

Spaces of the Political¹

(Michael Dutton, Goldsmiths, University of London)

Introduction: an opening gambit

This is not a paper about architecture *per se*, but about the architecture of a concept; the concept of the political. It is about how the binary architecture of the political, namely, the friend and enemy grouping, not only influences the built environment but how that built environment helps create the conditions for the emergence of the political by channeling, harnessing and transforming affective energy flows. Through the built environment we come to re-imagine the concept of the political, not as a set of institutions, or as an array of governmental forms or even a series of rational choices, but as the channeling, harnessing and transformation of affective energy flows. It is in interrogating this that we turn to the built environment and analyse two ways of regulating the cadency of affective flows in relation to the political. One form channels in order to dissipate. Dissipation and transformation are its hallmarks as it turns potential intensities into (market) desires. Britain's 19th century Crystal Palace was a prototype of this form of machinery. The other form of machinery interrogated works to intensify affective energy flows by focusing and forcing them through the ever narrower corridors of the friend/enemy divide. The prototypical machinery of that type of operation is found in Cultural Revolution China, in a building known as the Landlord Manor House Museum of Liu Wencai.

If Liu Wencai's Manor House Museum turned affective energy flows into political intensities that could drive the Maoist revolution, Crystal Palace dissipated these same energy flows by turning them into commodity desires that would drive market growth. With Crystal Palace, our attention is focused not just upon how material objects were turned into use-values but rather how such use-values had a phantasmagorical element that produced within the consumer a material desire. The channeling of energy into dissipated market desires produced a dispersal that, in turn, contributed to a political quietism. Such political quietism appeared as, at best, a 'side-effect' of an economic relation but in placing this machine next to the Maoist Manor House Museum we come to realise the centrality of this 'side-effect' in the formation of the political. The built environment, therefore, offers a set of heuristic devices that, read along side each other, reveal two quite distinct modes of being political.

Despite their radical differences, these two machines do share a 'family resemblance' in so far as they are examples of how the built environment contributes to political discourse through the disciplining of social subjects. That such machines can only work within a larger social framework requiring vast assemblages well beyond the machines themselves is without doubt. That there is leakage, malfunctioning and perverse consequences to these attempts is also not in question. That there are unforeseen consequences or multiple and often competing effects produced depending upon the materials, context, duration,

¹ This paper, which is drawn from a forthcoming book on the political, was first presented at the "Everyday Spatial Design and Practice with/against Modernity" workshop in Nanjing, 20-22 May 2015. I would like to thank the editors, anonymous readers, and Zhu Jianfei, for their suggestions and Deborah Kessler and Stacy Lo for their help in researching and preparing this work. .

culture, distribution and audience², is also beyond doubt. They are, after all, part of the machinery of power and, as we have long known, there is no power without resistance.³ Nevertheless, what these two sets of machinery open onto is a new understanding of the discursive field of modernity and the treatment of affective elements within any modern concept of the political.

1

From the Bio-political to the Political

In his recent book, *On Domestic Electrical Appliances*, the noted Chinese postmodern theorist Wang Min'an wrote about how modern consumer appliances have transformed family ethics and values. Traditionally, he notes, the production of family ethics turned on consanguinity and the traditional patriarchal order. The domestic spatial order, while always a precondition of family life, was thought of by many as being no more than an 'external' (外部性的) and 'subsidiary framework' (附属框架).⁴ The built environment was the framework that held domestic ethical production in place but it was blood ties that gave it meaning. In China, he observes, from the 'nineties onwards, that all began to change. The domestic spatial order increasingly became important as a vast array of electronic household appliances not only revolutionised economic production within the household itself, but actually began to manufacture a new family ethical comportment.⁵ In producing its own ethics, Wang tells us, space became "the biggest consideration of family and life,"⁶ and while he doesn't explain how this transformation took place historically, either in China or elsewhere, he nevertheless shows how, in the domestic sphere, a dispersed array of spatial, cognitive and sensory effects were produced by the interlacing of domestic life with domestic appliances. He notes how the dominance of *fengshui* or geomancy in the placement of things gave way to considerations of how, say, the television set would sit with the sofa, producing new spatial relationships between the viewer, the television and the couch;⁷ he comments on how the radio might not operate through lines of sight but nevertheless created very precise and particular acoustic relationships between the ear and sound⁸; he dwells upon how washing machines enforced a domestic rhythm⁹ and how the refrigerator changed the way shopping cooking, eating and even what we eat all changed.¹⁰ Collectively, these dispersed sets of effects from an array of electronic appliances established regular household rhythms, built particular relationships between objects and subjects and with bells, whistles and computerised music, established daily routines and patterns of movement and behaviour that helped create the modern domesticated subject. This was no longer a unified ethical

² There is little doubt, for instance, that Crystal Palace played a very different role in terms of colonialism. Context and audience become crucial here a point noted in the work of Timothy Mitchell. See Timothy Mitchell (1988), *Colonising Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

³ Michel Foucault (1978), *History of Sexuality, Volume One*, Vintage Books, New York. 95.

⁴ Wang Min'an (2015), *On Domestic Electrical Appliances*, Henan Publishing House. [汪民安 (2015)《论家用电器》河南大学出版社, 188.

⁵ Wang Min'an (2015), 188.

⁶ Wang Min'an (2015), 189.

⁷ Wang Min'an (2015), 80-82.

⁸ Wang Min'an (2015), 55.

⁹ Wang Min'an (2015), 9.

¹⁰ Wang Min'an (2015), 33.

domain based on blood or principle for there was little holding together the operations of the radio, the running and use of the refrigerator or the new geomacy brought on by the dominance of the television set. In marked contrast to blood ties and even the modern machinery of the political there was no manifest goal or ethical aim. Indeed, any ethical influences appear as little more than perverse side effects of the operations of a dispersed set of discrete operational relations. This domestic disciplining of the subject, therefore, seemed to have little effect other than the dissipation of the subject's energy.

The everyday domestic appliances Wang describes may well exert a disciplinary will over the subject and transform their ethical comportment and ontological orientation, but they do so by dissipating rather than agglutinating the energy of the subject. Moreover, this ethical dimension is but a side effect of their primary and manifest function which is invariably tied to the household production process (dishwashers are designed to wash dishes, refrigerates to refrigerate food and so forth).¹¹ The ontological and ethical effect, therefore, might well be thought of as being little more than an unforeseen side effect of their operation. Indeed, one might initially think of such side effects as a form of 'leakage' or an unrecognized malfunction of these machines. Crystal Palace might, however, give us pause to think of such side-effects differently. Before that, however, let us deal with the more overt signs of the political and machinery that consciously attempts to discipline life. That is to say, let us deal with machines that have political disciplining as their *raison d'être*.

Political spaces, be they town squares, public statues, monuments, or palaces of government, are consciously designed to produce ethical and ontological effects. Yet to work effectively, they must operate in multiple registers that reinforce each other and they, too, must permeate the intimate bio-political level. This political machinery 'pushes back' into the biopolitical zone in a variety of ways, but does so by using very differently configured sets of micro-technologies to those of the household goods described by Wang.¹² Instead of washing machines producing daily routines, we have the Hitler salute attempting to turn Fascism into an everyday gesture;¹³ instead of television sets establishing distracting lines of vision, there is the Lenin badge that constitutes, according to Vladislav Todorov, one of the "smallest units of communism." These micro-technologies, Todorov notes, take belief systems into "the lower depths, in the most diversified zone of life" as they attempt to reinforce a unity of meaning across all races of the lifeworld.¹⁴ It is in this way that political machinery takes on a bio-technical form,

¹¹ This puts into a different perspective Graham Harman's claim that Latour's Actor-Network theory 'like the ancient Megarians' suggests, that 'no one is a house builder unless they are currently building a house.' Here, in the habituated household space, the dishwasher is always a dishwasher irrespective of whether it is in use or not. Here, then, in the act of naming, we see the power of interpolation, but this controversy between Latourian ANT (Actor-Network Theory) and OOO (Object Orientated Ontology) is beyond the scope of this paper. For details of Harman's critique see Graham Harman (2016) *Immaterialism: Objects and Social Theory* Polity, Oxford, 10.

¹² Here, of course, for the sake of brevity, I am forced to omit references to the socialist 'decal-ization' of everyday objects and to the Production Art of the Russian Futurists. Such complications are also beyond the scope of this current work.

¹³ In becoming an everyday gesture, Tilman Allert says, it thereby provides "the most information about how people communicate, where they draw their boundaries and what they choose to disclose and conceal." See Tilman Allert (2008), *The Hitler Salute: On the Meaning of a Gesture*, [trans. Jefferson Chase], Metropolitan Books, New York, 3.

¹⁴ Writing about the small Lenin badges worn on the lapels of Soviet Party members, Vladislav Todorov wrote that, "... badges impregnate the microstructures of everyday consciousness and expand the circuit of

attempting to habituate (political) ideas as lived everyday values, gestures and compartments. What the fascist salute and the Leninist badge share is a look, not an outlook. They do not share a political viewpoint, but rather share a particular mode of addressing the political. Some might call it political theology but whatever term one uses to denote it, a key characteristic of this form is that it involves affective energy flows toward a single goal, namely, the expression of political intensity. This drive toward the monadic sets it apart from the modern domestic appliances. Where the machinery Wang describes institutes a disparate array of ontological effects that shatter the subject into an array of different lines of flight depending on their functioning and operation, the public political machine always tries to reassemble the unity of the subject around an intensity by channeling affective energy toward a single political destination. It is this radical difference that allows us to contrast two quite distinct modes of being political.

Wang Min'an's description of domestic electrical appliances and the transformation of life in contemporary China demonstrates the diffusing effects of the market and this stands in sharp contrast to a prior era in China when Maoism used the political and biopolitical machinery of state to put the question of the political at the heart of everyday life. If Wang's machines diffused affective energy, Maoism concentrated and intensified them by turning them into the political question, "who are our enemies and who are our friends?" Maoism reimagined both public and private spaces as sites for the production of revolutionary political intensification. Maoism offered one of the clearest examples of such political machinery because, as Carl Schmitt points out, Maoism takes us to the core of the political, namely, the friend/enemy grouping.¹⁵

II

The Schmittian Concept of the Political

The concept of the political, Schmitt tells us, emerges at the moment of appearance of the most intense and extreme antagonisms because it is only in that moment that the intrinsic, dyadic, friend-enemy quality of the political comes to a point of clarity.¹⁶ Maoism, in designing machines to intensify class antagonisms might well bring us to the core of the political, as Schmitt claims, yet, in doing so, it also raises a question about the nature of the political. One must begin to ask whether the ever-present and clear nature of the friend-enemy dyadic within Schmitt's concept of the political means that this is the only form that expressions of the political can take. In other words, does this moment of extreme antagonism encompass all possible expressions and forms of the political? Is Wang Min'an's bio-political focus totally distinct from the concept of the political? Is it a de-politicisation or merely another face of the political overshadowed by the dominance of the friend/enemy distinction? Is 'proximity' to the most extreme antagonism really the key

the "universal connection" of communism down in the lower depths, in the most diversified zone of life." Vladislav Todorov (1995), *Red Square, Black Square*, SUNY Press, New York, 40.

¹⁵ On how Mao takes us to the core of the matter see Schmitt, Carl (2007), *The Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political*, [Trans. G.L. Ulmen], Telos Press, New York, 40. On the friend-enemy quality of the political more generally see Schmitt, Carl (1996), *The Concept of the Political*, [Trans. J. Harvey Lomax], University of Chicago, Chicago. On how Maoism centres on a politics based on the friend/enemy distinction see Dutton, Michael (2005), *Policing Chinese Politics: A History*, Duke University Press, Durham.

¹⁶"The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation." Carl Schmitt, (1996), *The Concept of the Political*, [trans. J. Harvey Lomax], University of Chicago, Chicago, 26.

to understanding this concept and is it the only yardstick by which to judge what is political? Despite some reservations, in Schmitt, this appears to be the case.¹⁷

"The Political," he tells us, "is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the extreme point, that of the friend/enemy distinction."¹⁸ Proximity to the extreme not only offers clarity but it also offers distinction. The concept of the political has unparalleled authority over all other binary distinctions – be they in economics (profit or loss), morality (good and evil) or aesthetics (ugliness and beauty) – because only the friend/enemy distinction is stalked by the real possibility of death and killing.¹⁹ This possibility of death and killing is buried within the extreme antagonism and so the concept of the political becomes, in this Schmittian rendition, a one-dimensional sliding scale of proximity to or distance from intensity. It is proximity to intensity that offers clarity for it is proximity to the extreme that gives it definition. The closer to the antagonism, the more the political reveals itself. This unique, 'simple criterion' of friend and enemy, however, throws up far more complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic relationships with the extreme antagonism than the one dimensional sliding scale of Schmitt. To understand this, we need to move from the fixed single dimensional scale of Schmitt, into the orbit, flight paths and trajectories of other renditions of the political that are not so clear-cut.

The political, in this altered understanding, would still maintain the centrality of the Schmittian binary concept but would recognise that all the orbiting, multi-dimensional affective flows that circle around, pull away from or enter into the gravitational pull of the extreme antagonism are no less part of any concept of the political.

Whether we embrace it, harness it, develop it, or diffuse it; whether our machines channel it toward an intensity or drive it away from that possibility; whether these intensities can be harnessed productively or must be repressed or transformed into material or other desires; all these different contingencies suggest that the concept of the political really concerns the management of affective flows that take form through the machining technologies that channel, shape, and make them manifest. The political, then, is not just about proximity to the extreme antagonism but about how these orbiting, multi-dimensional affective flows are channeled, harnessed and transformed as they negotiate their flight paths in relation to this friend/enemy distinction. This refocusing of the concept of the political gives due recognition to the gravitational pull of the friend/enemy grouping in the formation of the political but extends the concept to cover all the various channelings, harnessings, diffusions and deployments that these flows undergo as they navigate their way into, around, and parallel with, the extreme. With this refocusing in mind, we begin to see how Wang's domestic electric appliances, in the very act of diffusion, are producing political effects. Rather than as a discrete domain separate from the political or even as a form of depoliticisation, they begin to appear on the radar as objects orbiting this political sun.

White goods only began to appear in China in the wake of that country's market reforms. This was not by chance. By processes that induced material desire, markets helped mute

¹⁷ The friend/enemy distinction, says Schmitt provides the concept of the political "a definition in the sense of a criterion and not as an exhaustive definition or an indicative of substantial content." Carl Schmitt, (1996), 26.

¹⁸ Carl Schmitt (1996), 29.

¹⁹ See Carl Schmitt (1996), 33.

and re-direct potential political intensities. Each potential burst of intensity would be re-channeled, such that even the material remnants of the (Maoist-Schmittian) political in China were 'marketised.'²⁰ Markets produced their own orbiting patterns around the political by turning potential (political) intensities into material desires.

Desires inflamed by the market gained a concrete material form with the appearance of the commodity. Combining phantasmagoric desire with functionality (use-value), the commodity would draw energy away from potential political intensities by turning affective energy flows into material desires rather than political intensities. Such desires would then be partly satiated by the markets. Wang's electronic appliances were not only objects of material desire, but, once purchased, they entered the domestic space and, once there, became part of an on-going process of energy dispersal. Now inside the home, the dispersal of energy continued as the functionality of these machines depended upon changes taking place in domestic spatial rearrangements, in daily rhythms, and in sensory attunements. If the domestic home appliances produced energy dispersal within the home, the purchasing of these appliances on the market produced a political domestication in social space.

To acquire such appliances required an income, thereby forcing one to expend energy 'homogenously' as labour power to achieve that end.²¹ The market also 'induces' purchases by imbuing such objects not just with use value but also with a phantasmagorical quality that is seductive. As affective energy is transformed into material desire there is further disaggregation. The only point of unity becomes the commodity itself. The result is a form of market-induced political quietism. The domestic space is essential to the constitution of this quietism because, as Peter Sloterdijk points out, "biopolitics begins as enclosure-building."²² For Sloterdijk, the watershed moment when this biopolitical enclosure building started to take shape in its modern material form was with the construction of Crystal Palace in 1851. It is with this exhibition, he suggests that the end of history opens onto modern history:

This is where the motif of the 'end of history' began to triumph. The visionaries of the nineteenth century, like the communists of the twentieth, already understood that after the expiry of combatant history, social life could only take place in an expanded interior domestically organised and artificially climatized inner space.²³

Crystal Palace worlded this new world. It hollowed out, repressed, diffused or transformed the intensities of life into something that the market found productive, profitable and calculable. As the incubator of the global market, this massive greenhouse structure was where the phantasmagoric and use-value were grafted onto the commodity form. Crystal Palace not only foreshadowed a globalised world built on trade, but in so doing, partially diffused within the West at least, any propensities toward political

²⁰ On the importance of understanding bursts in Chinese politics see the project led by Gary King. King and his associates undertook a huge quantitative analysis of contemporary Chinese political censorship and found that contrary to popular belief, Chinese didn't censor terms, but rather looked for 'bursts' that could potentially lead to street action. Bursts were, of course, nothing other than a symptom of growing political intensity. See King, Gary, Jennifer Pan and Margaret E. Roberts, 2013. "How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression." *American Political Science Review* 107(2), 326–343. On how the political is marketised, one only need look at the growth in China of the Red Tourist industry.

²¹ Georges Bataille notes the way labour power draws energy away from the heterogenous realm and into the 'homogenous' world of science, rationality and technique. See Bataille, Georges (1979), "The Psychological Structure of Fascism", *New German Critique*, Number 16, Winter, 64-87.

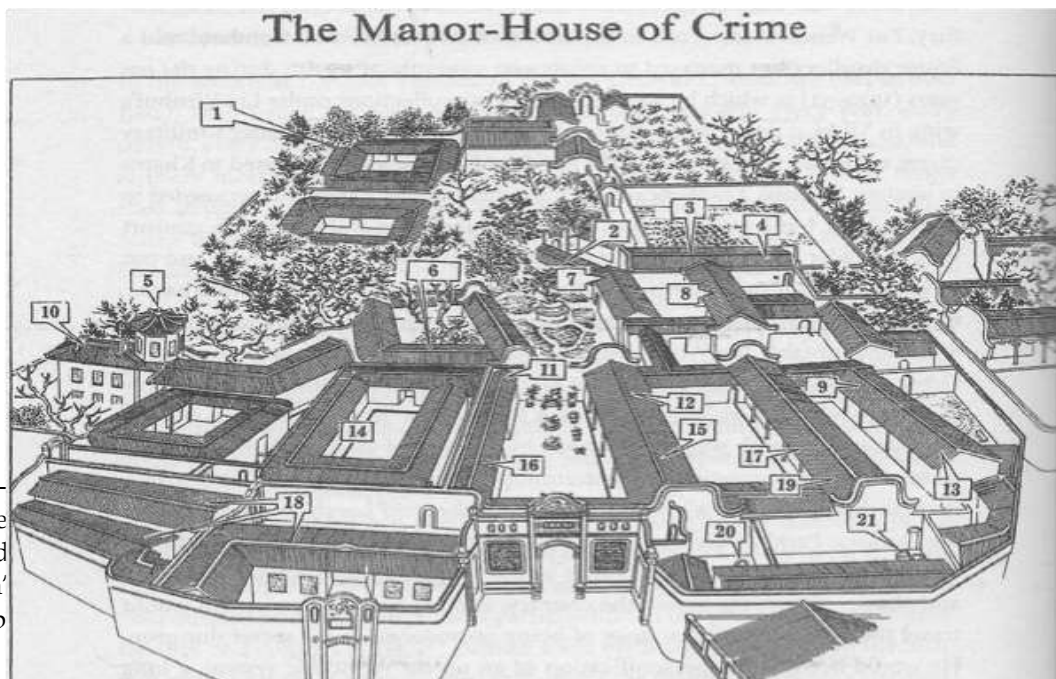
²² Peter Sloterdijk, (2014), *In the World Interior of Capital*, [trans. Wieland Hoban], Polity, Cambridge, 170.

²³ Peter Sloterdijk, (2014), 170-171.

intensification.²⁴ In contrast, Maoist political machines formed circuits and channels not to extract surplus value, but to intensify surplus energy and turn it into a political question — “who are our friends, who are our enemies?”²⁵ Their task was to agglutinate affective energy flows and transform them into political intensity.

The Chinese Manor House Museum and Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace are both organised around this broader understanding of the concept of the political and both geared to the possibility of intense eruptions rather than merely the mundane activities of daily life. They are both attuned to tidal waves rather than to the steady hum of domestic machines and they are both public and monumental, rather than private and habitual. Both are linked to what Carl Schmitt has come to call the friend/enemy grouping, yet they are linked to this grouping in quite distinct ways. Beginning with the Maoist Manor House Museum which links directly into the Schmittian political, the paper then moves on to examine Crystal Palace and the question of diffusion. What Crystal Palace demonstrates is the role of market-centric machinery plays in the production of political quietism. First, however, the Maoist Manor House.

Liu Wencai's Manor House Museum



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[Drawn from Lee, Haiyan (2014), *The Stranger and the Chinese Moral Imagination*, Stanford University Press, California]

The Schmittian political turns on the friend-enemy grouping and this chimes perfectly with the Maoist political. After all, from his very earliest official political pronouncement, Mao Zedong viewed the Marxist theory of class struggle through a Schmittian lens. Indeed, as an opening gambit, on the first line of the first page of the first volume of his *Selected Works*, Mao asks, “who are our enemies who are our friends?.....” (谁是我们的敌人，谁是我们的朋友...). This question, posed by Mao in 1926, was the starting point on a Maoist journey into and through the Schmittian political and it was this that would drive China's revolution throughout the Mao years.²⁶ Ignited by class struggle and developed by rhythmic, pulsating, political campaigns, extreme antagonisms were harnessed and channeled into political intensities. It was from within this overarching national political context that a series of micro-level machines were experimented with in the field of culture during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. These machines were part of a project designed to 'touch people to their very soul' (*Chuji renmin de linghun* 触及人们的灵魂).²⁷ To do this, the machinery needed to be both cognitively and affectively attuned. The Maoist Manor House Museum of Liu Wencai was one such tuning device.

The Maoists transformed the Manor House from a bio-political 'subsidiary framework' of landlord domesticity into an overtly political device designed to spark or intensify anti-landlordism. It was in this transformation of domestic space into overtly political space that we are given the clearest and most straightforward example of the mechanics of channeling and harnessing political intensity. First created in 1958 when the negative effects of the Great Leap Forward were leading to disenchantment with socialism, the Communist Party decided to restore the 7,000 square metre Manor House of Liu Wencai. As one of Sichuan province's biggest landlords, Liu's Manor house was used to highlight the obscene levels of inequality in old China and to blame that situation on the landlord class the Party had liberated the peasants from. Restoration work within the Manor House was, therefore, political rather than historical in nature and curatorial attention focused on revealing to the public the hedonistic lifestyle of landlords and the links landlordism had to banditry, warlordism and other 'feudal' powers.²⁸ As the litany of crimes that depicted landlordism grew, they were increasingly inserted into the Manor House and into Liu's life. He became, like Louis XIV in Louis Marin's reading, two bodies:²⁹ one, the embodied,

²⁶For details, see Michael Dutton, (2005), *Policing Chinese Politics: A History*, Duke University Press, Durham.

²⁷ That larger project was, of course, a Cultural Revolution that was said to have had the goal of touching people to their very souls. See *People's Daily* [*Renmin Ribao*] 《人民日报》02/06/1966).

²⁸ Haiyan Lee, (2015), *The Stranger and the Chinese Moral Imagination*, Stanford University Press, California, 199.

²⁹ Marin, Louis, (1989), *Food For Thought* (trans. Mette Hjort), Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 192-193.

corporeal Liu Wencai, the other, a typification and personification of all landlord vices. It was this latter Liu Wencai who occupied the Manor House after the revolution. Indeed, it was this typified landlord who, from the grave, dictated the nature of the on-going Manor House renovations.

In early 1960, mini dioramas and wax tableaux were added to intersperse the wealth of Liu with scenes of misery that he created.³⁰ Soon afterwards came the addition of a torture room and, most infamously of all, a *water dungeon*. The water dungeons would go on to become a standard trope of landlord cruelty and featured prominently in one of the so-called Eight model operas, the very famous and popular, *Red Detachment of Women*. By this time, the water dungeon had itself become, if not a typification then, at the very least, a readily recognisable trope of landlordism.



[Image: The infamous Manor House Water Dungeon, Still drawn from the 1966 movie of the same name.]



[Image: Still from the Revolutionary Opera, "The Red Detachment of Women," depicting the revolutionary hero in a water dungeon based on the one described in the Manor House.]

In early 1965, the authorities commissioned classically trained figurative sculptors to work with local and traditional artisans and create an artwork as the centre-piece of the Manor House. It was called, *The Rent Collection Courtyard Exhibition*. Made up of 114 life sized mud statues in the central courtyard of the Manor House, this work became the *pièce de résistance* of the entire Manor House exhibition.

³⁰ Haiyan Lee, (2015), 201.

The statues were described as “an atom bomb” of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and “a tool in the class struggle” that would transform anyone who saw them.... and many people did see them.³¹ According to one estimate, up to 100 million people might well have seen either the original work or copies of these statues that would 'tour.'³² For those who didn't, there were plays, movies, ballets and music written about them, other exhibitions based upon them, and textbooks that described them.

For the Party, here was art as a weapon of war. As one critic, Zhang Youyun, said: “The Rent Collection Courtyard was able to broaden and effectively ignite within the hearts of the people a sense of class hatred. The ideological content being performed by this work and the political logic that it transmitted summed up the collective interests of the masses.”³³ Collectively designing a plot-line that would weave the Manor House into the exhibition and the exhibition into the Manor House, they used windows, rooms and pillars to frame their story. They even used the courtyard trees as gathering points for many of the mud statues seeking shelter. Scattered throughout the exhibition courtyard were a series of found objects: wicker baskets, chairs, an old abacus, a grain thrasher. As Wang Zhi'an puts it, “Many of the objects in the exhibition were real and typical of objects central to peasant life in the old system. The landlord, Liu Wencai himself became a typical representative figure. A typification through whom peasants would come to see and understand the entire landlord class.”

[Image: The Rent Collection Courtyard statues. Source Manor House display boards]



³¹ Wang Guanyi, (1996), “Looking Back on the ‘Rent Collection Courtyard’” in *The Sculpture Magazine*, Number 1, 38-39. [王官乙 1996 “回首《收租院》” 《雕塑》 1 期] 38-39.

³² Wang Guanyi, (1996), 38.

³³ Zhang Youyun, (2005), “The Cause of the Change of Appreciation of the ‘Rent Collection Courtyard’ in Popular Perceptions”, *Art Research*, April, 2005, 46. [张幼云, “论公众对泥塑《收租院》兴趣转向之主要根源”, 《美术研究》] 46.



The Manor house now established a route along which the peasant audience would learn the principle crimes of landlordism. Each room displayed avarice in the face of dire poverty that would be enough to make one cry; cruelty of such an unspeakable kind, demonstrated by the torture room and, most graphically, by the water dungeon, would lead to hatred, and finally, all these emotions would be captured in the glass eyes of the mud statues of the Rent Collection Courtyard Exhibition. This summary of the affective dimensions of the Manor House were summarised in the struggle of the peasants depicted in the Rent Collection Courtyard statues. The sculptors had worked to evoke three emotions, crying, hatred and finally resistance, so, unlike the rest of the Manor House displays, it was in the tale the statues would tell that one final piece was added, namely, resistance. Wang Zhi'an explains how that became the penultimate moment:

The final phase of the [Rent Collection Courtyard] work was themed 'resistance' (反抗) and the key point was enmity (仇恨); the enmity of the peasants toward the landlords. Here, there is a self-generating notion of struggle tied to a consciousness of it. Hence, ... they are two parts of the same question; One expressing an abstract 'hatred' (恨), the other, the peasants growing self-awareness of where such hatred leads. Here, the idea of hate is expressed as a form of spontaneity (自发性) but the growing peasant self-awareness leads them toward organisation.³⁴

The original sculptors worked to intensify the emotional effect of the Rent Collection Courtyard by collecting, editing and weaving together into a single tale, the numerous stories of exploitation peasants suffered at the hands of their landlords. Intensification was not a depiction of real events but of real affects. The Manor House was not so much a

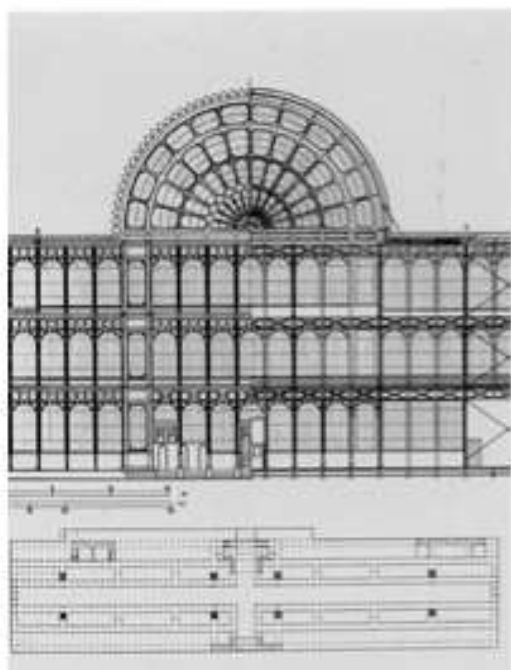
³⁴ Wang Zhi'an, (2001), *The Heavens Thundered at the Peak of Poetic Perfection*, Tiandi Publishing House, Chengdu Sichuan, [王治安, «轰天绝唱», 天地出版社, 四川。Wang Zhi'an (2001), *Hongtian juechang*, Tiandi chubanshe, Sichuan], 210.

museum as a performance site. The gaze, for example, migrated from traditional Chinese opera to the statues with the addition of glass eyes to the otherwise mud statues. This would involve re-modelling peasant gestures, based not on the gestures of 'real life' peasants, but on the stance of actors brought in from the Sichuan Opera troupe.³⁵ Through the gaze and exaggerated gestures, a stylised and intensified form was created using dramatically staging effects purposely designed to induce tears, anger and finally a desire to resist. This Maoist Manor House Museum, therefore, didn't just convey a revolutionary message, it developed this message within a series of affectively oriented technologies that were designed to contour and channel energy toward an intensity. In this respect, albeit in a very different way, this Maoist political technology shares something of a family resemblance to what Rem Koolhaas has called 'Technology of the Fantastic.'³⁶

Technology of the Fantastic is exemplified by things like the interactive horror theatres produced by Carnesky's Ghost Train ride in Blackpool England, or the dark rides of Coney Island, but what makes this Technology of the Fantastic of interest in relation to the political is that this technology, far from mollifying the masses or leading to a reduction of intensity, actually harnesses the speed and intensity of the city, then transforms it into a series of rides and distractions to intensify, not reduce, the urban experience.³⁷ It was because of this, Koolhaas insisted, that Coney Island was a "foetal form of Manhattan."³⁸ In terms of the political, then, can we think of the Manor House as the foetal form of Maoism? The fact that the Rent Collection Courtyard exhibition was, along with a number of ballets and operas, proclaimed a 'model (political) work' tends to suggest this.³⁹

More importantly, the use of this Technology of the Fantastic in such radically different ways opens onto the channeling toward and away from intensities. If the Manor House used such technologies to channel, harness and intensify through processes of homologisation that lead to a monistic political position, Coney Island channeled intensities into another form; the fairground ride. Such rides, as Koolhaas notes, capture the intensity of urban life, but more than that, they show how these intensities can be channeled toward profit extraction. In effect, they show how technologies of the fantastic are able to wed use-values and the phantasmagorical to produce the commodity form. Technologies of the fantastic first become interlaced with questions of economic development at Crystal Palace.

2. *Crystal Palace*



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[Plan of Crystal Palace (1851) Source: Crystal Palace Museum, Crystal Palace London]

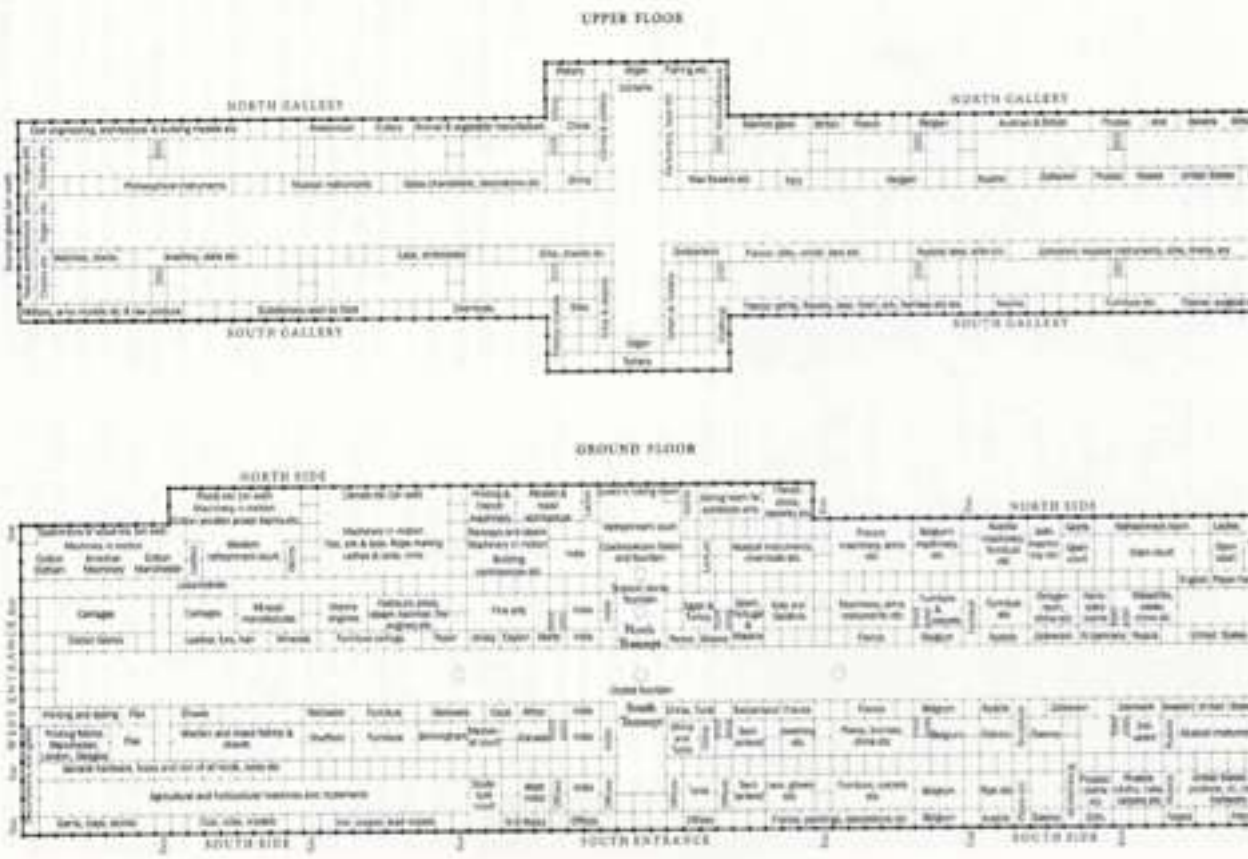
Built as a temporary structure in London's Hyde Park in 1851, Crystal Palace housed the world's first Expo – The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations.⁴⁰ A massive glass structure modelled on a greenhouse, the Crystal Palace building reinforced a Victorian sense of dominance over nature.⁴¹ As a massive industrial-sized greenhouse within which 'things' from across the globe joined the fruits of industrial labour, Crystal Palace was said to be "distinguished by its capacity to engender universal consensus by material means."⁴² With the commodity form as its material means, Crystal Palace became the display-case for a new global world in which free trade dominated. More than that, Crystal Palace was a sign of the will to power of markets as they were becoming technologised, systematised and universalised. It was also the first sign of the emerging power of the phantasmagorical. Both as an exemplary phantasmagorical monument of what technology could create and as a showcase of these new phantasmagorical consumer goods, Crystal Palace would discipline and domesticate the workers' political imaginations, not through force of arms but through the seductive qualities of the phantasmagorical commodity.

⁴⁰ There were many national exhibitions that predated the Great Exhibition, although what is not in dispute is the unprecedented scope of The Great Exhibition of 1851 - namely, that it was the first that had aspirations to be international. D. Eldon Hall alleges that, "the Marquis D'Aveze collected an "Exhibition of Native Art Manufactures" in 1798...[an] idea originated, was followed up and enlarged by... Napoleon -"whose instinctive sagacity quickly appreciated the stimulus which rivalry and pride would lend to the industrial resources of the country" – promoted and fostered these national displays...Belgium and Holland have...held 'National Exhibitions,' modelled upon the French system...Germany, Spain and Portugal also, had, to a greater or less extent, these National Fairs. But it remained for the Anglo-Saxon race, (that "nation of shop-keepers," as Napoleon called it), to develop, in its widest form, the fraternity of commerce, and the possibility of universal peace." D. Eldon Hall (1852) *A Condensed History of the Origination, Rise, Progress and Completion of the "Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations*, Redfield, New York, pp. 6-10. After Cole visited the 1849 Paris Exhibition, with plans afoot for a British Exhibition, Prince Albert said to Cole, 'it must embrace foreign productions...it must be international.'" quoted in Patrick Beaver (2001), *The Crystal Palace*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd., West Sussex, 13.

⁴¹ Prince Albert made this clear in the speech he made at the opening of the exhibition. In this speech he states: "So man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God. He has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs His creation, and, by making these laws his standard of action to conquer nature to his use...." See Prince Albert (1849) "Prince Albert's Speech of 1849 announcing 'The Exhibition of 1851'" from *The Illustrated London News*, 11 October 1849, 10.

⁴² See Paul Young (2008), 'Mission Impossible: Globalization and the Great Exhibition' in Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg (eds.), *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, p. 39.

PLAN OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE



[Source: Crystal Palace Museum, Crystal Palace, London]

The Crystal Palace Exposition of 1851 transformed working class sentiment which had, up until that point, felt exploited, disenchanting, alienated and on the brink of revolution. Indeed, the mid-19th century was a time of revolt. 1848 was famously dubbed the year of revolution, yet even if one left aside troubles on the continent and focused instead only upon the labour problems of the English, the picture was little different. Riots in Bradford in 1837, Chartists riots in 1840 and 1842, then the plug drawing riots of 1844. All these 'disturbances' set the ruling class on edge,⁴³ yet strangely, by 1851, a miracle had

⁴³ In the early months of 1848 turmoil broke out all over Europe and the Chartists announced a mass rally on Kennington Common in south London, followed by a march on Westminster to present a petition signed by five million people. The Bank of England was protected by sandbags at ground level and guns on the roof. Queen Victoria left the capital on the advice of her ministers. See Michael Leapman, (2002), *The World for a Shilling*, Headline Book Publishing, London. pp. 46-47; The dissipating effect the Exhibition had on the threat of ferment at the time is also observed by Fay who says: "Colonel Sibthorp ... feared the irruption of foreigners, pickpockets and Socialists. Three years after the revolution of 1848 such fears might be quite legitimately felt. As we shall see, the fact that the Queen could move freely among great crowds in the Exhibition was regarded as a major triumph for the British political system." See C.R. Fay, (1951), *Palace of*

happened in London. The revolutionary atmosphere dissipated, and was replaced, it seems, by a sense of wonder that Crystal Palace created.⁴⁴

While labour power turned the wheels of industry and transformed nature's raw materials – including labour itself – into mobile and malleable use-value, it was Crystal Palace that would stimulate the senses such that the mobile and malleable use-value would surface not just as use-value but perhaps, more importantly, as material manifestations of the flow of desire.⁴⁵ By stimulating the desires of the crowd, Crystal Palace quietened the intensities of the masses. The building itself was an embodiment of the phantasmogoric character of the commodity form. That is to say, 'Crystal Palace as spectacle' functioned as a phantasmagorical form of display case for the desirability of the commodities within.

Crystal Palace was more than an exhibition, it was also the harbinger of the mass entertainment industry.⁴⁶ With theme park like entertainment in the grounds behind turnstiles that rotated to the sound of profit, it was the harbinger of a world of organised, commercial fun. It would be the precursor to the theme park⁴⁷, the progenitor of organised tourism⁴⁸ and the inventor of the public pay lavatory⁴⁹; it had turnstiles at its entrance to

Industry: A Study of the Great Exhibition and its Fruits, Cambridge University Press, 8. The 'Press' is quoted as having written, an obituary with near reverence: "The tale of Hyde Park in 1851 will fall on the page of history. Fallen thrones will lie around it: here the Saturnalia of power - there the wild excess of popular freedom...everywhere anarchy, repression, conspiracy, darkness, dismay and death. In the midst of all these struggling spirits rises up the great figure of the Crystal Palace, to redeem the age." See Patrick Beaver, (2001), *The Crystal Palace*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd., West Sussex, p. 67.

⁴⁴ One can note a remarkably similar phenomenon in far more recent times in London. Note how the 2011 London riots, which quickly spread to other cities and were a sign of massive social discontent, were replaced by the joyful 'phantasmogoria' of the Olympics barely one year later.

⁴⁵ "They influence the entire system through minimal invasions by –if the phrase is permissible– stimulating its acupressure points." Sloterdijk says this of the terrorist's pleasure in their one-sidedness, but what it also shows is the effect of 'minimal invasions' of consumer desire on what he calls the bored *Dasein*. See Peter Sloterdijk, (2014) *In the World Interior of Capital* [trans. Wieland Hoban], Polity, Cambridge, 181.

⁴⁶ And in the New York exhibition of 1853 that followed Crystal Palace, the organiser would be none other than Phineas Barnum. See Walter Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, (Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin; edited by Rolf Tiedemann), Belknap/Harvard, Cambridge Massachusetts, 186 [G6, G6a, 1].

⁴⁷ According to Deborah Phillips, "The Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations established an international paradigm for the 'Grand Exposition' and the 'World's Fairs' that were to become a major influence for Walt Disney... The Great Exhibition was laid out around a series of national 'courts', a structure that was replicated in later Grand Expositions and World's Fairs and which continues in the pavilions of Disney World's Epcot World. The spirit of the 'Industry of All Nations' remains strong in the displays of national commodities and architectures at Epcot World Showcase." Phillips, D. (2012). *Fairground Attractions: A Genealogy of the Pleasure Ground*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. p. 19. (Online edition retrieved July 28, 2014 from <http://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/fairground-attractions-a-genealogy-of-the-pleasure-ground/ch1-pleasure-gardens-great-exhibitions-and-wonderlands>)

⁴⁸ Timothy Mitchell argues that Thomas Cook "launched the modern tourist Industry" on the back of his early excursion train tours of the Crystal Palace with the Midland Railway Company. See Timothy Mitchell, (1988), *Colonising Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 21. Mitchell is correct to point to the crucial role of Crystal Palace in proving the success of this business model although it was far from being the first such package tour. As Kate Colquhoun notes, prior to Crystal Palace, Thomas Cook had many tours with its first packaged tour beginning in 1841. It was for the Temperance League and was a train ride from Leicester to Loughborough (152). What made Crystal Palace unique (and for Thomas Cook so profitable) was that it constituted the "greatest mass movement of people in Britain's history." For details see Kate Colquhoun, (2003), *The Busiest Man in England: Life of Joseph Paxton, Gardner, Architect, Victorian Visionary*, Godine, New Hampshire. 190.

⁴⁹ "The greatest innovation at the exhibition was the provision of public toilets, these included 54 urinals at no charge, 22 water-closets for gentlemen and 47 water-closets for the ladies, in the central refreshment area the charge for these was 2d and 1d in the eastern and western refreshment areas, Ken Kiss tells us. These

regulate and count its customers and calculate profits,⁵⁰ refreshment rooms inside to feed its hungry clients, printed catalogues to guide the public around the displays of industrial inventiveness and educational delights. It even had its own board game.⁵¹

Bradford workers who had but a few years earlier been rioting about working conditions became proud recipients of twenty-one medals for their cloths and yarns, having earlier demonstrated their newfound pride in industry by being, per ratio, the biggest subscriber to the Crystal Palace building fund.⁵² Even before Crystal Palace was built, worker's social clubs had been collecting weekly instalments for train and exhibition tickets.⁵³ No one, it seems, wanted to miss out on visiting what was billed as the greatest show on earth.⁵⁴ Whether it was the pride of the worker in receipt of prize medals,⁵⁵ a sense of national pride in the productivity inventiveness of a 'people' that had created this wonderland or just the sheer pleasures of the theme park-like entertainment available there, Crystal Palace proved to be a major draw card.⁵⁶ When cheap tickets became available two weeks

were prototypes for both public and 'user pays' toilet systems as they were, according to Leapman, the catalyst for the provision of public lavatories. Crystal Palace toilets could also be the source of the euphemism 'to spend a penny' as the charge listed above suggests. Over 827,000 people were said to have spent a penny and the design of these lavatories was soon copied not just in the streets of London but in other cities across the world", see Leapman, pp. 91-95. See also Ken Kiss, "The Crystal Palace Museum," *Pocket Profiles No. 3., The World's First*, London, trustees of the Crystal Palace Museum, 2007, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁰ The entrance price was hotly debated with the architect of Crystal Palace Joseph Paxton, following the Prime Minister Lord John Russell wanting free admission. This was rejected and the pricing scheme adopted was 80 days at 1/- (5p), 30 days at 2/6 (12 1/2p), 28 days at 5/- (25p), 2 days at £1.00 (See Ken Kiss (2007), *The Crystal Palace Museum – Pocket Profiles No. 3., The World's First* London, trustees of the Crystal Palace Museum, 11.

⁵¹ Released in 1851 to coincide with the exhibition, 'the Crystal Palace Game' promised players a "Voyage round the world, an entertaining excursion in search of knowledge, whereby geography is made easy." Paul Young (2008), 'Mission Impossible: Globalization and the Great Exhibition' in Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg (eds.), *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, 58.

⁵² Michael Leapman (2002), *The World for a Shilling*, Headline Book Publishing, London, 43.

⁵³ On Priestly's travel club, see Leapman, 43; for Thomas Cook, see Leapman, 225-229.

⁵⁴ In the 140 days it was open, the Hyde Park Crystal Palace exhibition attracted six million visitors, with *The Times* reporting that nothing like this had ever been witnessed before. See Kate Colquhoun, (2003), *The Busiest Man in England: Life of Joseph Paxton, Gardner, Architect, Victorian Visionary*, Godine, New Hampshire, 186.

⁵⁵ There were fifteen thousand exhibits, half of which were from Britain and the remainder came from overseas, see Kate Colquhoun, (2003), 180. The introduction of the medals had succeeded in the planning stage of the Exhibition to overcome the dilemma that although the Commissioners ... 'had enough money pledged to be able to set aside £100,000 for whatever structure they chose' this was not enough to offer cash prizes which was their original plan. People would have to be persuaded to compete just for medals, for global honour and acclaim, rather than financial reward.' (Leapman, p. 40). However, the number of articles viewed and awarded demonstrated the success of the Medals. "The number of Prize Medals awarded is 2,918. The number of Council Medals is 170...The number of Exhibitors was about 17,000...the task of the Juries involved the consideration and judgement of at least a million articles; the difficulties attending it being not a little increased by the want of a uniform system of classification of the subjects in some of the foreign divisions" [Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851. Reports by the Juries on The Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition was Divided (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1851] p. ii.

⁵⁶ After awarding Paxton £5000 and settling all outstanding accounts, the Commissioners were left with £180,000. In addition, nearly £100,000 worth of the exhibits were presented to them. It was decided to purchase Gore House and 22 acres of land near the Brompton Road and to erect there a permanent exhibition building to house the gifts, together with other objects which, in the opinion of the Commissioners, exemplified good taste and design. This was the beginning of the centre of art and learning that still flourishes in South Kensington. It now includes the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science

after its opening,⁵⁷ the working class flocked to the exhibition and were awestruck. As one newspaper reported, they “seemed to stand in awe of the building: its greatness paralysed them: they hardly liked to penetrate into the huge compartment which opened on each side, but stuck close to the crystal fountain, or, if they moved forward, kept close together in small parties.”⁵⁸ Despite its utilitarian, prefabricated industrial form, it seems, this building had an aura. It created an almost religious atmosphere through the regularity of the glass panelling and the use of natural light.⁵⁹

To create such a flexible and transparent structure required a combination of new technologies drawn from industry, the railways and horticulture and then adapted to an architectural form that would house humans, not industry. New lighter, thinner and stronger glass pane-making technology, coupled with the discovery of new techniques related to load bearing construction, enabled this massive glass pavilion to be built. While shocking at the time, it was but a foretaste of things to come. “Buildings without the noodles,” was how Adolph Loos would come to call this style that now takes the name of modernism in architecture.⁶⁰

For Peter Sloterdijk, however, Crystal Palace goes beyond modernist architecture for it is, metaphorically, the hothouse of a new post historical atmosphere that has moved beyond the modern and beyond world history. Crystal Palace produced a momentary flash of Victorian light to illuminate this post historical world and produce, according to Sloterdijk, the world of the bored *Dasein*. The basic disposition of the bored *Dasein*, he tells us, comes about because they live a life devoid of any life-affirming/life-threatening challenges.⁶¹ The Schmittian political is always a life-affirming/life-threatening challenge, for there is always a possibility of death.

In other words, they lived a life, seemingly freed from the possibilities of the political. This life-affirming/life-threatening binary of Sloterdijk reveals the channeling mechanism of Crystal Palace. This “almost immaterialized artificially climatized building”⁶² held out the promise of a world of material desires satiated but totally occluding the real possibilities of the affirming-life/threatening Schmittian friend/enemy divide. Here, then, we see the precursor not just of Koolhaas's Manhattan, but also Wang Min'an's everyday domestic

Museum and Library, the Natural History Museum, the Geological Museum, the Imperial Institute, the Royal College of Science, the Royal School of Mines, the City and Guilds College, the Royal College of Art, the Royal College of Music, the Royal College of Organists and the College of Needlework. The list can be continued. This, then, is England's legacy from the Great Exhibition according to Patrick Beaver (2001), *The Crystal Palace*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd., West Sussex, 65.

⁵⁷ “25,000 season tickets had been sold at three guineas for gentlemen and two guineas for ladies. The holders of these tickets had the privilege of attending on the day when the Great Exhibition was opened by the Queen. For the two days following the opening the price of admission was to be one pound and thereafter five shillings until 24th May. Then it was to be reduced to one shilling from Mondays to Thursdays, half a crown on Fridays and five shillings on Saturdays. There would be no Sunday opening. Smoking, alcohol and dogs were prohibited.” See Beaver, 35.

⁵⁸ Michael Leapman (2002), *The World for a Shilling*, Headline Book Publishing, London, 12.

⁵⁹ *Punch* would joke that this unusual structure was a Crystal Palace. The name stuck. See C. R. Fay (1951), *The Palace of Industry*, Cambridge University Press, 15.

⁶⁰ For an example of just how negatively Adolf Loos viewed ornamentation see his essay, Adolf Loos (1998), “Ornament and Crime” in Adolf Loos *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, [trans. Michael Mitchell], Ariadne Press, Riverside, California, 167-176.

⁶¹ Peter Sloterdijk (2014) *In the World Interior of Capital* [trans. Wieland Hoban], Polity, Cambridge, 172.

⁶² Peter Sloterdijk (2014), 170.

appliance diffusions. It is also at this point that we begin to recognise two distinct modes of being political.

Conclusion

Crystal Palace and the Manor House are, in a Maoist sense, 'typifications.' They are typifications in that they open onto radically different ways – one attempting to harness the intense energy of the political, the other dissipating and transforming it – of being political. Together they render visible, not simply machinery of state but the *machining* of the political. Through such machining, two quite discrete modes of the political become visible. This is not to say there are not others or the potential for others.⁶³ Rather, it is to suggest that the political runs at a deeper and more profound level than the disciplinary mechanisms we might employ to talk of different forms of governmentality. The focus on flows highlights the fact that beneath the mentality of government there lurks a subterranean set of considerations. The concept of the political, then, is concerned with these. It is concerned with the array of modes and mentalities that form a constellation around the friend-enemy distinction and it is concerned with other ways of configuring these relations. This, then, means less of a concern about proximity to the extreme, than how 'our concrete world' relates to this extreme. It is about how it runs in parallel, orbits around or enters its orbit. In this regard, the friend-enemy distinction remains the touchstone of the political but its authority now derives not just from its proximity to the possibility of killing but how that authority generates a way of seeing the world that reaches down and transforms the bio-political everyday. Whether through white goods or through Mao badges, these various modes of the political set their own quite distinct ontological and ethical framework around which life is lived. Through the Manor House and Crystal Palace, we have explored two of these modes. Perhaps now, as our world enters a new period of uncertainty and as the endless growth of markets sends us spinning toward extinction, it is time we began to look for others.

⁶³ What was the function of *yin* and *yang* in the channeling of the flow of *qi* throughout the Celestial Empire if not another mode of politico-mentality?

