
What is to be done ?

Let's start with some questions.

Ponder the future and wallow in despair ? Or seize the present better in order to change what is to come ?

It is the alternative that concludes a much quoted book, whose pages have yellowed and been repeatedly dog-eared. Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (which was published in French and English forty years ago, two years after it appeared in Italian). Maybe turning to its well-worn pages can be of help in dark times like the ones in which this 6th issue of JSSJ is being published ?

Shall we listen to Kublai Khan « It is all useless, if our final landing place can only be the infernal city » ?

Or shall we agree with Marco Polo : « The hell of the living is not something yet to come », it is « the hell we inhabit on a daily basis, that we make by being together. There are two ways not to suffer from it. The first comes easy to many : to accept hell, become a part of it to the point they do not see it any more. The second is risky and requires attention and constant learning : to look for and know how to recognize who and what, in the middle of hell, is not hell, and to give it space, and make it last » ?

Our theme for this issue, contemporary cities and neoliberalism, and the questions they raise in terms of spatial justice, or spatial injustice, places us on Marco Polo's side. Even as growing exclusion and inequality are facts acknowledged by all, we are indignant, but also critical: critical in the sense of questioning (« attention, and constant learning »), researching (« to look for and know how to recognize »), and trying to make a difference (« to give it space, and make it last »).

Our aim is therefore unchanged, in a journal carried along by a diverse group of academics—academics who don't exactly play along with the current rules of academia. Our academic world does not escape the general dominance of what is called « neoliberalism » and we too are under pressure to quantify, compete, become bankable, change, rush, and we seem to spend always more time on useless tasks, at the expense of the really valuable aspects of our jobs. Our small world keeps asking itself whether to play along with the new rules, or defy them ? And what are the implications of defying them ? Everyone is entitled to their own answer, and the members of the group that has been working on the *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* journal are bound to have different answers and make different choices.

French universities are undergoing a major transformation, even as the regional map of our country is being redrawn, and several of the members of the board thought this editorial should address their worry, their criticisms, or even their anger. The question seemed too important, and too difficult to deal with here, and we shall take the time to discuss these issues in depth before writing about them in the Public Space section.

We wish for this journal to remain a space of freedom and diversity, constrained only by our ethical principles as scholars and our efforts to combine a social relevance and academic standards. We share the belief that both are essential, as long as relevance

is not taken to mean applicability, immediacy, or profitability. That is therefore our commitment, at odds with the current context, in some ways, to keep operating a project based on a free gift, donated time and space to write.