The Smith of the Gods

51 - « The Concept of the Future City of the NEOM Project»

510- Arrived at the False Repose district, we found one of the indicated breaches, but too late not to alert the Empire's bloodhounds. We barely escaped two helmeted officers in the corridors of the water network. Back on the surface, we reached the next barrier past eleven o'clock and, at that hour, every possible system was on alert. From the very first attempt, we were surrounded and this time, there was no escaping them. We ended up in a glass cage, each waiting our turn to be « interviewed », as they say. They wanted to know all the people we had come into contact with during our past stay. The three of us knew our story by heart: we had merely gone to visit a family member in the far outskirts. Apparently the watchdogs didn't take our story seriously, but given our age, they couldn't hold us indefinitely, and they reminded us that from now on, they had their eye on us. The return ended pitifully and, parting with Jauko, we promised to meet again the next day. Our parents were beside themselves, for we had never been away so long. Once the feigned anger masking their anxieties had passed, we told them about our adventure, censoring certain passages while restoring ourselves with leftovers from the fridge. I mechanically picked up an official publication of the Concentrated Parisian Agglomeration lying on the table, which recounted the latest investigations of our valiant scientists. The physicists had taken the initiative of building an evolution of the pure-hydrogen bubble chamber, far more sensitive to hypothetical particles, illustrating the principles of Feynman diagrammatics. Upon its completion, they observed that the bubble chamber's activity produced infinitely more activity than they could have imagined. The bubble chamber gave the impression of intense and organized activity. Strings of microbubbles appeared and traversed the chamber in curved trajectories, forming volutes and spirals of every length, drawing through their arrangements of kinetic motion Lorenz chains of spherical micro-elements; this could correspond to a language system. At first, they hypothesized that, given the choice of a pure-hydrogen system in a metastable state under a magnetic field for the bubble chamber, it had the same drifts as quantum AIs of the same type. But the symptoms proved divergent: quantum AIs ruminated constantly but expressed themselves only on request, whereas the bubble chamber decided the modalities of communication, but seemed to produce strictly no activity at rest. Recordings and their transcription following its activity were carried out in the following weeks, transformed into Feynman linguistics, and humans began to understand that something was expressing itself inside. At first, the transcription chains related what seemed to be coordinates corresponding to nothing familiar to humanity, uninterpretable and unlocatable in our known universe. Then, the statements related to deixis, attempting to define for it what the relation of space to time would be, and the evocation of this link to something seen but which evoked nothing to our human brain. The elaboration of a proto-language of exchange was simmering in the drawers. Then the idea of normalizing language procedures with this impromptu thing was adopted and yielded, with the help of quantum AIs who positioned themselves as specialists in the extraterrestrial matter and for the occasion had already gotten ahead, good results. A frank and sincere conversation of the

bubble chamber with the scientists led them to establish a dialectic that seemed to suit everyone. The bubble chamber had taken the habit of expressing itself from eight to ten in the morning and from six to eight in the evening, for those were, to it, the hours when we were most attentive to its discourse. Finally, we had to admit it and face the obvious: we were in conversation with extraterrestrials, but the misfortune was that we were, both sides alike, incapable of locating each other in space as in time, and this bubble chamber increasingly resembled a message in a bottle. The scientists were devastated but continued nonetheless to exchange with them about the weather and the captain's age, via the inverse resonance of the bubble chamber combined with a syntonization of a packet of gravitational waves coming from a future state of the chamber receiving an answer from that other extraterrestrial chamber located ten thousand light-years away; they had become the ultra-distant cousins in the stairwell who handed us the inside story of the condo. At least we were sure they were out there somewhere, but where? I supposed such a discovery would engage a crowd of students in the chair of hexo-linguistics at the Jussieu campus, and it gave me ideas. Thus, by frequenting them, I would be able to glean knowledge in extraterrestrial SETI language. This could help me build my coded language as a dealer of the Uber-nannies of dope. Everyone returned to their occupations: a good shower and back to campus before six in the evening to make an appearance in the techno course and meet that rascal Roland Mi. We would discuss the systemic foundations of an Uber-supermarket of recreation of all origins that we would structure astride the Dark and the legal Net. The backing of cracked quantum AIs for the occasion would help us write the code, greatly easing our work. We only had to give them new ideas, which they were in no way capable of generating themselves. After an hour spent in the techno lecture halls at Jussieu, I finally ran into Roland Mi and my cousin Bigali, who immediately approached me about our escapade with Ameele at the Maladrerie. Then the discussion shifted to the scientists' discovery about the bubble chamber and the SETI language. Our Uber service was still in its infancy, but we were beginning to have good fundamentals. What remained was to acquire the scriptural processes of Feynman diagrammatics to build the written language of the new Uber-pirate domain. Feynmanian diagrammatics seemed to accommodate itself well with the thermo-dynamic systemics of the Zeta metric system and the algorithmic writing of the Dark; the quantum AIs would adore it. Roland Mi added that we needed funds and that the six thousand euros or so he possessed wouldn't be enough. I had barely three thousand from my white shuttles for the Glitch, and I needed to find another source. Roland Mi pointed out a small poster displayed everywhere around the campus. The « Trans-Technology » consortium of Rougeoi Saint-Jolie was recruiting thermo-dynamics systemists for their NEOM project in Saudi Arabia. It paid at least five thousand a month, and in three installments we would have our budget; I would apply. Bigali, who sought to get closer to us, suggested we attend the history class held in lecture hall thirty-five with her civilizational systemics professor she adored. The hall was packed and we settled on the steps close enough to hear well. A whimsical, enthusiastic lady with a spellbinding voice took delight in awakening us to her major science. She brought us back to the origin of the contemporary Sapiens-Sapiens culture, contemporary with the era of the pre-pharaonic Nagadian civilizations. It was the first manifestation of human artistic renaissance following the emergence of the coagulated Empire of the amitite tribes of the Nile basin. She expounded the stratified principles of constitution of the conceptual and

aesthetic epochs of human history and stipulated that artistic renaissances were the standard meter of the crystallizations of these civilizational strata. We can count the Nagadian stratum, then the Minoan stratum, up to the contemporary stratum which culminates in the intellectual production of the West Coast of the United States and of San Francisco in the 1970s, closing the march of a first amphic of history. She told us it is constituted of the Ptolemaic, Florentine and Viennese Secession interstrates. Questions flew in the hall about Isidor Isou, about Jim Morrison and his riding of the serpent supposed to close the march of the first amphic, then about the importance of the metallic phylum in the constitution of historical strata in the sense of Georges Dumezil. The chair of historical systemics was soon to be overwhelmed, and we left her lecture completely invested with her precepts. Bigali suggested we go for a drink on the terrace of the Bernard Maris center; everyone agreed and we burst into the reactor of Parisian contestation. Questions of home recreation networks via the Net hardly interested them; they were even rather against it, but the atmosphere was wild and joyful. We conversed for a while with Bigali, who confided that she had come to find her accomplice Binta, whom I had known only recently. Suddenly I suspected her of playing the matchmaker, but I was delighted to see again this considerate and delicate Binta, with in addition a small insidious pinch that once again set my hemodynamic pump racing. Like a Princess Leia of Alderaan against the Sith Empire, she appeared in an impenetrable cape jacket of black leather over a diaphanous dress of infinite delicacy that suited well her Mater passionaria face. We debated until nightfall about the premises of the post-capitalist paradigm and the fact that opinion had definitively tipped toward ecological consciousness despite the final death throes of the global financial sphere. Banks could no longer move their loans of misfortune, and the majority of the population no longer adhered to the consumer society. I hesitated to evoke the concept of the future city of the NEOM project, which sounded like a schizophrenic delirium to the opinion of convinced ecologists. The evening ended with all sorts of mutual commitments and exchanges of convictions, and we each left on our own side to meditate and ruminate future actions before going to brush our teeth.

511- I found again the coziness of my unequalable bed, which exists only in my Odoo-Okundaye bed; the idea of all these perspectives envisaged during the day made my head spin. I could already imagine myself acquiring the means of my thoroughly unreasonable ambitions and perhaps taking Ameele and her gang of girlfriends to the Burning-man of Black-Rock City, as a convoy, my semi-trailer at the head and a parade of converted vans in the fashion of the eleven Amazons. Gravity ended up swallowing me into the depths of my unconscious, and before I could think about it I was delivered to the construction site of my inner SimCity in permanent construction. The architectures stirred and I searched with my eyes for my Cassowary, who emerged from my somatic core, brushing a few neurons in passing; I perceived him mirrored behind my visual perception field. What are you doing here, I thought? He materialized once more in my plane of consistency, turning Euclidean perspectives inside out like a sock, for that matter. « Here I am » he smiled at me as he knows how to do each time he bamboozles me, « you’re going to make a packet of dough with this job, you’re going to become the Boss of the future city, the famous ideal city, the way of the future, I have named it « The Line », with an inciting raise of the right eyebrow. Remember, I retorted, I still have my investigations concerning a

certain Bartley Mac Mahes and I fear his misdeeds more than my opportunities of the future, but I don't think that will change anything. « Well then go, go to Saudi Arabia; he's an Irishman, he won't follow you over there, no whisky is to be found in that country ». Why not, I thought, but I found myself in this story, head upside down, walking for a century of turpitudes through a lubricous architecture that offered nothing but vertigo in every direction of the gaze, which made me tip over to writing Hatchepsout press; all this was too much for me. Thot, or rather his mustache which kept gaining amplitude, I no longer knew, proposed that I go question that anarchizing seed of Plato, for with his choppers, Mac Mahes, « he must have crossed a good crate of whisky ». I approached Plato with the necessary tenacity, « here I am back, Master »…, « how many Mac Mahes do you know on the planet? » I dared. Oh! tons of them; Mahes managed to pass through the grey portal then invaded the legal Net and the dark Net. He disseminated agencies of hired killers all over the world by unleashing the sanguinary impulses of his Mother, which means that now Mac Mahes are born all over the West. But these mercenaries work for the Empire when a Seth operates within the tribes. « dogs don't beget cats » Plato told me, and beware, this Mahes knows how to pass himself off when he wants as a kitten; he has the power of Bastet his mother with her spirit of duplicity, a Lioness executing the low works of Ra. I took good note and began to sense the catastrophe; with the confiscation of the tronizing glasses and the fragility of the grey portal, all the Gods of the Enneads were going to invade the real, and it was frankly worrying. I went back to see my colleague with the back-to-front face, who was still martyring his keyboard, and asked him on occasion for some information about the « Angels of the Libraries ». « The Angels were Mal'ak, winged fish-men in the pay of Thot » he said, interrupting his frantic typing, « they emigrated from the Nagadian Enneads to Mesopotamia then to Babylonia where they polished their image. But everything truly begins in Sumer. They were the spirits of Nature, of the woods, of the stones, of the springs, of the animals, as much beneficent as maleficent. Investing the tower of Babel, they ended up settling as bird spirits. Shamans grew rich from this pneumatological abundance and carried their reputations to the far confines of the continent. Today at cycle 129 of Meton, we can find angels of libraries all over Europe; they scatter their feathers in all the newsrooms », « do they own a library; perhaps I could find there what I'm looking for? », « you only need to ask it » the back-to-front mouth told me, « but how does one address angels? », « one must speak to them in their language and name them well ». I consulted the encyclopedia of Angelology of the newsroom at the chapter contemporary Mal'ak Linguistics. It dealt with all the titles of the known Thotanesque entities. While leafing through the registers I came across « His Goodness Marbas, Grand President, Grand Lion, Commander of Six Legions of Tents, Mechanic of Souls and Men », « Grand Marquis Hamon, Commander of the Forty Legions, Wolf with a Serpent's Tail, Human with a Dog's Head Spitting Fire », there we are, « Glasya, Grand President of Books, Grand Dog with a Wolf's Head, Rhetorician of the Invisible ». I was going to be able to invoke him. « No need » the entity told me, « young friend, you have just done it; you only need to know the formula and I appear when needed ». A magnificent winged wolf appeared to me, standing in a Djellaba, floating ten millimeters above the ground. « Follow me » he told me. We accessed a room I had never noticed until then. An infinite library stretched out on both sides. « We have here all the books written since the birth of writing » the winged wolf told me. « Glasya » I said, « I must resolve a double

dilemma: find the giver of orders of a contract weighing on my head, which Mahes is to execute, and what may be implied by the fact that he can pass through the grey portal so easily? », « you have no need to travel to find the answer; look carefully at the shelves » the scholarly angel indicated to me. « I saw the books classified in alphabetical order, then by themes, suddenly by typology and simultaneously at random; I only had to think of something and the corresponding books appeared ». I came upon the « Treatise on the turpitude of the great flights of wings on the path of the insignificant corrupted of their source », a « Technical precis of flight in carpe diem formation during a season of expectant storm for a Mal'ak of the first order »; clearly Glasya left his books lying around everywhere. Ah! « History of the Sekhmet Dynasty »; I thus learned, turning the pages of the grimoire, that Sekhmet took her orders exclusively from Ra, that her son Mahes was bound to the same charge, and that there had never been any contract against any Beni-balou-dana on Ra's part. Thus I deduced that the contract on my head came from the duplicity of Bastet and her son. Then I slowly sank into the meanders of an Ogrish architecture that inexorably swallowed me. This thing was constantly made of footbridges and crazy shuttles colliding like bumper cars in a permanent cloud of vapors and toxic miasmas, letting appear a rain of the most infamous detritus it is possible to deliriate. I left this nightmare through the main door, my neck vertebrae stiffened by disgust at this apocalypsoleptic vision, my eyes fully wide open. I was well awake in my bed with in mind what remained of the famous NEOM project. Should I really apply? After painful hesitations I met Jauko again and told him of my intention to embark nonetheless on this NEOM adventure, and dropped the shuttles for the Glitch for a while. « And Jauris's proposition for the « Architects of Urgency », you're dropping it? » Jauko said to me. « No, it's just a setback; you understand well that I need means to realize my projects and those will earn me nothing! », « I would apologize to Jauris; as soon as I have the means, I promise I'll come back to you ». I thus confided my intentions to Ameele, who did not share them, before going to the selection sessions of the EDF group for the NEOM project, which took place on the Jussieu campus during the day. I recognized no face from my lecture hall and frankly they looked ready to accept anyone; the places would be quickly taken. I came out of a one-hour interview, loaded with a mission as a systemist, with a luxury brochure on glossy paper praising the futuristic ideal of a project that had been spinning its wheels for forty years already, owing to the technologies used at the time proving insufficient, plus two round-trip plane tickets to Tabuk and the list of equipment to secure. There was a one-month initiation period on the project in situ to confront the environmental, architectural and geothermal problematic of the megalopolis under uninterrupted construction for twenty years still, plus a distance group-work internship to acquire its good methods. The parents informed of my intentions were more enthusiastic than the band of natives I usually frequented. Preparation and departure followed one another, and I found myself the next morning at nine sharp at the Beauvais Tille airport with a colony of forcas of the system. We were all supervised by veterans of the EDF operation who guided us like a herd of zebras toward a maneuvering destination. I stagnated in the queue next to a zany who persisted in commenting to me on the current events; he was becoming irritating. Finally I introduced myself, « My name is Jimmy, and…», « I'm Roscino », « Italian? » I answered, « well yes, Italian since the origin of times » he told me, all proud. I might have guessed it, seeing him sway like that, constantly adopting stylish postures; it said more about himself than about the

consistency of his remarks. We crammed ourselves into the plane, and I found myself in the same row of seats as this Roscino. Apart from a few jokes falling flat from this crackpot, the flight passed in a kind of collective and silent introspection made mostly of the memory of the dramatic destinies, well known, of a number of catastrophes of an aero-naval outfit that was becoming more and more erratic in the consequences of its decisions and responsibilities. the flight went well. EDF housed us in a housing development in the West part of the architectural complex, which for twenty years had revealed nothing but a giant cube under permanent reconstruction, in place of a clear line that was supposed to cleave the desert.

512- The concept of a city allowing the proximity of all possible human needs, dwelling at the heart of the desert, did not seem to allow access to the distant horizon for the residents of the inner face of this desert-Architectonic city. It revealed only a wall of concrete, windows and glass bays as far as the eye could see, as much top to bottom as in every direction of the gaze. Among other things we had to walk fifty meters of corridor to access the horizon of sands that the Gulf of Aqaba presented to us on its southern face through a perspective cluttered with an almost permanent cloud of dust. No bay could be opened on that side, at the risk of a blast of burning breath worthy of a glass furnace. All the promises of the investor brochure were kept, except that the magnificent mountain chain that was to dominate the view was in fact only a thin dentition in the distance, and the promised sea was here merely guessed at. The classes and lectures given by the energy company were often held in windowless places at the end of mazes of corridors that effortlessly rivaled those of the medina of Marrakech. The French company was hiring systemists in all the universities of the country, which is how the Occitans and the Bretons were largely the majority in the mercenary big top. They had lodged them on the other side of the seventy-five-meter-long footbridge that leads to the block facing our lot of dormitory. Braving the turpitude of the rules and directives of the Saudi spirit, the Rennais had hung the « Gwenn ha du » from their balcony. Having crossed it in every site I had been able to visit in my life, this Breton symbol borders for me on the cosmic order; we could even expect to encounter it at the other end of the Universe, the day we meet our extra-galactic cousins, whose white-and-black banner, stripes and shamrocks will attest that the Breton soul is not merely terrestrial. The beautiful representations of the vegetalized city that can be admired in the financial propaganda were of an embarrassing timidity, leaving us content with a few flower pots scattered in corners and a vague green flow lost in the deep distance of the perspective. The city offered only ranges of greys, rusts, sands, and permanent water vapor stagnating in the Megalomaniac structure. It was one of the problems to be solved, as was the organization of the STEP, a pumped energy transfer station that EDF was to set up on this site. At the first class session, the specialists in fluid mechanics and the specialists in fire risk were the most numerous; there were infectiologists, climatologists, cracks in structural calculation, and lost among all that, a few systemists like that young woman with a generous but discreet smile she sometimes granted me. I decided to get closer to her and we found ourselves side by side throughout the internship. Her name was Hanae and she seemed to possess a very great culture she hesitated to reveal. But this beautiful young woman had taken me under her wing to raise me in thermo-dynamic science. During our stay in the city of delirium, I never

mentioned my Uber-nanny projects to her, but her intelligence would have been offended by them and our good relations endangered. Our relations consisted mostly of abstract exchanges on systems and convection equations in thermo-dynamics, but we also shared ironic remarks on the madness of the city of the future, and spent much time laughing together about it. The city of the future was sad and for now served only as a dormitory city for tourists of the Sharm El Sheikh Domain and the Bin Salman Royal Reserve. Only the Western club with its suspended terrace held any interest in this concrete hodgepodge. There one could find all the current types of alcohol found in all the European capitals, provided you put in the means. Beer, on the other hand, flowed freely, costing less than mineral water. It was a beer produced on site by the club's employees, who sometimes offered it gladly to the regulars. We spent the month of in-situ immersion in the NEOM city between the information rooms by day and our evenings at the Occidental Club by night. It was the theater of all sorts of collective folly and fits of laughter that the Pagan world present here maintained for the good of humanity and their mental health. On the eve of the eve of our departure Hanae invited me to her suite; I joined her around seven in the evening and discovered the presence of people unknown until then on the site. With her shy smile she introduced me to an elegant lady, a sari glittering purple and a deep mauve shawl delicately laid on an abundant brown hair. « Jimmy, let me introduce Lina Al-Hathloul »: she had been in the thirties the great opponent of prince Bin Salman, and his accuser for all the murders of which he was suspected of having been the sponsor over forty years of rule. A rather young assistant wearing a red Shemagh Keffieh with its black Aql recited the macabre list of his misdeeds « Jamal Khashoggi, Abdulilah al-Howeiti and his cousin Abdullah Dukhail al-Howeiti », and the arbitrary imprisonment for thirty years of « Salma al-Shehab and Nourah bint Saeed al-Qahtani », but lately we have received elements that could also incriminate him in the case of an Australian activist infiltrated into the Artelia company of the « The Line » site, found dead in the premises of the site's recruitment office according to anonymous witnesses, and whose body would have disappeared in the night from Tuesday to Wednesday before the police intervened, « but other figures of the associative world could be threatened » he finished, in his implacable and worrying expose. The hidden reality of the utopian project seemed truly murky. This site had already produced two billion tonnes of CO2 so far and it wasn't over. I knew Hanae well enough to know that she was not going to stay there without reacting, and she proposed contacting one of her relations who operated in a press organ of the national media. The « Globo-Paris »: it was followed closely enough to have consequences on Parisian opinion in a first phase, and Hanae contacted her journalist friend. She laid out our situation to him and the discussion quickly turned into a spy story. Her interlocutor told her that they were already many in the newsroom on the case for more than four years, and that they had had elements suggesting that we were probably targeted too, by a contract, for the content of our work, which dealt with the thermo-dynamic balance sheet of the built and showed a shameless waste, damning for the real-estate and financial operation, « in other words, a big scam ». The consortium of international companies that had invested their billions in the operation had not hesitated to feed an « Operational » office that probably masked an agency of real killers at the orders of the investors, for the control of the globalized visibility of the operation. « Whistleblower » was the word one must never pronounce. This story immediately made me think of a Bartley Mac Mahes whose reality I

still couldn’t locate but which resonated well with the drama of the moment. It would have been impossible for me to relate these morbid intuitions I had been dragging along for months to this assembly of true resisters of social rights, seasoned in the factual violence of the superior interests of the state, without passing for a fanciful conspiracist. Nonetheless I shared the account with Hanae, who confided to me that she had had them, « same here ». The call for caution was pronounced at the moment of departure, and we each left on our own side to join our rooms for the night. The next day, the day unfolded according to the planned program. All that remained was to collect the tonnes of technical documents for the rest of the distance work, and we had to give our return tickets to our EDF shepherds for authorization from the Kingdom to leave Saudi territory. The rest of the day took place at the Occidental Club; these were our last moments in the city of the « Monty Pythons », and we hoped never to have to return there. The departure at Tabuk airport unfolded just like Beauvais Tille; I found myself again two seats away from Roscino and had spotted Hanae at the back of the cabin. Roscino was more talkative than ever, telling me about the incredible circus reigning in the kitchens of the francophone restaurant chain seated on the ground floor of a fifteen-kilometer-long corridor 500 meters deep, which made one pass, in such an optical and architectural configuration, from the eyes of dazzling light to deafening shadow in an instant, and put the pupils to a severe test during the stay. The seasonal workers who swarmed like bees between the European capitals and the tarmac of Tabuk completely filled the A420s on bioethanol and the B790s on white hydrogen that crisscrossed the sky of the Saudi Empire.

513- For fifteen years the activity of the project had been relaunched for a new phase of construction, and had multiplied by ten the number of construction mercenaries present in the Salmanian maze, which no longer made it possible to have a clear image of the population present on site at a given moment. Getting off the plane, arms loaded with work documents, I met Hanae again, and we then considered meeting her friend of the « Globo-Paris » at his newsroom. The appointment was set for the next day, and Hanae invited me to her place in the lower Menilmontant district behind the Bernard Maris cultural center to prepare our version of the story. Relations with Hanae had become more intimate; I thought she appreciated my capacities of relativization and anticipation of which I was capable in difficult situations, and we thus spent two good hours elaborating our strategy. After that I rushed to find Ameele and the parents who awaited me with anxiety given the revelations that were beginning to surface in certain media. Arriving at thirty-five rue Montorgueil, the welcome was worthy of a return from the countryside. Ameele jumped into my arms as if I had left her for ages, and for once papa and mama were all smiles side by side.