



Università degli studi di Napoli
“L’Orientale”

CROSSROADS LANGUAGES IN (E)MOTION

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH by Lorenza De Marco, who won the photo-literary contest "*Naples in (E)motion*" with the photo: "**Legame di Sangue**". The motivation was:

The photo "*Legame di sangue*" by Lorenza De Marco is a metaphoric triumph of the pure essence of Neapolitan people. It moves the spirits with delicate joy and picturesque humor. De Marco fully interprets the theme of the contest. It plays with a number of metaphors that connote and denote two of the most intriguing aspects characterizing the essence of Naples: the sacred and established need, that Neapolitans experience and manifest, to put their daily endeavors in the hands of a higher power and, on the other side, the almost desecrating and humoristic reduction of the divine empowerment to deal with daily routines and needs. Sacred and profane are linked in a "blooded" connection.

The old couple, in the photo, quietly sits by one of the thousands street altars that enrich the city of Naples. Speechless, motionless, restless, fully abandoned to the divine help and intercession, they wait. Something will happen if San Gennaro, whose blood miraculously liquefies twice a year in a crescendo of prayers, devotion and abandonment, over stands, understands and intercedes. The link is there, it is a link of blood that embeds the town to the Holy Virgin Mary and the most famous of all the saints.

Sacred and profane silently coexist in the genetic profile of all Neapolitans, tied and entwisted in a "*legame di sangue*".

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FLORIANA GALLUCCIO

BETWEEN THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL WORLD. GLOBALIZATION AND THE DISCOMFORT OF EMOTIONS

Introduction.

Before I begin, I wish to thank the Organizers of the Conference, and in particular Liliana Landolfi, for having affectionately invited me to participate in this conference. Upon accepting this invitation, I had initially expressed many doubts and reservations. These trepidations were primarily provoked by feeling somewhat 'out of place', considering my training as a geographer, in a context dedicated to the analysis of discourse, languages and their acquisition. However, the explicit decision made in this conference to favor the convergence of a wide range of contributions that concern the fundamental idea of *crossroads*, with the intent of accentuating the ties that exist among the plurality of discourses, languages and the world of emotions, compelled me to accept what I consider to be a challenge from different viewpoints.

In fact, by moving from my interpretative standpoint, tied to knowledge of some of the diverse terrains that comprise today's geographical knowledge, I will attempt to outline an itinerary, albeit necessarily concise, that assumes the perspective on which since 1990 David Harvey has invited us to reflect in his renowned work, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. In his analysis, masterfully conducted with a close criticism of the Marxist system, Harvey brought into focus the changes generated by contemporary globalization: that is, the combination of processes and of material and symbolic practices that preside over the structuring of today's world. Closely aligned with this, he underlined the manner in which these transformations influence our "structures of feeling", which express themselves by means of new configurations, representations, and metaphors, activated by the social changes concerning the perception of time and space. Indeed, Harvey coined the phrase "time-space compression", a re-elaboration of the Marxist concept of "annihilation of space by time", which determines an acceleration of both the processes and rhythms of the production of capital, and of social and cultural changes.

Thus, I would like to begin with some personal considerations that are driven by the need to share the start of a dialogue centered on the relations and on the reciprocal interactions between *external world* and *internal world* for how, socially and culturally, the *reality* of these two *spaces* articulate themselves in the era of late-capitalist globalization. They continue to structure themselves in the vision of the western world, from which the cultural models that they permeated are derived, even if in the course of a millennial history that still needs to be reconstructed in

this sense, the global organization of the current system of production, of which we piercingly measure today the fracture lines and, in some ways, the crisis.

This preliminary search is oriented and nurtured by an impalpable discomfort that appears to sneak into our lives and that compels me to undertake an approach to the complexity of knowledge – mirrored in the symbolic and immaterial universe of *communication* – in its forms of social reproduction. I will try, therefore, to outline a few nodes in a provisional itinerary, which will devote attention to the crucial frontier space that separates the *internal world* of individual subjectivity and the *external world* in which social or community ties are welded, and aims to question this elusive transitional space.

It seems as though today it is possible to develop a similar vein of research, to try to clarify the unceasing recursively co-generative processes through which the orders and disorders of the world are constituted. In my opinion, this perspective can provide fertile results thanks to the *crossroads* between knowledge and a renewed dialogue between scholars grounded in various disciplines. At the same time, in order to create a shared *point de repère* (point of reference), within the consented limits of my presentation, I will proceed only with mentions and suggestions, tracing with broad strokes a number of questions which, while requiring answers, right now only envelop my doubts.

In an attempt to understand *how and if* today the fine border between the external world and the internal world has been transformed and constituted, I will point out ideas from studies that have chiefly enriched the contemporary debate in geography and in many social sciences, then connecting them to some suggestions offered by post-Freudian psychoanalysis. The wide range of emotions (and drives), through verbal and non-verbal language, contributes to the formation of the organization of the psychic apparatus, from which our subjective inner geographies take *shape*. An internal world that, agglutinating in a kaleidoscope of perceptions, sensations and emotions, renders symbolic representations of our individual lives *loci* dense with meaning, granting *form* to memories, fantasies, phantoms and feelings, in a dynamic interaction with the social organization of the external world.

Globalization and mechanisms of power in post-Fordist capitalism.

The attention in the field of geography to a dimension of space understood as relational space is a key to understanding that is drawn, with renewed force, from the debate of contemporary geography. From the original considerations of Henry Lefebvre in *The Production of space* – an unsurpassed work published at the start of the 1970s – to the critical theories elaborated in the last quarter of the Nineteenth century by radical or Marxist geography, the heuristic vale of this perspective has emerged. Other than the above cited Harvey, the Anglophone debate that initially developed at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) of Birming-

ham was crucial, as well as the geographers of Cambridge, Oxford and the Open University; or among Latin American thinkers, the contribution of Milton Santos, with his fundamental *The Nature of Space/A natureza do espaço*, 1996. A weighty set of reflections, rendered prolific also on account of gender studies and on the significant contributions of Doreen Massey, that established themselves in the last forty years principally in the context of the multifaceted and controversial postmodernist debate, marked by the cultural turn. In this debate, the theories of Foucault and then of Deleuze and Guattari became indispensable references, primarily for the centrality attributed to the dimension of space and to the decisive power/knowledge nexus.

David Harvey's reading of Foucault, concerning in particular the relationship between power and knowledge, constitutes an inescapable premise to approach the question that I wish to address. Distancing himself from the idea that power is found predominantly in the State, Foucault urges us, as Harvey notes,

to 'conduct an ascending analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been, and continue to be, invested, colonized, utilized, complicated, transformed, displaced, extended, etc. by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination. Close scrutiny of the micro-politics of power relations in different localities, contexts, and social situations leads him to conclude that there is an intimate relation between the systems of knowledge ('discourses') which codify techniques and practices for the exercise of social control and domination within particular localized contexts.¹

The current phase of globalization – born from the political-economic transformation of post-Fordist capitalism – is characterized by the intensification of the financialization processes of economy, by the indiscriminate decomposition and fragmentation of labor that entails the de-localization and de-territorialization of production, which lead to an increasingly marked lack of distinction between the multiple spheres of existence in our subjectivities. If we then turn our attention to the internal world (of emotions and the unconscious) before the "crisis of modernity" and the irruption of what Bauman called "liquid modernity", this dimension of subjectivity appeared more differentiated in diverse systems of cultural and ethical values.

On closer inspection, then, to which external world do we refer? Of which internal world do we intend to talk about? And, most importantly, in what ways

¹ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell, 1990, p. 64.

does the society of control exert its effects on the emotions of individuals and on the dynamics of our subjectivities?²

In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri, drawing on Foucault, remind us that the society of control:

(which develops at the far edge of modernity and open toward the postmodern) [...] is a type of society] in which mechanisms of command become ever more 'democratic,' ever more immanent to the social field, and distributed throughout the brains and bodies of individuals. The behaviors that produce social integration and exclusion are thus increasingly interiorized within the subjects themselves. In this society, power is now exercised through machines that directly organize the brains (in communication systems, information networks, etc.) and bodies (in welfare systems, monitored activities, etc.), toward a state of autonomous alienation from the sense of life and the desire for creativity. The society of control might thus be characterized by an intensification and generalization of the normalizing apparatuses of disciplinarity that internally animate our common and daily practices, but in contrast to discipline, this control extends well outside the structured sites of social institutions through flexible and fluctuating networks.³

Opportunism as an existential condition of postmodernity.

According to Paolo Virno, the existential and emotive condition of the *multitude* – a concept adopted to distance itself from the classical and homogenizing concept of the *people* – in the world of post-Fordist production “is characterized by the *immediate coincidence* between production and ethicality, ‘structure’ and ‘superstructure.’”⁴ The pre-existing boundaries between time of labor and non-labor, between public and private space, once differentiated and connoted by different systems of cultural, ethical and emotional values, tend to cancel themselves out and appear modified through the technologies of production, while the usual distinctions between these worlds are drastically reduced, almost to disintegration. Virno also affirms:

During the twentieth century, nihilism seemed to be a collateral counterpoint to the processes of rationalization both of production and of the State. That is to say: on one side, labor, on the other, the precariousness and changeable nature of urban life. Now, however, nihilism (the practice of not having estab-

² The concept of “society of control” was introduced by Michel Foucault, from *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) from within a reflection which, over time, was articulated surrounding the complex relationship between biopolitics and governmentality.

³ Michael Hardt, Toni Negri, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA., 2000, p. 23.

⁴ “è caratterizzata dall’*immediata coincidenza* tra produzione ed eticità, ‘struttura’ e ‘sovrastruttura’”, Paolo Virno, *Grammatica della moltitudine. Per una analisi delle forme di vita contemporanee*, Derive Approdi, Roma, 2002, p.87.

lished practices, etc.) has entered into production, has become a professional qualification, and *has been put to work*. Only one who is experienced in the haphazard changing nature of the forms of urban life knows how to behave in the *just in time* factories. [...] The advanced technologies do not provoke a 'displacement', such as to dissipate a pre-existing 'familiarity'; rather, they reduce to a *professional profile* the experience of the most radical kind of displacement itself. Nihilism, once hidden in the shadow of technical-productive power, becomes a fundamental ingredient of that power, a quality highly prized by the marketplace of labor. This is the background upon which, above all, two not exactly edifying emotional tonalities stand out: *opportunism* and *cynicism*. [...] Opportunists are those who confront a flow of ever-interchangeable possibilities, making themselves available to the greater number of these, yielding to the nearest one, and then quickly swerving from one to another. This is a structural, sober, non-moralistic definition of opportunism. It is a question of a sensitivity sharpened by the changeable *chances*, a familiarity with the kaleidoscope of opportunities, an intimate relationship with the possible, no matter how vast.⁵

Therefore, the survival strategies put in place by the *new human actors* of our time range from more or less overt discomfort to more or less silent adaptation, while an unprecedented anthropology emerged in which emotional subjective tones need to be decoded according to a different *logos*, with other frameworks.

Beneath the surface, the thrust to orient oneself in the world constantly oscillates between the aspiration to an openness towards others and the many forms of atomistic closure, which is the result of the impotence and of the nihilistic disintegration that lurks in our internal worlds. The set of values to which to we refer and the meanings that innervate our social practices seem to fall apart, day by day, and the opportunism and the cynicism about which Virno spoke, in the late-capitalist globalization era, surge to a decisive dimension of the human condition.

Media literacy to the feelings and the complexity of human beings strategically stereotypes the seemingly-simplistic and reductive virtuality of relations and,

⁵ "Durante il Novecento, il nichilismo è sembrato un contrappunto collaterale ai processi di razionalizzazione della produzione e dello Stato. Come dire: da una parte il lavoro, dall'altra la precarietà e la mutevolezza della vita metropolitana. Ora, invece, il nichilismo (abitudine a non avere abitudini, ecc.) entra in produzione, diventa requisito professionale, è *messo al lavoro*. Solo colui che è pratico dell'aleatoria mutevolezza delle forme di vita metropolitana sa come comportarsi nelle fabbriche del *just in time*. [...] Le tecnologie avanzate non provocano uno 'spaesamento' tale da dissipare una pregressa 'familiarità', ma riducono a *profilo professionale* la stessa esperienza dello spaesamento più radicale. Il nichilismo, dapprima lato in ombra della potenza tecnico-produttiva, ne diviene poi un ingrediente fondamentale, dote tenuta in gran conto nel mercato del lavoro. Questo è lo sfondo contro cui si stagliano soprattutto due tonalità emotive non proprio edificanti: l'*opportunismo* e il *cinismo*. [...] Opportunista è colui che fronteggia un flusso di possibilità sempre intercambiabili, tenendosi disponibile per il maggior numero di esse, piegandosi alla più prossima e poi deviando con prontezza dall'una all'altra. È, questa, una definizione strutturale, sobria, non moralista dell'opportunismo. In questione è una sensibilità acuminata per le mutevoli *chances*, una dimestichezza con il caleidoscopio, una intima relazione con il possibile in quanto tale.", Paolo Virno, cit., pp. 88-90.

through digital and communication technologies, replaces the *virtual* evanescence relating to the wealth of every human encounter, previously lived in person, *in* and *out* of the concrete existence of bodies. This is the area that witnesses the emergence of inconveniences, dystonia and dyscrasias: signs of *disorientation*, of which one cannot grasp the full scope and it is difficult to perceive how, in an unreflective manner, this *disorientation* is reiterated.

Nonetheless, language cannot be separated from the body and at the same time the body – a sensitive interweaving of perceptions, emotions, feelings and of analog and logic mental functions – does not lie. Thus, if we assume that the body is a residual place of authenticity, with its coded language that signals the conditions of well-being or subjective distress, and if our body gives life to emotions, feelings and thoughts, how do we decipher the subtle perception of their disintegration when bodies manifest – via various forms of pathologies – a continuous division between the *inside* and the *outside*?

Once again it is David Harvey, in some of his later work, who supports that the body has now become the choice place of the strategy of the accumulation of capital: space necessary for conceptualization in order to understand the ongoing social, economic and cultural transformations. Harvey argues, “[c]onceptualizing the body (the individual and the self) as permeable with respect to the environment permits the articulation, in a very particular way, of the ‘self-other’ relation (including the relationship with ‘nature’).”⁶

The crisis of the meta-psychical and metasocial guarantors.

Regarding the relationship of self-other, with reference to the formation of the psychic apparatus and the structuring of the Id, the original insights of the brilliant French psychoanalyst René Kaës appear extremely fruitful. Kaës’s work has long been referenced to understand the genealogy of intersubjective psychic relations and how they function. The French psychoanalyst, tackling in his long research and in clinical practice the theme of the “unconscious alliances” within groups, speaks of the importance and of the social value of the *meta-psychical guarantors* and of the *metasocial guarantors*. He utilizes the concept of the *metasocial guarantors*, elaborated by Alain Tourain, for whom these guarantors represent

the great structures of categorization and regulation of social and cultural life. Their function is to guarantee the sufficient stability of social formations, to base them in a center that orders them and provides them with a solid legitimacy. [... Current] transformations that are changing modern and postmodern

⁶ “[c]oncettualizzare il corpo (l’individuo e il sé) come permeabile rispetto all’ambiente permette di articolare, in modo molto particolare, la relazione ‘sé-altro’ (compresa la relazione con la ‘natura’)”, David Harvey, *Il corpo come strategia dell’accumulazione*, Edizioni Punto Rosso, Milano, 1997, p. 12.

societies regard those great structures for the categorization and regulation of training and of the social process: myths and ideologies, beliefs and religion, rituals and institutions, authority and hierarchy. A decisive feature of modernity was the collapse of the beliefs and of the 'grand narratives' (Michel Serres) that furnished the identifying references necessary for social and psychological stabilities.⁷

Kaës thus identified the *metapsychic guarantors* as the formation and the psychic processes of the whole world "on which the psyche of every subject is founded and structured."⁸ The vacillation and the collapse of values, of the symbolic systems and of the identification tied both to the *metapsychic guarantors* and the *metasocial guarantors*, according to this eminent current in post-Freudian psychoanalysis, distinguishes the current postmodern condition, generating what Julia Kristeva defined as "the new maladies of the soul."⁹

Therefore, questioning the ways in which the *crasis* – that is realized in the society of control – between the subjective dimension (intrapersonal) and social dimension (interpersonal) is urgent. A fracture that is articulated along the fine border that is the threshold of emotions, a powerful interface between the internal and external world.

Thus, we should once again turn our gaze to the dynamics and the shifting configuration of such a subtle border, and on the re-articulations of this third space.

⁷ "le grandi strutture di inquadramento e di regolazione della vita sociale e culturale. La loro funzione è quella di garantire una stabilità sufficiente alle formazioni sociali, di fondarle in un centro che le ordina e di dotarle di una solida legittimità. [...Di fatto, le odierne] trasformazioni che sconvolgono le società moderne e postmoderne riguardano le grandi strutture d'inquadramento e di regolazione delle formazioni e del processo sociale: miti e ideologie, credenze e religioni, riti e istituzioni, autorità e gerarchia. Un dato decisivo della modernità è stato il crollo delle credenze e delle 'grandi narrazioni' (Michel Serres) che fornivano i riferimenti identificatori necessari alle stabilità sociali e psichiche", René Kaës, "La trasmissione delle alleanze inconsce, organizzatori metapsichici e metasociali", in AA.VV., *Generi e Generazioni. Ordine e disordine nelle identificazioni*, Centro Psicoanalitico di Roma, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2008, pp. 25-41, ivi p. 25-26.

⁸ "su cui si fonda e si struttura la psiche di ogni soggetto", ivi, p. 27.

⁹ "le nuove malattie dell'anima", Francesco Conrotto, "Conclusioni. Vicissitudini dell'identificazione all'epoca della postmodernità", in AA.VV., cit., pp.147-151, ivi p. 149.