

For a rhizomatics of contemporary subjective production:

Short homage to the pathological and obsessive compositions of Dr.Nathan

The self is a fiction. The self is a manipulation.

The self has affirmed together with its Universalization. The self is bourgeois, historically speaking; it is enlightened and reactionary also when revolutionary. The self is a monad: autarchic and impervious.

“So now I am alone in the world, with no brother, neighbour or friend, nor any company left me but my own.”^[1]

I, I, I, ... The self is Human, as well as being part of HIS democratic project of endless hierarchisation; it is a walk through a rich but passive landscape: the daydream delirium of humanist, supreme rationality – the Reason of a White, Western, Civilised Man; the topological void of an interiority that refuses to deal with the paradoxes of its outsides. The self separates by dominating otherness.

“Reason? – this is a bad business

Reason and Tongue stumble a lot!”^[2]

Syn is composition, togetherness, relationality, even after being fixed, that is *tetikos*, when relation might crystallise, temporarily. The self is synthetic only oxymoronically, following an old, compulsory push towards individuality. The self is a process of subjectivation – a subjective machine, a regime of production of subjectivity. A long living one, we can agree, which will be hopefully seen by the most as a destructive parenthesis of cosmological life in a remote future.^[3] Since it is plural, heterogenetic, and polyphonic, the minor endeavours of rhizomatics clarified us that subjectivation is constantly produced: the provisional encounter of a multiplicity of rhythms, the impermanent bordering of existential territories.^[4] And this attempt was already an ethico-onto-epistemological challenge, one to make a difference rather than reflecting upon it;^[5] a praxis against the structuring forces of a supposed scientific knowledge on the subject that have always attempted to over-determinate, and as such to produce, it.

“Cognitive capitalism, the information society, and cultural capitalism ... similarly fail to account for the relationship between capitalism and processes of subjectivation.”^[6]

A pivotal relationship this latter: the power of capital does not only operates in the economy of goods and services, or in the exchanges of financial markets; its is also a “semiotic operator.”^[7] It possesses its own mode of subjective production, of generalising the value of subjective formations. The capitalist axiomatic flexibly creates and recreates, adds and subtracts, novel *dispositifs* (apparatuses, technologies: call them as you prefer) of power, as well as re-proposing existent, and recovering already ‘obsolete’, ones: as slavery still serves aims, finding place into our closest peripheries, the neoliberal government of the individual has exacerbated this process of subjective individuality, at least from the half of last century (look at the mirror and you might glimpse the entrepreneur of your self). Whether digital

vectors of contemporary capitalist (re) production pervasively expand, its generative technologies work by selecting and repositioning the necessary subjective cogs in always remunerative, extractive but manufacturing machines. Cybernetic machines separate, define, select and recompose those partial elements that are useful for specific subjectivations, operating beyond direct human comprehension as well as intensively canalising pre-individual collective forces:

“this is as true for unemployed workers as it is for a cow.”^[8]

It is the same partial and emergent character of the processes of subjectivation to be taken advantage of. Deterritorialised parts, partial nuclei of subjectivation, are increasingly driven towards reduced compossibles, drastically selecting the contingencies that might bifurcate the existent. After his fragmentation in the mediated urban landscape of postindustrial societies, Travers has finally reached the tendency of a hypertrophic condition: a fractal implosion, which annihilates the receptive capabilities of subjectivity. The co-constitution of Travis’ subjective becomings with the medico-nuclear obsessions of Doctor Nathan, glimpsed a world-scale driven production that self-fulfils under our eyes. This is the distributed and platformised de-subjectivation of Trabert, a modulation of experiences that seems operating by an endless differentiation.

“In his way across the car park Dr Nathan stopped and shielded his eyes from the sun. ... A group of workmen on a scaffolding truck were pasting up the last of the displays, a hundred-foot-long panel that appeared to represent a section of a sand-dune. Looking at it more closely, Dr Nathan realized that in fact it was an immensely magnified portion of the skin over the iliac crest. Glancing at the billboards, Dr Nathan recognized other magnified fragments: a segment of lower lip, a right nostril, a portion of female perineum.”^[9]

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘Reveries of the Solitary Walker’, Penguin, 1979; first edition 1782.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Idylls from Messina’, unpublished in English, transl. mine, 1882.

³ Thanks Marco, you advanced this point in one of your answers to your paper at Fearing and Loathing of the Online Self, John Cabot University, Rome, May, 2017.

⁴ Félix Guattari, ‘Chaosmosis. An ethico-aesthetic paradigm’, Indiana University Press, 1995; first edition 1992.

⁵ Karen Barad, ‘Meeting the Universe Halfway. Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning’, Duke University Press, 2007.

⁶ Maurizio Lazzarato, ‘Signs and Machines. Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity’, Semiotext(e), 2014.

⁷ Félix Guattari, ‘Capitale Mondiale Integrato’, Ombre Corte, 1997.

⁸ Tiqqun, ‘Organe de liaison au sein du Parti Imaginaire. Exercices de Métaphysique Critique’, self-publishing, transl mine, 2001.

⁹ James G. Ballard, ‘The Atrocity Exhibition’, Harper Collins, 2001; first edition 1969.