

"And more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or Nothingness) behind. Grammar and style. To me, they seem to have become as irrelevant as a Victorian bathingsuit or the imperturbability of a true gentleman".

1937, Samuel Beckett. Bruce Nauman catalogue, P75.

"A veil that must be torn"

Gilles Deleuze analyses in "l'épuisé" the films that Samuel Beckett made for Television, Quad in particular. Pointing out that language states the "possible", he explains that the works of Beckett aim to exhaust the potentialities of the various mediums of creation he uses. While Beckett devises and realises Quad as a piece for television, Quad looks obviously like a choreography: there are no dialogues; those taking parts are not identifiable, though differentiable; they are cast to walk according to a

scheme determined by the four corners of a square, the purpose being to exhaust all the possibilities of routes (in the space), then all the possible combinations (of movement) of duo and trio.

The piece is complete when all the possibilities are exhausted. The work challenges to propose a new possibility of creating through television, using the choreographic mode, to exhaust in the piece at one attempt all the possibilities of the form.

By exhausting all the possibilities of a creative media, Beckett exhausts its potential. A media, a discipline without anymore potential is a discipline without power.

In contrast to his cultural history where the artistic fields were as precisely delimited as sacred territories, Beckett proposes a new artistic writing, which invents itself by its own shape and closes after itself like "a hole's pin".

Beckett has torn the veil of multiple points of times, the veil of spoken language, the veil of theatrical language, and that of the audio and televisual.

By tearing all the veils, Beckett tears the notion of representation itself.

Quad cannot be defined according to any pre-existing artistic modes. In

Quad the modes of representations are mixed and then exhausted. It is a work for the television, which functions as a choreography. The internal

logic of the choreography is itself inspired by the variation of a theme, a genre of operation that belongs to the premises of music.

Talking about James Joyce, Beckett said:

"His writing is not about something; it is something itself..." (Bruce Nauman Catalogue, P75).

This statement illustrates Beckett's notion of representation ("is about").

Instead of something which "is about", Beckett asserts an autonomic formulation ("is something itself") without links to a represented, a meta-language, "the language of bodies walking".

In a letter in 1937 in German, he wrote: "We can not eliminate all language in one go; we must not at any cost neglect anything that contributes to its discredit. Drill holes, one after the other, till the moment when the thing which is behind starts to ooze through"(L'épuisé, P70).

In "Cap au Pire" in French, Beckett writes: "Hiatus is when the words disappear... making disobscure, making disobscure what words make obscure"(L'épuisé, P70).

Hiatus: Deleuze coins the word "gestus" with reference to the choreographic minimalism in Quad; "gestus", or hiatus of the gesture. By taking language

into question, he draws our interest towards the human ways of being, to the silent codes which populate the unawareness of human individualities:

hiatus, or lacuna of statement.

Hiatus oozes through language like reaction to a stimulus, as a formulation without instructed codes, a communication without the representational, a potentiality devoid of essence: an intensity.

Quad reveals its intention of breaking the links that exist between art and the historical logistics of representation, the combining or diversions of the mediums of representation appear simultaneously alongside the research into a sub-linguistically entity which appears to command human relations.

"Profound change in our apperception"

The socio-philosophical essay of Walter Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", explains the mutation which plays a key role in the subversion of the mediums of representation:

"Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound change in apperception, finds in

the film its true means of exercise. The film with its shock effect meets this mode of reception halfway"(The Work of Art... P233).

"The reception in a state of distraction" is a new phenomenon in respect to the relation between the spectator and the piece of art, distraction implies the opposite of instruction. Representation in the occident until the end of the nineteenth century was created according to codes established for their instructive value; the birth of the cinema gave concreteness to the questioning of these established codes of the classical mediums of creation by modifying the perceptive relation that it involved.

The cinema also calls into question the boundaries that divided preceding creative mediums because in effect this technique employs a form of presentation which brings those mediums together.

While tactile perception is an effect attributed to architecture in the occidental traditions, in the African and Asiatic cultures it also exists in the medium of music, of percussion. In percussion the tactile effect can be said to exist in the way in which we perceive our visual or sound senses. It is rhythm that makes time perceptible, rhythm has a nature which is similar to that of numerical figures "which are not tangible or intelligible, but which can be assimilated to a non tangible nature"(From Aristote in L'Homme sans contenu, P 168).

"Here the camera intervenes with the resources of its lowering and lifting, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargement and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."(The Work of Art..., P230).

With this description Benjamin lays bear the potentiality of the cinema, like mathematics and rhythm, the cinema reveals to us another facet of the human situation, the facet of "unconscious optics". The unconscious optics is that which exists at the limit of our visual perception, until the end of the Nineteenth Century the gallop of a horse was represented in painting according to an erroneous established visual code, the position of the limbs of the horse while it galloped symbolised the way in which the gallop was witnessed rather than represent the real gait of the animal, the cinema was the tool which enabled us to see how the gallop of the horse actually evolves. The Gallop of a horse occurs at a speed which makes it imperceptible to our vision; our perception of it is completed by the unconscious optic which fills the gap created by the physical limitation of human vision. But this unconscious optics also alters the way we perceive our own lives. Our own movements are realised partially unconsciously, the way we catch an object, the way we walk, it is a fact that our body cannot

take accurate measures of its own gestures. Even in existential terms this phenomenon has its importance. For Beckett it had at least been a preoccupation inspiring testimonies on the multiple descriptions of human movement like the running and dancing of Molloy, while Molloy goes to visit his mother (P93. Molloy. Editions de Minuit.1951). For the choreography of Quad, which in spite of having been a choreography of mere walkers, Beckett works with professional dancers, because the walking had to be measured taking the technique of video into account, and the "gestus" made perceptible therein.

"Tactile appropriation is accomplished by habit. As regards to architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception."(The Work of Art..., P233).

Perception as a way of habit doesn't mean for Benjamin a diminution of the intensity of what is perceived, rather the habit becomes important where a different mode of reception takes place: "reception in the state of distraction". While we speak or write, we use the language partially unconsciously, similarly, the way we live in buildings and cities does not proceed by reflection or the consciousness but by unconsciousness educated by repetition, our daily life determines the way we do things.

If, in the thirties Walter Benjamin was analysing the cinema as the media of a civilisation where the way of life is enacted by architectural habits, how do we approach the television, a media that has invaded all the fields of the domestic and public spaces?

The televisual equipment has become a part of our day-to-day life because it can be perfectly integrated into the architecture, the public spaces have integrated the video-surveillance systems, and the private spaces are connected on the televisual channels. The television like architecture is an integral part of our environment; no doubt, our perception of the television is unconscious and induces in us an unconscious behaviour.

"The aim of painting has always been the deterritorialization of faces and Landscapes, either by a reactivation of a corporeality, or by a liberation of lines or colors, or both at the same time."

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. (A Thousand Plateaus, P301)

Deterritorialization

The cinema distinguished itself by the addition of movement, time and photographic perfection, but the video integrates a new dimension to the cinema, this particularity which originated through video is the immediacy of the reception of a moving image. About photography Benjamin could say, "the process of reproduction was accelerated so enormously that it could keep pace with speech"(The work of art..., P213), we can say that the video distinguishes itself by the fact that the time of reception itself keeps pace

with speech. The video abolishes the limits of time and of distance of reception of the real, and actually annihilates notion of representation by becoming a witness of the truth. The perspective rediscovered by Alberti initiates us to the fact that the nature of the represented evolves simultaneously with its mechanised reproduction, in the way of a research, a headlong rush towards the abolition of the space-time required for representation. The perspective is a pictorial effect with such efficacy that it does not suppose an iconographic learning. The technique reproduces perfectly the visual perception that we possess of a street, or whatever line types present in a given natural space. The perfection of perspectivist representation finds all its sense and its self-idea in the vision of the city, the place of its inhabitation, the arena of its habit.

But this perfection in representing by the moving image, and its abolition of reception time, options being offered by the video media, were already inscribed in pictorial perspective when the lines of construction on the canvas announced its aspiration for perfecting representation. The innovations in perspective established a representational code that distinguished itself from the Middle age methods of representation with the fact that its reading, its understanding of reality is identical to that of our own perception. Similarly, we perceive the movie as we perceive our

dreams.

The perspective technique is a factor "deterritorialising" the work of art, from its original place: the face or the landscape is deterritorialised from the real world by the perfect replication of the inexpressible impression on our perception. However the deterritorialisation of the work of art effectuate itself as thoroughly in the video as it optimises the reception time of the cinematographic image. The deterritorialisation of the work of art is also called by Deleuze and Guatari as "involution" of the work of art. This means evolution by "contagion and not by reproduction" (G Deleuze and F Guatari *Thousand of plateaus*". P237-238).

Contagion is the term with which Deleuze explains how the individuation of the person constitutes itself. The contagion is different from heredity because it involves heterogeneous terms of communicating by symbiosis. The contamination is processed neither by mimesis (Jung) nor by analogy (structuralism) but according to an affect relationship. In fact, Deleuze and Guatari explain the power learning mechanism as distinct from that of knowledge learning. The affect creates the desire for a mimesis of something that we experience and not something that we see. This is the particularity of a space-temporal situation; the object of its mimesis is the subjectivity of the

perception, of the temporal and physical reality that contaminates our own individuality. Deleuze quotes Boulez: "Boulez distinguishes tempo and non tempo in music: the pulsed time of a formal and functional music based on values versus the non pulsed time of floating music, both floating *and* mechanic, (A Thousand of Plateaus, P262).

The contamination of individuality appears when it is in relation with this time floating which has nothing but speed or differences in dynamic".

Subjective and contemplative perception of the passing time and the changing world which contaminate our becoming (A Thousand plateaus, "the little Hans becoming", P255 and 256). Music incorporate at the same time, the objective perception of a given place and passing time; not just the time punctuated by tempo or rhythm, but the subjective perception of immediate reality as well, and takes into consideration the intensities (speed and dynamics) that our individuality grasps: the floating time or slow tempo. It is in this context that Benjamin's quotation makes full sense: "The cinema like psychoanalysis introduces us to an unconscious...."(quoted);

psychoanalysis is a mode of lecture of individual constitution (individuation) with a hereditary mode of reading (your father, your mother, pulsing...). The cinema does not function through factors of heredity but by contamination; by symbiosis of the movie; because the cinema is itself an

artificial formulation of a space-time that reveals movement: the imperceptible act of power evolving in passing time.

The state of symbiosis, a condition of contamination of individualities realised through the perfection in representing the image and passing time in cinema. While Benjamin speaks about reception in the state of distraction, we can understand this reception as contamination, tactile apperception being the specific mode of a contamination revealed in architecture, the place of the habit, of symbiosis, the scene of contamination.

Video resumes the aspiration for perfection like the perspective technique with the new manner in which it creates perfect reproduction of our perception, the unique quality of cinema lies in its ability to reproduce simultaneously the visual and temporal. It is then confirmed that the evolution or involution of the creative techniques takes place by abolishing the separation between perception and representation.

Let's take an example, an advertisement: the product, a tomato sauce; the photographic image, a Mediterranean face type; a text, "good ... Italian", briefly a collage of texts and images. Two heterogeneous elements: the tomato sauce, the Italian face; the good sauce is Italian: symbiosis by the

text; good (sauce)=beautiful (face)=Italian (sauce and face =good and beautiful); redundancy of the sign, repetition and variation of a motif: process of contamination. Advertising appropriated for a long time the collage, this practice which was born with dada and the surrealism movement can be appreciated as a cinematography inspired practise in relation to montage, montage of sound on the visual, on the mobile, brief heterogeneity, relations which don't exist in the nature: artificial relations.

Briefly THE MODE BY WHICH ADVERTISING, COLLAGES, AND BY EXTENSION CINEMA AND THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS THAT DIVIDE THE URBAN WORLD OPERATE, IS THEN CONTAMINATION.

Deleuze evokes the drug addict state: "the moment when desire and perception are merged" (A Thousand plateaus, P287), when all perceptions are desired, when all perceptions affect us and involve our individuation. The state of the drug addict is paroxysmic, its consummation intensify the mode of individuation through contagion and it is for this reason that the cinema is like a drug. In symbiosis with the movies, the individuation is also built in accordance to multiple intensities; through the involution of the

collage of sound on moving images, we are delivered to the ecstatic state of our senses.

"The work of art must mark the seconds, tenths, and hundredths of a second..." declared Steve Reich. Marking the time to perceive the interrupted involution, the incessant contagion: to perceive our individuation.

And while Beckett exhausts by variations of the motives, all the elements that Quad was composed of, he intensifies its paroxysm, the contaminating power of the elements which he disposed. The video-media is a visual and sound window which opens on a space and time, enabling us to see and hear and simultaneously draws the involution of a space-time and its particularities: "... in the television the secret of its assemblage, a pre-recorded voice for an image each time taking form; the particularities about the television work" (L' épuisé, P74).