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CRITICAL STUDIES NOTES: ART, BECOMING AND PARTICIPATION #13

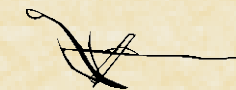
Euarda Neves, Nuno Rodrigues and Susana Caló

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Eduarda Neves, Nuno Rodrigues and Susana Caló

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INTRODUCTION

Eduarda Neves, Nuno Rodrigues and Susana Caló

Critical Studies: Art, Becoming and Participation marks the launch of the Visual Arts and Critical Studies Group, recently formed within the scope of the Arnaldo Araújo Research Centre (CEAA).

The book seeks to rehearse what may become, in the next future, a *Brute Theory*, whose territories of action remain under definition but whose company we wish to keep along future trajectories. As the singular is a collective, in this publication dispersion overrides the search for any type of unity.

Brute Theory, as a pocket of resistance to current models of academic domination anchored in profitable, efficient and, as repeatedly stated, competitive research, proposes precarious dynamics, such as risk and drift.

Therefore, and taking into account the following presuppositions:

1 - In *Art and Utopia. The Sirens' lesson*, possible relationships between artistic practice and the concepts of Utopia, Heterotopia and Dystopia are proposed. Within this context, art is perceived as a singular space of resistance and called upon in its heterotopic dimension. This also involves reflecting upon the questionable approach of the Vatican to contemporary art and the resulting, usually dystopian implications, such as the Holy See's representation at the 55th Venice Biennale.

2 – in the text *Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City)*, the author's artistic programme is grasped as a political and paradigmatic strategy. Considering the reading developed by Walter Benjamin around Edgar Allan Poe's work *The Man of the Crowd*, this strives to conceive the city as a potential space for trans-subjectivity and for the limitless explorations of the *flâneur* through a critical approach to the work *Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City)*. Between Baudelaire and Poe, the *flâneur* and the man of crime, *Lost in the City* draws combinations, deviations and dispersions.

3 – During the 1960s and 1970s the relationship between spectator and artwork underwent considerable transformations as the modernist notions of aesthetic experience, authorship and objecthood were critically dismantled.

In *Feed-back Loop: from Perception to Brain-time* and *The Screw: Between Wearing and Watching* Nuno Rodrigues analyses, respectively, Dan Graham's *Present Continuous Past(s)* and Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolés* highlighting the heteronomous dimension that underpins this critical endeavour.

4 – Following a careful exploration of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-minor, and its development vis-à-vis the relationship to the axiomatics of capital in the form of the problem of the *minority*, *Becoming Minor, Space, Politics and Emancipation* proposes thinking on the concept of minor vis-à-vis issues of space and territory, as a practice of resistance in articulating both a micro and a macro-politics while warning against the dangers of mistaking minor for small, independent or marginal. The working hypothesis here states that a struggle for spaces of existence is a struggle for life and that defending the right to a territory also involves defending the right to participate in the invention of a world.

5 – In *Masoch, From the Figure to the Problem*, literary production is portrayed as the power to open up spaces enabling new human dimensions to emerge. In *Masoch*, Deleuze conveys how literary production entails the creation of worlds that exceed pre-existing clinical concepts and reach beyond mere biographical projection. This essay explores the exercise of literature as something that proceeds according to an opening to the world or a 'becoming-world' of the biographical.

Brute Theory seeks out conceptual approaches to authors whose programs ensue from an extreme necessity. Only those that remind us of the cynicism of Diogenes in which critique, polemics and courage constitute true sovereignty.

Eduarda Neves
Nuno Rodrigues
Susana Caló

What is astonishing is that it is in the field of aesthetics, long night in which all cats are grey, that the famous excellence of the people in general is spouted. Let us be consistent. Why is the physics of the people not excellent? Why is its biology not most excellent? Why is its historical overview not exceedingly lucid? And of course nobody takes their consistency to the point of declaring that the famous "people in general" is more excellent than Einstein, Claudel Bernard or Marx, but if we move to the realm of art... The more primitive, more feet-on-the-ground, more instinctive, the better. It's a whole criticism making use of these words, as aesthetic concepts, a whole criticism-symbol of a resigned culture¹.

ART AND UTOPIA

Ever since Thomas More, the notion of utopia has activated surprising imaginaries and idealized descriptions. A recurring theme within several fields, particularly those of philosophy and political and social theory, utopia, whose programs know no ideological boundaries, projects visions of new worlds, of a future beforehand.

As we know, art's territory has not escaped utopia's purifying temptation. We would even say that it has projected it as *The best of worlds*, where the *Beauty* and *Goodness* pair assumed itself as an aesthetic-moral warranty certificate. The History of Art, of Aesthetics and of Criticism offer us multiple sophisticated examples of utopian aspirations and promethean mystifications about art and the artist.

Thinking art and utopia. We are certain that art does not belong to the domain of utopia if, with it we want to make present approximations of future times, ideal spaces with no real place, normative and totalizing.

As Deleuze has proposed, "utopia is not a good concept: there is instead a "fabulation" common to the people and to art. The bergsonian notion of fabulation should be resumed and given a political sense"².

About utopia's sense for life and art we may say it is expressed in one movement, at times unhappy, at times persistent. As nothing seems to oppress

1. Eduardo LOURENÇO – *Heterodoxia I*. Lisboa: Editora Gradiva, 2005, p. 31.

2. Gilles Deleuze - *Conversações*. Lisboa: Editora Fim de Século, 2003, p. 233. The author also stresses that the people is "always a creative minority, and remains one even when it acquires a majority: because they are not lived in the same plane.(...) The artist cannot fail to appeal to a people, he needs it in the depths of his action, it is not his role to create it and he cannot do it. Art is what resists: it resists death, servitude, infamy, shame. But the people cannot concern itself with art."

us more than the sense of incapacity, the utopian impulse assures us the surmounting of despair.

ART AND HETEROTOPIA

Thinking art and heterotopia. We shall convoke art as a space of heterotopias.

In the text *Des espaces autres*, Michel Foucault identifies several differentiated heterotopic spaces, such as, for example, the graveyard, the museum, the library, the theatre, the garden, or the fair.

Heterotopic spaces represent real, effective spaces, out of all places but locatable, acquiring different forms without necessarily possessing a universal character. They have, within society, specific workings and the power to, in a single real place, associate several spaces, incompatible within themselves. Theirs is the singular function of resistance, deviation, evasion, that transforms in accordance with the historical moment and the culture framework.

It is that point in time when men are experiencing a state of rupture with their traditional time that heterotopia clearly works, says the author. Thus one understands the connection made between heterotopias and heterochronias, as well as the complex mutual organizations.

Assuming a system which isolates them and simultaneously allows their opening, heterotopias also contain a function that unfolds itself. On the one hand, producing an idealized space, they denounce real space as even more elusive, on the other, they create a real space desirably as perfect and regulated as ours is unorganized.

However, to the author, it is the ship that offers itself as a heterotopia par excellence: “the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that lives by itself, that is closed on itself and that it is left, at the same time, to the infinite sea (...). It is understandable why the boat was for our civilization, from the sixteenth century to the present day, (...) the largest reserve of imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats dreams dry up, espionage replaces adventure, and the police the corsairs”³.

ART AND DYSTOPIA

The Vatican is present in this calendar year of 2013, at the Venice Biennale. Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, who is a kind of minister of culture for the Vatican, had for long been developing efforts in that direction. It is known that the president of the Biennale, Paolo Baratta, was also interested in such participation, now a reality.

3. Michel FOUCAULT - “Des espaces autres” in *Dits et écrits IV (1980-88)*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994, p. 762.

In an interview published in the magazine "Art Press", Massimiliano Gioni, artistic director of this 55th Biennale explains the title chosen for this year's edition, *Il Palazzo Enciclopedico*. In the 1950s, the autodidact Marino Auriti envisioned a 700 meters high museum that would contain all the knowledge in the world. The artistic director welcomes the utopian dimension of this ideal, proposing an exhibition that awakens "the desire to know everything, understand everything, and explain everything and, above all, the impossibility of knowing everything"⁴.

Noting having not felt compelled to represent either all geographic areas or all cultures and furthermore, given the Biennale included the participation of various artists working outside the so-called art system, Gioni says he expects that "the presence of outsiders, given the lack of a better term, contributes to boost the *insiders* to get out of their comfort zone. Not that I want to be a sort of anti-market champion – there are many established and recognized artists in this exhibition – as I sought objects that can not only be bought, but that are worth above all for their talismanic powers or affective, psychological or socio-anthropological values, rather than economical ones, with which they were invested"⁵.

Among many other things, the artistic director also claims a faith in the transformation power "of our internal, private, oneiric images that (...) help us form a new ecology of images, in which we won't content ourselves by accepting those that surround us and that we force ourselves to ingurgitate every day, but we will make an effort to cultivate images endowed with a certain intensity and – I dare say it - a certain purity"⁶.

Countries such as Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Kosovo, Maldives, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, among others, were represented. The Biennale seems to oscillate between a remake of *When Attitudes Become Form*, the celebrated 1969 Harald Szeemann's exhibition, and the shadow, here rendered pastiche, of the exhibition *Les Magiciens de la Terre*, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin in 1989. Esoteric, autodidactic, mystical, official, institutional languages reinforce the Encyclopaedic Palace, in a kind of aspiration for an *Epistemologia Mundi*, converted to the original purity.

Throughout the interview, not a single reference to the presence of the Holy See, as if it was something usual, or as if the History between artistic production and the Church was free from blemish.

We know that Vatican's motivation for contemporary art is now reinforced, thus seeking to re-establish the connection, apparently interrupted in the last century, between art and faith. We excuse ourselves from explaining the multiple moral and political reactions of the Church to the works of several artists. We remember, in a more or less recent past, the Church's aesthetical censorship to the artwork of Pipilotti Rist at the 2005 Venice Biennale. The public had half the time to see the installation *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, because the Church closed San Stae.

4. Robert STORR; Massimiliano GIONI - "Massimiliano Gioni. Il palazzo enciclopedico" (interview), in *Art Press*, n° 401, supplément , 55a Biennale de Venise, Juin 2013, p. 6.

5. Robert STORR; Massimiliano GIONI - "Massimiliano Gioni. Il palazzo enciclopedico" (interview) ... p. 9.

6. Robert STORR; Massimiliano GIONI - "Massimiliano Gioni. Il palazzo enciclopedico" (interview) ... p.10.

But what we also know is that David López Ribes⁷ won, in 2012, the Painting Prize awarded by the Pontifical Academies, and at the time of its delivery, he would have mentioned that in the whole of his work he could not highlight a master piece, as all his works were his family. He would also have said that beauty is Christ. This artist collaborates with Kiko Arguello, founder of the Neocatechumenal Way, in art projects designed for liturgical spaces.

Returning to the role, not of great commissioner, but, contemporaneously, of great curator, the Holy See has Genesis as the theme of its pavilion and a Cardinal as a curator. The group Studio Azurro, Josef Koudelka and Lawrence Carroll were elected to present their respective artistic hermeneutics.

According to Vatican radio news, the President of the Biennale sees the Holy See's presence as a fundamental opportunity for the territory of contemporary art: "The arrival of the Holy See, in this phase, may be very important, precisely because it can contribute in a particular way to that special attention, to that selective attention that is more than ever necessary when facing this positive diffusion of contemporary art"⁸.

We do not know what might be the important phase Paolo Baratta seeks to evoke. The domain of the un-said, with greater or lesser cynicism, points to that of *false conscience*: "In capitalism only one thing is universal: the market. There is no universal State precisely because there is a universal market of which States are nuclei, are Stock Exchanges. The market is not universalizing, homogenizing. It is a fantastical process of richness and misery fabrication. (...) There is no democratic state that isn't deeply compromised with that process of human misery fabrication"⁹.

Cardinal Ravasi, committed to the approach between faith and contemporary art, and not fearing that confrontation, would have lamented (during the meetings on *Liturgy, Art and Architecture in the 50 years of the Vatican II Concilium*, taking place at the Catholic University, in Lisbon), that "much of secularized contemporary art, bears no beauty or message, and also criticized some churches built in recent years. (...) Cardinal Ravasi recalled that without knowing the Bible it is difficult to understand most of the works found in museums, ensuring that the Church is increasingly engaging in dialogue with artists, to bring faith and art together"¹⁰.

In Portugal, the Catholic University, through its Vice-Rector, Isabel Capeloa Gil, seems to corroborate Ravasi's view: "Contemporary art is frequently enigmatic, renegotiating, often, the relationship between the beautiful and the ugly, but nonetheless constitutes a search, even if located, for the revelation of a certain transcendence.(...) Instead of a liturgical functionalization of art, the works of Czech photographer Josef Koudelka, of the American painter Lawrence Carroll and of multimedia collective Studio Azzurro, configure the circle of creation, presenting contemporary art in dialogue with the oldest aesthetic manifesto, the Book of Genesis and its most

7. The artist's work can be consulted on the official website <http://www.davidlopezribes.com>.

8. JE (Vatican Radio) - "Bienal de Venezuela: apresentada participação da Santa Sé", in http://pt.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/05/14/bienal_de_venezuela_apresentada_participacao_da_santa_se/br-692104 (accessed on 11.06. 2013, 11h28 m).

9. Gilles DELEUZE – *Conversações*. Lisboa: Editora Fim de Século, 2003, p. 231.

10. Ângela ROQUE – "Cardeal Ravasi anuncia pavilhão do Vaticano na Bienal". Available in http://rr.sapo.pt/informacao_detalhe.aspx?fid=30&did=85392, 15.11.2012, (accessed on 20.06.2013, 17h35m).

perfect representation, humanity. A radiant encounter to visit until November 24”¹¹.

Much of contemporary art bears no beauty or message? Genesis as the oldest manifest (?) of aesthetics? We know that the Beautiful is a well-founded illusion, as Durkeim said about religion. If the traditional Aesthetics, throughout its History, found in Philosophy the instance of judgment and validation of artistic production, the twentieth century affirms – in a clearly dominant way when compared to previous periods - the impossibility of substantive criteria of the Beautiful.

In any case, The Genesis does not figure in the History of Aesthetics, even when, *in illo tempore*, it wanted to see itself as a religion of art, looking to take its explanations as the "good" explanation or the "good" reason.

It has been long time since, in the art world, the temptation of artistic taxonomies has been relinquished, and gone are the times of art as moral harmony or metaphysical splendour.

Does cardinal Ravasi find *beauty* and *message* only in works of a religious nature? Is it just in this dimension that the Holy See recognizes contemporary art? Art, as a heterotopia of resistance, distances itself from the encyclopaedic rhetoric prisoner of the aesthetic paradigm of harmony. It always presupposes a real place, a place of incompatibilities and heterogeneities, a place of adventure.

It is, in the manner of Foucault, a *dehors*, a privileged exterior place in a state of crisis.

It would be necessary to open another chapter to talk about the most secret bank in the world: a dystopian place where the relationship between art and faith is *renegotiated*. No fairy tale, no City of God, no City of the Sun.

Michel Foucault in the text *Eurydice and the Sirens*, questions if their seduction would not reside “in the void they open, in the fascinating immobility they provoke in those who listen to them?”¹² To stay alive is to become restless with the singing of the sirens and cross the abyss of the sea.

It seems that to the Venice Biennale no ship arrived, just a ferryboat organized as an enterprise. There is no navigation on the high seas, which is to say on the seabed. There is no crossing but an accumulation of surplus value.

Corsairs fled, and usurers remained.

11. Isabel Capeloa GIL – "Bienal de Veneza: encontro radioso entre Bíblia e arte contemporânea promovido pela Santa Sé". Available in Secretariado nacional da pastoral da cultura, http://www.snpcultura.org/bienal_veneza_encontro_radioso_entre_biblia_e_arte_contemporanea.html (accessed on 21.06.2013, 15h 18m).

12. Michel FOUCAULT – *O Pensamento do Exterior*. São Paulo: Editora Princípio, 1990, p. 57.

“Ce grand malheur, de ne pouvoir être seul”.

La Bruyère¹

Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City) is a paradigmatic photomontage by Martha Rosler (1943-). In this self-portrait the multiple and complex territories that shape her route are all present.

Influenced by feminism and a conception of art as an activist social practice and engaged opposition, her work is driven by the appropriation of mediatized images from television, advertising, photography, and ideological representations of daily life, which the artist enacts in a process of collage and photomontage.

Her critical essays in which she addresses the art system, the aestheticization of the real produced by photo-journalism, the humanist ideology of documentary photography, or the power structures that dominate public and private space, are indicators of the multitude of questions that we find in her vast production.

Leaving painting behind and making recourse to installation, video, mail art and performance among others, the artist uses a multiplicity of media, themselves constituting truly political and semantic problematizing platforms which destabilize power representations. The ironic, explosive and surprising plastic of her mode of production, is marked by the questioning of feminine stereotypes or even by an active criticism of capitalistic economy, American imperialism and social misery.

The use of photomontage, an historical practice with political traditions, formally and conceptually meets one of the coordinates of her program.

In 2008, Martha Rosler produced fully digital art works, presenting images in accordance with the higher printing quality of current magazines and periodicals, by reinforcing the sophistication and glamour of the people represented in those publications.

As Hal Foster emphasizes, artists such as Martha Rosler, Mary Kelly and Barbara Kruger, among others, have made the most productive criticism of minimalism as “they came back to images and discourses adjacent to the art

1. Edgar Allan POE – “O Homem da Multidão”, in *Histórias Extraordinárias*. Mem Martins: Europa-América, s /d, p.109.



Martha Rosler - *Self-portrait II (Lost in the City)*
Photomontage, 16x20 40,6x50cm, 1966-72

world, specially to the representation of women in mass culture and to the construction of femininity in psychoanalytical theory”².

Photography’s relationship with language and text, with context and personal experience, becomes structuring in the use of photographic image as visual paradigm of modernist myths deconstruction. Her artistic practice not only explores themes that dominate our daily lives and our contemporaneity, but also appeals to the public’s involvement with the art work.

Without any kind of didacticism, her images enunciate questions, they do not generate answers. Rosler says: “My work seems didactic but if you try figure out what the message is, I don’t think it’s so clear”³.

The issue is not to search for *the* answer but for each individual to produce and reformulate meaning. The artist aims, in her own words, to “provoke a reaction and give it life (...). If we get people to hold back, even if momentarily, in the act of making actions and give thoughtless answers in daily life, a *détournement* may be produced and a breakthrough in understanding may be possible. (...) In my work I intend to open a space in which the spectator may come in enter and rethink the received the incoming messages”⁴.

2. Hal FOSTER – *El Retorno de lo Real. La Vanguardia a Finales de Siglo*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2001, p. 62.

3. Martha ROSLER interviewed by Benjamin BUCHLOCH – “A Conversation with Martha Rosler”, in *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World*. New York: MIT Press, 2000, p. 54.

4. Martha ROSLER interview by Alan GILBERT – “La Calle es un Collage: entrevista a Martha Rosler”, in *Martha Rosler: La Casa, la Calle, la Cocina/ The House, the Street, the Kitchen*. Granada: Centro José Guerrero, 2009, p. 124.

Considering that, presently, what happens in public art spaces of art ends up projected into the public sphere, her works draw attention to the appearance of art not only in traditional means of communication such as the press, but also in political publications, on the Internet or in blogs.

Rosler is interested in attracting a public who usually does not attend museums or galleries, thus broadening the intervention scope of her work. She proposes the creation of fissures in standard daily life. Her work has always been widespread not only in underground territories, in the street, but also through the mass media such as television.

Self-Portrait I and *Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City)* are two interconnected self-portraits that integrate the series *Body Beautiful: Beauty Knows no Pain*. However, considering the framework of reflection that we intend to develop, only *Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City)* is subject to analysis here. Interviewed by Benjamin Buchloch, Martha Rosler mentions that she began this series in 1965⁵ and that the statement *Beauty Knows no Pain*, was taken from an Elliot Erwitt's film, where the phrase was pronounced by a Texas cheerleader. According to the artist, this series is fundamentally about the representations of the feminine in advertising and art⁶.

The reference to urban space, present in this self-portrait, leads us to evoke Rosler's interest in *street photography*. Although she has hardly photographed people, as her motivation was the street itself, in this black and white photomontage the passersby acquire the configuration of black spots moving through the city.

Despite predating *Secrets from the Street*, the attention to urban social space, however, is already delineated in *Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City)*.

Taking up almost all the image, passersby are moving in the street protecting themselves from the rain with umbrellas. A photograph of a female is placed at the bottom left corner of the image. Her back turned to the walkers and facing the spectator. It is she who "illuminates" the image.

As a strange and disturbing element of the photographic situation, this woman in pose, sunglasses placed on top of her head, denaturalizes the realism of a rainy day, to which the photographic image refers to. She also establishes a meta-critical relationship with the apparent instantaneous record of the photographed situation.

Recognizing the influence of Bertolt Brecht's didactic plays, the political dimension of her work is still present in the representation of identity. In *Self-Portrait II (Lost in the City)* we could talk about an effect of estrangement or distancing in the brechtian way. This distance of the *Self* in relation to the city, which the title of the artwork reminds us of, gets reflected also in the viewer's attitude. We are confronted with the strange relationship between the image of passersby on a street in the rain and the portrait of the woman represented. There is always more beyond the *Self*.

If Brechtian distancing refused the viewer the scenic illusion, the use of

5. Martha ROSLER interviewed by Benjamin BUCHLOCH – "A Conversation with Martha Rosler..." p. 47. However, according to information communicated by the artist via e-mail, the series was probably initiated in 1966.

6. Martha ROSLER interviewed by Benjamin BUCHLOCH – "A Conversation with Martha Rosler..." p. 47.

photomontage likewise potentiates image denaturalization. Just as in Brecht the montage of epic resistances interrupts identification and initiates criticism, similarly in this self-portrait the photomontage defamiliarises that represented. At the artistic level, the *Lehrstücke* is suspended⁷ while nevertheless remaining at the political level.

The brechtian *dialectical jump* is clearly experienced in the recourse to photomontage which, in turn, constitutes a political strategy.

Lost in the City, presents itself as a map of intensities, a cartography of affections, of forces. The image, according to Deleuze “is not only path, but becoming (*devenir*). (...) We clearly see why the real and the imaginary had to be overcome, or even interchanged: a becoming is not an imaginary, as well as a trip is not real. It is the becoming that makes the minimum path, or even stillness in the same place, a journey; and it is the path what makes imaginary a becoming. Both maps, from paths and affections, refer to one another.”⁸

Photomontage is closer to that of a mapping; it operates through displacements, gaps, paths, from images in to images. In the text *What Children say*, Deleuze notes that “maps (...) overlap, in such a way that each one meets in the following a reallocation, instead of finding in the preceding an origin of a map to another one. It is not about seeking an origin, but an assessment of displacements”⁹.

Photomontage, as a map, defines processes composed by several paths and trips that can be made by one or multiple travelers, but they coexist in it: difference as production of the collective, as Deleuze and Guattari note.

We can say that the city – *striated* space of the crowd - implies deterritorialized, decoded and interrupted flows, which are present in *Lost in the City*. While a force that articulates processes, the city is a live experimentation, rhizomatic, a mapping without beginning or end, where flows circulate and are articulated: a real *agencement*.

If traveling is thinking, we travel in plane or striated, in passages, connections, combinations. Between detours and dispersions, the city is drawn as a potential space of trans-subjectivity, of unlimited expedition for the *flâneur*.

In the era of *advanced capitalism* – to paraphrase Walter Benjamin with regard to Baudelaire – if a *flâneur* might be considered in this Rosler's Self-Portrait, perhaps he is closer to Poe and also the deterritorializing crime¹⁰.

According to Benjamin's reading, the *flâneur* seeks to overcome boredom in the city and within the crowd. While, on the one hand, the crowd acts like a drug to the *flâneur* and places him in the same condition of the commodity¹¹, on the other hand, it functions like a mass that, as an asylum, “protects the asocial from his pursuers. (...) In times of terror, when everyone has something of a conspirator, everyone may also play the role of the detective. *Flânerie* offers the best prospects for it. (...) When the *flâneur* thus becomes a detective *malgré lui*, transformation befits him socially because it legitimates

7. “I was influenced by Brecht’s *Lehrstücke*. I get to pose the questions. But I feel it would be self-defeating for me also to generate the answer. I may have an answer, but there is more to the world than me. It is very likely that the answer that you generate will be a better answer than my answer, so why should I presume to tell you what my answer is?” (Martha Rosler interviewed by Benjamin BUCHLOCH – “A Conversation with Martha Rosler...”, p. 55).

8. Gilles DELEUZE – *Crítica e Clínica*. São Paulo: Editora 34, p.77.

9. Gilles DELEUZE, *Crítica e Clínica*...p.75.

10. As there are books that don't permit themselves to be read, there are also secrets that don't permit themselves to be told. So begins and ends this work.

11. “The crowd is not only the newest asylum of the outlaws: it is also the latest narcotic for those abandoned. The *flâneur* is an abandoned man in the middle of the crowd. In this he shares the situation of the commodity. (...) It penetrates him like a narcotic that compensates him for many humiliations. The trance to which the *flâneur* surrenders is that of the commodity displayed and vibrating in the middle of the stream of buyers.” (Walter BENJAMIN - “O Flâneur”, in *A Modernidade. Obras Escolhidas de Walter Benjamin*. Lisboa: Assírio e Alvim, 2006, p. 56-57).

his leisure. (...) Whatever track the *flâneur* follows, all will lead him to a crime”¹².

Between the outlaw and the *flâneur* the border fades away¹³.

In Poe's words: "this old man – I said at length - is the type and the genius of deep crime. He refuses to be alone. He is the man of the crowd”¹⁴. It is about the collective as subjectivation.

Lost in the City situates the female figure on the margin of the image, but, like *The Man of the Crowd*, she refuses to be alone. As Benjamin said, regarding Atget's photographs, "isn't every corner of our cities a crime scene?”¹⁵

A *flâneur* never moves. A *flâneur* is never lost.

12. Walter BENJAMIN – “O Flâneur”, in *A Modernidade...*p. 42-43.

13. BENJAMIN says “Baudelaire loved solitude, but if possible in the middle of the crowd” (Walter BENJAMIN – “O Flâneur”, in *A Modernidade. Obras Escolhidas de Walter Benjamin...*p. 51).

14. Edgar Allan POE – “O Homem da Multidão” in *Histórias Extraordinárias...*p.119.

15. Walter BENJAMIN – “Pequena História da Fotografia”, in *A Modernidade. Obras Escolhidas de Walter Benjamin...*p. 261.

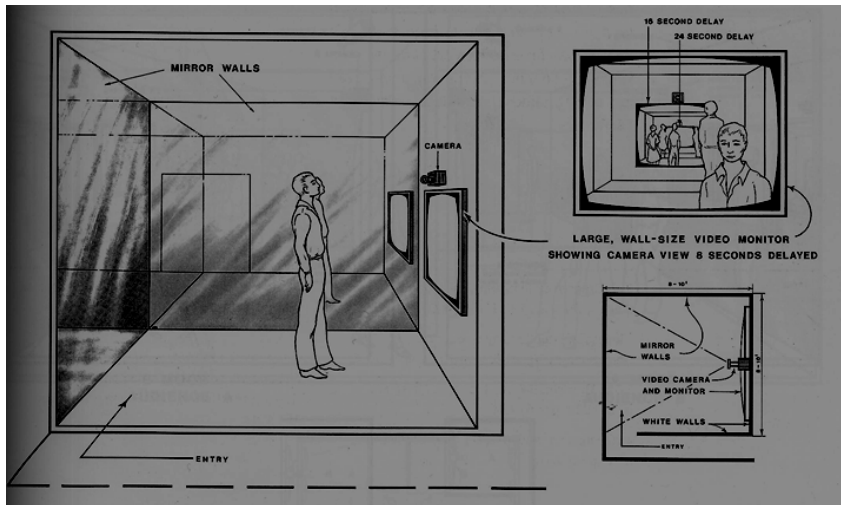
Perception

Part of Dan Graham's work deals with the structural tension arising from the interplay between objective and subjective perception within a given visual milieu and the self-perceptions of the perceiver. He does so by constructing technical apparatus that set up vertiginous circuits through which the perceiver and the perceived continuously change both position and status; this represents an investigation into the techno-social structures of perception and the specular *mise-en-abyme* inherent to contemporary subjective experience. This represents an essential aspect to his work that is particularly to the fore in his pieces intersecting video information circuits, architectural structures, and live performance.

For example, take the work *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974)¹. In this piece (as in many others), Graham constructed both a perceptive and a specular apparatus in which the production of images fundamentally results from an optico-reflective structure that functions insofar as the viewer is a constituent part. When the installation room is empty, nothing happens. The optical machine remains inactive, time and space are abstractions empty of empirical content. When members of the audiences walk in, their movements are immediately reflected on the mirror; they immediately see their images on the mirror-walls. After an eight second interval, images become produced out of other images. The subject of perception then becomes split into an optical point of view and the image's 'content'. Once the image becomes the image of *something*, perception occurs; once the image becomes the image of the perceiver perceiving, a series of close specular and/or informational circuits are formed. Two distinct 'eyes' set the visual apparatus – the I-eye of the spectator and the mechanical eye of the camera – to which a subjective (human-moving) and an objective (mechanic-static) point of view are connected. Here, subjective and objective perception refers to the point of view implicit in the image, that is, to the spatial and temporal position of the image in relation to the visual apparatus making the image possible². In a first instance, the subjective perception corresponds to the image captured by the eye and framed by the mirror, the reflective images created by the mirror facing the video camera and monitor and by the mirror perpendicular to it.

1. This is how Graham describes the piece: “The mirrors reflect present time. The video camera tapes what is immediately in front of it and the entire reflection on the opposite mirrored wall. The image seen by the camera (reflecting everything in the room) appears eight seconds later on the video monitor (via a tape delay placed between the video recorder, which is recording, and a second video recorder which is playing the recording back). If a viewer's body does not directly obscure the lens's view of the facing mirror, the camera tapes the reflection of the room and the reflected image of the monitor (which shows the time recorded eight seconds previously). A person viewing the monitor sees both the image of himself eight seconds ago, and that reflected of him/herself on the mirror from the monitor eight seconds ago, which is sixteen seconds in the past (because the camera view of eight seconds prior was playing back on the monitor eight seconds ago, and this was reflected in the mirror along with the then present reflection of the viewer). An infinite regress of time continuums within time continuums (always separated by eight second intervals) within time continuums is created. The mirror at right angles to the other mirror-wall and the monitor wall gives a present-time view of the installation, as if observed from an “objective” vantage point exterior to the viewer's subjective experience and the mechanism that produces the piece's perceptual effect. It simply reflects (statically) present time”. (“Present Continuous Past(s)” in Dan Graham, *Two-Way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art* (Massachusetts: MIT Press 1999), pp. 39–40. Originally published in *Dan Graham: Video/Architecture/Television: Writings on Video and Video Works 1970–1978*, ed. Benjamin Buchloh [Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University Press, 1979, p. 7]).

2. Throughout the text, the term perception relates to the production of actual images.



Dan Graham, *Present Continuous Past(s)*, 1974

Conversely, the objective perception corresponds to the images mechanically captured by the camera and shown on the monitor. On this level, we argue that the set of reflective and projective images produce objective and subjective perceptions as these indicate what is perceived from 'subjective' and 'objective' viewpoints.

There is, however, another set of relations between the images created that complicates this first distinction between the objective and subjective perceptions. Here, the objective and subjective stand stems from the interrelation of the images within the installation's schema, the way they bring about an internal or external space for perception. On the one hand, there are the images created by the feedback loop, which originate within the optico-informational circuit mirror-camera-monitor; on the other hand, there are the perpendicular mirrored walls which allow, according to Graham, the objective perception of the installation's mechanism. Insofar as the objective and subjective perception are distinguished in terms of their ability to point to a place which is, respectively, external and internal to the set or frame constituting the visual milieu of the image itself, we may argue that the monitor presents a series of subjective perceptions whereas the perpendicular mirror presents a series of objective perceptions. This occurs because the mirror reflects the 'external' and objective viewpoint of the installation's visual circularity and the monitor shows the set of images that immerses the viewer in the installation's visual apparatus. In this sense, the camera produces 'subjective' specular images whereas the perpendicular mirror provides 'objective' reflection. We may refer to a visual apparatus through which visual reflection and speculation is respectively connected to objective and subjective perception. However, this connection is valid only insofar as the objective and the subjective, the reflective and the speculative,

perceptions interrelate with each other. These are perceptive positions arising from the interrelationship between reflective and circular images. *Present Continuous Past(s)* constructs singular viewpoints that prove both 'objective' and 'subjective' insofar as they are positioned within a close, in relation to itself, but partial and open, in relation to the whole of the installation, optical circuit.

Both the closed relationship of the image to the implicit point-of-view and the dynamic relationship between 'objective' and 'subjective' images bring about the *opticalisation* of the viewer as he/she is reduced to optical positions and image content. However, the circuit mirror-camera-monitor (the circuit which positions the camera as the 'subjective' point-of-view) and its time-delayed feedback loop, repositions, as it were, the perceiver as the subject who perceives him/herself perceiving. Through the images originating from the closed time-delay circuit, a kind of image-subject takes shape. As soon as the viewer recognises him/herself on the monitor, he/she actively responds to the time delayed feedback circuit mirror-camera-monitor. Here, the subject is not reduced to an optical point of view within the given visual structure as he/she 'interacts' with the images produced in his/her capacity as perceiver, actor and object perceived. We may even argue that the subject regains its interiority, but only through the production of external images (reflection and projection). We are certainly far from the formation of a zone of narcissistic fascination in which the image of the self is repeatedly posited as a moment of self-recognition. The installation connects subjective recognition with the presence of another observer (the camera and the future viewer of the video monitor), so that observing is equated with being observed. In Friedrich Wolfram Heubach's words:

After all this, it is quite clear that Dan Graham's video installations give the observer a view of himself in which he does not find himself confirmed as a subject but experiences himself dissolved into his dynamic relationship to his image. They illustrate his subjectiveness as an attitude toward his image, his relationship to himself in an image — his dynamic relationship to his image.

And relating oneself to one's image is a social condition.³

This social condition arises therefore from the confrontation of the subject with an external image of which he/she is the content; from the very possibility of becoming an image. Symptomatically, Graham identifies two main theoretical influences behind his production of the video installations in the 1970s:

I was very interested in behaviourism and phenomenology.

3. Friedrich Wolfram Heubach, "The Observed Eye, or Making Seeing Visible (on the video works of Dan Graham)" in *Dan Graham* ed. Gloria Moure (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1998), p. 193.

Behaviourism was an American idea of just functional description, of the physiological movement of the body outside of consciousness. Phenomenology was a European idea of consciousness that also became important in American art at that time. Then primitive video was used in scientific laboratories to investigate physiological movement and I used it in time-delays to investigate brain-time.⁴

Action

Following the analysis advanced above, the tension arising between behaviourist physiological externality and phenomenological subjectivity reflects the move towards the relationship between perception and action. As seen, the circuit mirror-camera-monitor generates such a kind of images of movement whereby the 'subjectivity' of the observer is shaped by his/her relation to his/her own image. This condition only proves possible through the insertion of the viewer into a given techno-optical situation. As Graham suggests, the images of action stem from the interrelationship between a certain milieu (the techno-optical structure) and the corresponding action of the perceiver 'caught' within it. From the point of view of the video installation's optical construct, the actions or behaviours (observable actions) of the viewer seem alien and unproductive since they are unable to change the given parameters of the mechanism. Actions are only able to determine the content of subjective perception but not the technical milieu that makes this possible. Furthermore, the time-delay relationship between action images already indicates a productive process which, as far as behaviourism goes, overflows the redundancy of "functional description" as technical observation conditions the behaviour of the subject observed⁵.

The perception of action is short-circuited through the insertion of two specific visual axes: the perpendicular mirrored-walls and the feedback loop based on an 8 second time-delay⁶. From a perceptive point of view, the perpendicular mirrors 'suspend' the movement of the video feedback loop giving a view of the installation's wider schema. However, for Graham the 'objective' viewpoint provided by the mirror is in fact constructed so as to frame the viewer in an inverted "Renaissance painting" visual set. Moreover, Graham, influenced by Lacan's notion of the mirror stage, associated the framing of the perceiver in the "picture-window" or mirror to the formation of a perceiving self. In a mechanism parallel to the video-mirror circuit, subjective and objective reflective perceptions are mutually conditioned. The viewer is torn between the 'objective' and the 'suspended' viewpoint of the visual apparatus, and the perception of oneself through the Renaissance pictorial frame; likewise, the visual milieu is either the installation's technical apparatus or that framed by the classic pictorial window. By looking in the

4. Apolonija Sustersic, "One Morning Talking with Dan Graham" in *Dan Graham* ed. Gloria Moure, p. 33.

5. The performance *Performance/Audience/Mirror* (1977) provides a good account of what might be termed the behaviourist continuous dislodgment of both perception and behaviour. This is how Graham describes this piece: "A performer faces a seated audience. Behind the performer, covering the back wall (parallel to the frontal view of the seated audience), is a mirror reflecting the audience.

Stage 1

The performer looks in the general direction of the audience. He begins a continuous description of his external movements and the attitudes he believes are signified by this behavior for about five minutes. The audience hears the performer and sees his body.

Stage 2

The performer continues facing the audience. Looking directly at them, he continuously describes their external behavior for about five minutes. (See observation 2.)

Stage 3

The performer faces the mirror (his back turned to the audience). For about five minutes he continuously describes his front body's gestures and the attitudes it may signify. He is free to move about, in order to better see aspects of his body's movements. When he sees and describes his body from the front, the audience, inversely, sees his back (and their front). The performer is facing the same direction as the audience, seeing the same mirror-view. The audience cannot see (the position of) the performer's eyes.

Stage 4

The performer remains turned, facing the mirror. For about five minutes he observes and continuously describes the audience who he can see mirror-reversed from Stage 2 (their right and left now being the same as his). He freely moves about relative to the mirror in order to see different aspects of the audience's behavior. His change of position produces a changing visual perspective which is correspondingly reflected in the description. The audience's view remains fixed; they are not (conventionally) free to move from their seats in relation to the mirror covering the front staging area."

Graham notes that "in stage 2, the audience sees itself reflected by the mirror instantaneously, while the performer's comments are slightly delayed and follow, as they are verbal discourse, a continuous temporal forward flow [...] First, a person in the audience sees himself 'objectively' ('subjectively') perceived by himself; next, he hears himself described 'objectively' ('subjectively') in terms of the performer's perception [...] Cause and effect relations are further complicated when members of the audience (because they can see and be seen in the mirror by other members of the audience) attempt to influence (through eye contact, gestures, etc.) the behavior of other audience members, which thereby influences the performer's (of the audience's behavior)" [In Dan Graham, *Two-Way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*, MIT Press, 1999, pp. 124-5. Originally published by

direction of the mirror, the spectator sees him/herself framed within an inverted version of painting's classic setting that depicts the apparatus of the installation as the background, which, for that matter, continues to generate its time-delay feedback loop irrespective of such a 'classical' standpoint.

Brain-time

These two visual settings bring about an equivocal perception of action. The eight second feedback delay breaks the reflective suspension by allowing the viewer to view him/herself viewing the perpendicular mirror. This is an image which irredeemably fractures the apparent unity of the perceiving subject, not just because the viewer viewing the mirror is perceived from an angle perpendicular to the axis formed by the viewer and the mirror (a denaturalised perspective) but also because such positioning implodes the connection of perception and action provided by the mirror's optical "present-time". Graham distinguishes between video and film based on the ability of the former to produce real-time images contrary to the "discontinuous" temporality of cinema. Such opposition informs the construction of video installations in which real-time or "present-time" is deferred in order to create time-delay feedback circuits⁷. In his work, the time-delay circuits enable the production of images based on a 'present-time' disjunction between perception, behaviour and action. This is achieved through the setting up of visual mechanisms fragmenting perception's temporality (the relationship between perceiver and perception and perception and action) by means of "real-time" optical and informational construction. With the 'continuous' disconnection of subject and subject-image and of perception and action-perception, a hallucinogenic zone is opened up; a zone where the subject perceives his/her own brain activities. Graham suggests that the video installations produce a kind of image of one's own thought; a kind of "brain-time" or "drug time" image.

Anton Herbert, ed. Dan Graham (Ghent: de appel, 1982), n.p.].

6. The choice of an 8 second delay is not arbitrary as it is the time limit of short-memory, that is, "memory which is part of and influences a person's (present) perception." From this standpoint, the feedback loop engenders an infinite temporal regression, which is constituted at the limit between the perceptive present and the immediate past.

7. For Graham's account of the visual function of the mirror, video, and video feedback, see "Essay on Video, Architecture and Television" in Dan Graham *Two-Way Mirror Power*, pp. 52–61.

8. Apolonija Sustersic, "One Morning Talking with Dan Graham," p. 33.

The analogy for my video time-delay installations was actually Terry Riley's and Steve Reich's music. They were using sounds that were repeated a few seconds later. When you hear one sound after the other you would have an immediate feedback to what you heard before: so, there was a phasing situation. It would influence your brain-time in terms of creating a kind of new time, which wasn't long, melodic time as in former compositions but like drug time. We were inside ourselves perceiving: it is our perception process you sensed...you would be very aware of what was happening inside of your brain.⁸

The feedback loop is in the brain. But the perception of brain time only occurs through the perception of an external image of an action that has just passed, followed by another perception, and so on. Drug time comes about as a continuum and circular equivocation between what one sees and what one does, turning the perceiver inwards, towards the activity of his/her brain perceiving, or conversely, pulling the brain outside the body, creating a brain-image that, in its hallucinogenic condition, is as 'objective' as 'subjective'.

The World of Glass, Mirrors and Videos

Were we to name Graham's artistic strategy, we would term it expansive reductionism. As in other conceptual artworks, the reduction of the art object to basic structures operates as a means of bringing about the social and historical conditions of its production and reception. In many ways, the depuration of the artwork from artifice and inessential facets enables a remarkable expansion and complication of its structure on the level of socio-historical signification. For instance, mirrored-walls functioning as visual settings resonate with Renaissance painting visual frame and, within that visual background, as a milieu for the reflective formation of the perceiving self. However, Graham was not interested in making an opaque reference to the history of painting (although that reference is there, in the artwork). It was instead the actual and pervasive deployment of the classic “picture-window” in commercial and corporate architecture, reinstating inequalities of power and the commodification of individuals (alienating the self through an endless play of visual reflection, transparency and opacity) that made the recourse to glass and mirror relevant. The installations, interlinking informational circuits, modern architecture and performance, deal with the transcendental conditions of spatiotemporal experience inasmuch as these are bound to concrete socio-historical conditions. To some extent, the movement delineated in this text – perception→action→brain-time – elicits pure experience (the seeming perception of one's brain activity), the experience of internal mental action extricated from the external world, only to bring forward the technical and ideological dimensions that render this possible. Importantly, brain-time is concomitant with drug-time, that is, the instance of perception of inner activity (the traumatic fissure of the subject) is intrinsically related to the infinite regress made out of recent pasts, the circular abyss of a present continuously stretched by the endless succession of recent pasts. Confronting the subject with its inner mental states is an experiential depuration of the contemporary world of spectacularisation of social relations; it is, in many ways, the experiential limit of that world.

Present Continuous Past(s) therefore installs two interrelated processes which are present in much of Graham's oeuvre: formal and technical

minimalism as a way of inducing a plastic expansion of artwork's contradictory field of signification. Rather than considering baroque semiotics and formal minimalism as two distinct (albeit interrelated) facets of the installation, it is perhaps more correct to conceive them as engendering a double and reciprocal movement: the *minimalisation* of plastic semiotics and the *baroquisation* of techno-formal structures. The installation sets up a structural intertwining of perception and technical apparatuses so that vision is equated with a given techno-optical system, the 'bare' conditions of perception. This allows the staging of an opposition between opticality and pictoriality so as to release the function of the former from the cultural burden of the latter. It is from this initial position that the perceiver gets reduced to an optical angle within the given specular device, and that the eye and the camera become subjective/objective viewpoints within the installation's optical schema. Nevertheless, in effect, the visual objectification of perception is achieved not so much by the positivist denuding of the optico-informational structure; it is rather the result of image-projection, that is, the positing of the viewer presupposed by the content of the image. Both video-image and mirror-image operate as picture windows, that is, as the semiotic visual environments through which the spectator is both observer and observed. The image gains autonomy insofar as it precedes and initiates the relationship between perceiver and perceived. From this perspective, *Present Continuous Past(s)* puts into motion a movement that starts with material systems of signification which code, socially and historically, the mirrors, the camera, the monitor, and the installation's space, in order to establish a first moment of destabilization of representation where perception is laid bare, 'stripped' from given significations and confronted with the techno-optical apparatus that makes its material existence possible. In turn, this first moment of displacement, the dislodgment of perception and perceiver from their 'natural' ground, proves the starting point for the construction of a disjunctive specular system composed of several feedback circuits, which engenders a tensional connection between perception, techno-social situation and action. Self-referential structures contradictorily re-enact the social and cultural context in which perception and subjectification take place, the optico-informational ground of spectacle, asserting the impossibility of a positivist extraction of the technical apparatus from given systems of signification. It corresponds also to a crude presentation of the material and technical devices that make the capitalist spectacularisation of social relations possible. The seeming extrication of material and technical content from social signification is both an impossible task and an ideological operation from which the positivistic and technocratic validation of the spectacular dissolution of subjectivity arises. However, as *Present Continuous Past(s)* demonstrates, this is a necessary exercise for the critical apprehension of the material and technical machine that such a production of subjectification

involves. There is no material content that is not accompanied by corresponding processes of codification; every code has its socio-material mode of existence.

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Dance

One of the steps Miro taught Hélio was the SCREW, which consists in the body jumping off the ground and twisting in the air like a screw before returning again to the ground in one hallucinating spin.

Waly Salomão, “HOMage”¹

In 1964, the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica was introduced to samba. He soon became a *passista* (solo dancer) of the Escola de Samba Estácio Primeira de Mangueira, a samba school based in the favela of Mangueira, Rio de Janeiro.

Oiticica saw in popular dance the spontaneous expression of the “interior rhythm of the collective”, a mythical art form beyond (bourgeois) intellectual ossification, an expression of the primeval body movement that dissolves social conventions, stereotypes and classes. According to Oiticica, samba corresponded to a Dionysiac manifestation of inner vital forces, rhythms, and of the human body inasmuch as these immerse the dancer in a sensualised collective zone within which the social is experienced as an organic whole. Through dance, the inner pulsation of life becomes as individual as collective. His comments on dance point to the delineation of a mythical world that precedes social division and artistic expression, a world of pre-social collective plenitude and pre-artistic raw sensation. To put it differently, dance brings about a mythical zone where art, in its vital immediacy, harmoniously merges the individual and the collective body, making possible the subjective experience of society as a whole.

Dance therefore plays an important role in signalling a reconnection to a mythicized world of primordial expression, distant from the highly intellectualised realm of modern art yet necessary for its vital re-ignition. However, as this text demonstrates, Oiticica's somewhat romanticised view on dance and vital rhythm is critically confronted by his own artistic production. The organicist conception of dance is displaced in its connection to the contemporary social reality of the favela and irrevocably shattered by the inter-subjective zone brought about by the spectator's participation.

1. In *Hélio Oiticica* exh. cat. (Galerie nationale jeu du Paume, Paris; Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro; Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, 1992), p. 240. Translation modified.

Environmental Art

From 1964 to 1972, Oiticica produced a series of works to be carried, worn or inhabited. He called them *Parangolés*². Apart from the first three pieces — a banner, a flag and a tent — the *Parangolés* are capes with several layers composed of different materials (fabrics, meshes) to be worn by the spectator. Although designed to be worn, these capes are not costumes but visual “structures” constructed by means of assembling different materials/layers. Significantly, they form part of a body of work that mark a crucial turn in the artist's career, from the neoconcrete spatialisation of colour to the opening of the art object to questions regarding Brazilian popular urban culture (industrial and vernacular), material diversity and the status of spectatorship. Along with the *Nuclei* (1960-63) — a series of three-dimensional pieces consisting of a group of monochromatic paintings hung from the gallery ceiling according to a prefigured orthogonal structure — the *Penetrables* (1961-79) — small, walk-in cabin-like spaces — and the *Bólides* (1963-69) — *manipulable* plywood cuboid boxes or plastic glass and containers, holding different materials (pigments, shells, mesh) —, the *Parangolés* convey a shift towards what Oiticica termed environmental art.

Oiticica's environmental program advanced through the interconnection of three artistic approaches. First, the art object forges a situation that elicits the spectator's participation. Contrary to the passive and contemplative experience of the (modernistic) work of art, the spectator is here incited to manipulate (*Bólides*) or actively participate in the completion of the artwork (*Parangolés*). The beholder becomes a manipulator, a performer or an active contributor to the making of the artwork as it exhorts tactile exploration and playful usage. Second, through the intricate assemblage of disparate materials, the art object becomes a multi-sensorial structure for synesthetic experience, tapping into different levels of socio-historical signification. For the production of his 'environmental' pieces, Oiticica's introduced a vast array of materials of very different provenances, from found objects to prefabricated materials. Such heterogeneous constructions operate both on a material-sensorial and socio-cultural level. On the one hand, the Brazilian artist combined 'hard' materials such as wood and glass as a means to partition space and construct volume with 'soft' materials such as fabric, shells and pigments, creating a dynamic stage for haptic experiences. Oiticica became a *bricoleur*. On the other hand, he deliberately incorporated 'poor' or 'precarious' materials in constructions that seem improvised and makeshift, opening the path for what we may call the peripheral aesthetics of human resourcefulness (“on adversity we thrive”), so important in shaping his major installations, *Tropicália* (1967) and *Eden* (1969). Significantly, the material pauperization and precarization of his work aligned with an increased interest

2. The word 'parangolé' is part of Rio de Janeiro's slang. It has different meanings that refer to the streetwise way of life of the *carioca* (a Rio de Janeiro born citizen).

3. Briefly, the neoconcrete movement emerged as a response to the deadlock reached in late 1950s by Brazilian constructivism (concrete art). Through the theoretical orientation of the poet and art critic Ferreira Gullar, neoconcrete artists engaged in the persistent, even if multifarious, critique of the “exacerbated rationalism” of concretism which, according to the neoconcrete standpoint, had reduced geometric abstraction to a technical expression of scientific knowledge (particularly Gestalt psychology), objective positivism and modern mechanicism. In contrast, neoconcrete artists attempted to elaborate a new position regarding the history of Brazilian geometric abstraction. This was a position that proposed a renewed and autonomous relationship between art and subjective perception, expression and intuition (without abdicating the geometric rigour and objectivity of concrete art). Although short lived (1959-61), and somewhat parochial (the neoconcrete movement resulted from the reaction of a group of artists from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo's concrete art scene), the neoconcrete movement would define much of the avant-garde art produced in Brazil in the 1960s. The writings of Gullar, particularly the “Neoconcrete Manifesto” and “Theory of the Non-object”, and the art work of Oiticica and Lygia Clark (among others) would prove pivotal in framing the conceptual debates and artistic practices of the following years. Significantly, as Ronaldo Brito asserts, the neoconcrete art movement signals the historical closure of Brazilian constructivism and the opening of a new set of parameters for Brazilian art (see Aracy Amaral, *Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte. (1950-62)*. Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro; São Paulo: Secretaria da Cultura, Ciência e Tecnologia do Estado de São Paulo, Pinacoteca do Estado, 1977; R. Brito, *Neoconcretismo: Vértice e Ruptura do Projecto Construtivo Brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Marcos Marcondes, 1975).

4. The beginning of Oiticica's artistic trajectory is part of the history of Brazilian constructivism, more specifically the history of concrete and neoconcrete art. This trajectory starts with Oiticica's involvement with the Rio de Janeiro avant-garde cultural scene associated with the *Grupo Frente*, which included the artists Lygia Clark and Lygia Pape and the influential art critics Ferreira Gullar and Mário Pedrosa. In the mid-1950s, Oiticica participated in several exhibitions of *Grupo Frente* and in the *1st Exhibition of Concrete Art*. Like other concrete art painters, he explored the formal problems then being addressed by contemporary, i.e. concrete, constructivism: the pictorial structure of the painting's surface, notions of repetition and seriality, figure-background relations, and the formal functions of colour. In the late 1950s, Oiticica begins to develop an individual artistic path, producing a group of paintings titled *Secos* [Dry] (1956-57) and *Metaesquemias* [Metaschemes] (1957-58), in which his investigations on structure and colour and formal seriality gain consistence. As he would retrospectively acknowledge, this body of work inaugurated a line of enquiry which would lead to the production of the three-dimensional “environmental” art in the following decade. In 1959-60, during the formation of the neoconcrete art

in vernacular and popular aspects of Brazilian urban culture and society, such as samba and the urban space of the favela. Lastly, Oiticica never fully abandoned the constructivist (geometric-abstract) framework of concrete and neoconcrete art³. He explored new sensorial and material possibilities through continuing his systematic study of the three-dimensional expansion of colour. The ludic and sensuous aspects of the pieces produced during the 1960s are arranged according to the framework of reference provided by the highly architectural conception of space and structural notion of colour developed during a formative period in the late 1950s and early 1960s⁴.

These three aspects — the participation of the spectator, sensory-material heterogeneity, and the structural spatialisation of colour — shaped the *Parangolé* series as well as the rest of the work produced that decade. However, the capes establish a singular direct link with dance. More specifically, the usage of soft materials as a way to create a wearable shelter composed of several layers/surfaces, in a certain sense re-actualising painting's classic relation between draperies and compositional planes, and the presentation of the capes as art pieces to be worn and danced with, connect the *Parangolés* to performative movement, to popular dance, and samba in particular.

In light of Oiticica's notes on dance, we may consider the *Parangolés* as a means of negotiating between the 'warmth' of vital movement and the 'coldness' of modern visual arts, opening the latter to the primordial zone of sensuous expression enacted by the former. To put it differently: the capes operate as art mediators between the pre-artistic world of spontaneous rhythm and the highly intellectualised world of contemporary art. However, this mediation is far from unproblematic as it relies on the tensional relationship between the formal aesthetic structure and mythical human vitality. To borrow Waly Salomão's words, Oiticica's work stems from the “pendulous tension transgression/constructivism”. The environmental program emerges from within the midst of such antagonism.

The discovery of what I call *Parangolé* signals the crucial point and defines a specific position within the theoretical position of all my experiments with color-structure in space, especially with regards to a new definition of what may be, in those same experiments, the “plastic object”, that is, the work. It is not the case — as the name *Parangolé*, taken from folklore slang, might lead one to suppose — of implying a fusion of folklore with my experiments, or any identification of that kind, transposed or otherwise, completely superficial and useless (...) In this search for an objective foundation, for a new space and time in the work in environmental space, this constructive sense of the *Parangolé* aspires to an “environmental art” par excellence (...) The

spectator's participation is, once again, characteristic of what exists today generally in art: a search for “environmental totalities” that are created and explored throughout all their orders, from the infinitely small to the architectural, urban space, etc. (...) The “finding” of *Parangolé* elements in the landscape of the urban or rural world is also part of “establishing perceptive-structural relations” between what grows in the structural grid of the *Parangolé* (representing here the general character of colour-structure in the environmental space), and what is “found” in the spatial environmental world. In the architecture of the “favela”, for example, a *Parangolé* character is implicit, such is the structural organicity of its constituent elements, alongside the internal circulation and external dismemberment of these constructions; there are no abrupt transitions from “room” to “living-room” or “kitchen”, only the essential that defines each part connecting to the other in continuity (...) All these matters remain for a critical theorization, including a return, through the concept of the *Parangolé*, to that mythical primordial structure of art, which, of course, always existed and defined to a greater or lesser extent (...) There is a “will for a new myth”, brought about by these art elements; they interfere with the spectator's behaviour.⁵

Therefore, the articulation of dance with fine art took place within the framework provided by the environmental program. However, as the above passage suggests, the relationship between the operational realm of the environmental project and the mystical sphere of the “primordial structure of art” remains unresolved. On the one hand, the total experience of the artwork was accomplished through the interpenetration of the abstract-geometric framework and certain aesthetic dimensions of the socio-cultural Brazilian reality of that time. As the citation shows, Oiticica sought to incorporate facets of Brazilian life into his work, bringing it closer to specific contemporary aspects of Brazil's relentless process of modernisation⁶. In this sense, the environmental program entailed a process of reconnecting artwork to a precise social field, operating within the cultural parameters stemming from a defined socio-historical territory. On the other hand, the trans-historical and archetypical notion of primordial rhythm (dance) remains a crucial facet regarding the political remit of artwork, for the idealised totalisation of the collective body is accomplished through a “return” to a mythical world of spontaneous experience. Oiticica refers to two different kinds of experiential totalities or lived experiences (*vivências*) whose interrelation is the very means through which the mythical world of primeval rhythm and the topological socio-political reality of urban Brazil violently displace each other. Oiticica saw the stages for this tensional relationship in the “spectator's behaviour”.

group, the three-dimensional spatialisation of colour takes on the architectural dimension characteristic of his mature work. In 1959, Oiticica initiates the production of a series of paintings, which are monochromes deriving from tonal variations of one indexed “nuclear” colour (white, yellow or red) while exploring the limits of the frame's bi-dimensionality. While reducing painting to a flat surface, Oiticica released the paintings from the wall, creating three-dimensional constructions that establish a spatio-temporal relationship with the surrounding environment. These three-dimensional structures result in the production of the first *Nucleus* in 1960. As experiments in the spatialisation of colour, the *Nuclei* bring about a dynamic interrelationship between the experiential (spatial and temporal) trajectory of the viewer, the rhythmic arrangement of colour staged by the orthogonal construction, and the involving space of the gallery. They represent, in this regard, Oiticica's contribution to the neoconcrete response to the impasses pertaining to Brazilian geometric abstraction. However, as Oiticica realises, they opened a set of possibilities that went beyond the neoconcrete framework and the constructivist tradition. To a certain extent, the *Nuclei* signalled the closure of the constructivist project and the forging of the environmental program that later culminates in the *Tropicália* (1967) and *Eden* (1969) installations of the late 1960s.

5. Fundamental Bases for the Definition of “Parangolé” in *Hélio Oiticica*, p. 85-88. Translation modified.

6. Oiticica found in the informal and interstitial spaces brought about by the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of the country (the social spaces of the ‘street’ and the favela) a productive source for his work. Socially, Oiticica tapped into the way of life of the underclasses (the petty criminal, the outcast, and the poor) while, culturally paying particular attention to the dimensions of urban vernacular culture that conveyed notions of precarity, improvisation and resourcefulness.

Participation

The *Parangolés* are meant to be danced in or with (or inhabited) to the sound of samba music. According to Oiticica, the act of wearing the cape corresponded to a “bodily-expressive transmutation” of the wearer, the participator, into a new subjective position that only the art piece brings forward. The wearer becomes a participator who becomes a dancer. Specifically, Oiticica points to a crucial difference between wearing and watching:

“The “wearing”, in its greater and total sense, counterpoints the “watching”, a secondary feeling, thus closing the “wearing-watching” cycle (...) Wearing, by itself already constitutes a living experience of the work since, by unfolding it and having his/her own body as the central nucleus, the spectator experiences, as it were, the spatial transmutation which takes place there (...) Watching already leads the participator towards the objective spatio-temporal plane of the work, while in the other [state of wearing], this plane is dominated by the subjective-experiential; therein lies a completion of the initial experience of wearing”⁷

In this text, by pointing out the objective and subjective position of the wearer (dancer) and the watcher, Oiticica makes reference to the “environmental structure” of the *Parangolé* in terms of “participator-work”: the spectator experiences the work, as it were, either from within, 'inside' the performative act of completion, or outside that spatio-temporal zone, as a passive spectator that observes an external event. As an environmental piece, the cape puts into motion a “cycle” (wearing-watching) that is opened by these two oppositional experiential positions and completed by ways of the continuous interchange between subjective participation and objective witnessing. Crucially, Oiticica considered the series of stoppages and restarts of movement necessary for the changing between dancers and viewers, an important dimension of such cycle.

In the “Notes”, the artist suggested that the total (environmental) experience of the *Parangolé* is attained through the equivocal position of the dancer-spectator, that is, through the experience of a participator that is a performer for others and simultaneously a spectator of the movement of other performers (within a group of participators-spectators). However, the closure of the cycle wearing-watching does not amount to a definitive completion of the artwork, as if one were the adequate supplement of the other; as if the total experience of the *Parangolé* was accomplished through the necessary and smooth transition from the position of passive spectator to active participator.

7. “Notes on the Parangolé” in *Hélio Oiticica*, pp 93, 96. Translation modified.

What sustains the 'environmental totality' of the capes is the antagonism arising from watching and wearing, contemplation and action, and the very irreconcilability of these two subjective positions. The participator-spectator is torn between two different experiential situations, occupying the complicated position of mediation between two divergent zones of subjectivity. As such, the *Parangolé* does not represent an attempt to stage within the artwork the critique of the passive experience of art, so important for participatory art, in terms of active participation as 'primary feeling' vis-à-vis secondary inactive observation. Environmental totality implies that participation is always participation for the observation of a spectator that is captured by a performative event that demands external, but also 'internal', observation. Through the transformative act of wearing, the spectator is transmuted into the witness of an event as dependent on the dancer as on the viewer. Thus, the wearing deploys the wearing-watching dichotomy. In this case, the watcher is caught in a situation where objective observation is fundamental, as if the act of watching were also the object of someone's external observation. The contemplation of the dance movement, qua work of art, is the means through which the observer becomes the watcher-watched, a witness conscious of its witnessing. Contrasting with the position of the spectator, Oiticica referred to the violence related to the wearing of the cape, assailing the individual's pre-established way of "being in the world". The transmutation related to the immersion in the mythical world of dance (wearing) involves the radical shattering of given subjective positions, rather than the spontaneous release of vital sensuous expression unblemished by violence. Following Oiticica's notes on dance, this violence seems linked to the dissolution of the subject's mode of being in a social world structured by social conventions, class division and intellectual abstraction. It is a violence that de-naturalizes the subject's 'natural' place in society. Oiticica attempts to reconnect the mythical conflation of individual and collective vital forces to the concrete urban social underworld that resulted from the accelerated process of modernization of Brazil. The *Parangolés*, being hybrid constructions that operate between makeshift shelters and capes to dance with, powerfully conjure this urban reality. However, Oiticica's comments on the *Parangolé* point to a direction very different from any configuration of a harmonious social totality. As he pointed out, the *Parangolé* is first and foremost a visual work of art that operates within an inter-subjective perceptive field composed of dancers and observers. Here, dance is a primary, and subjective, experience of the artwork insofar as the dancer becomes part of the visual art object (to be perceived by others). The seeming empowerment of the spectator, who, by wearing and dancing becomes an active participator in the making of the art object, is critically dislodged for participation is primarily manifested in terms of action pertaining to the completion of the artwork, that is, as an aesthetic component of the visual

piece. In this sense, the cape is the perpetrator of a violation that is not connected to primordial vital movement, but to the objectification of the dancer. Wearing marks precisely the tension emerging between acting and performing (acting for a spectator that, in turn, objectifies his/her own observation). From this point of view, the collective dimension of the *Parangolé* is brought forward both through the connection and disjunction of seeing and being seen, and doing and seeing.

Modern Primitivism

If there is a reconciliatory and utopian facet to the *Parangolé*, it is found in the reciprocal overlapping of the mythical expression of life and the material world of those formally excluded from — but fully socially and economically part of — modern Brazil. Here, the urban vernacular bears the mark of a socio-cultural domain that is as primitive (outside the formal and institutional framework of the nation-state) in as much as it is modern (intrinsic to the process of the nation's modernisation). Rhythmic myth, that pre-social zone where society can be experienced as a whole, was actualised in the concrete social life of the informal urban world, the negative reality of the idealised image of the modern nation. According to Oiticica, this modern primitive world — a world produced by the state's developmentalist surge as its negative over-spillage — engendered the conditions for the reactivation of the primordial pulsation of collective life. However, as the notion of participation indicates, the immediacy of the connection between urban vernacular culture and primeval performative movement remains far from unproblematic for it is forged within the social arena of inter-subjective processes of objectification and subjectification. In this regard, the capes stage the encounter between two different but correlated zones of social positioning: the Brazilian modern primitivism of the favela and the contradictory process of objectification of the subject (dancer) and subjectification of the object (work). 'Environmental totality' is the process through which the socially located 'pre-social' mythical sphere of dance and *bricolage* is brought about by a visual art object and sustained through an equivocal subjective position (wearing-watching) that functions as a kind of primeval stage necessarily conditioned by today's forms of subject formation.

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Becoming-Minoritarian as the universal figure of consciousness is called autonomy. It is certainly not by using a minor language as a dialect, by regionalizing or ghettoising, that one becomes revolutionary; rather, by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating them, one invents a specific, unforeseen, autonomous becoming.¹

Minor languages do not exist in themselves: they exist only in relation to a major language and are also investments of that language for the purpose of making it minor.²

There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity. (...) A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence.³

Deleuze e Guattari, *Mille Plateaus*

When Deleuze and Guattari refer in *Mille Plateaus* to the project of “becoming-minor” (*devenir mineure*) in terms of a revolutionary practice with the potential to resist the axiomatics of capitalism, the concept is invested with a political dimension that merits exploration. With this in mind, this paper will explore the relations between space, politics and social emancipation drawing on the notions of “becoming minor” and “minority”. Two ideas are key: I demonstrate, first, how the concept of becoming minor exposes the epistemological criteria defining majorities and minorities, second, how it relates to a *practice* that operates a minorization of the major to make it minor, discarding the simple minor/major opposition. The concept expresses a concern with the creation of conditions of possibility for other forms of thinking and living that reflect the multiple experience of the world⁴.

It is important to consider, however, as Maurizio Lazzarato⁵ pointed out, that the notion of becoming minor is born in a specific period of struggles of the 60's, and reflects a context in which minoritarian formations seemed to offer lines of escape to the political rigidity of major social, institutional and partisan formations. Nowadays, however, the situation is a different one. Because the neo-liberal model operates on a double register - at a micro-

1. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*. Paris: Minuit, 1980. *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi. London: Continuum, 1987, p. 118.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

4. For an extended discussion of these issues, see my recently edited Dossier for journal *Lugar Comum*, n.41, 2014, in Brasil, entitled “Becoming Minor, Space, Politics and Emancipation. Perspectives from Iberoamerica”, with contributions from several authors analysing the territorial dynamics of power, and the relations between spatial practices and social emancipation across Ibero-America. An on-line version can be found here: <http://uninomade.net/lugarcomum/41/>

5. Non-published interview, May 2013, London.

political level, through the capture of the production of subjectivity, and at a macro-political level, through the mobilization of state institutions - the traditional opposition between minor social movements, institutions and parties needs to be re-evaluated and up-dated. For this reason, it is crucial to clearly distinguish the “becoming minor project” from praise for the marginal, the small, or the non-institutional. Therefore, I will emphasize the notion that politics is always both a micro and a macro-politics. It seems to me that if the concept still has something to offer today it is because it summons the need to seek ways of articulation and formalization between these two dimensions.

I

Developed in regards to the political nature of Kafka's work⁶, the concept of becoming minor refers to the process by which, in a context dominated by a hegemonic language, passages and spaces are generated for the variation and multiplicity that goes unreflected in the dominant forms of representation. In keeping with the idea that "the unity of language hides a political manoeuvre" and that hegemonic languages reinforce homogenization, identity and "constants of expression or content", becoming minor is a treatment of the standard language whose purpose is to extract language from the power relations otherwise imprisoning it and thus re-connecting it with the variation and heterogeneity that characterize the experience of the world. In this respect, neither the minor nor the major concern two different languages but rather different treatments or usages of language. The crucial definition involves how the major determines the pattern or rule in relation to which all other usages are qualified and subject: representations of power and knowledge, norms and laws, immanent to both content and form, which regulate not only discursive practices but also behaviours, ways of speaking, doing and thinking. Given such standardization, a minor treatment of language (*langue*) finds its justification in the premise that the multiplicity of the world should be returned to language to safeguard the feasible scope for enunciation as the capacity inherent to formulating new problems and introducing new objects of struggle into the political space.

According to Deleuze and Guattari's definition, a minor literature is characterised by affecting the major language with a strong degree of deterritorialisation and subjecting it to a series of displacements and renegotiations that push the major language to its own limits. In Kafka's case, this is particularly achieved via the contextual displacements (for instance in *The Metamorphosis*) that produce problems whose nature always requires a renegotiation of familial, economic, bureaucratic and juridical structures. This becomes clear when adopting the view put forward in *Mille Plateaus*

6. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*. Paris: Minuit, 1975.

that the politics of language is pragmatics: thus, that language does not in itself exist but instead depends on external and internal factors that determine its effectuation and the usage of linguistic elements in a certain social field and at a particular moment in time. Therefore, confronting language with its limits aims to precisely show this pragmatic dimension and reveal the network of elements on which language production depends. In this sense, language is best grasped if perceived as a dynamic system with breaks and transitions at the frontiers of micro and macro struggles reflecting both the power modulations existing at any given point in time by which the expression gets distributed. Should we continue to extrapolate the political meaning of framing language in terms of this dynamic, then we would understand how, just as the enclosure of language upon itself freezes its revolutionary political potential (through overshadowing its collective and social aspect), similarly, the enclosure of the writer upon him/herself suspends the revolutionary political potential of literary creation. Thus, in terms of the minor, and in contrast to a phenomenological or psychoanalytic conception of literary production, Deleuze and Guattari contend that the true writer is one who induces a force of de-subjectivation upon experience or an elevation of experience to the impersonal as the condition necessary to engaging with the collective (and singular) experience of the world, and thereby connecting the individual to the collective. On this basis, the notion of the 'collective assemblage of enunciation', also introduced in the *Kafka* book, is central to understanding what minor literature means: writing implies an act of writing *with* rather than a writing *of* things. This, in fact, describes the political condition of literature. In this manner, the making of a language is no individual affair but is above all a people's concern and in this respect a process of constituting a collective. This is why Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a minor literature creates the conditions of possibility of "a people still to come", a people that is missing⁷. However, discerning that "people" in this manner does not refer to any particular or ideal group proves vital since instead it calls into being the political question of the *yet-to-come*, of other ways of life, of other values and modes of thinking for which conditions of possibility have yet to be established. Indeed, it is this movement of "becoming", forcing the minor upon the major, that should be strategized.

II

Moving on from these considerations while bearing in mind the contemporary commodification of city and territory as a dominant trend, I now describe how the idea of 'becoming minor' informs a counter-hegemonic thinking and practice of space. However, I should first clarify that when

7. This articulation between a minor treatment and the notion of "a people to come" is best articulated in *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps* (1985), *Critique et Clinique* (1993) and *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991) in relation the concept of fabulation.

speaking of a dominant, hegemonic language in the domain of the problematic of space and territory, we refer to the global process by which urbanization today promotes the expansion of capital, structuring both city and territory in ways that not only generate social exclusion and discrimination but also inevitably result in the affirmation of certain modes of spatial relation that require the asphyxiation of many others.

The aspects I noted earlier – namely, the deterritorialisation of the major language, the elevation to the impersonal, the connection between the individual and the collective, and the collective assemblage of enunciation – reveal important dimensions to take into consideration when analysing engaged spatial and social practices. Two aspects resulting from the previous examination should be added; firstly, the political investment of life and everyday existence – following due recognition that power operates across different levels, from the production of subjectivity to the modes of social organization – and, secondly, the importance of creating modes of articulation between the subjective dimension, social movements, forms of representation and institutions. Clearly, politics cannot be reduced to the larger dimension of representations or institutions, as it also underpins the production of subjectivity and forms of life, as much as the 'way we speak' or 'what can be said'. Indeed *politics is made and practiced*, traversing the fabric of existence both at the individual level as much as at the social level. If it is crucial to convey the need to conceive of existence and daily life from a critical perspective, it is precisely because if life has been constituted an object of power, it can also represent a strategic force of resistance. Power in this sense, as Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari contended, is better defined neither as a structure nor as an institution nor even as a property one gets endowed with, but instead as a set of relations of forces that traverse the social and the individual accounting for particular institutional or social crystallizations.

It is clear that material and spatial domains are traversed by power relations both in an explicit and implicit manner and transmitting regulations upon modes of social relations, forms of life and values. As such, space is not a simple neutral container of social and cultural relations and should be understood instead as something that plays an active role at a molecular level in the singularization and renovation of cultural and social modes of relation. As Guattari reminded us, the production of subjectivity depends on a series of polyphonic factors, spatial and material, discursive and non-discursive, signifying and assignifying. Thus, if we consider that practices of emancipation are space contingent (and space forming) inasmuch as social and spatial relations are interrelated, we should be able to carry out analysis of the institutions or places we inhabit not only to identify modes of rigid and hegemonic organization but also to reform them. We would thus approximate the process of institutional analysis or critique developed by Guattari and

Jean Oury in the *La Borde* clinic⁸, where we could say that the strategy was to *minorize* the institutional space as a means of singularization and autonomisation of subjectivity, therefore extending beyond the deadlock of a pure horizontality against a pure verticality of power.

In this manner, considering emancipation in relation to spatial practices, the key guiding question would become: in what way can we establish the scope for the emergence of more democratic forms of living and of relationships with space in conjunction with the communities at stake and exponentially amplifying their processes of civic autonomy and social emancipation? We would therefore have to consider an economy of space and territory oriented towards the emergence of other conceptions of freedom, of liberty and of justice, hand in hand with the respective communities and in critical opposition to major epistemological criteria.

Whilst it is certainly possible to identify minorities according to a numeral criterion⁹, it would be a mistake to confuse the minor with small or independent spaces disconnected from society or tentatively separated from reality, in rupture with the institutions and the existent power structures. On the contrary, as Guattari claims, the minor should above all *mobilize* a practice of articulation:

"the conclusion of these types of transformations will depend essentially on the capacity of the assemblages created to articulate these social and political disputes. If this articulation is not produced: no desired mutation, no struggle for spaces of liberty can ever hope to trigger large scale social and economic transformations."¹⁰

This thus raises the question of identifying ways of articulating the minor with the major beyond the simplistic (unproductive) opposition between 'small' or 'big', 'marginal' or 'institutional', 'formal' or 'informal'. As such, spatial practices, concerned with labour relations, with the collective as a form of production, with protocols of occupying space as much as the politics of territory and their legal determinations, become particularly relevant to thinking on the nature of a spatial practice able to intervene in the relations of different power spheres. It is correspondingly crucial to pay attention to participatory models that promote other forms of social relationships and that potentiate these articulations. And, just as it proves necessary not to confuse participatory methodologies with a lack of architecture, I also deem essential bearing in mind that which architect Teddy Cruz suggests when defending how "a community will not be free until it is able to creatively resolve its own housing needs, its own modes of socio-economic sustainability, its own conceptions of public space and infrastructure: its own civic culture"¹¹.

8. I have first attempted to analyse the spatial-political underpinnings of the work developed in institutional analysis through the study of the La Borde Clinic case in "Félix Guattari and the Collective in La Borde. Notes for a conception of subjectivity beyond the human", in *(dis)locations*, ed. Gabriela Vaz Pinheiro and FBAUP, 2011, 80-88pp.

9. As Deleuze and Guattari explain: "When we say majority, we are not referring to a greater relative quantity but to the determination of a state or standard in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to be minoritarian." *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 321.

The opposition between minority and majority is not simply quantitative. Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it. (...) Majority assumes a state of power and domination, not the other way around. (...) Minorities, of course, are objectively definable states of language, ethnicity, or sex with their own ghetto territorialities, but they must also be thought of as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and the deterritorialisation of the mean or majority." *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 116 – 117.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

11. Cf.: the excellent online discussion and, in particular, the Teddy Cruz comments in "Re: [-empyre-] Resilient Latin America: Reconnecting Urban Policy and the Collective's Imagination, <http://www.mail-archive.com/empyre@lists.cofa.unsw.edu.au/msg04008.html> (Accessed in July 2012).

III

"Becoming minoritarian is a political affair and necessitates a labour of power (puissance), an active micropolitics. This is the opposite of macropolitics, and even of History, in which it is a question of knowing how to win or obtain a majority. As Faulkner said, to avoid ending a fascist there was no other choice but to become-black. Unlike history, becoming cannot be conceptualized in terms of past and future. Becoming-revolutionary remains indifferent to questions of a future and a past of the revolution; it passes between the two. Every becoming is a bloc of coexistence"¹².

A practice of the minor begins by recognizing that the thinking of space and territory represents an issue of concern to everyone. Just as the invention of a language concerns a collective, and not just an individual or a regime of representation imposed from above, space also concerns a community within the framework of constructing its civic autonomy. Only by adopting a perspective in which territorial struggles are perceived as struggles for life, as symptoms of these collective assemblages, can we make politics traverse space, hence, by conceiving it as a territory of existence. In this way, the politicization of space does not end in space, but continues pointing in an outwards direction, always indicating its position in a transversal chain of power relations, which prefigures its capacity for intervention and affection at different levels. Undoubtedly, the measure of mutual affection is the political measure of space.

Lastly, to recognize that politics is made and practiced in the struggle for the spaces of everyday existence as the struggle for life implies acknowledging and defending that the right to space is also the right to inventing the world.

12. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 322.

Le monde est l'ensemble des symptômes dont la maladie se confond avec l'homme.
Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et Clinique*¹

In contrast with psychoanalytic interpretations of literary works, which tend to see writers as patients, Deleuze's critical-clinical 'project' proposes a relation between the critical and the clinical, whereby writers, like clinicians, can themselves be seen as symptomatologists. The fundamental point of contention is that interpretations of the literary work focusing on personal and family related causes or presuppositions overshadow the discernment of the fundamental productive nature of literary creation. Moreover, the 'sense' of the symptom should be sought out from among the forces producing it rather than from its form against such preconditions. As Zourabichvili explains: "if, using the terms of Nietzsche, Deleuze can say that the real critique is a symptomatology (or clinical), it is because he is no longer satisfied with the form of the phenomenon, but wants to know just what 'will' is invested in the phenomenon"².

Hence, from the point of view of Deleuze's 'critique et clinique' project, the fundamental question that should be asked to literature is: 'what is it for?'. Such is the opening interrogation of Deleuze's book on Sacher-Masoch. The idea behind the critical-clinical 'project' involves going beyond the application of pre-existing clinical concepts to literary production, to trying to extract clinical manifestations and concepts existing beyond these from the worlds created within literature's other. Such conception also indicates a slowing of the plane of the subject and of the personal, as well as a distancing of what may be considered the interpretation of the work based on the biographical projection of the author. Following from here, the exercise of literature can be thought of as something that necessarily 'transcends what is' through an operation that involves the suspension or 'defacement' of the biographical-personal dimension by virtue of a 'becoming-world' of the biographical.

Within this frame, this essay aims to address what is arguably the most crucial in Deleuze's conception of literary creation, that is, the possibility of reconfiguration of the biographical experience beyond the

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et Clinique*, 1993, p.14. Last book edited by Deleuze comprising essays published between 1963 and 1989 and revised at the time of publication alongside many other original essays on literature.

2. François Zourabichvili, 2006, "Kant avec Masoch", *Multitudes* 2006/2 25; Gilles Deleuze, 1962, *Nietzsche et la Philosophie*. "Si, parlant d'abord dans les mots de Nietzsche, Deleuze peut dire que la vraie critique est symptomatologie (ou clinique), c'est parce qu'elle ne se contente plus de la forme du phénomène, mais demande quelle « volonté » s'investit dans le phénomène".

phenomenological through an ethical-political crossing of literature and life alongside the renewal of the idea and practice of the 'biographical' within a collective, world-historical sense.

This is where Masoch comes in.

Présentation de Sacher-Masoch

The book *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* was the first in which Deleuze formulated the clinical-critical question under the guise of a symptomatology resembling Nietzsche³. In this same sense, the appropriation of Masoch's and Sade's names by clinical semiology in Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886), to designate and classify new clinical entities, respectively, 'masochism' and 'sadism', is understood by Deleuze as a sign of the prodigious literary effectiveness of their works. Precisely because it reveals the capacity of Masoch's and Sade's works to extract new configurations within the limits of the invisible, making visible and possible new dimensions of sexuality that assert themselves as genuine ways of life: 'sadist' and 'masochist'.

However, the very literary singularity of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and Marquis de Sade was precisely subject to challenge when Freud failed to discern literary production properly in the terms of a symptomatology of the world. Though in the eyes of Deleuze, Freud did attain the merit of introducing fiction into medical diagnosis, taking the first steps toward the subordination of aetiology to symptomatology, and thus properly discerning the constellation of forces reuniting around a symptom to the detriment of casual reasoning. Yet according to Deleuze, in one particular case Freud had simply superimposed a familiar-personal grid onto the symptom, reducing it to the realm of the intimate and the personal. I am referring here to Freud having explained "sexual perversion" based on castration phantasies and internal aggressiveness and with an infantile and family related genesis, thus, emphasising a personal and pulsional economy, and, in his conception, having reduced masochism to the rule of sadism (or the desexualized return of sadism to its own object) (Freud, 1915, 1919) unifying both identities into one; 'sado-masochism'⁴. In so doing, Deleuze considers there is a failure to discern masochism and sadism as complete, non-transformative entities in their own rights. Above all, as manifestations of the world, they are lost by referring the whole to the interiority of the writer or to a psychobiography of the work:

"Sadism and masochism are confused when treated as abstract entities each in isolation from its own specific universe. Once they have been cut off from their Umwelt and stripped of their flesh and blood, it seems

3. *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: Le froid et le cruel*, 1967, Minuit, Paris. The other two essays devoted to Masoch are "De Sacher-Masoch au Masochisme", *Arguments*, n.21, 1961, and in 1989, "Re-présentation de Masoch", *Libération*, May.

4. It is in the essays "*The Drives (Instincts) and their Vicissitudes*" (1915) and 'A child is being beaten - a contribution to the study of the origin of sexual perversions' (1919) that Freud presents perversion as originating in childhood, and a fantasy subject to transformation by repression or by sublimation. Particularly, in the 1915 text, sadism and masochism are addressed as two movements of one same drive.

natural that they should fit in with each other"⁵.

Hence, according to Deleuze, the designation of 'sado-masochism' stands as a *semiological monster* in that it obscures the constellations of forces and the specific and diverse movements that embody the signs. In other words, the problem arises when, separating the writer from his world, sight is lost of the particular manifestations that the literary production forced itself to 'extract from the invisible by making visible'. In this case, by reducing the literary exercise to the form of the writer's personal experience, there is a loss of the relationship with the world to which the symptom belongs, as well as the positivity of literary production, which is demonstrated by the actual fact that the names of Sade and Masoch come to designate actual clinical manifestations.

Sadism and Masochism

In Freud, the subjugation of masochism by sadism occurs when the two entities are absorbed into one, that is, into the 'sadism-masochism' unit. What is then designated as the 'sadism-masochism' perversion becomes a partial drive, a state of oscillation between a sadistic pole and a masochistic pole, explained by an overlap of the death drive (drive of destruction and domination) to the pulse of life that is redirected to the other (sadism), and to the self (masochism). The goal of the drive – violence – is retained, only the object changes (the other or the self). In this sense, masochism and sadism form part of the same oscillatory and partial drive: on the one hand the libido diverts the death drive towards objects in the external world, from which sadism results - maintaining it - on the other hand, in the organism through a co-libidinal excitation that represents the place of the original and erogenous masochism⁶. While sadism and masochism might seem complementary, in the sense in which the first finds pleasure in giving pain to the other, and the second experiences pleasure in the pain inflicted by the other, Deleuze argues that the mechanisms by which they operate are productively distinct. Crucially, the masochist, or 'victim' in Sade's novels does not match the 'masochist' in Masoch's novels. Nor, conversely, does Vanda, the 'cold and indifferent woman', the 'cruel woman' of Masoch's literary world, correspond to the sadist male of Sade's novels: "a genuine sadist could never tolerate a masochistic victim (...) Neither would the masochist tolerate a truly sadistic torturer."⁷

Deleuze attempts to show that behind Masoch's woman-executioner lies an idea of pedagogy: the masochist's cruel woman must be created and taught, their relationship contractualised, "the masochist contract implies not only the necessity of the victim's consent, but his ability to persuade, and his

5. *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: Le froid et le cruel*, Paris, Minuit, 1967. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (Zone Books, NY, 1971), p.42.

6. Freud, *The Economic Problem of Masochism*, 1924.

7. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, p.40.

pedagogical and juridical efforts to train his torturer"⁸. However, the masochist's woman also renounces pleasure, suspends satisfaction and feels no pleasure in the victim's pain, at the same time as the sadist's victim also feels no pleasure in the pain inflicted. Here, Deleuze finds a singular logic of desire – which contradicts the notion of desire modelled from absence and according to a transcendent ideal – proceeding by the suspension, the postponement of pleasure, which is to say, prolonging desire as a process, independent of a final object that grants satisfaction. In this way, according to Deleuze, the suspension of desire and the denial of the real predominate in Masoch's literary world; while for Sade pleasure and the projection of the ideal over the real prevails. Nevertheless, beyond that, such phantasm also serves different functions in both Sade and Masoch. While in Sade, fiction should be destroyed at the expense of that which is lived, in Masoch, the phantasm is precisely the place of the masochist's investment (the fetish object) in which the real and the ideal intertwine. Therefore, one ought to understand the Deleuzian insistence on making the clinical disjunction or decomposition of sadism with masochism in light of an objective to discern distinct literary projects, varied worlds and movements of forces, and different processes of actualization beyond the appearance of complementarity. As I will show here Deleuze finds opposed notions of desire and of pleasure, as well as different capitalizations of the fictional with political meanings and inferences.

The becoming-world of masochism, the phantasm and the collective

In *A childhood memory and reflections on the novel* (1888), Masoch describes some of the events associated with the discovery and construction of his 'masochism'. An early fascination with the sacrificial economy of the church, with its figures of martyrs and saints, a childhood feeling of growing pleasure upon punishment; along with an inclination for the study of the history of matriarchal and patriarchal societies. It is worth noting that Masoch structures his work around a series, under the name of 'Legacy of Cain', and of which the book *Venus in Furs* (1869) forms a part of Love, its first volume. In this context, the following consideration of Deleuze proves extremely crucial: "What is the meaning of the term 'Legacy of Cain'? It is intended first to express the burden of crime and suffering inherited by humanity"⁹. If we accept such facets of Masoch's work as inseparable from that which is clinically called masochism, then the question we arrive at is the following: for what reason would a 'masochist' want "to account for the inheritance of crimes and sufferings that weigh upon humanity?" The work of Masoch certainly reflects the cultural and political movements of his time and culture, latent in the types of characters portrayed, from Slavic folklore and the

8. Ibid., p. 75.

9. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, p.12.

multiple revolutions against the Habsburg Empire during 1848, just as much as the work of Sade is inseparable from the French Revolution. However Deleuze's response points towards yet another dimension of the socio-political valence of Masoch's work, sought beyond the identification of some of its historical and social features.

It seems that what is at stake here is not just a political-cultural investment in the work, but in a work that in itself perverts the world, through a crossroads of the personal with the collective, or of a *becoming-world of the biographical*¹⁰. Such would also be the mark of the writing of the writer in contrast to that of the 'neurotic'. The novel of the 'neurotic' in which the world is a projection of a second order, the fruit of an indirect relation mediated by the phantasm (the world as the projection of my phantasms, or the origin of my phantasms, thus both cause and product) and of the writer who, while trying to directly relate to it, turns out as much a 'patient as a doctor of civilization'. Therefore, the excessive projection of man over the world would be repaired on that other plane that is literature, or the *literary plane*, through a specific practice of experience and an openness to the de-subjectified forces of the Outside. Hence, to say that experience is elevated to the literary equates with the conception of a process of personal trans-biographization that would refer experience to the world and to a collective. In this sense, it seems that it matters less to think of the literary operation as the negation of the biographical, but rather as a particular process of *agencement* with an out-of-self, a collective and impersonal (though singular) outside, in which literature finds its highest justification. As Éric Alliez explains, from the moment in which the personal and the collective coalesce – as happens with Masoch – the phantasm becomes part of an existential and political program¹¹. From that point onwards, masochism is not only Leopold von Sacher Masoch's masochism, but something that inscribes and re-enacts the liberation movement of the world within a program of masochism: the writer diagnoses the world and evaluates the chances for a new health, or for a new man¹².

Also at stake is the breaking of the merely fanciful statute of fiction, taking part in it and connecting it to the social and the political so as to extract its greatest potential, which is the potential of the false (that is not constituted by opposing the true, nor as its negation), and that opens up as political possibility of creation. It is in this sense that Deleuze affirms that true writers are those who make of the phantasm not the origin but the work itself:

10. 'The artist is not only the patient and doctor of civilization, but also its pervert'. *Logique du sens* Paris: Minuit, 1969. *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. NY: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 238.

11. cf.: Éric Alliez, "Deleuze avec Masoch", *Multitudes*, 2006/2, 25, p. 53-68.

12. In "Re-présentation de Masoch", 1989 (reprinted in *Critical and Clinical*, pp. 53 -xx): "More a physician than a patient, the writer makes a diagnosis, but what he diagnoses is the world; he follows the illness step by step, but it is the generic illness of man: 'the legacy of Cain', 'the Sign of Cain' as the total work (p.53).

"What properly belongs to Sade, Masoch and a few others (for example, Robbe-Grillet or Klossowski) is making the phantasm itself the object of their work, whereas usually it is only the origin of the work. What literary creation and the constitution of symptoms have in common is the phantasm. Masoch calls it 'the figure' and in fact says 'one must go beyond the living figure to the

problem'. If the phantasm for most writers is the source of the work, for those writers who interests me it is precisely the phantasm that is at stake in the work and has the last word, as if the whole work reflected its origin"¹³.

The literary (or the phantasm elevated to the literary) therefore represents a means through which one goes from 'the figure to the problem'. In *The Logic of Sense* this idea of movement from the figure to the problem is taken up in terms of an extraction of the non-actualizable of the pure event and of going from the causes of the symptoms to the quasi-causes of the work, in opposition to that which takes place in the familiar novel of the 'neurotic'¹⁴. Thus the production of a symptomatology involves this movement of the 'figure' – in the sense of the personal, of the familiar, of the neurotic – to the problem or structure in which the problem is placed. That is to say, this involves a movement from the personal to the collective.

The power of fiction and perversion as program

We find in Masoch a pedagogical relationship with the ideal woman who corresponds to the phantasm, however, within other terms, we might also state that the masochist manipulates the real directly, for creates his own through a pedagogy of the phantasm. Thus, the distinction between the lived real and the phantasm does not take place in Masoch as, on this level, the object *par excellence* of the masochist is the fetish object, which in itself is a phantasmatic construction (the phantasm suspends the ideal in his interiority and makes itself permeated by the real). We should then note that, while remaining true that the masochist prefers phantasm to the real this is because law prohibits a relationship with the real (in Freud, the prohibition of incest, where the Law is no longer the law of father and mother, but becomes the moral law). The masochist operation simultaneously also allows the thought that the terms are not of an escape from the real to the imaginary, but of the movement of the phantasmic as a creation of new conditions of existence beyond transcendental Law (of the possible)¹⁵. Additionally in this case, this is the brutal power of fiction that begins being delineated in Masoch. The phantasmic, or the movement of the figure to the problem, represents the maximal figure of the fictional, not because the phantasm is an escape from the real, but because the phantasmic movement carried out in masochism creates its own conditions of possibility. The ideal, now phantasmal, ceases to be transcendent and fiction starts creating its own conditions of realization.

Let us see how through the contract, the masochist makes use of the law by which the real is manipulated to the point of matching and being permeated by the phantasm. The despotic woman of the masochist rules over him and

13. Interview by Madeleine Chapsal, "Mystique et Masochisme" in *La Quinzaine littéraire* 25 (April 1-15, 1967): 12-14 reprinted in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, trans. Michael Taormina. Cambridge: Semiotext(e), 2004, p. 132.

14. "The neurotic can only actualize the terms and the story of his novel: the symptoms are this actualization, and the novel has no other meaning. On the contrary, to extract the non-actualizable part of the pure event from symptoms (or, as Blanchot says, to raise the visible to the invisible), to raise everyday actions and passions (like eating, shitting, loving, speaking, or dying) to their noematic attribute and their corresponding pure Event, to go from the physical surface on which symptoms are played out and actualizations decided to the metaphysical surface on which the pure event stands and is played out, to go from the cause of the symptoms to the quasi-cause of the oeuvre - this is the object of the novel as a work of art, and what distinguishes it from the familial novel (*Logic of Sense*, p. 237).

15. See François Zourabichvili's "Kant avec Masoch", *Multitudes*, 2006/2 no 25, p. 87-100, which develops the idea that Deleuze finds in the work of Masoch as the means for a total reconfiguration of the question of the critique, since it is in Masoch that the meeting of Art and Law occurs on which the critical and clinical depends and the fetish as condition for freeing the imagination of the Kantian conditions of possibility.

has rights over his life, from the way he acts and speaks to the choice of his name. We correspondingly then perceive the relevance of Deleuze's criticism of the inscription of the negative upon desire and the transcendent ideal of the phantasm. While psychoanalysis understands that the masochist, like everyone else, seeks pleasure but is not able to achieve this except through pain and phantasmatic humiliations whose function is to appease deep anguish, Deleuze shows that what is important to note is how the suffering of the masochist is the cost he has to bear, not to access pleasure, but to dismantle the pseudo-connection of desire with pleasure, which throws back into obscurity an entire existential and political program of the masochistic fiction, of the creation of the woman-executioner, and of suspension as practice¹⁶. Therefore, the assumption that literature should reflect not only the phantasm (as an origin of the work), but also the real problem, implies, from the part of Deleuze, providing literature with a unconditional relationship with the real, established through, among other means, a relationship of pedagogy and the disconnection of the negative from desire.

According to Freud, the masochistic drive realises itself when a third party emerges in the process, a third indeterminate object that occupies the place of the first subject, who moves to the place of the object and is mistreated. In the place of the first, another is placed, the idealized woman of the masochist, for example, that occupies the place of ruling subject. In keeping with Freud's conception, the masochist, a dominated and mistreated object, determines the conditions of his own domination as it is he himself who creates his dominating subject, the 'cold and cruel woman'. However the subject occupying the place of the first subject (absent in order to be violated as an object) is the sadist, or the reverse of the masochist drive. Thus, in Freud's understanding, masochism is de-sexualized sadism directed against the self. Furthermore, the empty place occupied by an undetermined third subject, born in the process of masochist movement of the death drive directed against itself, is an event of depersonalization necessary for accomplishing the masochistic drive. As the subject-object relationship becomes damaged, jeopardizing the Other as a structure, it happens that perversion produces depersonalization, creating "a world without the Other", to making recourse to the words of Deleuze. As Freud explains in *The Drives (Instincts) and their Vicissitudes* (1915), the subject moves and this aspect distinguishes, for instance, masochism from self-punishment in obsessive-compulsive neurosis.

Now, while Freud is able to conceive of this idea of Other, this third indeterminate, he is unable to see these same mechanisms operating in sadism and masochism as entities in their own right, creating their own interior element of difference, an Other of masochism and an Other of sadism, whether real, whether imaginary, and corresponding to the idealized woman-executioner.

16. In *Re-présentation de Masoch*, Deleuze clearly equates suspension to juridical formalism in Kafka "a justice that is not confused in any way with Law p.77) Cf. also the dissent among the conceptions of desire and pleasure in Deleuze and Foucault in terms of an opposition between desire and pleasure, suspension and satisfaction, that correspond to different political strategies of resistance.

We would state that it is precisely in this capacity for creating that Other, in the literary worlds of Sade and Masoch, that the literary operation resides. In other words, masochism's Other or sadism's Other correspond to an idea of sadism existing in Masoch and an idea of masochism existing in Sade and not necessarily complementary. Thus, from the point of view of an analysis of the biographical dimension in relation to Masoch's construction of the plane of the literary, the clinical disjunction of the entities sadism-masochism opens up a space to grasp an Other that finds its origins in the interiority of the work and concerns the construction of literary experience on a phantasmatic plane as the suspension of subject-object relations, determinants of a certain structure of the experience.

In this sense, one should think the model of masochist perversion in relation to the reconfiguration of the relations of enunciation and their relation with the real to understand the influence of masochism – as a literary machine – in the thought of a *minor practice* of literature, in which speech is on the side of the victim, that is to say, in which the subject that subjects himself originates a new speech.

Conclusion

The understanding of literature as symptomatology involves operating two inflections of thought around what literature is and does, and how the personal-biographical element is operated: literature is a way of opening to the world, for it is more on the side of the 'world' - the writer as the 'clinician of civilization' – and of the collective than of the personal, with a primarily political sense that Deleuze later develops ('the formation of a people to come' particularly in *Kafka* with Félix Guattari) and the assertion of literary production to the extent of a speculative extraction of the event that launches and renews the conditions of the experiment beyond the possible.

In short, we may say there are six key factors resulting from analysis of the formulation of the critical-clinical question in the work of Deleuze's Sacher-Masoch that are crucial to the exploration of how personal biographical elements are treated in literature: 1) the formulation of an idea of the 'other' that is interior, resulting in a process of depersonalization in Masoch, denoting the power of the fictional as the opening up of a space of difference, or a figure of an Other that is not formed by subjugation, but in which the very act of its creation implies a de-subjection via the creation of the other. In this continuity it should be noted that this mental 'other', that is created, is not projected on the real, but is – 'the masochist's ideal woman executioner' – formed by a relationship of pedagogy in which the real can be said to be manipulated, contradicting the very idea of either transcendental Law or of the father; 2) the development of an idea of literature inseparable from a

practice and a politics of life through a thinking of the contract in opposition to the institution, and of desire as the suspension of pleasure; 3) the renewal of the subject-object relationships in the literary plane and, specifically, the dissolution of the Other as structure. This essentially allows us to conceive of a process of constituting experience that does not in its genesis impose a domain of the subject on the object, or at least the possibility of a concomitant relationship with the object¹⁷; 4) the re-singularization of the biographical and personal experience of the author when thinking about the connection between the writer and the world, the one that becomes with the world, the one who is delirious while perverting the world and making the world delirious – 'from the figure to the problem'; 5) speculative fiction and perversion as a literary model in which the phantasm, the fictional, is thought of with a productive and constitutive valence; 6) finally, masochist perversion as a minor practice in which speech is on the side of the victim.

17. In *Logic of Sense*: "In other words, the positive, highly affirmative character of desexualization consists in the replacement of psychic regression by speculative investment. This does not prevent the speculative investment from bearing upon the sexual object - since the investment disengages the event from it and poses the object as concomitant of the corresponding event" (p.238).

