

HERESIES. A CRITIQUE OF MECHANISMS

BY JL MARZO

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"That crowd of idiots who find the film beautiful or poetic, when basically it is a passionate, desperate summons to murder."

Luis Buñuel on *Un chien andalou*

Heresy; Greek *Hairesis*, lit., act of choosing, cf. *Hairein* to choose.

To choose. To desire. To be. Capital sins which summarise that most serious and dangerous of knowledges: the self. "I am". A monstrous punishment established by a human, all too human God. God set up the trap because he was afraid of being human, because he did not want to be God. This trap represents the concept of power and the method granted to us by which we may think of ourselves: mechanisms, things... A universe built so that territories might be organised in a certain way, territories designed to cover up the only possible evidence: nothingness.

Without a doubt, the machinery, the form which our expression takes, the technology of our acts is both the lock and the key of our submission and of our freedom. Heresy, choice, is condemned because these mechanisms are unveiled by its presence. A monopoly of thought, burning on the bonfire, is created, but techniques based on reason are also invented which are able to question such thought. It is hardly surprising, then, that the institutionalisation of the charge of heresy is based fundamentally on control of how the mechanisms are perceived. Behind the accusation of heresy there lies not only a wish to force into submission those who do not adhere to truths which are "ineffable" –being based on their own indemonstrability– but also on the maintenance of the structures and clockwork which support them and

keep them going. To say that God does not exist is not considered by the Church to be a heretical act, but rather a blasphemous one. To describe the Church as a farcical organisation inasmuch as it no longer represents a given series of values is certainly considered to be heretical. The paradox of heresy is to be found lying between the control emanating from rules and techniques which are exercised by mankind in order to overcome these very rules and techniques: on the one hand, knowledge of the mechanisms "rules" our lives, and, on the other, helps to subvert them. And here you have the link that binds power and desire.

This, then, is intended to be the conceptual base of the works presented here: this is the background to a meditation which does not only wish to question those constituent truths which were invented by institutions (us) –for the simple reason that they do not exist– but which prefers to focus our thesis on the mechanisms which establish and legitimate such truths, mechanisms which could be defined as the technology of behaviour, and – inasmuch as the latter needs to be expressed– as the technology of expression.

An analysis of the reality of heresy and its implications not only for society –be they political or representative –but also in the context of techniques of the self as communicating entities, cannot take place unless it is restricted to a precise historical archeology and certain circumstantial premises which not only qualify the meaning of what is meant by being heretical, relativising it thoroughly, going beyond the limits of fixed doctrinal bodies, but also never cease to substantiate the subject, according to the techniques employed. To study heresy implies an examination of the substrata which condition the mesh that binds us, while appreciating at the same time the means of expression of those who have established their lives –consciously or unconsciously– beyond the reach of power–based desire. Heresy can only be analysed in a given area, and never in global terms, given

that the mechanisms involved always differ and are always set in a particular way. This thought "concerning what is close" is not concerned with thinking about that which is false but rather about looking at the evolution of the rhetorical constructions and the instruments of thought which belong to power.

However, "Heresies" is not a work of historical research, as might first appear to be the case. We could define it with greater exactitude as a mirrored, multiple and flexible reflection on the incardination of behaviour which is considered heretical in the world of social relations, and, fundamentally, in the field of representation. It is not hard to guess how difficult it is to analyse a series of "differential" forms of behaviour when there is no moral centre available to act as a mirror and thus categorise these variations. How can any visual, verbal or textual research be undertaken if it is based on a premise which, like ours, denies any form of central order which could prefigure or condition ethical theses? Without a doubt, we will have to employ some kind of technique, which we are not afraid to qualify as an instrument, which will examine as thoroughly as possible the experiences of what Foucault called the technologies of the self and which we also wish to extend to the technologies of the "voice of the self".

The instrument in question owes much to what has been qualified as rhetoric. Not because rhetoric is a simple means of persuasion, but rather because within rhetoric a certain closeness to the truth may be discerned which can defend its own legitimacy against that of the truth itself and of the certainty of that which is proven and known. A transparent (or trans-apparent) mechanism which sets a range of techniques in motion which do not seek to attain a determined truth but rather to reveal the processes followed by us in order to suit our own discursive ends. This transparency is, in our opinion, thoroughly terroristic, because when the mechanism of a clock is revealed, forcing it to stop for a few moments, we can intervene, placing elements of confusion into it, strategically, particles that raise contradictions in

the economy of the logico-productive discourse. This transparency is parasitical, but also tragic (though not pessimistic), given that there is nothing to see once the curtain has been raised. Tragic terrorism consists of "making that which was known in the past expressible once more, and, by not imposing a knowledge which may be dispensed with by he who must suffer it"¹. To make the inordinate pass from silence to word, and to make it possible for this word to be more representative than representable. This is our aim. This is our *hairesis*.

Jorge Luis Marzo

Curator of the exhibition.

["Heresies" consists of two different parts: on the one hand, a series of artists present a group of works through which they express multiple points of view and meditations regarding subjects and realities which have brought the discourses established by culture and power into conflict: the body, technology, tradition, the media, madness, the guises of power, etc. On the other hand, the presence of these artists gave rise to the possibility of carrying out parallel textual analyses which will complement the debate on heresy from different perspectives. These are the texts which follow.]²

HERESIES: A CRITIQUE OF MECHANISMS

by Jorge Luis Marzo

I. From morals to the spectacle (and vice-versa)

Galileo was accused of heresy for defending a theory which went against the teachings of the Catholic Church. Having said which, many philosophers and scientists –some of them with links to the Curia– had already noted down similar arguments some time previously. Aristotle himself, "the Philosopher", was aware of this theory. So what was the real meaning behind the accusation against Galileo? More importantly, how could Galileo's arguments really, directly, affect the fundamental dogma of the Church? Would the simple fact that the Earth was not at the centre of the Universe negate the Christian doctrine and dispense with the existence of God, the Holy Trinity, the miracle of the Resurrection? Evidently not. So what was it, then, that posed a risk to the Vatican, and to Galileo's own life? Why were Albigensians, Cathars, Dulcinians, and the followers of other socio-religious doctrines eradicated from the communities in which they had been born? And what about Savonarola?

Or Bruno? Or why did the very Sixtine Chapel itself nearly receive the death penalty when it was viewed as heretical almost a century after it had been built? Why have anarchism and Marxism been considered "the great heresies of our time" by dictators and capitalists, among others?

Is heresy a way of thinking that is opposed to conventions which have been established by the community? If this were the case, what is known as the "progress of ideas" would never have taken place in the history of mankind. But this process has taken place, as ideas have been conceived in order to improve on previous ideas and on the received common sense of a previous era which had once been solidly established. If it is true that ideas renew codes, and everything points to this being a dogma inherent in our current way of thinking, it would appear that we have already taken measures to protect ourselves against eventual attacks on our common social consensus. Having said which, it is also true that we tend to leave on one side

those archaeologies which would enable us to observe what we describe as mere "natural cyclic disturbances" from a closer viewpoint.¹

Are we then dealing with ideas which are opposed to those which have been imposed on us by the powers that be? The coercion exercised by power, by the state, does not distinguish between supposedly less offensive malfactors and more pernicious types of heretic. Prisons are full of people whose backs are turned to the opinions of the powers that be. They have no opposite opinion because they have no opinion at all. And not only because they have been deprived of a voice, but also because the actions which they undertook and which have led to them being punished were never intended as challenges to a set of imposed ideas. Many prisoners are completely unaware that such an imposition exists.

In that case, **are heresies specific actions the physical manifestation of which threatens to destabilise the legislation of the powers that be?** Yes and no. The difference lies when recourse is had to the conscience, to the ethics of the individual who carries out such actions. It depends on the margin of choice of these individuals when they decide to act. The heretical, deconstructive, terrorist idea exists inasmuch as it is expressed or communicated. The heretical value of something becomes apparent when it becomes physical, tangible. Without the word, this value is not held to be dangerous, alive though it might be in the hearts of the people. Activity: the building up of heresy. This is the heart of the matter. Action is not abstract, it is concrete and definable because it is brought about by a specific body, in an exercise of free will. To this body –this set of decisions and physical tactics– we give the name of individual. And this individual, able to choose freely, is able to make him or herself understood. **The individual who is aware of his or her own words is a heretic, even though he or she might have nothing to say.** If these words happen to be expressed "casually", without there being any kind of awareness of identity and ethical autonomy,

then the powers that be think in terms of marginalised people, of the lumpen, of moral scum. This self pushed to one side, unaware of its words, nonetheless encloses a tremendous depth: there is nothing more dangerous for the powers that be than the existence of a life which is ignorant of power, when the *raison d'être* of the state is its ubiquity. For which reason, perhaps, **a heretic is also someone who is unaware of his or her words.** This anomie existence, held to be erratic and without any ultimate aims, can be anticipated by means of a simple operation: representation. If we can manage to bring those who do not share our morals onto the level of representation, the "horror" of the former can be tamed. It is then that we can hear these "proofs of truth" without entering into conflict; the insults that flow from the mouth of the jester do not bother us. We are dealing here with a form of hypocrisy that allows us to hear something without having to confront the person who is saying it.

Heresy is the name which the powers that be use to qualify any activity which is terroristic because it is based on the self, on autonomy, on identity; a self free of the umbilical cord which, when it speaks, questions the most sacred aspect of social order: the certain knowledge that the language used is the same for everyone. To speak outside the terms of the given language, or of an existence which has been imposed by force, is to place a direct interdiction on the forms which the state has agreed to use in order to explain things. **The history of heresy is a history of the critique of the mechanisms which govern attitudes in society:** linguistic or scientific machinery that are at the service of a political planning of behaviour.

Our weapon is an archaeology of disorder which can only be social, because if not, how in hell's name should we talk about what is ours? How are we to articulate our *verisimilitude* in the face of the *objective truth*?

"To deny a truth revealed by God is an error of faith and an error which is close to heresy, but is not yet heresy, because it is missing a second element which is the definition of the infallible magistry of the Church over this divinely revealed truth. True heresy is a conscious and deliberate negation of divine truth as propagated by the magistry of the Church."²

This is the dictionary definition of heresy. In brief, it concludes that in order for heresy to exist there must be a negation of the truth as it has been promulgated by the Church. An injurious comment, a blasphemy, offends the honour of the Church and even that of God, but it does not constitute heresy unless this honour has been made articulate through a given legislation. The heretic questions the technology of such legislation. Already in the early years of Christianity, the first movements which were held to be heretical by high-ranking ecclesiastical circles, centred their beliefs on a critique of the methods of communication that were used in order to make the divine truth known and to relate it to certain specific physical realities. So it was that the *Paulines*, around 250 A.D., advocated psychotherapy and certain economical changes in order that they might integrate themselves more fully into those social structures which they wished to penetrate. Or the *Palestines*, who maintained that it was necessary to employ a certain amount of violence, given that, for them, a strong church and the achievement of certain political aims were inextricably linked.³

This fact has been partially overlooked in most philosophical and sociological treatises, given that such texts have been concerned mainly with an analysis of the mechanisms within the discourse in question and not those beyond it; a closer look has been taken at the souls than at the bodies. Technologies of application of these linguistic structures, inasmuch as they were physical, exogamic, would appear to have been thought of as elements which had more in common with politics and science as practical disciplines than with any form of ideal discourse. Idea-application has never been an

equation especially favoured by philosophers, nor even by the social sciences, which have often done little more than extend duty-based morals in order to establish –in a positivist manner– how the discourse in question should be applied. In brief, ethical and critical debates have joined hands in order to achieve a rational equity, at the cost of losing their own violence. Violence has been considered the most damaging technique to use when creating situations in which opinions may be given: "...each one tries to eliminate what it finds most disturbing in itself under the name of the other, and what distresses both about each other is a certain collusion with violence. In effect, ethics expels its ethical substance as the violence of critical judgement, and criticism struggles to free itself of its own violence by rejecting ethics".⁴ This negation of violence has given rise to a certain obfuscation regarding the intention of certain debates to reach the stage of genuine political action. Although they may have been heading in the direction of a de-construction of the truth, by analysing the logical processes which define it, it is also true that the mechanisms for applying this truth are left to one side, given that facing up to them means adopting a terroristic outlook, something which the intellectual class looks unfavourably upon, given its instrumentalist and popularizing world-view, based on its supposed technical function.

Within what is known as the "progress of ideas", it is clear that philosophical discourses –we will leave aside the more openly theological ones for the time being– have been built up on the basis that ideas have always existed with reference to previously given premises, to certain preceding ideas. Obviation of breaks in the structures of thought, as it has always been believed that history is something linear and continuous, has led to the conception of idea in relation to its use, without bearing in mind that use also implies a history of that use, as Wittgenstein (or Gracian) would have put it; the mechanisms which have been established in order to make such use possible.

A breakdown of the concept of heresy –at least by means of certain shared elements in the models we wish to select– cannot be alien to that conception of truth which language imposes on every era. The charge of heresy, both now and in the past, presupposes the existence of a moral centre as a base for determining good, evil, utility, beauty, etc. The person who opts out of this agreed moral order, the person who "chooses" by simply using his or her own "menu", is a heretic. Previous to the techniques proscribed by the elite, logically, there existed ideas which were used to justify the former. To the extent that ideas are defended by figures or groups of certain figures, with their own ethical and experiential codes, such ideas are –"objectively"– difficult to prove, whether affirmatively or critically. There is no sense in defending the ethical autonomy of the individual only when the latter exercises no social power. The powerful –even the greatest state murderers– also have a right to exist, despite the repercussions that their applications have had on society. In other words, the truth defended by each person is fully legitimate if we apply the pattern of personal ethical autonomy to it. Matters get complicated –and it is at this point that we wish to complicate them– when we try to observe how this legitimacy has come about as part of a global anti-relativist move in the direction of moral choice.

The assumption on the part of power –of the state and the institutions which support it– of a coercive base for implementing the decisions and wishes of the social elites would never have come about if the ideas which underpin the entire structure had recognised their own relativity. Police, jails, and the psychiatrist owe their existence to the awareness on the part of the powers that be of the lack of objectivity of their own existential base. This undoubtedly occurs because ruling institutions are not abstract entities but the end results of personal decisions that have been aligned and linked up to each other. Without a doubt, the state requires objective techniques of implementation which dissuade people from placing the universal legitimacy

of the ideas of the powers that be in doubt. These techniques can be defined basically as a process of ensuring that individual personal wills coincide and identify themselves with the will of the powers that be, on a basis that Kant formulated at the start of our industrial era: "Work in such a way that you end up by wishing that as much of your action as possible will become universal law".

We could point to three main stages in the development of techniques of verisimilitude designed to legitimate general truths or dogmas which have been imposed one after the other by the agents of control: that of Logic (moral rhetoric) during the era of political theology, after the fall of the Roman Empire and lasting for the whole of the medieval period; that of Science (political anti-rhetoric), from the 16th century up until the present day, and that of Communication (amoral rhetoric) which has arisen in the second half of this century.

In brief, the era of logic laid the foundations of a discourse based on interpretation of memory; the further away they were from the centre, the less objective their language and the more they were able to instal subjective moral hierarchies. Science, for its part, resulted in a discourse –based on political implementation of the same– which led to the establishment of control mechanisms whose scientific outlook gave them a legitimacy –based on its objectivisation– which was unavailable to a merely persuasive rhetoric of intentions. Restricted to demonstrating that which was empirically conclusive, only the direct control mechanisms of social machinery could be defended as legitimate given that they answered directly to scientific categories: quantification, results achieved according to previously established schedules, statistics, programmes applied in response to previous programmes, etc.

Communication, which was directly related to this scientific anti-rhetoric, also used mechanisms as a foundation for its legitimacy, but without applying

concepts of a moral nature to them. The force of the spectacle, once deployed, sucks absolutely everything into it, and defines the communication strategy of the powers that be, and its implementation. That which cannot be included in this whole, when everything has been placed there exclusively for our enjoyment and advantage, is stigmatised because it does not correspond to the public good which has been approved by the "whole" community. But let us continue with Galileo for a little while.

One afternoon, Galileo was visited by the rulers of Rome in order that they might hear, with their own ears, the observations of the physicist concerning his "strange" theories regarding the Earth's movement. Galileo revealed the telescope, standing behind a curtain, pointing to the sky, and invited his visitors to look through it. Nobody did so. After ridiculing such an "absurd" apparatus, they left the room, openly joking about what they considered to be a "clownish" scene.⁵ This well-known episode is an almost perfect illustration of the true idiosyncrasy of that which is considered to be heretical. The image of the telescope represented neither more nor less than the appearance of the arch enemy: the mechanism. Galileo had created a technology which was impervious to rhetoric, or to any form of debate, which, next to the reality it offered, would have lost all meaning. The Church perceived the danger at once and accused Galileo of heresy, forcing him to make a public retraction. Those lenses not only meant that power was no longer legitimately in the right, but it also obliged the political authorities to make use of certain empirical techniques, to make use of equally objective mechanisms. From this moment on, power could no longer have recourse to a realistic rhetoric based on memory and transhistorical experience, rather it had to base its *raison d'être* on the creation of techniques which could not be rejected given their provable, scientific nature. A single mechanism was able to undo a theoretical argument of almost ten centuries standing, but this also meant that it became a tool at the service of an exclusive rightness.

Galileo's optics marked the metaphorical end to and beginning of two different forms of legitimisation. Before the emergence of technology applied to science, the Church and feudal states based their doctrine on the formulation of an "apparent" discourse –a moral rhetoric– which was capable of convincing everybody. Obviously, physical coercion was used when dealing with those who did not believe in the rules or who were ignorant of the dogma in question, but we still cannot speak of an institutionalised technology in the strict sense of the phrase. We have already seen how the hierarchy of crimes in the pre-modern era was completely out of proportion with the punishments meted out. Often robbing a horse and killing a Cardinal would be punished in a similar terminal fashion.⁶ This implied that all crimes were visualised as being on the same level, given that any distinction made between the seriousness of different crimes was largely moral; and not legal, as is the case nowadays. Rhetoric, based largely on biblical interpretations and on the teleological immanence of power, was the weapon used to maintain social control.

When scientific technology emerged around the 16th century, a twin phenomenon took place, involving, on the one hand, the absorption of this technology –as a set of practical and reproducible techniques– on the part of the state, as a method for implementing law and order, and, on the other, the development of science itself as a focal point for revolution and newness, for heresy.

The understanding shown by the modern state –that was beginning to emerge by the end of the Renaissance– of the importance of the scientific viewpoint as the main defender of Truth, can be understood as the desire of the state to replace a rhetorical, linguistic system such as the medieval one, a system which was now completely out of kilter given that it could no longer offer truths as certain as those provided by science. The development and production of objective mechanisms provided a long-term insurance policy

that would guarantee the rule of order. Machiavelli was one of the great engineers of this operation. Statistics, reasons of state, economical programmes, the constitution of law, the rules of democracy; all of these have been formulated on the basis of their scientific characteristics, which are conclusive regarding the results. There was no longer any question of persuading people by means of allusions to hellfire or divine punishments carried out by the "secular arm". The state, the social and economic elites, all based their power on two genuinely new fundamental norms, just as the times required: the public good, and the law. The former being the soul of the state, and the latter, its active body.

It is true that the concept of the public good –as promulgated by the British empiricists in the 17th and 18th centuries, especially by Hume– remained a rhetorical exercise despite being legitimised by the "will of the individual to organise himself", and not by memory. Both Hume as well as Locke knew that no ultimate reason could be stated with complete certainty, or, as they themselves put it, "substance does not come from within but is shaped according to outside circumstances". Locke, however, was already aware of the the profound influence of mechanisms on the collective unconscious when he pointed out that the concept of human freedom should not be understood in terms of "free choice" but of "freedom of action" in accordance with free choice.⁷ In other words, choosing was not as important as having access to the appropriate tools for carrying out an autonomously made decision. This viewpoint naturally implied an extremely acute critique, but also gave rise to another major problem. Locke argued that political sovereignty was founded on the consent of those governed, on the perception held by the latter of their own government. But consent to what? To a set of morals or to the techniques of implementation? In all events, consent can never be little more than the acceptance of rulings which come from "above", of techniques offered by the powers that be as a model for relations between

people and institutions. And it is precisely in the 18th century when these techniques come to be analysed and handled by specialised technicians. It is no coincidence that the concept of humanistic and social disciplines emerges from within enlightened and academic European and American circles later on. Nor is it a coincidence that Locke had a tremendous influence on the fledgling United States, where political theory was centred more on elements of "action" rather than those involving "choice", right from the beginning.

A little while ago, we commented on the fact that the appearance of scientific technology was not only used to justify the ideas of those in power, but that it also generated a paradox which was difficult to resolve: the capacity of science to defy that very power. This would give rise to a virtuality in the political use of science itself. And as a consequence, a conception of relations between science and power which would lie in the direction of unification, of complete integration. The greater the mutual absorption, the more difficult the emergence of any kind of heresy. Foucault's studies of this question are stunningly eloquent. The power of science, established by means of its neutral –but imperative– logic, gave way in reality to the concept of political jurisprudence, in the sense that it incorporated new elements into the system before such new elements could bring into question any of the systems of control technologies. The fact that science was in the hands of experts for most of the 19th century and, above all, for all of the 20th century, placed the use of science in an amoral situation; in other words, the ignorance of contemporary scientific processes on the part of most people – who, however, make use of them in their daily lives– has brought about a fundamental unmentionability regarding any cultural evaluation of this scientific presence. The impossibility of trying to define the genuine –and objective– structure of day-to-day mechanics is a result of our having placed this scientific world in the area of representation. Our ignorance of the workings of a simple clock, a television set, telephone or computer requires a

technical, educational explanation of this reality –and not of its use, with which we are all familiar– on the part of the specialists. As a detailed, professional description of these mechanisms is useless, given our inability to understand it, the discourse offered to us is placed on a level of representation, of verisimilitude.⁸

(However, we would like to point out a paradox: is it not also very true that specific knowledge of any given discipline is necessary if we are to deconstruct the same? Or do we not need to know anything about the material we wish to destroy? If I criticise current television programming policies without any previous knowledge of how they function, what kind of discourse is it that I am referring to? Is it judgement alone that transforms the target of my criticism, or is it my direct action which manages to formulate the latter? Moreover, and this is a question which we shall return to: if I formulate a critical discourse with the aim of deconstructing a given policy, I should use some of the established mechanisms, because if not, how will the others know precisely what it is that I am criticising? Possible Double Paradox (PDP): the critical discourse that continues being true to life, continues in the direction of logical discourse.).

As we said, this merging of science and the public or political good – based on the installation of scientific invention as a progressive and liberal element in the machinery of political power– has come to form the tool through which coercive morality has based its verisimilitude. And communication has been and is the formula used to achieve the implantation of such morality.

From the rhetoric of logic to the anti-rhetoric of science, we have moved on to the creation of a complete verisimilitude. A verisimilitude which rules over all not because reality has disappeared but because reality has become totally de-functionalised. If science offered a discourse based on "certainty" which functioned as an alibi for the morality that sponsored it as a political

good, communication has created a new set of references: the introduction of autonomous judgement, of relativity even within science itself. The new communication and information systems which have emerged since the Second World War and, above all, since the end of the 1960s, have absorbed ethical relativity, but without rejecting its actual technological structure, which remained objective and quantifiable in terms required by the power structure: communication based on objectivity must of necessity lead to a realistic discourse, to a certain reality, and one which is therefore measurable and correctable by means of vaccines and antidotes. What does this mean? That the implantation of the amoral in the realm of the scientific, of the technological, strengthens the moral character of science itself, its objective condition. If everything can be said on television, then television is a socially perfect organ given that it does not make any a priori judgements. In the name of the "common good", now under the guise of "everybody without exception will participate", communications technology has reached the level of a passive tool for obtaining a consensus and a total democracy. From "everybody down there" to "everybody here next to me". Rhetorical discourse has renewed itself through representation, but with one considerable difference: whereas politics –when it used science as an instrument of legitimisation– did indeed have a moral component given that its power was meted out using extirpation as a basic premise, the fusion between the two leads to the spectacle, to the absolute integration of what had previously been suppressed. But what is more, there is another important difference: science is no longer that potential enemy of the ruling class thanks to the spectacle which dramatises value judgements –especially those of the powers that be– and strips them of reality, generating acquisitions of new elements, which may be on a small scale but are constant and continuous. Science and Politics establish their pacts thanks to the need that both share to keep up with the times. And where there is a need to keep up, nothing is ever fixed or true;

edges blur and reality becomes probable, apparent, likely. To the extent that there is nothing behind the mechanisms, the power of seduction, of rhetoric, moves on to the next interconnection between these mechanisms, to the risky vertigo of waves. The spectacle of the mechanisms. Completely amoral. Nothing but mechanisms, even if they are operated from behind. Mechanisms, however, which have been legitimised as a spectacle for the public good. We cannot help but stress something which is obvious: a choice can be made, *hairesis* may be practiced, only from among that which is known. In this sense, power "naturally" tends to keep its formulas hidden, so that heretical attacks tend to be formed on a basis of ingenuity, lacking knowledge of the techniques used by power. It is no coincidence that the main weapon used against heresy for many centuries has been wielded by the educational system, or rather by the lack of a real educational system. So, we can also see that nowadays the main technical resource of institutional persuasion is information, global communication, belonging to a representational world. To the extent that everything we can know or see turns us into the accomplices of knowledge and of vision. The desired objective of those in power nowadays is to palm happiness off on us through mechanisms, in order to assure our complicity. "Marketing research probes, prods and diagnoses the consumer body to ensure that it is still operating at a healthy level of desire for the commodities it produces. The result is a subject with carefully monitored dreams of happy-ever-after."⁹

Behind the mechanisms lie nothing except intentions, one after the other. The freezing of the mechanisms can help us to break down the monopoly of such decisions. But what can be done with the mechanisms afterwards? They were created for the self-power tandem as a system of self-control references. This same ethical doubt regarding the existence of the machine is used by the economic elites to relativise our perceptions and make them appear weaker than they really are. And this takes place by

means of communication, of the verisimilitude of the spectacle. In the spectacle, reality and non-reality are confused to the extent that that which is virtual blossoms into a central reference point. Political virtuality has become a vital element in the representation of power. "This is what is available, because it is virtual".

On the other hand, through representation, potentially heretical behaviour is also weakened using a process of monumentalisation, of the construction of symbols which "say something" in themselves. Being symbols, they are subject to a predetermined order which endows them with significance "in a certain way". Some feminist analyses have made some extremely interesting comments on this aspect of the matter. For example, the way in which Enlightenment and romantic strategies have tried to justify the exclusion of women from public life when the main subject for debate was, precisely, the universalisation of Reason: "The natural mother is therefore, paradoxically, an adopted mother, a symbolic wet-nurse, who is represented as the natural begetter of the civil pact, begotten as she is in her turn as a seal of approval and legitimisation of the pact in the same movement used by the patriarchal pact to beget itself. For this reason the woman does not form part of the pact, as she is the symbolic guarantee that this pact is a "result of nature";¹⁰ "This myth of regeneration based on nature explains why women have been simultaneously excluded from politics and elevated to the rank of goddesses of Freedom, Equality, Virtue or Reason."¹¹

Power has already understood that we all have our own ethics and sense of autonomy and that the criterion of the common good does often not apply, which is why it makes a gift of happiness and panders, in virtual terms, to potential customers: "You want more, of what there is. As this is what there is, you want it all." This projection of the outlook of those in power –referring to a "reunited" understanding of the social masses– is expressed, paradoxically, by means of an appeal to the specific, to individuation. The

mass is not conceived as a homogenous block but as the sum of a multitude of individuals, and thus it is necessary to understand the type of message that they wish to get across to us: "Vote! Buy! Be!". A uniform projection would be highly damaging because it would not reach a participatory level of conscience in the reader, in the spectator. On the other hand, the call to the specific, to the value of personal autonomy, works perfectly as a rhetorical bond. The less life is thought of as a complex whole, and the greater the tendency to see it as a productive sum of differentiated circumstantials, the more viable it is in political terms, given that we are unable to view matters abstractly and to create the distance required for generating criticism. Barthes was intuitively aware of this fact when he spoke of reference to the specific in contemporary thought: "[...] it is enough to remember that in the ideology of our present era, obsessive references to "the specific" –inasmuch as these are rhetorically insisted upon in social sciences, in literature, in behaviour– are always armed like a war machine against meaning, as if that which is alive had forfeited the right to be able to signify (or be significative) and vice-versa."¹² Therefore anti-rhetoric, based on the capacity for action on the part of techniques that aimed for a "natural" social order, gives way to an amoral rhetoric, based on an offer of choice. This offer is in direct political accord with a supposed social demand; the right to representation that everybody admits is theirs is no longer generated on a basis of morality, of truth, but on one of virtuality, and not only as a simple technical effect produced by the media, but also as the only possible strategy for psychological interpretation: if there is no psychocentric moral upon which we can structure what we see, then how can a logical perception with the other, with others, be established in the context of social communication –of socio-political relations designed with the pretext of communication– if not by means of verisimilitude, of a technique which can make us and make them credible? This verisimilitude, this appearance of certainty is no longer supported either by the idea of truth –inasmuch as truth

is a value judgement that may be demonstrated by a rule which has been accepted or imposed as a standard- but proposes a new dichotomy (and it is thanks to the knowledge that there is a new dichotomy that we know that the powers that be continue to be moralising and Manichean), namely: reality and non-reality.

Reality now emerges with an entirely new gamut of rhetoric handled using new concepts of truth. A society which has imposed upon itself a series of technologies through which everything ends up integrated in representation, and which assumes that it is able to verify the existence of everything by itself, will tend to view truth in relation to its manifestation in terms of imagery. However, if everything manifests itself through images, everything also becomes, real, certain, or, at all events, virtual, credible. Nothing could describe better the desires which emerge from contemporary political dogma. Everything is real, as everything is showable, sayable, objectively representable. This reality is mathematically identified as true, and, therefore, as legitimate.

This, then, is what the amoral rhetoric of the language of monopoly consists of: everything is valid because everything is constructed with a view to being communicable. Power explains itself through representation. First, because power does not *exist in itself* but only does so through its mechanisms, and second, because within representation, within verisimilitude, it is safe from any form of heresy, as it has made all of us participants. Lacan pointed to the existence of a third "symbolic" dimension lying between the real and imaginary ones. This symbolic dimension is the registry of language, of law, of power, the outside place in which people must not relate to each other on a "one-to-one" basis but by means of culturally-established codes.

The era of communication has completely co-opted our capacity for being heretical, basically due to two perpendicular reasons. First, because heresy has been permanently defined by institutions as the "eretica novità", as

that which emerges in order to question mechanisms which have become established by tradition: "Prophanas, dice, vocum novitates. Delle voci, cioè la novità delle cose, dei Domini, dell sentenze, le quali sono alla vecchiezza, ed all'antichità contrarie".¹³ If novelty has taken on the likeness of heresy, how can a contemporary heresy be formulated when our current tradition is based on appreciation of the new, of the continuous flux of that which can be surpassed, on the smoking ashes of that which until just a moment ago was the "very latest" thing. And, second, because once it is clear that the projection of reality is on a representative level, power will have become omnipresent, multiform. (For this reason, what is more, governmental institutions continue to carry out "autos de fé", once they consider themselves to have been legitimised in the mirror held up by the media). In this verisimilitude of the whole, we are also plausible. But not necessarily certain. Not only do signs lose their relation to their points of reference, but the subjects which created them –inasmuch as they are signs within the representation– also appear to have been obviated as real entities, as if they had never lived experientially. Our lives are real –no doubt about that!– but our languages *indicate* that it does not *appear* to be sufficiently so. Because something *appears* to be like something when there is something for it to be like. If that which we live does not *appear* to be too real it is not because it is unreal but because, if we are to be entirely honest about it, it cannot really be described in words. And if I cannot describe it in words, because I don't know how it is, then I have got a problem. If I do not describe, I cannot *appear* to be anything, especially if I describe without knowing what I have to describe. It is true that this has been an important matter for centuries, there is no need for us to get paranoid here. The subtle difference lies in the fact that we have made mechanisms of ourselves as well; languages. When we accept ourselves as a narrative conscience

–so predictable, understandable when projected externally, with a logical, rhetorical, credible thread running through it– our identity moves teleologically, looking forward to a new, regulatory "beyond", which is also comprehensible and.... *Possibly, one of the best worlds in the world.* Power, Culture, is everything, because in some intangible and unreachable way it has managed to return the responsibility of its function to the self which it created. The wedding ball. Power represents itself as a mask on our faces.

However, if the moral centres of the rhetoric of power have transferred themselves to the vertigo of a would-be horizontalness, would we perhaps – who knows?– not be making a mistake as regards the direction in which we are aiming our darts? Should we not perhaps go back to thinking of how each of us might *choose* his own strategy... to describe oneself without the need to describe the world?

II. Introsel: the cut-up tongue

After the disappearance, or, if you prefer, the blurring of the central morals of culture within the framework of a representational reality in which each and every one of us would appear to be realistically possible, the process of the self appears to have accepted certain breaks with its own archaeologies. Without any doubt, this has something to do with the fact that the change in the parameters of projection on the part of the instances of social control questions the very circumstances which at one time conditioned the presence of the self in the old mechanisms. The transformation of the mechanics of institutional expression has meant that the concept of individuality has also "drifted". The technologies of the self, as Foucault has pointed out¹⁴, have never been disconnected from their own responsibility when managing power. The legitimisation of relations between subjects in the

name of power is created through decisions taken by individuals, not by abstract entities; in other words, we have the mechanisms that we have given ourselves and that we have been justifying by means of different strategies. If the mechanisms change, the way we consider ourselves also changes. However it would also appear possible that –given the characteristics of general transformations in the cultural machinery of expression, the self could have accepted a debate which would have gone beyond a mere circumstantial variation. Perhaps we are finding that those would-be psychological changes that appear to affect us are more complex and profound than we imagine; changes which are hard to accept at the beginning, and essentially contradictory, but also capable of providing new outlooks as regards our own personal reality and the way we have of making ourselves understood.

We propitiate these new outlooks in two ways: on the one hand, by analysing certain dynamics of the self, with a view to seeing what strategies it might suggest as weapons of communication in the face of monopolistic discourses, and, on the other hand, by submerging ourselves underneath the scaffolding which had been built in the past, but which is now still to be found under the surface, so that we may have a clear view of what relations are taking place between certain psychological realities and the need for communication. Some of these relations show a potential capacity for generating a radically heretical reaction, albeit at the price of not being able to be represented.

The fact that heresy is defined *in the passive* as coercion in the face of free choice –outside our established legal or moral framework– should make us ask ourselves if there exist certain general criteria according to which we could produce some kind of similitude regarding these heretical choices. Could we manage to create a landscape, small though it might be, which could offer us some guidelines so that we could glimpse what is going on? What causes and what effects are to be inferred from the –let us say it now–

retraction of the self when faced with a conception of the centre which has become blurred, or, better said, which has taken on a multi-form image? That nobody considers that this *retraction* of the self is something pessimistic, is a fact which is going to lead us into a terrible form of existence. We will now see how it is by no means a question of *reduction*. Above all, we must insist on the importance of an analysis of our individual mechanisms of self-consciousness and expression if we wish to discover the meaning of heresy in our era. In order to choose, is it necessary to know oneself? The two visions which we commented on in the previous paragraph will help us to pin down the question in greater detail.

Inasmuch as power individualises us with the imperative rhetoric of its anonymity, our responses are thoroughly personal and non-transferable, even though we are not aware of the fact that we often follow certain pre-established mechanics. As far as these reactions are concerned, cannot be considered alien to the process of ethical and representative relativisation in a general social context. Power aims to ensure the verisimilitude of its ethical programme through representation, through the total levelling of values which brings about a universal awareness of normality, little inclined to fevers of collective passion outside this representation, while the self, in its turn, also bases its communicability on this same representation. Because power and the self stem from the same root, from the creation of technologies based on selection and communication of the results. When the central norm of selection which kept us going disappears, to communicate what one is is a profoundly complex act which is not altogether painless. But there is no need to be afraid; our beloved X, Ursula H'x and lieutenant Fenimore keep on falling and falling into Calvino's cosmic vacuum and nothing has happened to them so far.¹⁵

"We have inherited the tradition of Christian morality which has turned the renunciation of the self into a principle of salvation. To know oneself was,

paradoxically, the way to renounce oneself [...] We are also heirs of a secular tradition which respects the outside law as morally fundamental. How then can respect for oneself be morally fundamental? We are the heirs of a social morality whose rules concerning acceptable behaviour are based on how we relate to others. Since the 16th century, critiques of conventional morality have been undertaken in the name of the importance given to the acknowledgement and knowledge of the self. For this reason, it is somewhat difficult to see how interest in oneself can be compatible with morality [...] Our morality insists that it is the subject which should be rejected."¹⁶

Foucault –and Nietzsche or the problematical Heidegger in their days– already outlined what could be the heart of the matter when they tackled the problem of our ethical being, that is to say, of our being in action. This is none other than our perception of guilt due to our supposed incapacity to describe ourselves without referring necessarily to what is demanded of us. To the extent that our social availability is based on representation ("acts of penitence are dramatic, not nominal, given that they are based on the penitent's having to suffer public ceremonies of recognition and humiliation"¹⁷), our own conception as autonomous entities moves in an "empty" territory, as it is far more difficult to appeal to representation when we are talking about ourselves to ourselves. Thus, there would be no greater heresy than that of being "oneself", given that this cannot be represented in a landscape of one's own in which there are neither mirrors nor dominant morals.

"In that interior world where his (the artist's) thought and his emotions go seeking the experience of imagined adventures, there are no policemen, no laws, no pressure of circumstances or dread of opinion to keep him within bounds. Who then is going to say Nay to his temptations if not his conscience?"¹⁸

Some will argue, not without reason, that simply thinking about oneself involves an image, a representation, not that that is of any use to us here; everyone will have an idea of how they see themselves. The question is how to communicate it.

The *retraction* to which we alluded earlier has something to do with this. Given a situation in which power is omnipresent –with its phagocytic expression of legitimacy by means of representation– the self retracts itself when it thinks of itself as being outside these inserted relationships of collective verisimilitude. This self, this *myself*, carries terroristic implications given that the more we are part of –or they make us part of– the representable whole, the more proof we have of our indescribable nature. The more we allow the *participatory* projections of power to introduce themselves into our lives, the more possibilities there are that are responses will be critical and destructive, given that we also assume for ourselves the power which is offered to us.¹⁹ The great paradox, as may easily be guessed, is that faced with this social omnipresence as a moral model, reactive patterns of behaviour –even though they have accepted their critical discourses– will also interiorise the impossibility of really affecting the system, as the self itself has made itself one of the foundations of this system.

There is no doubt but that we are not defending the idea here that we are going to be freer or more real thanks to "social" implants through participation. What really interests us is how we can de–structure that social expression which is demanded of our own identity, and the mechanisms obeyed by the former.

Gianni Vattimo has suggested pertinently that now that the metaphysical distinction between object and subject (the very basis of what has been called reality) has been lost, mankind has entered an oscillating area, a world of

"lightened" reality; "made lighter because the divisions between truth, fiction, information, and image have become less clear: a world in which our experience has become totally media-influenced".²⁰ A reality which is less defined by the experiential than by the representable leads to a *rocking-chair* phase of perception of the self, surpassing that which we might call the *balance* phase characteristic of modernity.²¹ In this rocking-chair dynamic, the self swings constantly, like a weathervane, located on a fixed point but aware of its constant exposure to the winds that cross its path, of the constant variations in the scenery it faces. Descartes said: "This proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true for all those occasions when I pronounce it or when my spirit conceives it". "But there is no guarantee that it will be the same from one occasion to the next", was Lyotard's reply to this.²²

Being subject to a multitude of differentiated contexts each of which has a different specific type of discourse, identity takes on new fragmentary dimensions. The more the subject acts, the more he selects his presence in several simultaneous areas and becomes fully aware of his changeability. Bertrand Russell, in his "Principia Mathematica"²³ spoke of *variables* as being those logical symbols which are not determined. The different determinations the meanings of which are susceptible are called "values" of a variable. A variable is ambiguous as far as its designation is concerned and is therefore undefined, but it conserves a recognisable identity each time it presents itself in a given context, in such a way that many variables can be presented together in the same context, each with their own particular identity.

To this extent, identity is preserved and not only possessed; it is recognisable, but only in a given context; the context has "selfness", that is to say, it is different from other contexts; and the other variables of the context have their own identity.

Following this line of thought, we can arrive at two clear conclusions: on the one hand, that identity may be expressed only within a given context,

given that the subject cannot employ one single linguistic register but many different ones due to the multiple areas in which it moves. And on the other hand, that recognition of what we are is also relative, given that our external points of reference –those things with which we can establish relations based on similarity– are always to be found in specific contexts, which suggests that potentially we can resemble many things, depending on where we are talking about. Russell, in fact, falls back on the principle of Leibniz according to which, if identity is the only fundament of truth, "the diversity of expressions for designating the same individual is never conceptually irrelevant given that they presuppose the insertion of the above–mentioned individual in different specific areas."²⁴

A propos of this relativist perspectivisation, Gilles Deleuze has pointed out –also with an eye on Leibniz– the need for the self to structure new strategies of personal knowledge given the phantasmagorical nature of all the points of reference which are external to oneself. Objects, signs, "that are no longer defined by an essential form, but by achieving pure functionality"²⁵, force relativism on the subject, even with reference to himself; a relativism which is "not a variation on truth according to the subject, but the condition according to which the truth of a variation presents itself to the subject". That is to say, the relationships which we establish with each other and with other signs are based on anamorphosis, the only possible figure in a theatre of speed. This "deformation" of ourselves and of others, leads simultaneously to a lightening of the concept of identity given that "we are" but that we cannot make this apparent by means of fixed forms. The self retracts itself, unburdening itself of various loads which it had used to demonstrate its credibility. We are not dealing here with a feeling of loss or of nostalgia for some kind of removed plaster cast, but rather of a sudden awareness of an inexpressible identity acting as an external order, as an intimate legitimacy, once it is discovered that both you and the others have many different voices.

"Irrupting into consciousness, this terrible emptiness, if unresisted, would result in the extinction of self. And because of this psychic deficiency, explaining in part Marlow's feeling that he is an impostor, no assured sense of autonomy is possible. Such a condition is described by Laing in "The Divided Self" as a 'primary ontological insecurity', the deep-seated anxiety in a person who never gained a sense of trust in his own separate identity, an individual with no inner confirmation of self. When the substantiality of one's very existence as a person is always called into question, no definite belief, no absolute value can be sustained because it is not fed by underlying supportive feelings [...] Self judges self independently, and self accounts for punishment. One use of the double is to dramatize the process of moral and psychological self-recognition.²⁶

We are not afraid to say that this new situation involves serious tensions; the paradoxes have not been settled yet, and are still thought of in Manichean terms, unused as we are to not having a handle nearby to hang on to. Some of these tensions, however, should not be understood as mere passing transitional stages in a given process. On the contrary, they should be of use to us when we are taking on board a whole series of channels of communication which before had been forbidden. Such contradictions can produce dynamics which push away the ghosts of proofs, as these have traditionally been understood, allowing us to recompose them on the basis of their very paradoxical, perspectivist contrariness.

The tensions to which we are referring are a long way from being accepted by means of a conflict with an exterior structure. They exist because the latter does not. This discovery ends up by leaving a strange taste in our

mouths: we cannot describe. Or rather, we can describe, but not ourselves, as long as we understand that describing implies some form of communication: "By retracting our being, we thus free ourselves from that which blocks us in order to find ourselves at the point where those hidden, invisible, untouchable premeditations –that act as a support to human actions in their superficial *hic et nunc* manifestations– define themselves in unnameable forms (but not unnamed because the art of writing already exists and because it is often sufficient just to follow the path in order to achieve this). This crack in the surface structure (morphology, ecology, the words do not matter) is offering us an existential environment which we do not even suspect".²⁷

The here and now of our being reveals our own autonomy to us; an identity of desire based our choice, on our *hairesis*. It is true that desire has also been constructed by respecting the functional norms of productive language. However, a desire based on an aspiration for an external object must wend its way through patterns "of collective truth", for which reason it must conform to a series of agreed-upon, previously pacted rules. A desire guided by the self-legitimacy of our autonomous condition will only respond to our own patterns; this desire is terroristic, heretical, because it does not question the object it is searching for, but rather the written mechanisms for searching for it.

It is hardly surprising then, that the most interesting analyses of modern personality are to be found in discourses which try to dismantle the concept of stability, as a category centred on *balance*, and on the articulation of an entity which is always representable. Deleuze and Guattari have opened new channels of investigation in this regard. In their work, schizophrenia is not only an (undeniably brutal) illness or biological state, but also a potentially liberating psychic condition that is produced within a framework of capitalist social structures. The State is constantly trying to neutralise its destructive

potential by means of a continuous codification of its flux. For Deleuze and Guattari the schizophrenic subject has the possibility of emancipating itself from modernity's normalised subjectivities. A subject which is basically contradictory, even its very formulation of itself. Contradiction, then, is not an effect of a schizoid situation, but is the reason for which the subject not only has a single reasoning process, but also has many at the same time, and all of them legitimate given that each and every choice responds to a specific type of genre. "Schizoanalysis opposes the plethora of mechanisms, discourses, institutions, specialists and authorities that block the flows of the unconscious. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the deterritorialised body as the 'body-without-organs'. The 'body-without-organs' is not an organless body but a body without "organisation", a body that breaks free from its socially articulated, disciplined, semioticised, and subjectified state (as an 'organism'), to become disarticulated, dismantled, and deterritorialised, and hence able to be reconstituted in new ways."²⁸ The nomadic, the rhizomatic, the schizophrenic are fragmented, libidinal bodies, which seek to smash identity based on representation. Whereas psychoanalysis is based on the capacity of the individual to give himself a common name by means of integrating himself into the general flux of behavioural cause and effect, generating neurosis, schizoanalysis "opens the lines of the movement of desire far from socially-imposed hierarchical forms". In this regard, revolutionary men and women are those who instead of creating discourses which are opposed to power, refuse to reproduce themselves, to territorialise themselves, something which directly threatens the capitalist social order, which follows the guideline of "one man, one space, one index".

Here it is also necessary to look at those mechanisms which have fermented in the conscience created by us with the aim of maintaining ourselves within territorial parameters, and which in reality constitute power's main weapon for creating a "natural order" which is based on and legitimised

by our own experience. Such mechanisms function as experiential police; organs of self-control that regulate our flow of desire. For example, Amelia Jones analyses the concept of the sixth sense in the work of Maureen Connor present in "Heresies": "[The sixth sense], far from its meaning for New Age philosophies (where the sixth sense is fantasised as a kind of extrasensory perception –ESP–), for Renaissance thinkers, it designated what Connor has reformulated as 'a kind of sensory censor that determines how we allow ourselves to use our other senses'. It is this pre-modern conception of the sixth sense that Connor explores here as a system of repression, of making taboo those experiences that elicit untrammelled pleasure or disgust. For Connor, the sixth sense, which enables the subject to *contain* her other sensory experiences through an exercise of self-control, becomes the psychic equivalent of the conventional notion of skin or skeleton as maintaining the coherence of the body by sustaining it as a fixed, physical entity".²⁹

The assumption of structural contradiction, in which our body and our soul are not fixed in any way, is far from being a mere activity or strategy which aligns itself in a position opposed to instituted order. This fundamental paradox is to be found "where there is neither order nor justification"³⁰, in a terrain whose sounds and noises are only heard by systems of codification and validation. In reality, this experience which is not conditioned by the acceptance of patterns of morality, can be qualified as *silent*.

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Silence

"You are innocent, when you dream", sings Tom Waits. Power is afraid of silence. To begin with, it always thinks that silence is conscious and voluntary, that it is a *broadcast* silence. For which reason, it is convenient to

repress it given that it denies a communication which has been previously agreed-upon in the name of the community, it questions, ridicules, the established system of dialogue. Quite the contrary, silence can simply be silence; a form of discourse which moves around in its own orbit and whose radiowave does not fall within common frequency usage, as when dreaming occurs. There is silence because we hear nothing. This form of silence is without doubt more heretical than the former one. It is an *omitted* silence, because it simply obviates the entire system of representation. It is not that it shuts up or that it describes, because it is not even aware that there is someone who wishes for something to be said. For which reason, its extirpation must be far more incisive, as the very existence of the system itself is at risk. One thing is to be against something, another is to not even be there. The solution is provided by representation itself. Names, suits, functions and identities are given out, and then incorporated into the luminescent carousel of the great credible screen of reality. Our character, who lives with his or her back to any handling of ours, is introduced and monitored in the representation. His silence –he continues to act for himself, staying silent or talking, we do not know – equalises him and turns him into a discourse. To the extent that he or she is made to appear to have re-entered the appropriate orbit, it is assumed that the heretic is disarmed and deactivated. Like a terminator that does not speak, that does not follow the same patterns as the others, who is tested with sniffer dogs who smell out people's humanity and uncover "false" identities. The type of discourse alien to power –often formalised by such a silence– is considered by the powers that be to be highly dangerous, above all if many people begin to share this silence, organising their lives according to certain interpersonal choices. As Deleuze and Guattari have pointed out "power centres are defined much more by what escapes them or by their importance than by their zone of power".³¹ Lyotard translated this according to the way in which the

mechanisms themselves acted to solve the problem. "That which is under threat is not an identifiable individual but the capacity for speech and for silence. This capacity is threatened with destruction. There are two ways of achieving this. To make it impossible to speak and to make it impossible to be silent".³²

(Note: current representation of reality has plenty to say with regard to all this. The greater electoral abstention and political absenteeism, the more television programmes we will see which show the lives of more run-of-the-mill people, including those of the stupidest. The reality-shows involving couples unsuited to each other or ruined lives, studio debates with people-from-the-street talking about the most unexpected things, some of them things for which you could have been burnt at the stake not so long ago –hard sex, terrorism, football, genetics, politics etc.– the advertising programmes in which a plastified salesperson mesmerises us by showing us how wonderful his product is in a brutal media performance in which everything is a dazzling set-up, or the growing use of television statistics (opinion surveys), are all phenomena (for want of a better word) which are indicative of the efforts made by power to label everything which is unlabelled, to insert such phenomena on the big screen of representation, *anomic* phenomena which, by themselves, would never have selected this option. The power of television lies in its psychophagy. It is psychophagy and creates psychophagy. Millions of ecstatic people swallow other people when the latter appear on television, but would be unable to go on the television programme themselves. Psychophagy involves a process of symbolisation of psychologies, of de-experientation. The Nazis knew a great deal about this. But there is also some good news: more and more people, when asked about a given subject, reply: I don't know/No comment).

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The self retracts, lightens itself, thins itself out. But in what way does this affect identity, the ability to create that which we are, the formation of an awareness of personal truth, even though we know that the latter is relative when compared with other concepts of truth.

The deconstruction of the self is connected to a lost logic of identity; this means the concept of identity which has been accepted by the diagrammation of power. The psychologists Laing and Cooper talked of "personal disintegration" as a "radical dissolution of fascist egoic structures that one is brought up to experience oneself in".³³ Without these imposed mechanisms, our autonomous condition faces the challenge of forming new experiential bases which, moreover, may also be structured in a collective universe. Whether these bases should be entirely our own or whether they can also respond to external stimuli

–like the weathervane– is something which needs to be clarified. However, the starting point can only be a vacuum –the state of relativity *par excellence*– which is neither pessimistic or negative, but hazardous, intense and profoundly contradictory, *schizoid*, perspectivist, anxious, "whose temperament is not based on a fear of being led towards the tragic, but a lack of certainty regarding the value of the vision".³⁴

The trader Kurtz, in *The heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad, says what are virtually the only words spoken by him in the entire novel, just before he dies: "The horror..the horror.." After the unveiling, the awareness of the vacuum, of nothingness. Behind the mechanisms, the unknown does not exist, only we do. Behind the curtain, drawn for so long, the surprise is precisely that is we ourselves who stand there. We are always waiting to be discovered. The horror of our complete autonomy.

A fragmentary self which is looking for its own adhesive material. A multiplicity of voices responding to a divided, multiple ontology, which can now neither read nor be read using the old mechanisms. A new self? But is this possible? Have we not formalised heresy by means of the mark of that special hand which has pulled back the curtain and shown us the engineering behind ideas? Should we not put this concept back together? Because then, we would defend the specialists in heresy, individuals who, acting as unique characteristics –we would already be using hierarchies– would lead the rest of us on to new, unknown stages. If there is no norm or dogma for evaluating the quality of the new, of the unveiled, how can the figure of the "genius" be sustained, he who opens and broadens horizons, who "heretises"? Perhaps we should begin to think about a sum total of heretical manifestations, which – instead of looking for an objectivable result that can be labelled as certain, as something to aim for– would lie behind a credible conception of its realities, which could or could not be shared by people, but which in any case, by revealing the transparency of the mechanisms, would accept the possibility of its own trans–formation and enrichment.

Jean–Marie Guyau, towards the end of the last century (which is the last century?) designated the word *anomy* as the absence of fixed law in opposition to the autonomy of Kant: "An autonomy which bases virtue on unconditional respect for a rule, in 'conformity to the rules dictated by Reason' and which are probably the social norms of a group interiorised within an individual, thanks to tradition or upbringing."³⁵ Guyau based his analysis around cases of "uprooted people" produced by the "avalanche of ruined farmworkers drawn by the factories that are being established in large cities such as Lyon or Paris."³⁶ Later on Emile Durkheim would recover this term, above all in "Le Suicide" and "La Division du travail social", redefining it as that

which designates the series of facts or cases that cannot be reduced to any given rule of normality or of its opposite, anormality; "anomy designates those irregular events which do not correspond to any violation of the rules because, in this case, the rule would go against itself".³⁷

More recently, the French sociologist Jean Duvignaud has undertaken a profound rereading of the concept of anomy, attempting to get right down to the very roots of its gestation and to the capacity for communicability that this condition might have. Duvignaud begins with the statement that "anomic events are to be found where short-circuits take place between different discourses in an inspired, brutal manner, stirring up the coherence of the systems, provoking unusual configurations which have not yet been conceptualised, which are always perishable, but the memory of which, after their disappearance, brings about the emergence of countless collective and individual consequences"³⁸. In other words, anomy here means those forms of behaviour or identities which are still not susceptible to representation. For Duvignaud, anomy would help us to show how societies and individuals transform themselves mutually by means of actions and reactions which have not been foreseen by established codes of usage. According to him, anomic manifestations would catalyse such changes.

The interesting thing about this vision is that it reads anomic events as being the result of the abyss or breakdown between a reality –which thanks to its own constant mutations has also helped to cast doubt on the very concept of system– and the mechanisms which a society traumatised by change can offer as a way of mitigating this unbalance. These saving or vaccinating techniques in the face of that which does not correspond to the established order, have traditionally been modeled around the idea of "coertion". Prison, hospital or the grave were set up as ways of escape, too far from so-called "daily life" to interfere with the latter. However, in a situation of social virtuality based on the indistinct foundations of representation, how can

changes which *are about to* take place be foreseen when the very idea of change is the protecting mechanism which it would appear that we have provided for ourselves? How is it possible to go beyond the concept of novelty by means of something new?³⁹

The heretic's desire of an infinite nature, because "no rule, no law, no rational category can exhaust his contents or understand him".⁴⁰ The law can only interact –even when it does so in an automatic fashion, as it does nowadays– when there is not one single specific individual taking part when the vaccine is being applied; the event takes place –and remains mathematically situated within the representation– in the form of news, of scandal, of controversy. However, in the universe belonging to the anomic behaviour of the heretic –apart from the control techniques which can criminalise him or her– his or her liquidation or disappearance is not on the agenda: It is these others who consecrate him as a personality who is different: the anarchist man does this or says that, but his being suggests something different from what he or she is or appears to be. The anomic personality reveals an indomitable experience, and suggests a relationship with man that the latter –in his empirical immanence– cannot conceive of."⁴¹ Nietzsche commented that heretics are those beings who "speak" an experience which is still unknown. Even though they talk in a code which is not yet in existence, they cannot fear liquidation. At all events, they can be silenced, but their discourse continues to exist to the extent that power has to accept it as an opposing, *wicked* language. As in jurisprudence, the other language, precisely because it is heretical, ends up forming part of the normative codes, albeit in order to legislate its own guilt. The anomic personality creates itself. Afterwards, it is accepted or rejected by the group; saint or heretic. One's own choice, *hairesis*, then, turns into the central pole around which the norm revolves. The protestant discourse: "One should know how to construct oneself; this formation must represent you". The value of

creation, of the manufacture of personality, becomes myth: "This is what is new.. We are condemned to invent ourselves as people, to the extent that there no longer exists a welcoming structure which provides a framework for us and imposes a morphology on our dreams. Anomy itself has changed in meaning as our society and civilisation have changed. We are condemned to innovate or to explode"⁴².

This assumption, that novelty is an order of reference, entails, in parallel fashion, the appearance of other viewpoints regarding its very essence. Self-creation in our present questions the existing relationship between anomy and memory. Perhaps we also have to rethink, and relativise profoundly, what we understand to be the relationship between time and newness. It is true that we have constructed techniques of reflection based on the old idea that ideas follow one after the other, the latest ones always being those which enjoy the greatest consensus as far as their operative capacity is concerned. Naturally, it is no less certain that this process-like trajectory has been based on an evident lack of rationality to the extent that women, for example, have been excluded from this historical formulation, to give one example from a majority perspective which has nonetheless had pressure put upon it.

Many feminist theories have been exposed in the field of historical research and reconstruction, confronting current understandings of tradition and history. While women do not appear in the inherited tradition, they certainly do appear in history. To get right up into the theatrical flies of historical processes implies a questioning of the homocentric notion of tradition as an ideological mask. By means of numerous analyses in this direction it has been possible to unveil a multitude of mechanisms and hidden "satanised" realities thanks to the masculine consensus regarding the concept of culture and history. It could be said that a considerable quantity of *novelties* have been discovered. Are we not to call them novelties simply

because of the fact that they belong to history? But to whose memory are we referring? The need for and the urgency to constitute a memory of the past which belongs to women –which belongs to them to the extent that it has been systematically oppressed and identified by a homoculture, and to the extent that it can also be included in its turn in what we call Culture with a capital C– this memory can also contribute important novelties to our own social technologies, and puts the necessary revision of the concept of the new and of its constitutional processes firmly on the agenda.

What are the mechanisms which confront the *socialised* being with the image of anomy? They are none other than those which represent the whole. The Romantics responded to nihilism through the sublimity of the cosmos, through its perfection. A perfection which includes within itself that which cannot be said. A positivist perfection, a true perfection. Kant sets off on the right path with the idea of the *sublime* so that later pre-Thatcherites like Edmund Burke in the 18th century can stipulate the sublime as if it were some kind of bin for left-overs. The sublime is categorised as an island on which everything *other* is dumped, like a leper: all that which cannot be said, interpreted or represented. In the street, we would call it the lunatic asylum, the prison.⁴³ Capitalism reinvents the sublime in the mask of the spectacle, in the simulacrum of "everything is possible". The anomic is integrated into the world, because *garbage* spills over its own edges, and this terrifies the powers that be. Suddenly, thousands of forms of behaviour which have nothing to do with the main one appear on our monitor screens, in our books, in our newspapers, on the stages. That distant island has joined itself, in one fell stroke, to the mainland because the latter has made it possible for all of us to be possible, always according to the basic and immovable law of representation. The sublime normalises itself. It makes no difference that we still do not understand, that we do not want to understand; there is no better strategy than that of providing fifteen glorious minutes, just fifteen minutes,

and not a minute more –there are others waiting in line who also have something to say– to keep us calm, a bit surprised perhaps, but calm, in the end; all cosy in front of the fire. The world of representation is like the universe of the Valencian *Falles* ; fifteen minutes of free expression, granted only because they will be immediately phagocyted, cremated. The flames of the spectacle purify all.

III. It is possible that I resemble myself. It is probable that they make me appear so. Verisimilitude.

The first heresy, named as such by the merging and fast-growing Church in around 200 A.D., and of which there is written confirmation, was the *Docetic* heresy which took its name from the Greek work "dokeo" (to resemble or appear). According to this doctrine, Christ only "appeared" to have suffered during the crucifixion⁴⁴. Its followers maintained that given the divine nature of Jesus, he could hardly have felt physical pain and suffering when he was executed. This consideration or interpretation caused enormous controversy, with some placing more emphasis on the human element in Christ, and others being more inclined to see the Messiah as God himself. On the other hand, we cannot help but notice that the ultimate aim of this debate was more to do with establishing the kind of memory that Christ himself on the cross was to leave in the minds of men; or rather, with how men intended to remember their saviour. A Christ who had not shown his human side in most of the torments he had to suffer –because of his divineness– might have created a type of mythology that would have lacked the energy and edifying qualities necessary to perpetuate itself through the centuries. On the other hand, the acknowledgement of human horror when facing death would without a doubt be of much greater help when building a symbol that would

function as a kind of psychological control mirror for people for whom death was an all too frequent reality.

For us it is irrelevant here whether Christ really did suffer or whether his pain was simulated. At all events, the interesting thing about this debate is the perception that existed of this event. A Christ who feels the need to clarify what he essentially is would appear to be somewhat surprising, given that he knew himself to be divine. It was then not just a question of being, but of appearing by means of different rhetorical mechanisms, such as the miracle, the ability to prophesy, or the theatricalisation of death. Christ needed to make himself credible ("eikos") because at the end of the day only he himself knew if he was God himself. It probably went through Jesus's mind when he was on the cross that his divinity did not matter to anybody. The point is that it remains symptomatic that the first heresy of Christianity is based on the appearance of a fact; on its verisimilitude. And above all, that it is based on the ability of an individual who is clearly "the other", to make himself plausible. We say "the other" given the non-codified characteristics of Jesus. Choice (hairesis) and verisimilitude tend right from the start to establish a tacit relationship.

Verisimilitude is the technical faculty that language has of constructing visual or textual images, which appear to be true, certain, or real, but which cannot be proven by means of technologies known and accepted by everybody. The impossibility of establishing its level of reality or of legitimacy marks the difference between what is real and what is accepted as such. The credible is that which "can be" but which does not "completely exist", as it cannot be proven as if it were a mathematical equation. It could be said that it is a sort of phase preceding "real" language, something like a representative phase at the doors of reality.

On the other hand, Aristotle himself defines rhetoric not simply as the art of persuasion, but also as "the art of seeing the means of persuasion

required by different themes". Rhetoric does not seek to constitute truths, as these can be proven scientifically, but to find the means of persuasion to be used in arguable matters which are not fundamental truths⁴⁵. Rhetoric not only seeks mechanisms of expression but also, what is more, is able to submit matters to the judgement of power by revealing the techniques of persuasion which it employs. This double perception turns out to be complex and necessarily contradictory, being a double-edged weapon.

Traditionally, and following Aristotle, verisimilitude has been understood as the rhetorical ability of making a discourse plausible by means of certain specific points of reference. In practice, these points of reference were none other than objective reality itself, with the subjects being mere channels through which the latter was transmitted. The plausible was moving in the direction of a reality which had been established as such. It goes without saying that this conception of verisimilitude would be of little use to us today. The reason for this is simply a change in our understanding and interpretation of reality. Given the loss of points of reference common to the environment in which we move, this reality has taken on a multiform shape, depending as much on the subjects which name it as on the contexts in which it finds itself. Horace, the most significant and influential mentor of the Greek philosopher in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, had already anticipated this as a possible situation with regard to the relativism of reality by means of the establishment of certain rhetorical techniques, based more specifically on the idea of *decorum*, of the adapting of the message to the medium. However, both always defended the idea that the ability to create credible discourses was in direct correlation to a moral centre which included all the elements of judgement within itself. The possibility of being heretical was, in reality, simply obviated, given that a potentially heretical action was transformed into a negation of the exercise of rhetoric, a negation which was not held to be a form of dialogue. If somebody speaks "in another language", communication

may only be established with difficulty, for which reason it is of no use when commenting on a previously established reality. There was only one reality. Outside this reality, there was nothing.

To confront reality nowadays involves a radical change in such points of reference. To begin with, it is vital to point out that when we are talking of verisimilitude, we are talking about representation, about communication. Verisimilitude is based on the desire to describe. He or she who does not have such a desire, is in no way liable to consider its plausibility. A being without spirit or without communicative techniques owes nothing to this rule. He or she is, and that is all. When we talk here about verisimilitude, about appearances, we do so with reference to representation, to imagery, of language, of art, although evidently verisimilitude responds in perpendicular fashion to external socio-psychological circumstances.

So it is not so much a question of seeing how we develop a comprehensible discourse –credible as far as a common background accepted by everybody is concerned– but of how to explain, how to make credible that which we are. Verisimilitude, not in the sense of seeking forms that are to be found in the world, but of our own personal expressive projection. The credible is partly a kind of substratum shared with a contemporary community but also has the function peculiar to itself of giving form to a different, identitive expression. The credible, nowadays, brings together the need to offer a social dialogue and to provide leeway for our most impulsive self; a social verisimilitude and a personal verisimilitude able to show, albeit at the price of weakening our identity or truth slightly. Without general focal points of reference, without universal forms of discourse, the only reference point worth bearing in mind is that provided by ourselves. How do I make myself a plausible version of myself? Assuming moreover that I have to express myself in many different ways depending on the context in which I find myself, how can I structure my expression in such a way that it

can generate useful, communicative reactions while still remaining myself? How can I get my –potentially heretical– critical strategy across, and not just simply express it? How can I describe my experience without having to describe the whole world? The fact that the self has retracted itself in search of a new organisation of social and ethical relations does not mean that when it comes to communicating the question remains the same: how can I say my words in a world of precise word-filled contexts and which, moreover, is not only representative –as institutions demand of us– but is also presentative of how we are and of what we wish to say?

These questions, posed in this rhetorical fashion, cannot get away from a more general question. Can we establish an analysis of these questions without having to keep in mind those formulas which were thought up in the days when verisimilitude was spoken of as a moral glue? Surely we can. Nonetheless, we have preferred to take some of the old premises as a starting point because, at the end of the day, they remain mechanisms which can still be redirected to a certain extent. What is more, we cannot disconnect our possible techniques of expression either, from those which –for example,– the media use to bring across the reality of their messages. The essential difference lies in the very conception of the sign: whereas for those in power, the sign is simply a symbol, and, as such, starched and unitary, for a rhetoric of the self the sign is bereft of a supra-legitimising context; it is a simple volatile sign in search of a contract; an allegory.

The Baroque period is the time when the discourse of verisimilitude is posited in a radically different manner. Both in the field of political communication and in that of the search for one's own image, the debate revolves around the way in which things should be expressed, in the way of creating credibility, of projecting realities.

Basically, the Baroque develops two new interpretations: on the one hand, it questions the idea of central perspective and on the other it puts the

concept of identity as a reflection of the universe on the agenda. This takes place in an atmosphere of tremendous confusion and contradiction, given that this is also the moment when the mechanisms of power as we know them today established themselves across the board for the first time. Mechanisms which were still represented in medieval terms but which were legitimised in a different way: on foundations laid by political science, on the nomination of and therefore on the estimation of the common will. This contradiction of different strata in a single context led to the emergence of completely unknown differential responses and/or patterns of behaviour.

The Catholic Baroque period knows that God is dying, for which reason it discovers that God is not God, and has never been God. It places individuals on an empty plain which will rapidly be utilised by the renewed organs of power, such as the Church. The appearance of modern science and the Protestant Counter-reformation, with its discourse on the self, made up the triad of questions to which the Church had to adapt itself.

The Church reacted –under the guidance of the Order of Jesuits– by establishing new mechanisms which guaranteed certain limits but which also provided a certain leeway when laying out a general map for society. The Council of Trent between 1545 and 1563 established a whole series of norms which would become the canon of a whole new lifestyle: representation, the spectacle. For the first time, newness was legislated as such. Laws were stipulated which ensured control over the new in the field of representation, the only pillar of support for a morality which –as was the case with Catholic morality at that time– knew that it lacked social legitimacy. The new was no longer interpreted in terms of a specific morality but as something which was and appeared to be without any sort of morality whatsoever and which required urgent identification and labelling: "a thing is beautiful to the extent that it is clear and evident", wrote Giulio da Fabriano⁴⁶.

The doctrine of the Baroque Church was perfectly well aware that a sea change was taking place in the way that people were relating to reality. Moreover, the Church itself was propagating analyses which tended to fuse doctrinaire dogma with freedom to reason as was the case with the theses of the Jesuits, who also tried to simulate understanding of the mechanisms, which is what happened in the *compositions of place* by Saint Ignacio de Loyola⁴⁷; or, for example, in the emergence of the *probabilism* propagated by the Dominicans, designed to analyse legitimate choices⁴⁸. The unitary perception of reality gave way to a fragmentation of experience and to an interest for all that which was not central, or even natural⁴⁹. It was not in vain that one of the most obvious features of Baroque cultural production was its desire to reflect the artificial, the specific, the strange, the abnormal, the monstrous. To cease looking at God entailed looking at oneself and discovering our own differences in others. This is the spirit that moves the Baroque period.

Most creators and thinkers towards the end of the 16th century and throughout almost all of the 17th, question the central perspectivist order and begin to hint at the need to establish new psychological and spatial relationships in order to make way for the concept of "continuum", of a mental and physical deployment which would be capable not only of integrating expressive desires but also –and above all– of integrating the differential perceptions of individuals. The Church, faced with such a challenge, voiced considerable doubts, as this did not at first appear to be the most suitable way of settling the shifting control and power bases at the time. It goes without saying that it soon came to feel that the new ideas were the perfect arena for endorsing a new political therapy: in the area of representation. In place of illusion, the individual "recovers" his ability to participate and his legitimacy, leaving "sterile" autonomist positions to one side. The spectacle – the great all-absorbing urban designs, the *chiaroscuro*, the multiple or false

perspectives, the *trompe-l'oeil*, the stage lighting, etc.– invites the individual to participate in the magic, a magic which is symbiotised in the political message. As long as he is participating, he does not think about himself: "There is a genuinely Baroque wish to manage social patterns of behaviour by provoking the suspension of individual awareness by having recourse to the exaggerated, whose effect is reinforced by the disproportion existing between the extent of the expense and the brief duration of the sought-after pleasure. In this sense, ostentation in a culture based on appearance acquires intrinsic value inasmuch as it contributes in an efficient manner to the formation of attitudes and to suppress potentially adverse trends in opinion"⁵⁰.

The illusion of the publically deployed spectacle comes within the jurisdiction of the law, in this case the political law, of verisimilitude. According to this, a religious discourse, for example –which can be accepted only with difficulty by a self which is beginning to be aware not only of his personal autonomy but also of his lack of social support– is easily projected. The universe of representation settles the question of legitimacy thanks to its own presence, by the fact of being there and offering a dynamic which is all-embracing, all-absorbing. The spectacle legitimises itself by bringing heaven down to earth. We are dealing here then with a political response to a situation which is dangerous for the powers that be given that reality –as in the Baroque case– takes on a profile which has a certainty that can scarcely be found in previous eras. The interest of Baroque artists in facing reality, albeit through the use of ecclesiastical doctrines, led to the latter conceiving of the formers' works as two-sided representations: the real and the virtual: that which is seen and that which it translates, thus creating paradoxes and allegories between the real and the artificial.

The system of the spectacle, based on verisimilitude as an end and not a means, with its creation of omniform image and word, going beyond the supposed reality of these, is not just a circumstantial technique but an entire

world: "It is not only a theatre but is also a church: the spectacle is not a collection of images, but social relationships between people conditioned by means of images', said Guy Debord, referring to the current spectacle. The contradiction of a tautology: the spectacle defines reality and this definition defines unreality in its turn. When all that is lived moves in the direction of representation, there is no real life, because no other life appears real. The victory of the spectacle lies in the fact that nothing appears to be real until it appears in the spectacle, despite the fact that the moment it appears it loses any reality that it might have"⁵¹.

The spectacle of verisimilitude. Not a verisimilitude in the sense of an urgency to make us understand, but certainly based on the premise that there is an obligation to understand. Under the mantle of happiness, of the good, of consensus, of the democracy of interests, of inclusion and participation: "As Debord drew the picture, these people were members of democratic societies: democracies of false desire. One could not intervene, but one did not want to, because as a mechanism of social control the spectacle dramatized an inner spectacle of participation, of choice. In the home, one chose between the countless variations of each product on the market [...] the spectacle dramatised an ideology of freedom"⁵². In other words, the spectacle does not just offer a discourse in order that we do not think about freedom, it theatricalizes everything that exists in order to make it legitimate again and back in touch with its own roots. The act of *haireisis* in the area of representation is defined by its obligatory nature, by its supposed necessity, by its being framed within a definitive order of the "whole". The spectacle is an enterprise of socialisation, of vital ordering, with its eagerness to influence normatively those areas where the norm is in danger of not being interiorised or of being rejected. The French doctor-psychiatrist Renaudin wrote in the mid-19th century: "The more stubborn the madman becomes in the face of any kind of rule, the more necessary it becomes to wheel him

around everywhere in a methodical fashion which will lead him in the direction of a normal existence and which sooner or later will end up by becoming necessary to him"⁵³.

In the face of this reality engendered by imagery, artists are deploying imagery engendered by reality. The limit, the borderline, where the two meet, is very faint and difficult to define. It would appear to be found in the very idea of verisimilitude. "When compared with the historicity created by the scientists [and politicians], there is an apparent no-historicity of the artist; the artist cannot teach his ways of inventing and producing to others, as he himself cannot fully account for them."⁵⁴. This being the case, no reproduceable model for truth can be accepted in the world of art. This is why characters like Bernini or Borromini will have no followers; we are dealing here with languages which are so interiorized that they can only be understood in their own verisimilitude, in the specific applications of their intentions. In a world of relative selves, it may only be expressed in highly specific contexts, at particular times and in particular places, as is the case with Bernini, but above all with Borromini, with his more than precise works. The abstract concept of language disappears to make way for art as an adverbial –not as a substantive or adjectival– situation. But, at the prize of a non-collective understanding?

Where the specific is concerned, verisimilitude and illusion allow themselves to play with the real, with the spectator, while accepting the subjectivist nature of the experience. The plausible is engendered on a basis of autonomy and not on the suppression of the latter which was what those in power, the Baroque church, intended. Artists discovered the lack of verisimilitude in central perspectives, for which reason they reacted with multiple visions more in accordance with a relativist worldview, based not so much on sensual experience as on the formulation of the expression of the latter. An expression which was conditioned by the possibilities for reception

generated by the discourse. In this way, the image was and was not at the same time. The meeting point is none other than a credible image in which the truth of both one and the other can establish some kind of common point of reference. The self generates, deploys its projection having previously incorporated the perceptive. It not only creates, rather it selects more than anything else. When it chooses, it converts the creative act into interpretation itself. The visual spectacle it broadcasts includes its own spectacle on which its own genesis is based, in order to settle the choice of imagery. This is the reason for the feeling of tautology in modern thought as established round about the 17th century, but also for the suspicion that the relation established is relative, given that our own discourse and the variations in the contexts in which we express it are not unidirectional: "The object and the subject are formed together along the two poles of the perceptive field... Vision has no place on a line which puts the seer and the seen in contact with each other, but belongs in a field of visibility full of glimpsed lateralities... So reality is not expressed by a phrase such as X is like this, but by one which says X is like this and is not like this. An inconsistent description – relative to negation – is what corresponds to the assertion of reality. This lack of consistency characterises the form of the possible"⁵⁵, the form of the credible.

This questioning of the borderline between personal expression and the urgency of communication simultaneously questions that which is real and multiple and that which is natural in the objective sense of the word. "Rhetoric mixes the true with the probable; both aspects can be converted into a means of convincing the spectator. This is where illusionism comes in, technique, to achieve an effect and a subjective impression of reality."⁵⁶

In a representative concept of life –of "all of life", as can be observed in the galleries of social monsters in 17th century Spanish painting– perception is understood not as a prosthesis available on certain occasions but as a general body, as an organism which supplies information about life and

makes it experienciable. Life, susceptible of being represented from many different points of view, all of them legitimate ones, introduces verisimilitude itself into the field of the para-moral, of that which is distanced from the central discourses. This perception is not only a feeling of attraction towards the different but also towards "the other" experience itself, at first indescribable. Its describability logically involves a credible appearance: in representation, it is nominated, interpretable. This contradiction is the fundamental principle of both Baroque and modern language: the paradox of multiple thought and the gestation of representation as the means by which the multiple becomes homogenised.

This process of globalisation, the reduction of everything until everything is included, is closely linked to the "dual vision" introduced by the Baroque world, which suggests that "the complete image of a saint and the vision of the same is the spectator's supernatural experience. The spectator is introduced "into" the vision; he is not invited to take a look from the outside"⁵⁷. The improbable and the unlikely become plausible, truly convincing. This, in fact, will be the effect that lies behind the need of artists to proclaim their personal autonomy, their idiosyncratic personalities. The fact of describing oneself, strategically capturing the experience of others, implies one's own spectacularisation of the relation, a possible area of debate between opposing parties. To communicate –in this universe of verisimilitudes– means involving the listener in such a way that he enters a universe that is "other" than his. The urgent and imperious need of the individual, modelled instantly by power as an opening for a political discourse. A special moulding based on a defence of territorialisation, of fitting into a framework.

The main measures adopted by the Council of Trent consist of the following: "no image will be represented that suggests a false doctrine or which might lead those who have not received an adequate education into dangerous errors"⁵⁸ and: "images must be suitable both in their parts and as

a whole with regard to the stories which they are describing and to the places in which these take place". In other words, artists must tailor their work to suit the premises of a reality imposed by political rhetoric. The universe is conceived as a series of historical divisions, some of which are barren. Any discourse which tends to shy away from these marked divisions is not accepted. Confusion is elevated to the rank of public danger Number One. A confusion which is defined by a lack of objectivisation in the public spectacle. In this way, and for the first time, censorship acquires those characteristics which have made it what it is today. In this case we are dealing with a previous censorship which –as we have already indicated– legislates the new before this actually appears. The preventative nature of ideologies is based on this attempt to make a precocious discovery of *difference*, just as the violent nature of institutions is based on the confirmation of this *difference*. The dogma of representation is thus based on the persecution of confusion, given that the latter reveals and uncovers the established mechanisms of the ruling classes. The political condition of confusion is to unmask the silence of power by provoking a reaction from the latter, obliging it to necessarily make transparent those policies for which it has conceived ordered territories.

In the Baroque theatre of representation, light is the element by means of which the lack of any kind of centre is illuminated, the way in which artists transform doctrines into individual allegories, trying as they do so to "obviate" the Tridentine rulings. Anamorphosis, foreshortening, optical tricks attempt to resolve this imposition/lack of centre which is so tragic, not because it is pessimistic but because there is no doubt but that the circumstances of the above-mentioned centre are a direct result of the latter's uselessness.

Light becomes the general mechanism of performance, being an element which in itself consists of relativity. However, light is used not only as an apparent phenomenon, but is also expressed as the element which illuminates that which has previously lain in shadow: it shows the mechanisms,

but in doing so it also includes the doctrine of "nothing left out". It is therefore hardly surprising that the Baroque church or the current institutions of control immediately applaud this reading, given that it makes it possible for everything to be representable, susceptible of being illuminated. As everything may be reflected, the field of political action spreads by means of light to cover all orders of life. The Enlightenment understood this technique perfectly, applying it to the social sciences, to jails and hospitals.

Reality itself becomes spectacle, an accumulation of techniques and representative, controllable devices. Baroque artists generated a model of communicative freedom, defending its verisimilitude –its own self–reference– in the face of the canon of established truth, but it also opened the doors behind which power was hiding itself behind the illusion of representation.

This conception and reality of personal verisimilitude (a typically Baroque paradox) was defined as *decorum*. Decorum, as it was formulated by the Baroque essayists once the Church had taken charge of the matter, was the art of making painting conform suitably to its location and its theme. A biblical or historical episode could not be painted unless it made use of those elements –such as clothes, buildings, races, characters– which tradition had handed down to us. In the same way, it was not possible, according to the rules of decorum, to place a picture or a sculpture in a place that was not "exactly right" when it came to understanding the painting or for conferring meaning on the place selected.

When this notion is analysed in detail, it is not difficult to see certain connections with our own present day. If decorum was understood in the Baroque period according to moral and pedagogical guidelines, today it is necessary to view it in the light of the representational order of the individual. How do I express myself in a way which is true to my nature –natures– when I also have to be aware of the importance and specific nature of each context?

In reality, the discourse concerning decorum has been more apparent in the creative debate –not only the artistic one, but also in the field of advertising– than we have been aware. Consideration of the adaptation of the message to the medium and to the place has played a large part in the artistic expression of recent years. Moreover, they would appear to have been the main touchstones of most analyses. In the same way that the people of the Baroque period know how necessary anamorphosis was when positioning statues in the upper regions of churches, contemporary art has incorporated these same optic –and ethical– corrections, in order to elicit a greater understanding on the part of the spectator. The move of creative practice over to the media, to the street, using urban, advertising mechanisms, suggests that this is precisely what has happened. The importance of establishing parities between a certain will to expression and a context has led to a practice which logically follows a path of confusion, paradox and irony, knowing that no truth can be established outside territorial disciplines. Current artistic knowledge knows itself to be insecure as far as its foundations are concerned, given that what autonomy it has is weak in comparison to other interpretative systems, making it *permeable to non-artistic norms* as a consequence, and available for reinterpretation within the framework of an extra-artistic synthesis with representations that have no theoretical relation with artistically based knowledge. This same lack of limits is without a doubt an endless source of *hairesis*.

"Irony means saying the truth or is a way of saying the truth, of unveiling. At the same time it is a defence against the truth. This duplicity –even though, put like this, it seems astonishingly reasonable –produces another mode of unreason.

The unreason of a fundamental indescribability. If irony is a defence, it is also, inadvertently, a form of participation. Although Marlow says: 'I

also have a voice, and for better or worse mine is the discourse which cannot be silenced.' [...] As has been argued by the theoreticians of irony, from Schlegel to Kierkegaard and de Man, irony is the only trope which cannot be dominated or be used in order to dominate. An ironic declaration is fundamentally indeterminate or unsayable as meaning. Whoever tries to say one thing while clearly meaning another, ends up by saying the first thing too, despite himself. One irony leads to the other. Ironies proliferate in a great mass of small conflictive ironies"⁵⁹.

The self which wants to speak, cannot do so in the abstract, and cannot do so either by restricting itself to just one context, rather it must be aware of the existence of many contexts and of that of the many and varied expressive impulses to be found in oneself. Thus, verisimilitude cannot be conceived as fixed communicative structure either, but rather as a sheaf of infinite variables. This is the tragi-comedy of our times: we do not need to build strategies to talk, because we ourselves are strategic devices.

4 notes on modern decorum

1.- *No sticky stuff*

This ethical Horatian decorum –adapted, absorbed and newly regulated by our society in the course of the last 50 years– would perhaps have a clear exponent in certain propositions that emerged in the Anglo-Saxon university world in the light of a large number of current multicultural discourses. Political correction or decorum is clearly based on an urgent revision of the institutional patterns of representation as regards social communities that are in the minority. However, the problem, if there is one, lies in the disappearance of any kind of common ground when trying to make discourses communicable. Someone might argue that if the discourses were

aimed exclusively at the members of each community, there would be no need to establish common grounds of any kind. However, to the extent that our self consists of many different pieces, all of them potentially wanting to be expressed, and adopting differentiated strategies depending on our different objectives, the lack of meeting places which are common to all of us does appear to be quite a hindrance. A woman, apart from being a woman, might also be lesbian, working-class and a mother, and also a gypsy, etc. etc. To close off possibilities in such a way that only some of the different elements of our identity might be expressed would lead to tremendous self-censorship, thus reproducing the very mechanisms which we are trying to resist.

It goes without saying that minority thinking is subtly volatile, given that if all ethical concepts are defended from minimalist viewpoints, each member of the community could opt for his or her own "correctness"; it is clearly important, then, to create a minimum working framework within which collective groups with something in common –and not just individuals– might be considered.

It is clear that the concept of modern decorum –of the need to go back to our most direct, personal and intimate experiential resources in order to construct communicative discourses– has to be analysed at a good distance from any connection with Christian morality, but not at such a great distance from morality as conceived of in a Protestant context. Not for nothing have the unwritten laws of Lutheranism and its satellites (we can include Opus Dei here, as the Protestant version of the most pro-capitalist form of Catholicism) have always opted for an ethics of salvation based on the subject's own interpretation of his actions, and not so much on a hermeneutical system based on a concept of universal justice such as that engendered by Rome. However, let us not deceive ourselves. This ethics of the self-conscious religious self is regulated in its turn by the existence of a value which is certainly universal: punishment. The Protestant self feels guilty of not "being

able" to carry out what God intended, for which reason this self-consciousness is subject right from the start to the mirror of production, of the logical-economic discourse of utility. To the extent that Providence has granted us the ability to be, we are obliged to show that we are worthy of this gift. This is really the fundamental key to the thinking behind the Lutheran faith. It is for this same reason that a large part of the debate over political correctness in the Anglo-Saxon world appears to be reproducing this schizophrenia between autonomy and a reflecting central body. It would appear to replace the need to be in touch with the centre, with the urgent need to be distanced from it. In many cases, especially in those in which ethical, and not so much political, "tactics" were suggested –such as institutional confrontation, in which the presence of this central focus certainly does make strategic sense– it would appear that the clock cannot be changed as it is only the use of the time zones which is being challenged, to use an analogy.

Parallel to this, we can hardly ignore the justifications which are most currently in vogue concerning the debate over censorship. It is true that censorship –parallel to the heresy in the name of the autonomy of reason of one of the parties– confronts us with some slippery ground which needs to be negotiated with a certain subtlety. We are all aware of the many different forms which censorship can take, basically legitimised in the "unsuitability" of a given discourse (decorum misunderstood as objective anamorphosis), the "social or economic unprofitability" of this project, or simply its "lack of interest". (By the way, the alibi of moral control no longer applies: power no longer expresses itself in terms of "This should not be like that", but in those of "It cannot be public, subsidised by the state". In other words, the mechanisms are not directed at individuals but at a uniform mass. This is what the spectacle has become now that morality has disappeared.)

There are more than a few cases in which a refusal on the part of somebody to accept a certain activity is categorised as censorship when in

fact it is simply a matter of making a decision, which –although responding to parameters which might well be moralistic and Manichean– is nonetheless a decision validated by the independent ethical or aesthetic autonomy of whoever it is who is doing the deciding. This brings us to a fundamental paradox: where do you draw the line between an act of censorship and a particular ethical decision? Some or even many people would answer that the difference lies in the social profile of the one deciding, something which brings us back to where we started: the continued presence of the centre, which in fact continues to keep us informed about the technologies linked to behaviour. There is a difference, for example, between a "decision" made by a public institution and that made by the publisher of a magazine. The basic difference which we would all probably agree upon, is that –given the representational nature of what is public– we have a collective right to insist on multiple representations that correspond to the social fragmentation that really exists. This is most certainly the case, but that does not prevent the centre from being present in all our critical relationships.

The centre would appear to function as a kind of urban monument, ancient but still extant, which we continue to use as something to cling to when deciding in which direction we are going to go.

Modern decorum, instituted by a subjective dictum, brings us to another type of indescribability, of a contradiction which has a certain irony, like all paradoxes that are held in a certain esteem. We are dealing here with the nebulous, vague limits that exist between the idea of consensus and that of reason, something which was posited intelligently by Adorno and Horkheimer over fifty years ago: "There may be consensus between speakers, but no reason as long as anybody is excluded from the dialogue"⁶⁰. Consensus is not reason, it is simply an agreement between the parties that are speaking. In other words, if reason is to be engendered in such a way that it may be applied on a general level, and the context is "only reasonable" in a

given context, then how can the idea of a subjective solidarity –articulated by affinities in the debates on multiculturalism or on the subject of censorship– be defended, given that this idea finds itself beyond the scope of general reason? How far do we have to go before we confuse our talk of an "exact reason", connected to our criteria, with the "objective reason" brandished by the monopolist doctrine of those in power? Perhaps the problem is that Adorno and Horkheimer did not consider the possibility of non-exclusive consensae, that were not formalised on a premise of denial. Reason is exclusive to the extent that unreason exists. Subjective and supportive consensus, on the other hand, can share its existential unreason: which is not altogether reasonable: "It follows, that I suggest that the collective existence of an era should be contemplated –and this is little more than a metaphor which would not long survive an understanding of the event– in much the same way as is a multitrack recording tape: several series of discourses, each with its own congruity and specific systems, running along the same course. It is true that on occasion these multiple discourses will mingle, but it is precisely the impact at the points of confluence which will provoke anomic events of facts, even though we come up against anomy again at the same time in the concatenation of the discourse which it properly belongs to, in diachronic series and in the vertical inscriptions which result from the meeting of two different series..."⁶¹. Planets of subjective anamorphoses. Orbits of tinkling questions and ever possible replies.

On the other hand, the fact that those were oppressed and to whom we have asked forgiveness, should now turn against us is one of the greatest heretical paradigms of our time. Simply because we have built tools for ethical relations which cannot be conceived of in conjunction with a historical adjustment. When women or homosexuals build up their own identities on the basis of an autonomous discourse that belongs to them only, they are stigmatised as un-humanistic, and their behaviour as destructive of something

which has taken so long to create: the consensus of a common consciousness. But moreover, they are criticised for the mechanisms which they use to channel their discourses, for turning mechanisms on their backs in order to benefit themselves. Rosset⁶² has analysed in detail the type of criteria used by moralists when criticising amoral behaviour, in other words, behaviour which is not centred on an imposed hierarchy of ethics. Plato, for example, accuses the Sophists –who were sceptical of any form of truth– or Rousseau accuses Molière or La Fontaine of "ridiculing the truth" but also, above all, of being greedy and vain, of being motivated by lucre and pleasure. Plato does not reproach the Sophists for their scepticism, atheism and materialism, but for being "selfish". In other words, these attacks are based on a *formal vice* and not on the relativity of judgements. The American far-right "whips up" the consciences of its citizens against homosexuals and lesbians or against pro-abortion groups in the name of these people's "depravation", and not from a critical viewpoint which could be contested. The criticisms which women are now receiving, at a time when gender restructuring is undergoing a sea change, are still put forward within this framework of formal vice. Women are characterised primarily as a "whole", whereas men continue to be "plural". This labelling certainly reproduces a male cultural pattern which confronts women as a potential danger inasmuch as they are viewed as a single group, without any specific features being taken into account. And secondly, they are often categorised in terms of vengeance, self-interest, rancour, etc., thus adopting egalitarian premises, but in a thoroughly irrational manner.

In this way, the conscientious objectors' movement against any form of military service in Spain is held by the State not only to be a sign of lack of solidarity in the context of the false cover-all of the "common good", but mainly also to be a refuge for "cynical" and "parasitical" attitudes which are taking unfair advantage of the good will of the law –in other words, of the lack of legislation–. This formal vice lightens the burden of criticism levelled at

"formal", representative attitudes, given that the understanding of difference is to be found on the level of representation not on that of reality. In fact, moralistic discourses employ mechanistic logic, which are incapable of making in-depth judgements.

On the other hand, the fact that women with an awareness of their identity are globally pigeon-holed within "feminism" suggests that their discourses are to be found on the level of representation, to the extent that – "-isms" within certain parameters which may however be surpassed, as is the case with movements–isms which we would point to as modern, and which are so inasmuch as they proceed from other phases and succumb to/are diluted into the periods that follow them.

2.– *The illusion of law*

In parallel fashion, is not the process of progressive judicialisation of public life in Western societies a strange one, as regards the search for decorum and the integration of consensus? The courts of justice (real or virtual, as in the case of the recent fashion for television programmes which simulate trials at which sentences are handed out *as if they were* binding) appear to be beginning to make decisions in many cases which would normally have been solved through the reaching of an agreement, through common sense. Ethical autonomy and a real complete awareness of individual identity have led –in a manner which is thoroughly logical and which responds invariably to a process which has been taking place over several years– to a questioning of those codes for relations and dialogues which had been interpreted as the necessary bases for the clarification of differences between people and between ideas. These "grounds", these common areas of decision-making appear to have been shattered and to have lost any kind of social legitimacy. Each now appeals to his or her own personal code, while knowing, moreover, that from an ethical point of view he or she is defending

his or her most legitimate interests, which is why he or she goes directly to the judicial system as the only one which will guarantee the value of the application of his or her opinions. Lyotard has given the name of "differing" (*differend*) to this vacuum, which was previously filled by the concept of consensus: "As becomes clear during litigation, a differing would be a case of conflict between at least two parties, which cannot be resolved equitably because of the lack of a court ruling which may be applied to both arguments. The legitimacy of one of the parties does not imply any lack of legitimacy on the part of the other. It goes without saying that the application of a single court ruling to both in order to establish their "differing", as if it was simply a question of litigation, would be to the disadvantage of (at least) one of the parties (and to that of both if neither party admitted this ruling)"⁶³.

And so Justice, in this way, through law, ineffably becomes a meeting point for specific identities to the extent that it is structured around coercion and the implementation of its decisions. So it is that law ends up by becoming –at least at its highest level– the very image of consensus. Whereas on the one hand it accepts and absorbs new elements, otherness entering into it through jurisprudence, on the other hand it imposes a moral norm everywhere by means of convention. Law is the mechanism, the weapon which society uses to legitimate itself by constantly including the incorporation of the contrary, of the "other". This very concept of "inclusion" of the (representational, avant-garde) cause is what makes it possible to continue believing ideally in justice as a meeting point, but at the price of the suppression of one of the parties, without both being able to live together on the same level.

Justice, through law, and science, through technology, have built themselves up to become monuments of 18th century institutionalised moral policy that have survived into and prevailed in our time. We cannot help but observe that our relationship both with law and with technology is carried on with the help of intermediaries, technicians with knowledge of specific

mechanisms. Lawyers and programmers, judges and engineers, prosecutors and doctors, inspectors and military officers together form a class which is scarcely accessible to the man in the street, but to which the latter must have recourse when relating to both of these worlds. We use the telephone, but nobody knows how it works. Worlds are built around a mutual image: precision, objectivity of the result, the consideration of the result to the extent that the latter is unanswerable and universally applicable but without anybody being versed in the process which has led to such a conclusion: the definitive "truth". A truth whose existence has been structured through coercion, by laws thanks to their definitive nature, and by science thanks to its capacity for offering exclusive results within its rationality.

The process of judicialisation of social life is highly interesting to observe, as it allows us to know at first hand the substrata and underlying elements of the strategies of those in power. In the first place, we find that one of the central points of this entire debate is the use of "reasons of state", of the mechanisms of power, and not of the values used to move the cogs. We consider that reasons of state, its truths, the intentions of the people in power are absolutely "natural", that they even have something familiar and real about them. We denounce the facts, we expose them, and then we see that the reasons that were a motive force for them have also "some" validity, because, within their reality, they are autonomous, as are ours. We dismantle the facts, we draw back the curtain, to see nothing, or rather, to see what we already know is there: wealth, self-interest, well-being, power, etc.

But when we draw back the curtain, we also have fun, we find ourselves face to face with the spectacle which had been hidden from us, for other eyes only, the inaccessible sub-rosa room. A psychophagic spectacle which feeds itself on control of individual privacy, whether the latter is real or not. There is no difference –for the broadcaster– between showing an accused man hiding his face and running along the corridors of the courthouse, and the scenes in

TV commercials when supposedly true stories are filmed, with characters who tell us about their direct contact with the product in question, while the camera moves insolently around, giving us to understand that the scene has not been set up and that we are dealing with a documentary report here. Once the previously hidden has been revealed, it is subject to the law of the footlights, of the spotlights. In jail, before the cameras, behind the tinted glass of a black car, are the judges and the accused, the victims and the guilty; a psychophagy which also creates heroes and not only victims. The pornography of the private sphere revealed in the public one; the overlapping of the mechanism and its ethical sustenance. The (un)reality of an infinite decorum.

3.- *The forms of decorum: something about art*

From which place must the primacy of a look impose itself unaided?, Jean Duvignaud asks himself.

The primacy of *one* look. Our look has only itself to legitimise what it interprets: the universe of autonomous signs which surround it. A look which until now has resorted to a vast truth which indicated if that look were true or false. The look of the modern. In a cosmology whose central axis is novation, everything linked to the adventure of proof is stigmatised as erroneous: "the mechanisms cannot be stopped for the good of Art". Criticism of the mechanisms is labelled as political art, when political art is impossible: a tragic statement. Art cannot be political in the true sense of the word – involving a real change in living conditions – given that the political element within the piece or the discourse in question is fodder for representation. Art may only be political in a circumstantial way, using *politics as an adverb (hic et nunc)*. The social force of art lies outside the latter. Art, if it wants to have an impact outside itself has to get moving and shift into other areas, and we

could hardly call it art once it has done so; something which, on the other hand, sounds extremely exciting.

"Aesthetic creation appears in reality, in a Sophist perspective, and, in general, in any tragic perspective, more as the expression of a *taste* than as the expression of an ability which might properly be called 'creative'. This 'taste' –a word used by tragic philosophy to designate simultaneously that which is known as talent, or genius, or creative energy, or productive capacity– does not mean an aptitude for rising above the level of pure chance in creations which would escape chance in their turn, but rather an art of discerning in chance encounters (...), an art not of 'creation' but of *anticipation* (foreseeing, thanks to experience and acuteness, worthwhile encounters) and of *detention* (knowing how to 'detain' the work at the moment of one of these worthwhile encounters, meaning that the fleeting opportune moment has been successfully captured): the artist would thus be (...) like a man before whose gaze a cinematographic device is parading an endless series of pictures that differ in quality; this man would have a control panel that would allow him to pause the projection at the desired moment. (...) We would call someone a creator who, both as regards the works of others –one of the most abundant sources available for those who know how to tap them: "An author is a man who takes from books all that is in his mind, " (Maurepas)– and as regards all the possibilities that arise from the encounters that pass across his field of vision, knows how to choose the favourable encounters, to select the good images and to detain the vast mechanism of his imagination at the opportune moment. A question of taste or "aesthetic judgement" and not of creation, a taste which will give rise to the work of art without there being any need to invoke, at the start, the power which is known as 'creative'. To reduce creation to taste, to skill, to judgement, in this way, does not mean that the creative faculty is being underestimated, given that selection is as much of an exceptional nature as is 'creation'.

Creation is impossible. Art consists only of an infinite possibility of combination of visual, sonorous or verbal forms, of fixing certain moments of detention, whose rhythm depends on my own taste: nothing of any consequence, simply something which is a little more than pure chance. The basic innocence of the dice rolling, which, as Mallarmé wrote, "will never abolish chance" (...) The aesthetic experience is of a *painful* nature, given that it provides both the creator and the consumer with the spectacle of a need that is based on no need at all, thus underlining the lack of need in that which is experienced as necessary by mankind in any field, and making chance appear on the stage in person. A painful appearance, as Valéry's words testify: "Art is that which drives to despair. (...) To allude to need without ever showing it, is something far more cruel –for the man who is repulsed by chance– than the acknowledged absence of need; and this is the task at which artists labour ceaselessly. (...) In a game without rules, to introduce unexpected playmates: this increase in the element of chance defines the field of aesthetic experimentation"⁶⁴.

Rossey pivots his discourse on a conception of reality as the "ethics" of absorbing, as the "digestive" capacity which thought has when contemplating the world. The image of the weather-vane man, aware of his presence at a given place, anchored and tragic, where observes and sees the different winds pass by as the blow alongside. A pessimistic man? Discourse of an empty life? No, tragic language, but conscious and secure within the tragedy: chance-weather-vane in the middle of other chances. An ability to select the winds, an ability to see the winds, a will to unveil the mechanisms: art describes reality. What art shows is how a certain manifestation works, said the happy Wittgenstein.

To know how to foresee those certain places at which one may be positioned like a weather-vane, to detain circumstantial elements and adopt them allegorically, giving them a kind of contract for a specific use. Once used

in this way, the contract breaks itself, by itself. A break which has only to follow the path of the chosen wind, which passed energetically by and then left. The paradox of chance, random in itself.

(However, to what extent does a digestive, absorbing ethics posit a "logical" –and therefore a productive and deterministic– discourse regarding horizontalness, regarding a reality which for the simple fact of being made up of signs appears always to respond to the same principles and causes, even though these be tragic, which is to say unnecessary? Despite the tragedy of the vision of nothingness, the stomach which digests, as long as it is generated by means of specific variables –random ones, certainly– which become conscious to the extent that these are able to select the instant, and embody it for their collective vision. How to link this consciousness with the ethics of total absorption? And we ask ourselves, is the simple reality of digesting everything not in itself a need, for the simple reason that we can see that "that" is there, as we are? And if it is a need, does it continue to be random?)

The art *of the self-evident* is confronted with an infinite paradox, because on the one hand it consists of a phenomenon capable of randomising economic logic –which produces discourses, language, and meaning which is accepted and known thanks to established codes– creating new meanings and opening new hermeneutical paths, while also wishing to submit itself to a communicative action which will bring back some hope for social interaction with the world around us. Creation, after the failure of the normative model of modernity (not because its aims were misplaced, but because it achieved them completely in the one field it always wished to do so: that of industrial production; it was just that the avant-garde never believed that its utopia could become real; in this sense, modernity began with representative-type premises which were invented as being distant from reality and reality has finally ended up by catching up with the representation, as in the tale of the

tortoise and the hare), creation is in itself the image of paradox –happily– given that as it cannot be reflected in any universalist norm or conduct whatsoever, it has had to adapt itself to multiple structures of conception and interpretation, and as a consequence reality has suddenly appeared before it as vast and untractable, definitively tragic as it most certainly not be urbanised. The art of today is a realistic art because it seeks knowledge of the technologies of identity which we use, in order to make them rise to the bait. On the other hand, it would appear to be obliged to know the world around it, and the more the better, given the interconnection between all living phenomena; an intimate union based on a lack of adhesive: we resemble each other to some extent, because nothing unites us. This self–imposition generates a fate which is ironic and tragi–comic: the impossibility of it ever being fully realised.

"Conrad uses his events –realistic and almost universally known– as a means of expressing another less visible and lesser–known truth indirectly, in the same way that the narrative of *Heart of Darkness* is based as a whole on historical events and on events in Conrad's life, but uses them to express something which is transhistorical and transpersonal: the evasive and slippery underlying 'truth' of fictional as well as personal experience"⁶⁵.

A tragic art because it unveils the unveiling when it unveils. There is nothing behind the curtain, only the plaque which bears the name of the person who sponsored the moment of drawing back the curtain. Nothing new. But by contrast, our anxious look has certainly noticed the person who has drawn back the curtain, noticed his look, his continually realised, obvious, self–evident, reflex action. And we discover ourselves. An art of proof which thinks of reality not as the final point in a succession of events, but as an

archeology of what we have come to call reality; a construction of mechanisms which have made up our way of seeing and perceiving. To slip behind the scenes and to reset the stage, and re-observe the ridiculous gestures of the extras and the stupid dialogues of the actors. A look which does not implant new responses. An art conscious of the fact that it is not art, but subversion of the *truth*, a choice which can be de-mechanised. A de-representable action. A confusion.

4.- *The virtual*

Within this anxiety to seek certain minimum parameters within which some kind of relation can be established between what we are and what we appear to be when we describe ourselves, a change of real points of reference is of considerable importance. In recent times, the progressive cultural implantation of what is known as *virtual reality* offers a whole series of responses which are difficult to gauge. Virtual reality, that is, reality which is completely generated by means of information technology, would appear to be a world created explicitly by and for the retracted self. The virtuality of the images themselves, suspended in a discursive register with no alien points of reference but fully susceptible to being "filled" by the free activity of the interacting subject, proclaims a new subject-object relationship. To begin with, virtual reality is completely individualistic, at least as we know it today. In this sense, it is not so far from the main characteristic of the general world of representation: the insistence that interaction be personal and individualised, and never of a collective experiential nature. Virtual reality takes this yet one step further by insisting on the presence of the self alone in front of all the controls of the available mechanisms. It is true that this has been one of the main aims of the technological development of representation and information: three-dimensional images with the use of the appropriate "isolating" spectacles, the personal computer, the personal stereo, networks such as

Internet, etc.; machinery that strengthen our individual sense of interpretation, pleasure and perception. The existence of "otaku" in Japanese society is now well-known: bubble men and women dedicated exclusively to an autistic computerised task. This happens when "one arrives at a rejection of a Cartesian reality which is of no interest, and opts for a subjective and egocentric reality: the virtual."⁶⁶. In this hypersubjective world, the "uncertainty of the value of vision" which Rosset and Laing's psychiatric analyses comment on, finds a kind of metasolution, if we compare it to the idea of *decorum*. To the extent that the fully autonomous self creates meaning in the established programmes of virtual reality, the latter takes on a "homogenous" feel which was thought to have been lost, at the cost of de-collectivisation, of the acceptance of software as a new amoral "ground" which may be functionalised by our language and personal desires. This should not be understood as an attempt to condemn new technologies. We simply wish to make known how a retracted self can find a new form of self-assimilation – in which he no longer finds himself subject to appeals to the community or to previously agreed-upon codes– in virtuality, which produces in its turn a mythification of the autonomous and of the non-transferable within the field of manufacture of meanings. A lightened self which also tends to lay its foundations in a lightened reality, in which it is not obliged to take account of other realities apart from its own.

In the new analyses of the formation of a virtual self, in relation to the new representative contexts with which one is confronted, it is interesting to note the importance which mechanisms or devices have in this process, and how they can offer new techniques for exploration and *haireisis*. To the extent that it is taken for granted that our identity plays itself out in accordance with the devices which we ourselves have created, our relation with the world is based to a large extent on their use: "We cannot live without devices, and so we are cyborgs. The eyeglasses, hearing aids, telephones, hand tools, and

automobiles of today may give way to more powerful instruments, but now and tomorrow, these tools are part of us."⁶⁷. In the same way, the idea of the bio-apparatus, as the internal organisation of our personal lay-out, is becoming more and more accepted: the bio-apparatus appeals directly to: "...integrity of the body and of subjectivity. The apparatus, as we construe it, is itself a perceptual model, a reflection of social and cultural value systems, of desires. It can be seen as a metaphor that not only describes but generates subjectivity, a subjectivity problematized by the objectifying effect of any technological instrument."⁶⁸.

IV. Jesters: the perception of heretical language

We have already seen that in the world of "real" life, silence –understood as the discourse which cannot be heard– is capable of offering certain perceptions which in many cases and in the context of capitalism's language of demagogic productivity, produce a state of confusion and destabilisation among the powers that be. We have noted how the negation or simple "obviation" of power's *raison d'être* –generated by this "omitted" silence– is nowadays easily classified as heretical to the extent that it does not respond to the institutional wish that all of us be representable.

Power, truth and reason form an equation which seeks above all else to be assimilated, to be understood completely. Like the whole which is it is, its main obsession is to appear to be one, too. For this reason, language has constructed a self-referring language whose significates and significantes are defined through their constant contact with this idea of unity, of interior globality. To upset this balance leads to doubt, to contradiction, to paradox. To be outside the language means not being. Not to be able to name a thing

means that the thing does not exist because we are not. The equation thus resolves two problems in one stroke: on the one hand, it marks the limits of our being by means of our describability, and on the other it establishes the limits of the world using the dictionary. To speak outside the language of the world means "horror", an unreal and asocial existence which must be surgically removed because it places the mechanics of the orders which act as guidelines for life –for reality– in danger. To speak mouthlessly, that means heresy.

Having said which, since ancient times society has accepted certain types of heretical behaviour, whose permitted languages have called the mechanisms of control themselves into question. What is more, the pronouncements which have resulted from such behaviour have been appreciated as voices that have unveiled the truth, and especially heeded as the bearers of a supposed halo of truthfulness. So it is that the jester, the madman, the buffoon, the crippled, the child, the sick person, the old man or the artist himself, have been intimate with power, thanks to their very ability for saying the unsayable, using their madness, nonsense, larks, jokes, comedies. How is it that society, and those in power above all, welcome these "abnormalities" so that they form an integral part of their daily life. For what reason is it that certain languages are permitted, in the name of a certain physical reality, when such languages are under pressure as institutional targets?

If we are, furthermore, dealing here with people in the "real" world, then what is the borderline that marks the difference between what is punishable and what is assumed to be necessary?

This entire pantheon of "abnormal" people –the jester, the madman, the dwarf– was at the service of the court, with the function of providing moments of amusement and entertainment. The presence of such people, accepted within the midst of daily life, was structured by means of a break in

the logical discourse and the broadcasting of a series of nonsensical statements using commentaries and performances based on real life, well known by the buffoon or "man of pleasure", whose entire life took place in the wings of the palace court. On the other hand, the most characteristic festivals of that time, such as that of the Goliards in France, the Festival of the Innocents, of the Children, of the Ass, of the Deacons, etc., (not forgetting the influential title of Sebastian Brant, "The Ship of Fools", published in 1498), at which the predominant note was absolute chaos, most of them preconizing as they did societies which had been turned upside down, in which the poor and the deformed were in power, and the powerful had to submit to them. We are talking here about deeply-rooted popular festivals in towns and villages, which clearly had the blessing of those in power at the time. Nowadays, we can see quite a few examples of festivals which take us back to those popular bacchanalia: the Carnival, the *Falles*, the day of the Holy Innocents (April Fool's Day), etc. And so, how can all this be possible when power itself is defined by its rigid control of expression?

The other, the different, the "abnormal" take shape in society by means of a strange and subtle social regulation which allows them to express themselves, even though their message is a direct expression of what is prohibited. The jester, the dwarf of the medieval, Renaissance or Baroque courts, was not only introduced into the system so that he might amuse everyone with his cheekiness to the King or the latter's inner circle. As has already been remarked on in recent studies⁶⁹, two of the main reasons why the jester or the deformed man (the jester almost always sported some kind of physical deformity) were used by the monarch are: on the one hand, so that the latter would ensure himself supernatural protection, given certain superstitions current at the time (some of which survive to this day), such as the lucky hunchback, and, on the other hand, the belief that the madman has the ability to warn, to raise the alarm, as he denounces scandal and talks with

insight". Erasmus himself, in his "In Praise of Folly", comments of the anguish of the sane person when faced with the madman, the former being without access to this wisdom, this external world, which in reality represents the unsayable truth, the truth forbidden by sanity. Robert Castel has posited the question as follows: "Madness carries the promise of a mysterious truth, capable of changing life, and for this reason it is repressed by society with the collaboration of that prudent side in each man, which becomes society's accomplice"⁷⁰.

These "imperfect" beings are taken on board by those in power to the extent that they mark a territory, that they draw the very line which cannot be crossed. But is it simply for these reasons that they are not liquidated, in the same way as communards and revolutionaries are tortured and stamped out of society?

All these anomalous figures make up the impossible universe of reason. They exist, certainly, but have no being in the sense that they cannot describe themselves. We move them in the direction of comfortable prostheses that are distant from us in which –as if in another linguistic world altogether– they survive jabbering their unintelligible elucubrations and their mental vomiting, in a way which is perhaps similar to that in which we express ourselves when telling jokes: painlessly, comfortably, as they do not know they are idiots. Anomic beings.

However, let us suppose that these beings are telling the truth. Heresies that they are in themselves, the heretical aspect of their behaviour is fascinating because, with their lack of language, due to their inability to know themselves, they say what they see. And we listen to their discourses, attentive and afraid, although we certainly know that these discourses serve no purpose, as there is no self-awareness in them. There can be no madness or heresy if one is not aware of what is being expressed, so we think, so power thinks. Paying attention to what is different takes place because the

personal autonomy of the latter is non-existent. This neither causes pain nor affects the structures set up by power, by us. He who blasphemes while being unaware of doing so, creates a discourse in which blasphemy is only an idea and not a reality, we repeat to ourselves candidly. Only he who knows his own language is real. As the madman cannot know his own language, we place him on the level of representation, of the spectacle, a position which ensures that we will avoid contamination.

"As a man without restraint, Kurtz is also an extremist in language"⁷¹.

The madman, the dwarf, "speaks" without knowing why. Parasite meant jester in the Roman era: the guest who eats at the party and enlivens it for the others without holding himself in any esteem. Euripedes, in "The Bacchantes", points out that the madman has only one tongue and always uses it to speak the truth. The sane man has two: one for the truth and the other to talk as the need takes him. In other words, the jester cannot speak for himself because he has no private interests but he can make the world speak. The medieval universe and above all the Baroque one would later adopt the concept of a being who through denial of his own self becomes a vehicle for the truth, directly from Greco-Roman thought. A truth which is none other than power's own silence, the reflected image of that which does not want to be said in the presence of the King or of the rulers of the state. The suppression of the self leads to the centre of the discourse. It codifies the unsayable. It makes it into language because the body of the speaker is not important, because it does not exist, it has not been thought of; in a nutshell, it is not real, but virtual, pure spectacle. Moreover, the crippled and deformed body of the jester acts as a foil to the dignity that belongs to the court: "As in a game of mirrors, these unusual, flawed or exaggerated beings give confirmation to the others of their own normality, which the former deny with their bodies or their minds.

Being out of kilter, they are involuntary symbols, emblems, anagrams of the perfection which they lack and which, it goes without saying, belongs to the""⁷². A normality which is not challenged by the existence of the abnormal. Claude Kappler spoke of the idea of non-resemblance; a monster is a phenomenon which goes against the general grain of things, but not against that of nature taken as a whole.⁷³ This non-body legitimises the silence of power, in the same way that a King would suppress his laugh, created a profound paradox: the awareness of being denies the act of speaking.

On the other hand, it is interesting to observe the subtle link that was established between the figure of the jester and that of the King or the ruler. The Baroque period, for example, exalts the concept of identity to such an extent that the "Prince" frequently finds himself subject to popular pressure, given the level of representativity and symbolism which he himself embodies⁷⁴. In this sense, we can risk affirming that the "abnormal" body of the jester was employed as a kind of counterbalance to or mirror of the situation of the figure in power. To the extent that one represents solitude inasmuch as he is responsible for "uniting" the world, the other reveals –in his "irresponsible" solitude– both what is not permitted even to the King himself, and also the irrational nature of both their situations, irrevocably linked as they are by a tragic destiny: the unsuitability of their identities: "In the 16th century, when the traditional world found itself worn away by the unexpected appearance of a universe built around capitalism, those most closely affected were people whose position in social life placed them firmly in the centre of an essential information network: the prince, the philosopher–poet, the lover! These anomic characters affirm themselves in their lives and within the framework of their possible experience, they suffer the burden of their loneliness and of their marginalisation...and they suffer so abandoning themselves to all the projections, to all the phantasms of an individuality cut off from a traditional culture"⁷⁵.

"The distinctions of Conrad are made in terms of figures. What is more, these, due to an "inevitable necessity", must have other different, supplementary figures to explain them. (...) The accounts given by Marlow make the meaning shine forth once more, in the way a light will spread until it outlines the mist, taking on the appearance of a vague halo"⁷⁶.

The jester, the dwarf, the parasite is allowed to speak the truth before the powerful. It was expected of the jester to "cover himself, sit down and address a King, Duke or Marquess as a superior or as a boor"⁷⁷. Anybody who dared to do so without being qualified for it faced punishment, derision or even death. A teratology, a perfectly structured theory of the monstrous⁷⁸ codifies who can and who cannot speak. Thanks to his madness, to his tameness, the presence of the heretic –of he who "warns", of he who unveils, of he who draws back the curtain– is permitted; because he draws back the curtain in the area of representation, even though he is completely real.

The taming of potential heresy; the presence of a difference right next to us as a means of prevention, as a prophylactic to protect us against possible horrors, possible novelties, possible differences. Sebastian Brant wrote, in "The Ship of Fools": "When one wishes to take care of the children and the mad, one shouldn't take their clowning in the wrong way. If one does, one would be made of the same stuff as the other madmen"⁷⁹. The point of inflexion between the punishable and the acceptable really lies in the interval provided by illusion. Here, we are able to project our individual feelings without fear of affecting the system. To this end, it is necessary to understand why we do not apply social norms to these "anomic" beings; in political reality, there can be no exceptions; in the spectacle, there can be, because we exercise our judgements freely, without ties, as this is the principal demand

made by the world of representation. When Brant hinted that we should not get angry with the mad, with children or with old people, when these question the system, he is appealing to compassion, to the establishment of a "one-to-one" relationship in which as a consequence everything is more relative; above all because the madman "does not know what he is saying", it is up to us to give meaning to the content of his message: "The mentally ill person is non-productive, like tramps, homeless people, the poor sick, the old [*or the artists, given the similar arguments which are put forward by a large part of society, to the effect that art is useless*]. He is also dangerous, less because of his actions, which rarely have any impact on reality, than because of the example of transgression of the norm which he gives, and which could no more go unpunished than could a criminal act. However, the "irresponsible" being cannot be treated in the same fashion as the criminal, especially when – despite the negative stereotypes which his image inspires– there remains in him a pathetic element which always inspires compassion"⁸⁰. This compassion is the power pertaining to the exclusive mastery of our reason, which thus "knows" of its magnanimity, and of its "normal and healthy difference".

To confess is to reveal that which cannot be said. Kurtz, in fact, confesses: "The horror". There is something comical about this expression. Kurtz's few words are used to say : "The horror". There is no judgement, only an unappealable, unidimensional statement. He is and horror is. Kurtz has to confess his revelation, but he is unable to judge himself, and cannot therefore be judged: "You cannot judge (Kurtz) like he was just anybody", the Russian employee says to Marlow. Kurtz discovers that he is also unable to structure a discourse that reaches beyond himself, that can be understood by his peers.(Brando commenting that "his wife wouldn't understand him").

The hypocrisy of knowing oneself to be magnanimous in the face of what is different, justifies itself largely by the fact that the jester, the sick person or the drunk do not use rhetoric when they express themselves. An *irresponsible* being who is not conscious of his or her language is not in possession of this faculty: "The madman may talk as he wishes to emperors or kings or to any other person without being hurt by them, or hearing threats or insulting words, nor does he need to capture their attention using any manner of rhetorical artifice"⁸¹.

The amazement caused by this figure in the Baroque court or in our time has to do with the "marvel" of his not being subject to the political twists and turns of language and of the relationships which these engender. What surprises us is how "natural" and how uncontaminated his or her heretical discourse is. Denis Diderot, in "Rameau's Nephew", presents himself as carrying on an open dialogue with a completely parasitical character (in fact, the alter-ego of a surprisingly heretical Diderot, in an astonishing example of ventriloquism), a "throw-away" jester who spends his time visiting the homes of the rich and amusing them with his cynical comments and his gossip in exchange for a bottle of wine, a plate of food, or a warm bed. After the long conversation, almost a dialogue "between two deaf people", in which both broadcast completely opposed types of discourse, Diderot feels tempted to write: "Everything he said to me, were things that everybody thinks, and according to which people tend to run their daily lives, but which are never spoken of. This, in fact, was the main difference between this man and the rest of society. He had the vices he had, just as many others had them; but he was not a hypocrite. He was no more or less condemnable than the rest; he was simply more sincere and more honest with himself, and even profounder, about his depravation"⁸².

The "sub-rosa" room (the English language maintains this Latin expression, used to describe something secret, or revealed in strictest

confidence), thought of by Henry VIII of England[#] is a perfect example of this dichotomy between the natural and the rhetorical as regards the discourse of "the other". In that room, only accessible to a very small number of people close to the Monarch, one was allowed complete freedom of expression, without any form of linguistic repression. Here, a discourse was explicitly sought after which did not have to follow rhetorical guidelines and which was free of "artifice". Recourse was had to the "natural" in order to generate a language of truth, which is, in fact, none other than that of total relativity. This was the reason for the secrecy which surrounded everything that took place in the sub-rosa room. Within the chamber, those present spoke their own minds, without referring to dictaminated, fixed bodies of discourse. To do this, complete opaqueness, confidentiality and secrecy are essential. The expression of "haireisis" is conceived only as a natural flow, for which reason it must be banned from sight, given that it subverts the social mechanisms of power inasmuch as these are based on artifice, leaving them de-legitimised in the eyes of the public if the latter is allowed to observe them.

The sub-rosa room (very much alive in our current institutions) represents the taming of freedom on the part of a regulating society, by means of mechanisms which are available circumstantially but banned as a public commodity. But above all it defines the very meaning of the heretical, when the latter is thought of not as something distant but as a potential daily phenomenon based on the differential use of language. A language that rejects the established mechanisms of everyday control, political rhetoric (which is presented as if were everyday), and which places itself on a level which can only be represented with difficulty. To the extent that the potential heretic subverts (not inverts) the mechanics of the relations of expression, he puts the plane of representation that conditions power at risk, but at the same time creates a paradox, because once the jester has become the centre of attention and interest, he becomes framed as a "prosthesis", *filled in* with

our projections of normality and responsibility, and, as such, representable, adopted, accepted. Psychophagy creates itself because we believe that one of our halves controls the other; this is the result which the development of the mechanisms of order has led us to: the mechanisms which we have given ourselves in order to *take the measure* of what we are. But always within the measure itself, within the universe of the *same measuring instrument*. Placed within consciousness of the 50%, we use this fact to justify the limit which marks the dividing line between the two halves; we live in order to legitimise being on the threshold of the access door. A strange door, to be sure. From having a lintel with an empty space inside, we now adopt a liquid crystal display; we live in the shadow of the door. On one side and on the other, there are only controllable representations; menus available with the programmes changed so we may dispose of infinite lives in the video game of psychophagy.

•••

Well, let us raise the curtain. Ah! There is no curtain. It doesn't matter. Light floods the small, somewhat untidy stage, and facing it, a few people show how nervous they are before the coming performance. Voices are heard. They are unclear. They are entering now. There are several of them: strange flesh and wood characters who are ready to speak and tell us things. They sit on some stools. No, only on one. The show begins.

V. And, to finish, some practical exercises in ventriloquism

- "It is a question of using our voice in such a way that the sound appears not to be coming from our mouth. To do so, we should take a deep breath of air

and let it go slowly at the same time as we modify the voice with the help of the guttural and paladial muscles. The illusion will be heightened when the visible muscles related to speech remain immobile, and gestures and looks are employed which will give the spectator the idea that the sounds are coming from somewhere else. Few ventriloquists could convince anyone in the darkness. So we will have to have all the lights on. Most of them use puppets with moving lips that draw the audience's attention. So you should get hold of one. Your own hand will do, if you put a wig on it and join up your thumb and index finger to form a mouth. You should be aware that the art of ventriloquism owes its name to the Romans' mistaken idea that the performer drew his voice out of his stomach or belly".

- "Ventriloquism cannot take place in darkness"; it does not make any sense to pull a rabbit out of a hat in the darkness, or to levitate when nobody can see you, or to make a dummy talk when the dummy is not visible. The decision of the magician to be transparent, is a decision based on verisimilitude; he or she is obliged to do what he can to be credible. In the darkness, the performer can only be true or false; by not showing himself, he depends only on his own vision of himself. The wish to be transparent is an eminently social wish. By means of the dummy, the magician projects his/her language, his/her message, in such a way that it makes sense inasmuch as it is in contact with the *other*. On the other hand, it magnifies the way in which the dummy talks; he/she "makes it sick", he/she "heretises it", he/she irresponsibilises it so as to get the attention of the spectator, in the same way as the jester was taken for granted in daily life because he/she represented a non-conscience, which supposedly could do no harm. Normally, the dummies tend to say things which have a heavily ironic and even cynical tone when referring to social life. The dummy takes on an intimate, personal, individualised, untransferable kind of common sense. The audience respects

its opinion because it knows that it says "hidden truths", and even confirms that opinion by laughing at the less hidden jokes. In some form, it has credibilised itself through its representation; it is not that its discourse speaks the truth, but that –like a lawyer before a jury– it has a persuasive way of speaking.

- "There's a magic little box called a Tape Recorder that has been helping me. Gosh, the first time a person hears his voice he feels like crawling under the nearest bed and staying there. I know I did. But the tape recorder is helping me to improve my speech and create new voices. Most people can't see their mistakes – but with a tape recorder one can at least "hear" them.⁸³"

- The transparency of the trick, of farce, of drama, is that which exists in the relationship between the ventriloquist and his dummy. A ventriloquist cannot perform in darkness, he/she needs to know just how the mechanism works in broad daylight. Our eyes and ears will turn towards the dummy even though we are perfectly well aware of who is really doing the talking. But although we know what is going on, we are perfectly capable of unveiling the hidden meaning which the performer wishes to transmit by means of our relationship with the lie which he/she is showing us with such brutal frankness. The unveiling of the ventriloquist does not in fact pull the curtain back to reveal some unknown truth. Derrida has already pointed out that in the Christian concept of revelation, the end of the world is not the truth being announced, but rather the truth lies in the act of unveiling itself. And some time earlier, Wittgenstein –one of the inventors of modern ventriloquism– said that the function of language is to always show before it says, that the meaning of any given proposition lies in the way of describing it. Unveiling reveals one's own resources, the machinery, the utensils, by means of which we are able to

perform the act of drawing back the curtain; we already know what lies beyond; it is really our own archaeology of means that is beyond our reach.

The ventriloquist readily shows all his utensils; his/her voice, the movement of his/her mouth (less and less sophisticated by the day, one might say), the hand that moves the arms and mouth of the dummy, the inevitable stool, the stage lights, etc. He/she is pornographical in his/her way of going about things and his/her strength lies in this transparency. The meaning of his/her work lies in the peculiar combination of all these means; what is implied in the how-to, and the opposite. There are no secrets in this communicative deployment, despite the fact that there certainly might be hidden in the will of the performer, but these latter secrets lose themselves, transforming themselves voluntarily should he be inclined to project them socially.

- Ventriloquism, as a method of communication, has always interested power, despite it consisting of certain features that might lead to distortion. Or perhaps that is precisely the reason for such an interest. An example of how ventriloquism is perceived socially and politically –in the sense of channeling certain types of opinion through *anomic* subjects– is to be found in the well-known Frank Capra film, "John Doe" (1941). In this film, the main character, Jon Doe (Gary Cooper) an honest, ingenuous, simple and everyday man –very much in tune with the image of the average American propagated by the populist spirit of Roosevelt's policies– finds himself thrown into despair, used by the corrupt machinery of power which takes advantage of his ability to catalyse socially what are supposed to be the intrinsic values of the average American citizen: love of country, justice, religion, liberty. At one moment in the film, Joen Doe –unaware of the treachery of those around him– begins to uncover a whole political barrel of worms through a conversation he has with an anonymous drunk in a bar. This

character, who never stops drinking when already in a state of tremendous drunkenness, gives a speech which is apparently full of honesty, full of explicit criticisms of the system, extolling those virtues which in themselves are the key to what ought to be the healthy American way of life; "the thrill in my stomach when I hear the Stars and Stripes", "the profound feeling of liberty in a country in which everybody can say what they feel", etc. Straight after this, the character explains the trap into which John Doe is being dragged, to his face.

The drunk goes beyond his social abnormality –his drunkenness– to achieve a state of moral neutrality thanks to his own weakness. He turns into a representative prosthesis who has been given the right to say things which would be unsayable were he in a socially codified position. His social heresy allows him full verisimilitude, because he speaks from a state of otherness (we could almost say from a "sublime" Kantian position); his discourse is not apparently subject to the canons of the socially accepted mechanisms of representation; he is above it all, not by taking on a moral (universal) voice, but an ethical (personal and untransferable) one, which makes it easier for the audience to pay extra attention to his discourse, above all if the latter coincides completely with the moral truth which is supposedly that of the American people. The public (along with Doe) knows that it is a certain kind of man who is speaking, but one who is expressing in words uncontaminated by rhetoric that American morality which everybody wishes to listen to.

The artist, to a certain extent, is also looked at from this supra-moral position, allowing him to express himself with acidity, in a way that everybody wishes to be in accordance with a kind of truth that we all like to hear even though few of us can communicate it. For their part, many artists tend to confirm this point of view, by adopting a highly expressive discourse, allowing him to enter that inner circle of "voicers of substantial truths" which legitimises itself by the fact of making known that which it is supposed everybody already

shares: the right to express oneself individually. This, in fact, short-circuits any possibility of being specifically critical with the social environment because appeal is always made to matters of universal import. As soon as an artist exercises this right to self-expression but without channeling it through the global representative codes, he is no longer considered an artist, but merely an agitator or a provoker.

- General Schwarzkopf appears as this straightforward, affable general who, when older, talks of his great epic battles, using his baton to point to the screen at his side, in front of all the press and TV, expressing himself in technical language and stressing the positive outcomes of the military operations. The monitor screen, just as if it were a dummy, draws the looks of those present. Everybody stares at the screen and the greatest disasters in the world appear with a halo of decline –of nostalgia for that which is past–about them. We are found to be without a nameable entity, bodyless, soulless, merely pure image disconnected from its creator. From time to time we look at the general as we would a ventriloquist; with the pleasure of being able to see the trick, even. But the general is in broad daylight, like a magician: there is no place here for any mechanical trick, there is no point in encouraging speculation. He is not important, is what he wants to say. What is important is that the looks are drawn to the screen, thus protecting him from any kind of precise individualisation, denying reality the opportunity of being susceptible to revenge, to the same right of reply. Ventriloquism. But the general's truth is not only his truth, it is that of a system which is greater than he. That is why he is not a good ventriloquist; he has not invented his discourse. He is merely an automaton.

- "And pale slender women with consumptive faces lingered upon the footsteps of ventriloquists and conjurors"⁸⁴.

- When Walter Benjamin, in his "Thesis on the Philosophy of History"⁸⁵, had the idea of using the image of a chessplayer dummy –activated invisibly from inside by an ugly, hunchbacked dwarf– as a parable for modern philosophy, he was doubtless ironising in a highly subtle way about himself, in a way that suited his wish to destroy the idea of truth –and his own situation as a writer– perfectly. The dwarf, taken as standing for theology, is in need of a prosthesis which will represent him, given the absolute incommunicability of the discipline of theology which would arise if the latter had to present itself. Thus, the dwarf uses philosophy –the dummy which looks like an automaton– as a scaffolding or façade for channeling his discourse. In other words, Benjamin posits the very image of ventriloquism as a model for contemporary communication.

If this crippled, horrid dwarf were to stand up for himself, nobody would believe him –he would not be credible– so he decides to pass his social identity on to a dummy which certainly is credible and to which we may appeal as interlocutors. But why is the story which the dummy tells us credible, and why, on the other hand, would we not believe it if it were told to us directly by the dwarf? Why did Benjamin use this image to laugh at his own situation as a writer? Perhaps the German thinker knew that we would not believe him either if he did not use an allegory which would really be of interest to us? Benjamin, like the dwarf, "throws his voice" onto the allegorical figure, aware of his own impotence as the individual giving the message, but also of his need to communicate, albeit at the cost of selling much of his identity, of a certain prostitution.

- "Ventriloquism does not happen when the first breath is taken. It should not be forgotten that the dummy is the "star" of the turn, and, as such, only what

it says is of any importance. What the performer says only serves to prepare or to act as a foil to what the dummy will say"⁸⁶.

- "The dummy is aggressive, dirty mouthed, and much like a number of four-year-olds I know. Aside from the parody elements, and the marvelous absurdity of the whole enterprise, the central experience of such a trick is matching your concentration against the performer's attempts to deflect and reshape your perceptions [...] It's pure pleasure, plus redeeming anti-social value, allowing us to be mean, wide-eyed and sophisticated all at once"⁸⁷.

- "Ludlam [the author refers to the actor performing the ventriloquist role in *The Ventriloquist's Wife*] notes the psychological paradox at the heart of the very feat of ventriloquism: somebody else is appearing to say your words. The dummy permits the illusion of indignation to matters you can't acknowledge, the license of guiltlessly voicing the unmentionable."⁸⁸

In the same way as a ventriloquist uses the dummy to express his ideas, –always in such a way that the dummy takes on a representative position by means of which it is "permitted" to say that which could not be said by the performer himself– Conrad, in *Heart of Darkness*, uses Marlow as a piece or as a drive belt so that the language of Kurtz can flourish without being constrained by his own incommunicability. Even Marlow himself, in reality, is using himself as a talking dummy, being the way he is, sitting in his boat before the silent seamen who at the same time remind him from time to time of his own narrative voice. Marlow tells six of his memories, visualising them through the unveiling of Kurtz. Not in vain does Marlow become the physical embodiment of Kurtz's memory at the end of the novel, as if he were the latter's "dummy".

What characterises Marlow is that through himself, through his own grey areas, lies, guilt, definitive contradictions, the voices of Conrad and of Kurtz reach full expression, voices into which his own verbal expression is blended by means of a tremendous irony. Kurtz uses Marlow as his dummy, as that which will be able to "make understood" (to his son, as he makes quite clear) what Kurtz was and what he really thought, once the latter has died. Marlow will become the repository of Kurtz's memory, and will explain what Kurtz was. But it will not be Kurtz, but Marlow who will speak – the plausible, ironic, narrator of journeys. However, Marlow also uses Kurtz to some extent in order to make him say what Marlow himself knows and cannot say (that he is a liar and a trickster, without a doubt, although he neither is sure if he can be judged; he will seek the answer to this in Kurtz).

Kurtz: he cannot describe the unnameable. The unnameable does not necessarily have to be something oneiric, non-existent, metaphysical, either, but simply otherness, or rather, oneself. Kurtz is otherness. Kurtz cannot speak because we simply would not understand him. Conrad gives him only a few words in the whole of the novel, despite him being the central reference point of the entire narrative thread. Marlow has to speak for him and also as him. The ventriloquism is mutual. The confrontation by means of the experiential makes a real collective representation possible. Marlow is the experiential material which makes the confrontation possible; the dialogue with the other, with Kurtz, with oneself.

- And we end with something curious: did you know that in ancient times it was believed that ventriloquism imitated the voices of invisible beings? So now you know.

Notes

Introduction

by J. L. Marzo

¹ Clement Rosset, *Lógica de lo peor*, Barral. Barcelona, 1976, pg. 32

² The texts provided by the artists especially for this edition, will appear towards the end of the book.

HERESIES: A CRITIQUE OF MECHANISMS

by Jorge Luis Marzo

¹ From the influential financial magazine *Eurobusiness Zeitung*, Frankfurt, april, 1994, No. 64, pg. 12.

² *Gran Enciclopedia del Mundo*, Durvan, Bilbao, 1970.

³ Barrows Dunham, *Héroes y herejes*, Seix Barral, Barcelona, 1969.

⁴ Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (NY), 1988.

⁵ Arthur Hopkins, *Galileo Galilei*, Belthem & Sons, London, 1955.

⁶ Cfr. Pedro Fraile, *Un espacio para castigar. La cárcel y la ciencia penitenciaria en España* (18th–19th centuries), Serbal, Barcelona, 1987.

⁷ Juan Carlos Garcia Borrón, *Filosofía y Ciencia*, Teide, Barcelona, 1980, pg. 166

⁸ In the early 'Eighties, the Macintosh company understood this situation perfectly, and produced computers whose operative systems were impossible to enter, unlike other computers currently in use at the time. The user's relation with the software was through simple representative symbols, in which all the structural functions lay. The advertising of the company itself was an indication of this: "For all those people who don't want to ask themselves why the hell they can't understand their computer."

⁹ Kim Sawchuk, "Marketing Health Care and the Bioapparatus", *Virtual Seminar on the Bioapparatus*, C.Richards and Nell Tenhaaf (ed.), The Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada, 1991, pg. 46.

¹⁰ Celia Amorós, "Feminismo, Ilustración y misoginia romántica", *Filosofía y género. Identidades femininas*, AAVV, Fina Burulés, (ed.), Pamiela, Pamplona, 1992, pg.126.

¹¹ Elke and Hans-Christian Harten, *Femmes, Culture et Révolution*, Des Femmes, Paris, 1988, pg. 37; in Amorós, op.cit. pg. 126.

¹² Roland Barthes, "El efecto de realidad", *Lo Verosimil*, VVAA, Tiempo Contemporáneo/Revista Communications, Buenos Aires, 1970, pp. 95–101

- ¹³ Antonio Contín, *Dizionario dell'Eresie, degli Errori e degle Scismi*, Venice, 1767, v.VI.
- ¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *Tecnologías del yo*, (ed. orig. 1988) Paidós/ICE-UAB, Barcelona, 1990.
- ¹⁵ A reference to the well-known story by Italo Calvino, "La forma del espacio", in *Las cósmicas*, Minotauro, Barcelona, 1985.
- ¹⁶ Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 54
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 83
- ¹⁸ Joseph Conrad, in Steve Ressler, *Joseph Conrad. Consciousness and Integrity*, New York University Press, 1988
- ¹⁹ Regarding this, see the controversial article by Agustín García Calvo, "Preservativo", *El País*, 3 and 4 December de 1990, p. 28/p. 34 respectively. García Calvo suggests that power's omnipresent zeal has managed to establish its presence within desire itself, urbanising the sexual urge by adopting the condom as the supreme technological form of coercion in the realm of private life, using the logico-economic justification of usefulness in life and defence against death.... The decision to not use the condom implies a terroristic attitude in that it questions the functional conception of desire and death, according to the author, in a text which is not without a certain social *animadversion*, but not any less succulent for all that.
- ²⁰ Gianni Vattimo, *El fin de la modernidad*, (ed. orig. 1985) Gedisa, Barcelona, 1986, p. 158
- ²¹ As regards this differentiation, very much alive in the creative context of the Italian Povera, Cfr. J. L. Marzo, "La ilusión de la memoria. Luciano Fabro", *Lápiz*, Madrid, abril de 1990, nº 67, pp. 52-57
- ²² Jean François Lyotard, *La diferencia*, (ed. orig. 1983) Gedisa, Barcelona, 1988, p. 63
- ²³ B. Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, 1903, en J. Echevarría, *Análisis de la identidad*. Here I follow the line of some of the research on indetermination being carried out by Tere Badia.
- ²⁴ Echevarría, *op. cit.*
- ²⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *El Pliegue. Leibniz y el barroco*, (ed. orig. 1988) Paidós, Barcelona, 1989, p. 30. Deleuze calls this new sign-object "objectile" inasmuch as "the current technological object cannot even trace its origins back to the beginning of the industrial era, when the concept of the standard still carried an implication of essence and imposed a law of constancy, but to our current situation, when the fluctuation of the norm takes the place of the permanence of a law, when the object is located in a continuum due to variation.", while he defines the "sub-ject" as a *superject*.
- ²⁶ Ressler, *op. cit.*
- ²⁷ Jean Duvignaud, *Herejía y subversión*, (ed. orig. 1986) Icaria, Barcelona, 1990.

²⁸ We have followed analyses made by Deleuze and Guattari closely, en Steven Best & Douglas Kellner, "Deleuze and Guattari: Schizos, Nomads, Rhizomes", *Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations*, Guilford Press, New York, 1991.

²⁹ Amelia Jones, "The Flesh of the World", *Maureen Connor. Discreet Objects*, Alternative Museum, New York City, 1994, p. 4.

³⁰ Duvignaud, *op. cit.*

³¹ Best&Kellner, *op. cit.*

³² Lyotard, *op. cit.*, p. 23

³³ Best&Kellner, *op. cit.* As regards the 'division of the self', see R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience*, Pantheon, NY, 1967; David Cooper, *Death of the Family*, Pantheon, NY, 1971.

³⁴ Rosset, *op. cit.*, p. 62

³⁵ Duvignaud, *op. cit.*

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ *Ibid.* We would point out, out of curiosity (is the curious not a property of the credible, of the possible?) that anomy, in the field of medicine, is the incapacity for naming objects or for recognising their written or spoken names.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ In cultural politics, institutions appear to have found some succulent solutions to this paradox, which on the one hand renders null and void the revolutionary potential of the new, while on the other, in the name of the new, it deactivates whatever current dangers there might be in existence. Tere Badia has recently formulated the question in the following way: Is it not power, when it thinks about the societies which it loves, that attempts to adapt them to those avant-garde concepts that will always have to emerge? When an award is given to a certain *young* work of art, are the institutions not assimilating society into cultural manufacture and not the other way round? In other words, is it licit to promote a policy which searches for novelties when reality is totally obviated?

⁴⁰ Duvignaud, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ "For centuries, lunatics, delinquents, prostitutes, alcoholics, thieves and weirdos have shared the same place, a place in which the diversity of the nature of its "monstrosity" was hidden and levelled by an element common to all: deviation from the "norm" and its rules, linked to the need to isolate the abnormal from social commerce...[...] Alienation and criminality represented, in this way, together, the part of mankind which had to be eliminated, circumscribed and hidden until science had decreed a clearly-marked separation

between the two." Franco Basaglia, "El hombre en la picota", VVAA, *Psiquiatría, Antipsiquiatría y orden manicomial*, Barral, Barcelona, 1975, p. 157

⁴⁴ Dunham, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Alberto Blécula, in his introduction to Aristotle, *Retórica. Poética*, Laia, Barcelona, 1985, p. 16

⁴⁶ in Anthony Blunt, *La teoría de las artes en Italia, del 1450 al 1600*, (ed. orig. 1942) Cátedra. Madrid, 1982, p. 120

^{47*} Well commented on by Julián Gállego, in *Visión y símbolos en la pintura española del Siglo de Oro*, Cátedra, Madrid, 1984, pp. 179–83

^{48#} Barthélemy de Medina, a Dominican friar who was a teacher in Salamanca in the 16th century, proposes the model of the market as a place for legitimate choices. *From the outside*, all more or less probable opinions maintain their possibilities. The *conscience* must choose in good faith, and *from inside*, the opinion which will give it peace of mind. Thus "probabilism" is born, the casuistry which would reach its "Golden Age" under the aegis of the Jesuits. The credible extends to the entire field of moral action. The boundary between the true and the apparent is almost identical to that dividing faith and custom. In other words, the true lies in the shadow of faith, and the apparent in that of reality.

The Church would find the casuistical discourse a difficult one to handle, and came close to condemning it as heretical for nearly two centuries. Jules Gritti suggests that casuistry came very close to being a "realistic" science, thanks to a technique which may be adapted to all deviations, to all the complexities of the real. It also led to the taste for teratology, or taste for the monstrous, especially in the writings of Escobar, Tamburini and Caramuel, to the extent that this science applied itself to the "concrete", to the specific case. Jules Gritti, "Dos artes de los verosímil: I. La casuística", *Lo Verosímil*, (VVAA), Tiempo Contemporáneo/Revista Communications, Buenos Aires, 1970, pp. 115–134

⁴⁹⁺ "Porque ese cielo azul que todos vemos/ni es cielo ni es azul. ¡Lástima grande/que no sea verdad tanta belleza!". ("Because this blue sky that we all see/is neither sky nor blue. Great pity/that so much beauty be not true!") Luis Argensola, . 17th century. In Fernando Checa and José Miguel Morán, *El Barroco*, Istmo, Madrid, 1982, p. 5

⁵⁰ J. A. Maravall, *La cultura del barroco*, Madrid, 1975.

⁵¹ in Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Black&Red, (ed. orig, 1967) Detroit, 1983.

⁵² Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces. A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge. Massachusetts, 1989, p. 99

⁵³ Dr. Renaudin, *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1845. In Robert Castel, "El Tratamiento moral. Terapéutica mental y control social en el siglo XIX", VVAA, *Psiquiatría, Antipsiquiatría y orden manicomial*, Barral, Barcelona, 1975, p. 84

- ⁵⁴ Vattimo, *op. cit.*, p. 86. The parenthetical addition is ours.
- ⁵⁵ Lyotard, *op. cit.*, p. 62
- ⁵⁶ J. Bialostocki, "Barroco; estilo, época, actitud", in *Estilo e Iconografía*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1973.
- ⁵⁷ Rudolf Wittkower, *Arte y Arquitectura en Italia 1600/1750*, (ed. orig. 1973) Cátedra, Madrid, 1985, p. 140
- ⁵⁸ Blunt, *op. cit.*, p. 119
- ⁵⁹ John Hillis Miller, *Heart of Darkness Revisited*, New York, 1983
- ⁶⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialéctica de la Ilustración*, (ed. orig. 1944) Trotta, Madrid, 1994, p. 37
- ⁶¹ Duvignaud, *op. cit.*
- ⁶² Rosset, *op. cit.*, p. 50
- ⁶³ Lyotard, *op. cit.*
- ⁶⁴ Rosset, *op. cit.*, pp. 191–224
- ⁶⁵ Hillis Miller, *op. cit.*
- ⁶⁶ Wilhelm Roentger, "Implosión", *Iñaki Larrimbe–Implosión*, exhibition catalogue, Diputación de León, 1995.
- ⁶⁷ Warren Robinett, "Technological Augmentation of Memory, Perception and Imagination", *Virtual Seminar on the Apparatus*, *op. cit.*, p. 17
- ⁶⁸ Catherine Richards and Nell Tenhaaf, "Introduction", *Ibid.* Here, for the authors, the same inclusion of apparatus in the foundations of identity could become a positive characteristic to the extent that "when instruments are used to reorder perception, one can anticipate the relations of power". To anticipate, in this context, could mean to unveil, but also to foresee. The question that occurs to me is: foresee what we ourselves project, as it is us who, in reality, formulate the relations of power?
- ⁶⁹ Jacques Heers, *Carnavales y Fiestas de Locos*, Península, Barcelona, 1988
- ⁷⁰ Robert Castel, "Para una crítica de la institución psiquiátrica", *Psiquiatría, Antipsiquiatría y orden manicomial*, *op. cit.*, p. 99
- ⁷¹ Ressler, *op. cit.*
- ⁷² Fernando Bouza, *Locos, enanos y hombres de placer*, T&H, Madrid, 1991, p. 20
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴ Cfr. Walter Benjamin, *El origen del drama barroco alemán*, Taurus, Madrid, 1990.
- ⁷⁵ Duvignaud, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁶ Ross Muffin (ed), "Heart of Darkness. A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism", *What is Deconstruction?*, cita bibliográfica perdida.

⁷⁷ Bouza, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ We may recall that magnificent film "Freaks". See too the monograph on anomalies by Daniel P. Mannix, "Freaks", *Research Magazine* (classics), (ed. orig. 1976), San Francisco, 1990.

⁷⁹ Heers, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Castel, "Para una crítica de la institución psiquiátrica", *op. cit.*, p. 134–135

⁸¹ Gerónimo de Mondragón, *Censura de locura humana*, en Bouza, *op. cit.*, p. 36

⁸² Denis Diderot, *El sobrino de Rameau*, Bruguera, Barcelona, 1983, p. 114

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⁸³ Dick Preston, "Are You Afraid of Distant Voice?", *The Oracle*, Official Publication of the International Brotherhood of Ventriloquists, Vent Haven, Kentucky, May–June, 1952, vol. XI, nº 3, p. 5

⁸⁴ Charles Dickens, "Old C. Shop...", xix, 1840; en "Ventriloquism", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ed. 3, XVIII, 639/2

⁸⁵ Walter Benjamin, "Tesis de la filosofía de la historia", *Discursos interrumpidos I*, Taurus, Madrid, 1982.

⁸⁶ P. W. Ciuró, *La ventriloquía*, Artes Gráficas CIO, Madrid, 1963

⁸⁷ Erika Munk; "No Dummy", *The Village Voice*, Jan 9, 1978

⁸⁸ Gerald Rabkin, "The Ventriloquist's Wife", *Soho Weekly News*, June 1, 1978, p. 68

¹ Clement Rosset, *Lógica de lo peor*, Barral. Barcelona, 1976, pg. 32

² The texts provided by the artists especially for this edition, will appear towards the end of the book.

¹³ Roland Barthes, "El efecto de realidad", *Lo Verosimil*, VVAA, Tiempo Contemporáneo/Revista Communications, Buenos Aires, 1970, pp. 95-101

¹⁴ Antonio Contín, *Dizionario dell'Eresie, degli Errori e degle Scismi*, Venice, 1767, v.VI.

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