Tourism as a Technique for Planetary Urbanization

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to provide an insight on the role of tourism as a tool for landscape transformation and as a technique of planetary urbanization. More specifically, the goal is to show how alpine tourism transforms a territory thereby, urbanizing it and affecting processes of urbanization locally and regionally affecting the hinterland in a variety of ways. Finally by using Switzerland and its unique alpine urban model as a case on point, I aim to demonstrate how a new transformation is taking place in the village of Andermatt in the Uri canton, to prove my hypothesis; *tourism as a technique of planetary urbanization.* In order to carry my analysis I will start with section (1) *"Urban-Rural Divide? The Question of the 'Urban' in Theory Today"*, in order to provide an analysis on the theoretical debate of planetary urbanization. Then I will proceed to section (2) *"Preamble: Switzerland Provides a Clue"*, in order to introduce the research question, followed by section (3) *"Switzerland: A Case in the Urbanization of the Hinterland"* to highlight what unique characteristics in the urban character of the swiss hinterland are contributing to the planetary debate. Finally, in section (4) *"Tourism as a Tool for Planetary Urbanization"* I will focus on the case of Andermatt, its current transformation along with the regional effects as part of my research study, to conclude with section (5) *"The Sublime"* to provide a historical understating of why the urbanization of the alpine territory became relevant in the first place, as part of the aesthetic of the sublime in Germany in the 18th century. It is my hope that this research will contribute to the overall planetary *problématique* and the role of tourism as a tool for urbanization and its effects on such processes in general.

Urban-Rural Divide? The Question of the "Urban" in Theory Today

The "urban" is an intellectual construction, but one which carries with it important consequences nonetheless. Traditionally, the "urban-rural" dichotomy is based on the assumption that urban areas provide specific lifestyles for inhabitants, which are usually of a higher standard than those found in rural territories.[1] However, the traditional definition of the urban is no longer relevant, thus eroding the supposed simplicity of the urban-rural contrast.

In recent decades, the distinction has become increasingly blurred, largely due to factors such as: rapid shifts in the geographic distribution of labor; the transformation of the industrial sector; and the infiltration of technology in agriculture and livestock management. Transformations such as these have affected both the real processes of urbanization, extending them beyond their traditional metropolitan boundaries, as well as our conceptual frameworks for interpreting these processes.[2]

In order to redress the issues surrounding our traditional analytical frameworks, various scholars and organization have tried to develop new metrics for identifying the urban-rural dive. One such example is the UN's statistic division, which has attempted to distinguish between the urban and the rural way of life on the basis of the relative degree of population concentration. However, despite the fact that the rural and urban (or perhaps more accurately "the metropolitan") entail crucial differences in the structure of everyday life, the density of concentration is no longer a sufficient comparative measure. One of the main reasons this metric doesn't hold is that the organizational and metabolic balance of many densely populated areas depend heavily on industrial processes of production taking place in the countryside, predominantly in the form of industrial agriculture and forestry. Thus, we need to further examine the role of the countryside in defining the urban.[3]

Undoubtedly, the definition of the urban has for some time been a question of debate. The urbanization *problématique* is often addressed by the tendency to simply conflate the city with the urban, ignoring the supplicant role of the rural altogether. However, such a view was directly questioned as early as 1961 by Lewis Mumford in his *The City in History*. In this text, Mumford provides a clear conceptual analysis of the processes of city building and their culmination in the organization of today's urban societies. Mumford uses the German word *Abbau* (literally "un-building") to describe the mutually constituted processes of "de-building and up-building."[4] With striking resemblance to the metabolic processes of anabolism (the building up of energy) and catabolism (the breaking down of matter for the release of energy), Mumford contends that the process of up-building takes the form of assimilation, separation, and expansion of the environment,

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[1] "United Nations Statistics Division - Demographic and Social Statistics." United Nations. Accessed April 21, 2018. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/densurbmethods.htm.
[2] Brenner, Neil. "The Hinterland Urbanised?" *Architectural Design* 86, no. 4 (2016). doi:10.1002/ad.2077: 123.
[3] "United Nations Statistics Division - Demographic and Social Statistics." United Nations. Accessed April 21, 2018. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/densurbmethods.htm.
[4] Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961: 238.

which drives the economic order (*anabolism*). By contrast, the process of de-building entails a rapid transformation and extraction of the resources of the hinterland, or what is effectively humanity's exploitation of nature in service of societal and economic prosperity (*catabolism*).[5]

In concert with Mumford's description, Melvin Webber points to the expansion of urban infrastructures beyond the borders of mere cities as early as 1963. In *The Urban Place and the Nonplace Urban Realm,* Webber suggests that the notion of the city will soon shift due to the revolutionary increase in the speed of information transfer made possible by new communications technologies. Webber even uses the simile of a giant telephone switchboard spreading over the global when describing this transformation. By appealing to mass-scale communication systems and networks instead of roads, housing, and bridges, Webber indicated what would become the proliferation of types of urban infrastructure beyond what is reducible to the cityscape itself.[6]

In perhaps the most well-known challenge to "urban as city" paradigm, Henri Lefebvre in his book *The Urban Revolution* hypothesizes that society is engaged in a constant process of urbanization.[7] He goes on to suggest that the urban – short for urban society – is not physical, though it has a form. According to Lefebvre, urbanization is best conceived as a process of mutation; that is to say, industrial society effectively translates to the urban society due to the processes of urbanization being collapsed into processes of economic-production. Still more, in his essay "Toward an Urban Strategy," Lefebvre argues that the result of this economic shift is the emergence of a new form of sociality, which he calls "everydayness," which carries with it a whole complex of new issues that necessarily take place within the milieu of urbanization. Contemporary society, thinks Lefebvre, seeks urban democracy, while state power and economic laws seem to neglect the optimal uses of resources by relying too heavily on technology and science. While his hypothesis is that society is completely urbanized, his thesis lies in the way we begin to understand this transition; or what is an epistemological shift toward understanding of contemporary society in terms of its degree of urbanization.[8]

This understanding of the nature of the urban sheds light on the problematic dichotomy between city and countryside, revealing their crucial interdependency – which is largely economic. This

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[5] Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961: 450-453. For a more contemporary discussion of the use of creative destruction for processes of urbanization, see David Harvey, who, using the metaphor of an omelet, writes: "You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs, the old adage goes, and it is impossible to create new social configurations without in some way superseding or even obliterating the old." in *Paris, Capital of Modernity.* New York: Routledge, 2006: 1.

[6] "Melvin Webber and the 'Nonplace Urban Realm'." ACCESS Magazine. May 30, 2017. Accessed May 02, 2018. https://www.accessmagazine.org/special-issue/melvin-webber-and-the-nonplace-urban-realm/.

[7] Lefebvre, Henri. "Urban Form" in *The Urban Revolution.* Tr. Bononno, Robert. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003: 115-133. Additionally, Konstantinos Doxiades discusses the nature of human settlements and predicts, in 1968, the formation of an inevitable global city by 2100. The city of the future, goes by the name Ecumenopolis. In essence, future urban areas (megalopolises in his terms) will merge into an endless global city as a result of population growth, rapid urbanization and the expansion of our current transportation networks that will create an interconnected web of human settlements. See: Doxiadēs, Kōnstantinos Apostolou. "Ecumenopolis: Tomorrow's City". Britannica Book of the Year 1968, Traffic Quarterly, v.17, no.3, July 1963: 439-457.

[8] Lefebvre, Henri. "Toward an Urban Strategy" in *The Urban Revolution.* Tr. Bononno, Robert. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003: 135-150.

interdependence is economic in that far and remote rural territories are being intensively operationalized by Capitalist processes of industrialization, the fruits of which are then directed to dense zones of consumption, which are typically cities. For example, Bolivia's salt flats are being radically urbanized through the introduction of Lithium extraction pools and processing facilities, whose purpose is the transportation of resources to large industrial centers to be converted into commodified goods. It is thus evident that the cycle of capital production, accumulation, and consumption strongly relies on these often forgotten landscapes, which in turn further feeds (by means of a positive feedback loop) the processes of urbanization at the global scale.[9]

All of this amounts to a demonstration of the irreducible interdependency between dense zones of consumption (often in the form of cities) and the operationalized resource landscapes that feed them. In fact, so closely interwoven are the rural and the city that Neil Brenner has questioned the very foundations of the urbanization debate:

> From the original dispossession of erstwhile rural populations through territorial enclosure to the intensification of land use, the construction of large scale infrastructural investments and the progressive industrialisation of hinterland economies to support extraction, cultivation, production and circulation, the growth of the city has been directly facilitated through colossal, if unevenly developed industrial and environmental upheavals across the planet. In this sense, the rural, the countryside and the hinterland have never been reducible to a mere backstage 'ghost acreage' that supports the putatively front-stage operations of large population centres. Whatever their demographic composition, […] the spaces of the non-city have been continuously operationalised in support of city-building processes throughout the global history of capitalist uneven development. Such spaces are, therefore, as strategically central to the processes of creative destruction that be swiftly superseded.[10]

If Brenner is right, then the assumption that the city center is a synonym for the *urban* is not only unsatisfying, but in fact misleading in its falsity. This is because, from the very beginning of the industrialization of the city (and perhaps even the entire history of human settlement-making) the hinterland zones outside of the boundaries of cities have been configured to serve as a backbone (or, "back-of-the-house") enabling a network of operations that allow city populations to thrive.[11]

In today's context of discussions of the effects of planetary urbanization, travel is one such case of an infrastructural complex that brings all corners of the world in close proximity. This reveals the fundamentally relational character of the hinterland-city dialectic wherein today any geographical location in the world, like that of an alpine territory, can become interconnected with city centers, regardless of a locations topographic. In other words, the rhythms of planetary urbanization are

[9] Brenner, Neil. "The Hinterland Urbanised?" *Architectural Design* 86, no. 4 (2016). doi:10.1002/ad.2077: 126.
[10] *Ibid.* 123.
[11] *Ibid.* 124.

active at every scale and in every territory on Earth.[12] In order to show that this is the case, I take up the development of Switzerland's remote Alpine territories as a case in point.

Preamble: Switzerland Provides a Clue

Given the framework developed above, Switzerland's urban model offers a paradigmatic case for studying the role of the hinterland in the processes of urbanization today. This is due in part to the fact that Switzerland's alpine territories do not directly depend on large metropolitan centers for their economic livelihood.[13] Rather, these Alpine other zones – colloquially identified by the phrase "fallow lands" – are regions largely detached from urban networks and their metropolitan economies.[14] Given the relatively unique discontinuity between Switzerland's patchwork of mountain economies (i.e. their fallow lands) and the centralized urban economies, it seems to me that Switzerland is an ideal site for exploring the emerging "paradox" of a hinterland that continues to expand its processes of urbanization – largely in the form of tourist infrastructures – while at the same time suffering from significant levels of depopulation.

The unique character of this Swiss paradox began during the 1980's, when significant numbers of native Switzerlanders began leaving the countryside for the nation's metropolitan centers, resulting in a trend of mass depopulation in the countryside. Economic decline and recession were – and continue to be – of significant consequence for these territories. But while the countryside is shrinking demographically (and this is the paradox), these rural landscapes remain preserved, with some of them even continuing to grow, largely on the basis of government and private investment.[15] This raises the question: *Why is it that the Switzerland invests and encourages investment in the many large-scale infrastructural and technological projects that maintain these largely de-populated and now "fallow" alpine landscapes?*

In order to answer this question, I start with a basic theoretical clue revealed by this situation in Switzerland; namely, *that depopulation does not always equate to de-urbanization.* In fact, one could say that the rural is becoming more urbanized through the mobilization of highly engineered infrastructures of preservation, many of which are put in place to guard against the extreme climatic and weather conditions in these rural areas which result in conditions such as landslides, immense snowfall, and water and flood related events.[16] One possible explanation that emerges from this is that the tourist industry is one of the main drivers for such maintenance. This maintenance facilitates the continued flow of tourists into many of these remote territories. Tourists flock to many of these remote, picturesque Swiss villages, many of which have taken on the character of a theme park in order to become a commodity for this touristic consumption. Given the emergence of this condition, this

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[12] Brenner, Neil. and Schmid, Christian. "Planetary Urbanisation" in *Urban Constellations.* Edt. by Gandy, Matthew. Berlin: Jovis-Verl., 2011: 12.

[13] Schmid, Christian. "Theory" in *Switzerland - an Urban Portrait* Introduction. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005: 186-192.

[14] "The Alps" in *Switzerland - an Urban Portrait* Materials. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005: 876-886.

[15] Schmid, Christian. "Theory" in *Switzerland - an Urban Portrait* Introduction. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005: 214.

[16] Meili, Marcel. "Lovely Swiss Countryside: Myth and Reality in the Urban Topography" in *Landscape Architecture in Mutation: Essays on Urban Landscape.* Zürich: Gta, 2005: 148.

investigation is concerned with studying the transition of the Swiss countryside from its *traditional* rural character to its now *tourist-oriented, theme-park-like urbanized* character. My hope is that this investigation will contribute to the ongoing theoretical debate surrounding the processes of planetary urbanization by showing the importance of tourist infrastructure in this process.

Switzerland: A Case in the Urbanization of the Hinterland

In 1955, a manifesto developed by collective group of urban sociologists, architects, and journalists entitled *Achtung: die Schweiz* ["Attention: Switzerland"] proposed a new organizational urban model for the promotion of social transformation. The manifesto argued for the creation of decentralized nodes of concentration in an effort to moderate urban growth in emerging Swiss cities. The goal was to achieve economic and political sovereignty for the confederation of Switzerland as a whole. The basic spatial character of this urban model was based on the notion of a polycentric distribution of urban agglomerations that, collectively, would form one large-scale network of metropolitan centers.[17]

This proposal is indicative of Switzerland's urban organizational model today, which relies heavily on collective collaboration between all of its regional territories. Along these lines, urban scholar Christian Schmid, in his *Switzerland: An Urban Portrait*, defines metropolitan regions "as areas of urban concentration with a high degree of international networking and reach, [acting as] nodes within the global network of exchange and communication."[18] These networks control the flows of trade, production, capital, as well as cultural, social, and migration patterns. Additionally, in the age of globalization, such metropolitan centers tend to transform themselves into centers of global capital concentration. As such, the phrase "world cities" has become a characterization of these sites of agglomeration, since they now serve as attraction mechanisms for global capital flows, as well as attractive nodes for domestic and international tourists and travelers.[19]

In contrast to these world cities, "quiet zones" (i.e. territories that show minimal impacts of urbanization) are often detached from urban metropolitan networks. The impact of these zones in Switzerland is primarily regional, if not entirely local, as their main source of capital is agriculture.[20] However, "alpine resorts" serve as a separate category, entirely different from quiet zones, the networks linking cities, and metropolitan centers in general. These alpine resorts are largely dependent on the tourist industry for their survival; a dependence which drives the commodification of the landscape in order to generate income.[21]

Interestingly, these alpine resorts serve as urban centers only temporarily, since their population density is primarily affected by the temporality of seasonal travel. The urban character of these

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[17] Schmid, Christian. "Theory" in *Switzerland - an Urban Portrait* Introduction. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005: 186-187.
[18] *Ibid.* 198. Bracketed comment added.
[19] *Ibid.* 200.
[20] *Ibid.* 209-210.
[21] *Ibid.* 212.

resorts becomes evident by way of their contrast to the high altitude, topographically remote (island-like) territories in which they sit. Such landscapes are often susceptible to a variety of dangerous weather conditions. This is why these zones often have highly-integrated infrastructures for landscape preservation, as well as trans-national highways and high-tech railway systems not unlike those found in highly populated city centers. (In fact, one of the longest tunnels in the world cuts directly through the mountains in the Alps.) In short, the highly engineered character of these landscapes makes alpine resorts both easily accessible and safely connected to larger urban zones.[22]

But while it is the case that these alpine tourist regions have more recently experienced a boom, the same tourist industry was in decline from the 1980's up to the early 2000's. Depopulation of these regions due to emigration into cities and metropolitan centers drove unemployment with general economic recession soon following. As such, several regions within these alpine landscapes suffered from a decline of the ski resort industry and/or not belonging to any network of urban development. Thus, most of these areas have become marginal, thus turning into what is known as "fallow lands".[23]

Of these fallow lands, the largest is located in the St. Gotthard region and is referred to as Switzerland's "central fallow land". This area has two claimed disadvantages: (1) it lacks the potential for touristic development due to limited ski and sports infrastructures; and, (2) it lacks the glamourous scenery of the Matterhorn region or St. Moritz, and therefore has little to no pull on tourists. Despite the territory being located on the transitory axis of the largest rail tunnel in the world, the landscapes of this region are being passed, leaving neglected their picturesque beauty and developmental potential.[24] In effect, what we see here is the simultaneous depopulation *and* "infrastructuralization" of these fallow landscapes. But with this influx of infrastructure, there comes too the possibility of re-purposing these landscapes in order to attract tourists. It is this possibility that I detail in the next section.

Tourism as a Tool for Planetary Urbanization

"How can a village that depopulates, grow and multiply at the same time?"
                                                                                    – Rem Koolhaas, 2012

In his manifesto on the countryside, Rem Koolhaas reveals the need to reconsider the way we think about these often-neglected landscapes. He emphasizes our ignorance to the fact that these spaces are key drivers of the rapid transformation that affects our cities. He observes that while places such as traditional Swiss villages are shrinking in population, they are simultaneously expanding and multiplying in terms of their urban character.[25]

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[22] Meili, Marcel, "Lovely Swiss Countryside: Myth and Reality in the Urban Topography" in *Landscape Architecture in Mutation: Essays on Urban Landscape.* Zürich: Gta, 2005: 148.
[23] *Ibid,* 214.
[24] *Ibid,* 214,216.
[25] "Menu. Rem Koolhaas Sees the Future in the Countryside." Accessed May 02, 2018.
http://www.theworldin.com/edition/2018/article/14595/rem-koolhaas-sees-future-countryside.

Andermatt is a small village in the Canton (*i.e.* county) of Uri within the Swiss Confederation. It is located at the southern axis of the St. Gotthard rail tunnel and belongs in the so-called "central fallow land". In *Switzerland: An Urban Portrait*, Anna Schindler, *et al.*, report:

> Many hotels, funiculars, and ski lifts have been suffering a slow decline. The prospect of substantial repairs or renovations can spell the end of a hotel or a small ski area. […] Whereas top resorts like St. Moritz, Davos, Zermatt and Grindelwald are developing into specialized global centers, regions on the other end of the scale, like Andermatt and Obergoms, already number among the alpine fallow lands.[26]

However, while such may have been the case when the book was written in 2005, currently Andermatt is undergoing a moment of rapid re-urbanization. This new transformation is due to the development of the village into a tourist-oriented resort destination. But until 2001, Andermatt was just a small military village, its primary source of livelihood originating from the services provided to the military and its people. After 2001, though, gradually the military reduced its presence in the region.[27] This resulted in severe consequences such as economic recession and emigration to Switzerland's larger urban centers. As a result, Andermatt shrunk significantly both demographically and economically.[28]

In 2005 a London-based company purchased a portion of the military's land property for development. This tourism-oriented "urban" project will reach completion in 2022 and it will include 6 five-star hotels, 500 apartments, 28 exclusive chalets and an 18-hole golf course.[29] Since the company began construction, the village has been gradually transforming from a rural traditional military village to a now urbanized leisure-scape for the consumption of tourists. As a result, the village has not only repopulated (the local population in 2017 was 1,354 versus 1,282 in 2000) but it also created job opportunities, with the total number of jobs in 2015 being 1,117, versus 783 in 2001.[30] Additionally, there has been a significant increase in overnight stays, with 97,020 overnight stays in 2017, versus 63,081 in 2000 in Andermatt.[31] "Andermatt Swiss Alps," the name of the *urban* development project, has also had an impact beyond the boundaries of the Andermatt municipality property. All of this indicates that tourism, as a tool for urbanization, in fact affects not only the local landscape but also the regional and the intercantonal balance economically, demographically, and programmatically.

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[26] "Alpine Resorts" in *Switzerland: An Urban Portrait* (Introduction). Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005: 916.
[27] Information as a kind contribution by the "Andermatt Swiss Alps" development project
[28] "Exclusive Real Estate in the Heart of the Swiss Alps." Exklusive Immobilien Im Herzen Der Schweizer Alpen - Andermatt Swiss Alps. Accessed May 04, 2018. http://www.andermatt-swissalps.ch/en/.
[29] "Exclusive Real Estate in the Heart of the Swiss Alps." Exklusive Immobilien Im Herzen Der Schweizer Alpen - Andermatt Swiss Alps. Accessed May 04, 2018. http://www.andermatt-swissalps.ch/en/.
[30] Data contribution by the Uri Canton Administration
[31] *Ibid.*

However, Andermatt's rehabilitation required the approval of several of Uri's local governing bodies. For example, changes in land-use regulations were necessary, such as the exclusion of Andermatt from the recently established "second-home regulation," which forbids the construction of second-homes in excess of 20% of the municipality's local housing. Andermatt is excluded from this regulation until 2030.[32] While one of the reasons for the decline of the countryside was the unlimited and unregulated second home construction in various alpine regions, that turned villages into ghost towns, landscapes that became urbanized without revenue and benefit for the local community, for Andermatt Swiss Alps, the goal is to re-establish the village with regulated construction, and create benefits for the locals by turning the resort into a year round destination, that will eliminate the unused second homes.[33] Additionally, the project only became possible with the aid of several intercantonal initiatives, which were started to rehabilitate the neighboring St. Gotthard region.[34] This intercantonal collaboration has also lead to the development of brand new ski infrastructure, connecting Andermatt (Uri Canton) to the nearby village of Sedrum in Grisons Canton. Similarly, changes in the land-use of Andermatt have created nodes of specialized concentration within the wider Uri Canton.

Furthermore, a strong ambition for the development of Andermatt included not only the ambition to turn the landscape into a tourist destination but also to turn the village into a friendly work environment for the younger generation to start businesses.[35] In fact, since construction commenced in 2011, Andermatt has seen a significant influx in the number of young residents, primarily between the ages of 25-50.[36] Employment has also increased from 783 employees in 2001 to 1,117 today.[37] While the town of Altdoft (the capital of Uri) has long been the proverbial "*Mecca*" of Uri's industrial production, Andermatt is fast becoming the "*Mecca*" of leisure and recreation in Uri. In fact, of the 20 municipalities in Uri, Andermatt alone accounts for a quarter of the annual overnight stays.[38] In addition, changes have been observed in real estate speculation and pricing in Uri as a result of housing development in Andermatt.

All of this makes Andermatt an interesting case study among alpine resort development. While typical Alpine resorts act as national and international centers of activity during peak seasons (primarily during the winter months), they tend to become more largely vacant during the off-seasons. However, Andermatt is operational on a year-round basis. Thus, Andermatt represents an effort to break the pattern of a primarily winter activity Alpine destination, becoming instead a year-round node of activity, tourist and otherwise. This is largely achieved by offering a variety of programmatic activities in both the winter and summer seasons. In the winter, Andermatt serves a skiing leading destination; while golf-related activities are popular in the summer. Both skiing and

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[32] "Exclusive Real Estate in the Heart of the Swiss Alps." Exklusive Immobilien Im Herzen Der Schweizer Alpen - Andermatt Swiss Alps. Accessed May 04, 2018. http://www.andermatt-swissalps.ch/en/.
[33] Information as a kind contribution by the "Andermatt Swiss Alps" development project.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] Data contribution by the Uri Canton Administration
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*

golfing require significant transformation of the landscape, primarily in the form of infrastructural projects that result in the urbanization of the territory.

More generally then, Andermatt serves an example of how tourism is being used as a tool for planetary urbanization. But, we must also consider that it is not the drive to urbanize that motivates the expansion of urban infrastructures in these remote locations. Rather, there has to be a reason or reasons that tourists would want to see and experience remote locations, such as Andermatt. Thus, what is necessary here is an understanding of the underlying cultural and historical context that led to a point where people decided that it made a certain amount of sense to venture up into the mountains. *Why would anyone find it appealing to play golf in a remote corner of the Alps? What is it that led to this landscape being viewed as a location that is at once serene, yet dramatic enough to warrant the allocation of so many resources just for the chance to experience it?* The answer, I claim, is *the sublime*.

The Sublime

A unique combination of nature and technologies of highly engineered infrastructures have shaped present day Alpine geographies into the popular tourist destinations they have become. *But was it simply nature or engineering that gave the mountains their allure?* Something had to happen in the minds of people for such a thing to come about. This was the emergence of the notion of the sublime in the 18th century in the German speaking world. And it was no less a figure than Immanuel Kant who gave us what is now perhaps the sublime its most influential articulation. In *the Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant describes the sublime as follows:

> [T]rue sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the one who judges, not in the object in nature, the judging of which occasions this disposition in it. And who would want to call sublime shapeless mountain masses towering above one another in wild disorder with their pyramids of ice, or the dark and raging sea, etc.? But the mind feels itself elevated in its own judging if, in the consideration of such things, without regard to their form, abandoning itself to the imagination and to a reason which, although it is associated with it entirely without any determinate end, merely extends it, it nevertheless finds the entire power of the imagination inadequate to its ideas.[39]

In other words, for Kant, it is not that the mountains harbor within themselves a form so beautiful that the human mind is incapable of grasping it. Rather, it is precisely when we are unable to fathom the content of an idea produced by reason alone that we experience the sublime. As philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard, in his influential book *The Postmodern Condition* articulates it, the Kantian experience of the sublime occurs "when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if

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[39] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Trs. P. Guyer & E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 139-140; *Kant's gesammelte Schriften, Vol. 5*: 256.

only in principle, come to match a concept."[40] Lyotard goes on to describe Kant's notion of the sublime as "a strong and equivocal emotion: it carries both pleasure and pain […], in it pleasure derives from pain."[41] Lyotard here perhaps provides us a clue to our question.

What is it, then, about the Alps that would lead one to derive an experience of pleasure from that of pain? It is perhaps the otherwise rugged and harsh conditions of the mountains that provides the criteria of pain. And if we fuse this with the figure of the Grand Tour, a newly formed tourist culture that emerged in the 18th Century, we might start to see the ideological conditions that gave rise to the eventual development and installation of infrastructures that gets tourists comfortably into these otherwise remote and dangerous locations.

Building upon both Kant and Lyotard's description of the sublime, then, we might say that is this unique combination of a desire to travel to remote and rugged landscapes in order to experience something which is beyond comprehension that led, at least in part, to the formation of what we today call "Alpine tourism". Thus Andermatt, as an up and coming destination for just this kind of tourism, serves both as a contemporary example of the effect of this ideology as well as a symptom of today's planetary urbanization *problématique* — a symptom revealing that tourism is inextricably linked to today's processes of planetary urbanization.

To conclude, while the future is still unknown, it is at least clear that as The Andermatt Swiss Alps project gradually reaches the competition of its world-class ski resort development, the project has managed to drastically mobilize and transform the regional landscape in Uri using tourism as a kind of prophesy whose effects are both economic and social, extending beyond the boundaries of the very territory in which it sits.

For a visual analysis of Andermatt's urban transformation please visit:
https://andermattintransition.myportfolio.com/

[40] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Trs. P. Guyer & E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 139-140; *Kant's gesammelte Schriften, Vol. 5*: 78.
[41] Lyotard, J. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trs. G. Bennington & B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984: 77.

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