

LIAM GILLICK

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LIAM GILLICK CONSTRUCTION OF ONE AN EXCERPT FROM A NOVEL THAT IS NOT TO BE PUBLISHED (2013)

A SHORT SONG

For the door that is welded shut, Hallelujah!
For the shed that can't be entered, Hallelujah!
For the delegates who are struggling, Hallelujah!
For the CT and CGT, Hallelujah!
For the struggle that has been engaged, Hallelujah!
And the rights that will be won, Hallelujah!
To the many who have been abandoned, Hallelujah!

"VOLVOISM" AT THE END OF THE ROAD? DOES THE CLOSING-DOWN OF VOLVO'S UDDEVALLA PLANT MEAN THE END OF A HUMAN-CENTERED ALTERNATIVE TO A "TOYOTISM"? BY AKE SANDBERG

"[On] November 4 1992, Volvo announced the closing-down of its innovative plants in Kalmar and Uddevalla. These plants have become worldwide symbols of the possibility of combining high productivity and rewarding jobs. Does the closure of Kalmar and Uddevalla mean the end of a European, socio-technical alternative within the industry? Does "Toyotism" mean the end of history in industrial organization?

No. The performance of the Uddevalla plant was—according to Volvo management—equal to that of its conventional Torslanda plant in Gothenburg when the closing-down was announced. All three assembly plants in Sweden were approaching European performance levels. Uddevalla's potential for further improvement in quality and assembly time seemed great, even more so in the area of marketing and customer orientation of production. The Uddevalla production model is thus a viable alternative, to the Toyota production system, "Toyotism" or "lean production", as its ideal type is called in the US bestseller *The machine that changed the world* [*The Story of Lean Production*, James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, Daniel Roos]. Today's situation is contradictory and open, and the features of post-Fordism are still not fully developed.

For this reason the closure of Uddevalla has a strategic negative impact. It is thus important that it becomes well established that Uddevalla's performance was at least equal to that of Gothenburg and that Volvo did not even demonstrate there were short-term economic gains, let alone long-term gains, in closing Uddevalla and Kalmar, rather than making other reductions in capacity. Our task here is to try and understand why Volvo all the same decided to close the two innovative factories. We [will] first give a quick description of the production model of the Uddevalla plant and of its performance. Then we [will] discuss Volvo's official justification of the close down decision: overcapacity and a cost calculation showing savings. We [will] focus on the Uddevalla plant because it is the most recent and advanced in terms of design principles and because it was the first one to be closed.

A RESPONSE TO A SHORT QUESTION ABOUT TRANSLATION

In fact, 'Construcción de Uno' could also mean 'Building Oneself'. 'Construcción de Uno Mismo' would be the complete way of saying it, but 'Construcción de Uno' would suffice. 'Construyendo Uno' is building one—as in the process of. Construcción Uno is building One—as in edifice number one. I feel that the answer to the question, 'Have you built a red thing?' is harder to answer in Spanish in order to get the exact same double sense you want in English... Keep me posted as to how this progresses.

best
G.

A FARMYARD IN FRANCE NOT FAR FROM SOCHAUX

Come close, come close. This is the chance of your life. Come. Come. I am here, I am here. I have arrived!

You are in stagnation. In misery. It's finished. I am here. Not only will I bring you opportunities. But glory too.

You search for work? I will bring it to you. What work! The most beautiful, the most noble. For the greatest glory. For your patriotism. For your nation.

You are going to build automobiles!

The bad luck that has afflicted your region, I am here to repair this injustice. And you, the young, it is you who I address. Beautiful, strong, like young Turks. (We have some of those already!) I can't let you vegetate here.

And what to I demand for all this?

A tiny signature.

"Are there unions here?"

Unions?

"Are you well paid here?"

A fortune!

You can become a shareholder and participate in the benefits of this enterprise.

"Where do I find this car factory?"

In the most beautiful region of France.

Sochaux, in Franche-Compte.

"And the accomodation?"

For single people there is a castle!

"And leisure?"

Leisure?

We have everything.

Parties, pinball. There are women. Dances. Football. Fishing. Boating.

Victory my darling!

Victory my children!

Oh my God!

Drink! Victory! Drink! Victory! DRINK!

A group people, who used to work in a factory, break in once it has closed down, and use the plant as the site to develop a scenario for a potential film that will allow them to play out a great number of problems in relation to work, labour and life. This is the first report on their work.

Inside an abandoned factory: day

"This text is written as a first report. It communicates a potential book or a scenario for a film. And it does so by deploying a structure based upon the development of a sequence of questions that are constantly revised and renewed. A primary motivation remains a focus upon the potential of the disordered or spontaneous group—once it has been abandoned or forcibly disbanded by those in control of production. The scenario looks at the tensions between agency and critical passivity via an examination of levels of activity, action and fulfilment. All of this is in the face of a return to what may actually just be a continuation of a straightforward exploitation that is disguised behind disordered responses to the contradictions inherent in trying to identify the focus of an exploitative drive—both internal and external."

A person walks across the executive car park. Mid-morning

"The scenario looks again at the dynamic that exists within a group when one set of people thinks that there will "have to be change" and "things won't be able to continue this way" as a permanent state of desire and projection and the other believes that change will only occur as a result of direct action regardless of how destructive it might be. All this is complicated by one key issue: We come from a background that distrusts and embraces transparency simultaneously. The idea of coming together in a group seems very powerful but telling anyone about the group is very dangerous. Therefore while what we have discussed appears opaque it also embodies an understanding that there are some dangerous and exhilarating aspects that we can identify in the idea of dynamic groupings and agency. We are faced by a number of serious moral, cultural and political dilemmas, whenever we try and talk about the idea of coming together to produce a revised way to work."

Three people sit on upturned parts bins. Night.

You could say that the work that we've done in the last few years is hampered by collapse and evasion that is quite clearly connected to our distrust of transparency. One of the things we have become very interested in is cultures that try to create communality and productive communal arrangements, without clarity of intent [aka Communism]—places that have worked very hard to avoid larger sweeping applied progressive po-

litical structures and instead replaced them with micro versions in a state of constant change. What did that do to the society? Being torn between denial and assertion of the common good simultaneously?

A young woman addresses a group of former car workers. Morning.

We are interested in the cone shaped gap between modernity and modernism. Modernity leading to both Wal-Mart and memory sticks on one hand and modernism as a kind of "circling the drain" complex of striated, layered forms of self-referentiality which, at the same time, attempts a way to envision creating continual and endless possibilities of critique in relation to modernity. What we are actually interested in is this coned shaped gap between the two, more than one trajectory or the other. So with this suspicion of transparency, it means that we are very suspicious of structures that merely reflect back what the dominant culture already knows. One of the big problems when you have cultures that deny sweeping enforced changes on a social level in favour of spontaneous community models as agents of change, is that you have an increasing growth of the cone shaped space. Of course, we have more space to play in this expanding cone, as the gap gets bigger between modernity and modernism. But, the critical potential of late modern positions in opposition to the trajectory of modernity gets further and further away from the subject of critique. And if you look too hard at the cone you will find more areas to play in—a hypnotic zone of apparent potential.

Initially they had noticed that the doors of the administration block had been left open. No one had secured the building and no one had wrecked it either. They started to spend their time in their old work place, looking out at the countryside through the large windows that were installed in order to give them a more beautiful working environment when the factory was originally built. In the past they had to work with their backs to the windows, now they have time to sit and stare at the countryside surrounding the factory while discussing what to do next. Their feelings about the place are ambiguous, they would never damage the building, but they like to re-organize the signage, spending part of each day reconfiguring the former signs and information boards throughout the plant so that they now provide a complex reflection of their schizophrenic relationship to their former work place. The nuanced work and practices that they grew up with de-emphasized the idea of absolute quantification of speed over technique, and promoted the idea of flexibility and interactive teamwork.

JEREMY DELLER
'I WANT TO BE INVISIBLE'
ST HELIER, JERSEY
12 JUNE 2017
(2013)

In June 2017 a large demonstration occurs in St Helier, the capital of the island of Jersey. Members of the British general public descend on the town, angered by Jersey's status as a tax haven and its secretive banking culture. The event quickly gets out of hand; the protesters overwhelm the local police force, ransack buildings and then burn the town to the ground.

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