

Jusqu'ici tout va bien

The problem with skyscrapers is ascending.

I mean: the problem is with elevators, even before the square meter price for the land stopped justifying the rising; elevators were already letting us down.

Truth is the tallest buildings have been using a system of echeloned elevators, from here until the 40th floor, then another until the 80th, and so forth... The physical problem is pressure; the practical problem is time (that we loose or won't win) when going up.

In reality, ascending is as much slower as taller the building gets. This issue cooled down the race for skyscrapers since they started being built, but hasn't stop it. Since many years the news hasn't abound, the tallest buildings were all in the US, between New York and Chicago, and below 500m.

Another vertical construction, concrete, of detention, the Berlin wall, built in 1961, blinded the notoriety of yet another race, the race for a world defined in closed boxes. After 1989, a new generation of constructions have been actually displaced, followed by and compensated, and the taller buildings can be found in Taiwan (508m), Kuala-Lumpur in Malaysia (450mX2) or at Xangai China (460m)...

The angels of Wenders met in the no-man's-land between the East and the West, *two weeks ago, a Moroccan citizen was shot down in the no-man's-land between the European Union and the Third World (double or triple line of barbed wire fences with 6 meters high each)*. For those who like details we might say the immigrant died without being found from which side came the bullet. This land above geography, this *Guantánamo*, territory between two walls is, as it is well known, the worst place to be.

The walls are older than skyscrapers. Still, both sketch the dances of fear, signing the Earth with this or that, temporary, political power.

Huge examples can be observed, the wall of China (III century B.C; c. 16m height, 8m wide, c. 2500Km long), intended to stop the Mongols entrance, the Adriano wall (from 122 A.C; c. 4,5m height, 3m wide and 118Km long), it searched to prevent the way of other Barbarians on the Roman Empire. The Western Wall (48m long, 18m height), that represents the ruins of an ancient temple, was under the Arabic power since 638 A.C. the West bank barrier, or the Israeli security wall, built quite close from it, roams a part of the occupied Palestinian territories in 1967, including the oriental sector of Jerusalem, and will be, once finished, 350Km length reaching at some points 7m height.

Protecting the southern side of the "Empire State Building" (381m), USA -México the security boarder tries to stop the entrance of illegal immigrants from central and South America into US territories. Initiated in 1994, counts already with 3000 deaths, 7 meters height and 595Km length. Barriers for barbarians, therefore, high perspectives for free citizens. Not by chance being put challenged by the 11th September attacks. For Jean Baudrillard ¹, the WTC (417mX2) destruction was not at all foreign to its own arrogant architecture.

"The poor's are dangerous: morally dangerous, for they are social parasites, unproductive, thieves, hookers, drug addicts, etc – or politically dangerous, for they are unorganized, unpredictable, and with a propensity to go against the powers installed." ²

On the earthly perspective of the nomad, or the new barbarian, the challenge of the wall is to overcome it. In the case of the Berlin wall, the most of the attempts were well, the most creative divide themselves into two different styles: to overcome the barrier underneath it (by digging tunnels), and go beyond it by air (floating). The boat presented in this show, as a *wishing machine*, inserts itself in this second tradition, the tradition that tries to dodge the security by rising from the ground.

The reference to the "*Valla de Melilla*" (double or triple barrier of 6m tall) is direct, even because this combines its intentions with the Mediterranean Sea. More could be said about the advantage taken of geographic accidents as border lines, (mountains such as the Pyrenees, or the Andes or the Alps, rivers such as Minho, or Guadiana, or Danube, or Reno, seas such as the Mediterranean, etc.)

Levitation (from Latin: *levis*, lightness) is a process with which one can suspend an object in a stable position contradicting, by doing so, gravity, by means of forces applied without contact with the object in question. The flying boat, as a flying carpet, means above all the dream, the escape, the exotic, the romantic voyages.

On the international communications language used via Radio, the alphabet, consider as potentially misinterpreted, has been adapted with the substitutions of letters for words. Alfa for A Bravo for B, Charlie for C. This explains the name of the famous gate at the Berlin wall, and its customs post, Check-Point Charlie.

For this door, in/out of the wall we head hitch-hiking.

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notes:

¹ – *La violence du Monde* (Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris) - .Edition du Félin, 2003

² - Toni Negri e Michael Hardt in *Multidão* - Campo das Letras, Porto - 2004