Powers of Unknowing and Not-knowing

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Why do we insist so much on the notion of otherwise? Why otherwising even?

Implicit (or immanent, better) in any notion of otherwise, whichever way declined, is a remarkable dimension, almost banal in its self-evidence, and for that perhaps even more portentous, generative and unsettling. In fact, it is not even a dimension, rather a kinetic property: how a vista (with its accompanying sensation, perceptions, thought-explosions, ways of breathing too) can expand and grow precisely in the very same instance when one is pivoting in the dark.

There is a latent paradox inhabiting this moment, the simultaneous event of a dancing atomic explosion that captures what cannot be known in advance, and the rather feeble attempt to name it beforehand, clearly the work of an outcome-driven mentality, of a way (designerly or otherwise) bent to describe what could be ahead of its manifestation.

It is not presumptuous to state that these attempts (of naming, describing, labelling) are destined to fail, always, and not just because of the limitation of a language which in this circumstantial event can only falter. This is one of those paradoxically situations in which design (as it is deemed to be) simply cannot intervene.

Can the otherwise (now a place, now a state of existence, now a tension towards, now an unexpected torsion that transforms the known in the unfamiliar) be designed? This is to say: can difference be designed? Can the virtual? Can the not-yet be designed?

Here the paradox become almost luminous, so let's grab its fleeting glow to begin to disentangle the bundle of thoughts and practices that converge in the many designings we have summoned.

If to design is already to be engaged with the not-yet, how do we ensure that this propensity to world-build the non-existent does not end up congealing the moving force of becoming into a deadly blueprint? How do we liberate anticipation from wanting to know tomorrow only to be better prepared than yesterday, and instead anticipate as a way of retaining the propulsive, spontaneous impetus that is traversing one and every thing?

How do we redesign design's own capacity to stay with the otherwise, that is, its very own capacity to craft the not-yet and in so doing becoming other than itself?

It is a wager. To extract design (its practice, its theories, its ways...) from its own extractive nature is tantamount to perhaps the most hubristic desire of all: to finally plunge design (its practice, its theories, its ways, its obsessions, its delusion, its denials...) into the recursive flow of matter-thought where unknowing becomes our most experimental material and not-knowing our most formidable ally.