Towards an art of instauring modes of existence that 'do not exist'

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The art of instauration

However extravagant the notion of a non-anthropological subject may seem – especially in an era that clings to the primacy of the human subject – we must acknowledge that contemporary thought tends to admit multiple streams of experience or 'feelings' (as Whitehead puts it) as well as multiple modes of being, according to a plurality of worlds.[1] Thus, amidst the bankruptcy of anthropocentrism which we have witnessed in recent decades in various fields ranging from philosophy to ecology, beings who once seemed bound to their subjective sphere have gained another status, a new life. Invisible, impossible and virtual entities that were supposed to belong to the realm of imagination, the spiritual, representation or language cheerily crossed the boundary between subject and object, and reappeared in another ontological key. We are no longer the only actants in the cosmos – protosubjectivities swarm everywhere, and even what seemed a mere object of techno-scientific manipulation, such as nature itself, leaps onto the stage, claiming its own means of expression. Just notice, in relation to this, Peter Sloterdijk's considerations during his preparatory talks for the opera *Amazonas* (2010), where he detects an 'Amazon sorrow' in the face of the forest under threat. Sloterdijk believes that the protagonist of the experiment could be none other than the 'Amazonian subject' itself.[2] In light of this perspectivism, one of the cosmopolitical issues of the day could be: which sorrow does each actant, human or non-human, bear? Which is the threat that each one of them, and we together with them, face? And what devices should be used, be it to give them a voice, to bring them to light or to let them evade our voracious gaze? From the Amazon to the autistic, the point in question is the same – that of *modes of existence*.

Singular, human and non-human modes of existence emerge everywhere, in spite of the new, planetary-scale forms of biopolitical management of life heading toward homogenisation at a dizzying pace. What kind of existence can we attribute to these 'beings' that populate our cosmos, agents, actants, larvals, entities, all with their own ways of transforming themselves and us? Neither objective nor subjective neither real nor unreal, neither rational nor irrational, neither material nor symbolic; beings somewhat virtual, somewhat invisible, metamorphic, propulsive – which category do they belong to? And to what extent do they exist by themselves? How much do they depend on us? How in us are they? And, finally, what exactly is their status, if indeed they should all be immediately clustered into a single group, against the current of the existential plurality they appear to foretell? And what effects do they have on our existence and imagination? For Bruno Latour, some of them have the dual ability to transform us into something else while also transforming themselves into something else. As he writes:

> What would we do without them? We would be always and forever the same. They trace paths throughout the multiverse – to speak with [William] James's words – paths of alteration that are at once terrifying (since they transform us), hesitant (since we can deceive them) and inventive (since we can allow ourselves to be transformed by them).[3]

Étienne Souriau, in his book *Les Différents Modes d'existence*, published in the late 1930s, often used lofty language to lend shape to a sort of metaphysics that would encompass these very beings whose existence, according to the parameters and templates available to us, can neither be affirmed nor denied with precision.[4] He concludes that, in principle, no being has substance in and of itself, and that in order to survive a being must be instaured. Thus, before even attempting to create an inventory of beings according to their different modes of existence, Souriau proposes a certain art of existing, of instauring existence. For a being, thing, person, work, to conquer existence and not *merely* exist, it must be *instaured*. Instauration is not a solemn, ceremonial institutional act, as ordinary language would have us believe, but a process that elevates that which exists to an entirely different level of reality and splendor – 'patuity', as was said in Medieval times. 'To instaure' does not so much refer to the act of creation as it does to the 'spiritual' establishing of something, ensuring it a 'reality' within its own genre.

There is, then, no single source of instauration (will, consciousness, spirit, body, the unconscious, etc.) and, today, one could say that there are multiple 'devices' of instauration. Therefore, every philosophy, as well as every religion, science and art form, establishes its be-

ings and thereby ushers in a unique world – never the same one: ontological and existential pluralism, a multiverse! The implications of such a procedure cannot be underestimated. As Latour writes:

> Apply instauration to the sciences, and all of epistemology changes; apply instauration to God, and all of theology changes; apply instauration to art, and all of aesthetics changes. Apply instauration to the question of the soul, and all of psychology changes. What implodes in all four cases is the ultimately rather preposterous idea of a spirit at the origin of the action and whose consistency then ricochets out onto a material that holds no other weight, that has no other ontological dignity, than that which one condescends to attribute to it. [5]

The art of existing

For Souriau, art and philosophy have one fact in common, which is precisely that both of them aim to instaure beings whose existence they themselves legitimise, 'a kind of radiant demonstration of a right to existence, which is affirmed and confirmed by the objective glow and extreme reality of an instaured being'.[6] All indications are that Souriau craves something like an *art of instauring*, an *art* of bringing into existence beings that still drift in a fictional, virtual, distant and enigmatic twilight. Therefore, all his thought could be a harbinger of this call for a 'work in progress' – and work here does not necessarily refer to artwork, as even man is a 'work in progress', incomplete, open, unforeseeable. Thus, in each case, it is not a matter of following a *given project* to be fulfilled, but to open up the field for a *trajectory* to be followed according to the questions, problems and unforeseen challenges, each of which must be addressed individually. The vital challenge for each one of us, then, is not to emerge from nowhere, in a creation ex nihilo, but to go through a kind of original chaos and 'choose, out of a thousand and one encounters, those propositions of being that we want to assimilate or reject'.[7] Nothing is a given, nothing is guaranteed, everything may collapse, the work, its creator, the instauration – but this hesitation is inherent to the process, not an ontological lack or constitutive failure. This is because the vital path consists of exploration, discoveries, encounters, separations and painful resignation. Against the idealistic willfulness of the creator who starts from a blank slate, the solicitude regarding the 'matter' that beckons to him, 'the emerging being claims its own existence. In all this, the agent has to bow to the will of the work itself, to foretell this will, and renounce himself in favour of this autonomous being that he seeks to foster according to its own

right to exist.'[8] It is, therefore, a matter of defending this right – becoming the advocate of the being to come, a witness of this or that mode of existence, without which this existence might not come to be.

But how are we to imagine that thought and matter, Hamlet, Peer Gynt, the square root of negative numbers, the white rose… could exist in the same manner, asks the author? Of course they do not share the same mode of existence. The *instauration* of each being always involves innumerable unique trials (liberty), successive determinations (effectiveness) and a profusion of misunderstandings (errability). The creator is always confronted with a *situation of doubt*, as if he or she were hearing the voice of a ironic sphinx asking them: what now? The work questions, calls, parasitises, exploits, annuls him or her – it is a monster! – but at the same time demands testimony, solicitude, even to encounter the implied accomplishment, which always requires discerning what is feasible amidst the chaos of the world. No intentionality, no anthropocentrism, no mystification of the impossible work – only the instauration, the trajectory, the soul that is equivalent to a point of view:

> I think of a little child who has taken considerable time to carefully arrange different objects, large and small, on his mother's table, in a way that seemed graceful and ornamental, in order to 'please' her. The mother arrives. Calm and distracted, she takes one of the objects she was looking for, puts another one in its place and undoes everything. And when the explanations that follow the repressed sobbing of the child reveal the extent of her misunderstanding, she exclaims in desolation: 'Ah! Poor thing, I didn't realise that it was something'.[9]

David Lapoujade comments on Souriau's example as follows:

> I had not seen… What did she not see? What is 'this thing' that the mother does not see? One could say it is the child's soul – fully transposed to the objects. One could say that the careful arrangement of objects is testimony to the presence of the child's particular point of view. Both statements make sense: she sees objects, because she arranges them. What she does not see is their mode of existence from the child's point of view. *What she does not see is the child's point of view*; she does not see there is a point of view there – a point of view that exists. Obviously such blindness applies to all modes of existence discussed by Souriau.[10]

It is the pragmatism of our perception that, in privileging solid and manifest realities, neglects the plurality of perspectives, of planes of existence.

Instead of sacrificing the existential positivity of 'entire populations of beings' on the altar of a given Truth, it would be appropriate to multiply the world to accommodate them all – hence the effort to mobilise various concepts to ensure plurality and distinction among modes of existence, without turning these concepts into stages of a single evolutionary and universal process. Moreover, rather than asking: 'does it exist?', 'and in what way?', we need to know whether it is possible to exist 'a little, a lot, passionately, not at all', to varying degrees. For example, by existing in a state of possibility, in potency, or on the verge of emerging alongside the now, or existing, stammeringly, below a threshold of integrity – so many different ways of existing, between being and non-being, so many gradations! Even before comparing the modes of existence with one another, would it not be possible to consider the oscillation of a being between its maximum and its minimum? As if every existence could be evaluated in itself, according to its intensity: intensive modes of existence.

Ghosts and events

Souriau employs unusual images to blur our categories. After dying, a man returns to the world of the living to visit his beloved and take revenge for his own death. With only vague memories, he is unsure: where am I? What am I like? What is my mission? Am I an envoy for something – for what? Faced with a world populated with hints… Souriau means to say that we are all like ghosts. We don't know if we can be solely responsible for our existence; we don't know how much strength or weakness we have for this, how incomplete or unfinished we are. It is necessary to instaure our own existence, but also a sculpture in progress, a book in progress, a thought crossing our mind – they all demand an *instauration*. They are, thus, existences *invented* within the very trajectory of their instauration, a journey permeated by 'intense existential variations'.[11] If for some modes of being existence depends on their own strength ('if you want to be', Mephistopheles tells Homunculus, 'make it your own affair!'), for other beings it depends precisely on the strength and solicitude of others – they are *solicitous modes of being*. A poem cannot reach existence without the testimony, devotion and solicitude of others – both poets and readers. Imaginary beings depend on our desire, care, reverence, hope, fantasy and entertainment, and are therefore subordinated to them. Yet even so they are no less effective than those on which they depend. However, it is precisely by means of their solicitude that those who contribute to the creation or

endurance of the poem themselves conquer their own existence, on a different level. Not unlike Nietzsche, who claimed to have been born through his own work. Who made whom? More than just creators, we are the fruit and effect of that which has been created through us. We are its witnesses.

More than the classification of modes of existence of which Souriau takes inventory and carefully analyses (phenomenic, solicitudinous, virtual, super-existing, etc.), what is of interest is the passage between them and their world, which the author calls *synaptic*, no longer *ontic*: the transitions, twists, jumps and transformations, these movements where beings are implicit accessories of or catapults for enormous dramas – in the same way the characters that a child uses during play serve to reveal true events. In a world conceived in this manner, events are what really matter – that which arises, becomings, through which one moves to a different plane of existence as a result of a change in perspective. For the event consists precisely of this: a change in perspective, in the plane of existence. 'Moments ago the cup was intact; now there are only these pieces. In between the two moments is the irreparable. Irreparable, insupressible, unconcealable even by the subtlest resources of the spirit, which may deviate from but not contradict it. The patuity of the irreducible. Such is the existence of the fact.'[12] See how David Lapoujade adopts this example:

> One may doubt the reality of certain existences, but not the facts, as they have an efficacy, they change something in the way beings exist. The virtue here is not that the glass has been broken, it is its change in status. It is no longer a cup, but sharp fragments. Following Souriau's perspectivism, the event is a *turning point*: something happened that made it impossible to regard the cup as a cup.[13]

These events, precisely because they consist of a turning point, *make us see* and even *create* a new soul in the psyche of those who go through them! The author then concludes:

> There is soul as long as one notices something unfinished or inconclusive in a mode of existence – as such, it requires a 'principle of amplification', in short, the sketch for something bigger or better. Once again, through all of these unfinished existences, their demand to be amplified, magnified, in short, made more real. Hearing such demands, and seeing all that is unfinished in these existences, is to *take* their *side*. This is what it means to enter the point of view of an existence, not in order

to see through its eyes but to make it exist
even more, to turn it into a superior existence
or to make it 'truly' exist.[14]

After all, are there not more ardent, seething, gushing modes of existing? Existing hopelessly, saltatorily, differently…

If there are existences in a state of 'incompleteness and of precarious instauration that escape consciousness',[15] Souriau seems to want to restore rights to these liminary, evanescent, precarious, fragile existences that we neglect, even if the stability that we can offer them is non-corporeal or spiritual, and even if we have to lend them a soul. This is how we become their witnesses, their advocates, their 'existence-holders', says Lapoujade: we carry their existence just as they carry ours, to the extent that, from a certain point of view, we only exist inasmuch as we make others exist, or when we amplify another existence; or when we see soul or strength where others see or feel nothing, thus creating with them a common cause.

Elusive life

It is in the work of Fernand Deligny that we find the most beautiful and embodied example of all the above. During the years he spent living in the company of autistic children in France, Deligny set up a collective structure suitable for sheltering a mode of anonymous existence that was non-subjective and immune to all symbolic domestication. Here is a world free not only of language, but of all its practical implications: will and objective, outcome and meaning.[16] Against the cult of getting things done, a result of the desire to draw results (e.g. to work, to make sense and to communicate), Deligny evokes the act, in the very particular sense of the selfless gesture, of unintentional, non-representational movement that could consist of weaving, drawing, painting or, even, at its limit, writing. In this world in which the teetering of the stone and the noise of the water are no less relevant than the murmuring of men, Deligny places himself in the position of 'not wanting' in order to give way to the interval, to the tacit, to irruption, to spilling. There is no passivity or apathy in this attitude – on the contrary, it is necessary to clear the ground constantly, to free it from what divides the world into subject/object, living/inanimate, human/animal, conscious/unconscious, individual/social, so that the field may open and possibilities arise.[17] In such a context, Deligny asks: how can we let the autistic individual exist without imposing a him/her, a Subject, a self, self-reflection – all of these attributes – even in a private mode? For he is convinced that he does not see himself, precisely because there is no 'he' that can reflect himself… It is the individual breaking away from the subject, detecting at times that what escapes us, precisely that which we do not see because we speak, and that they see because they do not speak…

Hence the extraordinary status of the image in Deligny's work. Language will never be able to tell us what image is, he insists, because it shields it with its injunctions, objectives, commands, threads and senses. Regardless of how much we are invaded by images from everywhere, they are images tamed by language, images subordinate to communication, images circulating within a trading system or as commodity – image-commodities, commodity fetishism! The image replete with intentions and culture precisely abolishes the image. It would therefore be necessary to counterpose this to what Deligny terms 'the image we lack' in its bare state and poverty, in its character devoid of intent – the image that paradoxically is not made to be seen, that at its best is not seen, that reveals what evades, what evades us, what escapes. The status of these images is opposed to all representation, all intentionality – in fact, all idealism. It is not the image of a subject, for a subject, against a subject – there is, precisely, no subject.

Deligny can then assert not only that the image is autistic, because, like the autistic, it does not say or mean anything, but also that the autistic thinks through images. The image is not even a thing that exists in itself – it arrives, passes, crosses and only reaches us thanks to retinal persistence, a deficency in our organ of sight… In fact, an image is like a flock of wild geese that take off in a V-shaped formation when responding to a threat.[18] Deligny is interested in images taking flight, not lingering!

We have arrived at the gates of Deligny's cinema. For cinema could support all this if it were not completely subjected to language, to narrative, to the obligation to tell a story, to make sense and to emit a moral judgement, to have an uplifting or educational reach. If cinema didn't have the film as its goal, it could attain images. But this would require cinema to stop 'producing works', desiring a product. Perhaps only then would cinema be able to reach 'things' as a process, as an event. It would even be necessary to change the verb 'to film' – after all, why identify an activity through its final product? We don't say 'booking' when writing a book, and when using the hammer we call the act 'hammering'. We would therefore, perhaps, need to say 'to camerate'. In the article he wrote with this title, Deligny advocates respecting 'that which means nothing, says nothing, does not address, in other words, escapes the symbolic domestication without which there would be no history'.[19] It would be necessary to 'camerate' that which escapes us, that which cannot be seen, the lost images – the images falling from a cross-eyed camera, images that are not addressing anyone, on their way toward disap-

pearance… Involuntary images, just like a revolution… 'Whether it is a revolution or an image, all that it takes is to pull away, first and foremost, from *wanting-to-do-them*.'[20]

Just as art is for nothing and politics has a programme, here we are dealing with the art of placing oneself on the level of 'for nothing', of the most insignificant of events (for us). Jean-François Chévrier may have a point when stating that there is an archaic aspect in all of this, a kind of animism, or the dream of an 'embodied image that would be the living trace of a bare existence'.[21] But is this archaism really an issue? Are we really as modern or postmodern as we imagine? Or is it now ever more interesting to highlight these rebounds from ancient times that surface due to threats coming from the future, as Davi Kopenawa proclaims, in another context?[22]

It is not appropriate to apply Souriau's concepts to the work of Deligny, since Deligny forged his own concepts according to the 'subject' that was his. Nevertheless, intriguing convergences do not go unnoticed. After all, Deligny built a subtle yet complex device, conceived from silence, maps, paths, contiguity, an entire spatiotemporal agency where these 'lesser existences'[23] could master their patuity without abandoning anything that was peculiar to themselves; their mode of existence made of elusiveness, wander lines, invisible webs (their soul), on the brink of social invisibility and all the canons that determine who deserves to live or to be seen – perhaps because, as Deligny once wryly suggested, they are bored with the soap opera of our lives, preferring a thousand times over the excitement of trickling water to our tedious spectacle.

Could there be a schizophrenic mode, an Indian mode, an Oriental mode, a black mode, an artistic mode, just as there exists an autistic mode? Or, on the contrary, is it precisely the point that what we need to insist on is the 'in-between' in order to shatter such clichés and the cartoonish and identitarian typology that sustains them? Because this is about settling in-between modes, in-between worlds, in the passages, transitions, turns, slippages, crossings and twists of perspective, even in the negotiations between modes and worlds. Just to take a trivial example, even closer than that of the shamans: France-based ethno-psychiatrist Tobie Nathan primarily attends to African immigrant families. When he calls them into his office, Nathan also invites all the 'entities' that accompany them, and with whom an arduous negotiation begins to redesign relationships, liberate 'evil spirits' and manage conflict. It is during this exchange process between these very different modes of existence – these in-between worlds – that something can be gestated or healed.

The possibilities of life

Now we can broaden the spectrum of these comments. Deleuze never tired of repeating, throughout his work, that it is feasible for our thought to conceive of new possibilities of life, new modes of existence. 'Thinking would then mean *discovering, inventing new possibilities of life*,' he writes, before quoting Nietzsche saying,

> There are lives with prodigious difficulties; these are the lives of the thinkers. And we must lend an ear to what we are told about them, for here we discover possibilities of life the mere story of which gives us joy and strength and sheds light on the lives of their successors. There is as much invention, reflection, boldness, despair and hope here as in the voyages of the great navigators; and to tell the truth, these are also voyages of exploration in the most distant and perilous domains of life.[24]

But who evaluates modes of existence? How to judge whether one is preferable to another? Which criteria should be applied? Here is the first response that Deleuze provides, when criticising – along with Nietzsche and Antonin Artaud – the habit of philosophers who behave as if they were supreme judges putting life on trial:

> Judgment prevents the arrival of any new mode of existence, for such a mode is created through its own forces – in other words, through the forces it knows how to capture – and is worthy for and in itself, inasmuch as it makes this new combination exist. Perhaps this is where the secret lies: bringing into existence, rather than judging. If judging is so repugnant, it is not because everything is given the same worth, but, on the contrary, because everything that is of worth can only make itself and distinguish itself by challenging judgment. What expert judgment, in art, could possibly inflect on a future work? We don't have reason to judge other existing entities, but rather to feel if they behove us or not – in other words, if they bring us strength or, on the contrary, lead us to the miseries of war, to the poverties of the dream, to the rigours of organisation.[25]

In another text written along with Guattari, Deleuze adds:

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Cette autre manière de garder trace des gestes d'erre de Janmari aux prises avec ce qu'il en est de balayer la cuisine, lieu coutumier, nous l'avons cherchée pour faire ressortir les deux attirances.

Vers le centre est évoqué – à la mine de plomb, trace large – notre manière de *faire* lorsqu'il y va, pour l'un de nous, de balayer ce lieu, ce qui, dans le temps, nous prend cinq minutes.

Sur le même cadran, où sont marquées des tranches de dix secondes, nous avons évoqué la trace de l'*agir*, dont on voit bien que notre *faire* l'inspire ; mais l'*agir* se déroule en beaucoup plus de temps que notre *faire*.

Le surplus de gestes pourrait être mis au compte d'une sorte d'effervescence de l'activité quelque peu désordonnée, mal contrôlée, Janmari ne *se* dominant pas et pour cause, si bien que ces gestes lui échapperaient.

En fait, « attirés » pour une part par ce *faire* nôtre où le projet prédomine à partir du point focal, au centre, qui évoque la permanence de l'un de nous, l'agir est attiré, d'autre part, par des choses évoquées, en gravé blanc, qui apparaissent sur l'autre orbite que celle où notre faire a cours. Certaines des choses là provoquent des gestes, qui, autour d'elles, à propos d'elles, se réitèrent, toujours à peu près identiques d'une fois à l'autre. À leur endroit, les gestes d'erre prolifèrent, en pétales plutôt qu'en gerbe, focalisés ne serait-ce qu'autour du petit tas de balayures qui ne bouge pas au cours de l'opération, situé là une fois pour toutes, et tous les trajets du balai y reviennent sans cesse, le projet nôtre qui est de balayer quelque peu abandonné par le fait de ce petit tas qui grossit et devient en quelque sorte l'objet du projet, pour employer un vocabulaire qui nous concerne.

Ce qui peut se dire que faute de sujet garant du projet, nous avons affaire à autre chose, les gestes d'erre affairés à autre chose qu'au *faire* même, l'*agir* étant focalisé en plusieurs points, plusieurs choses, qui permettent au réitérer de se donner libre cours.

Que la pièce, en fin de compte, soit fort bien balayée, et même plutôt mieux que par nous, plus scrupuleusement, c'est là un fait constant.

Si je regarde Janmari balayer, pour évoquer sa manière d'agir, il n'y a qu'à dire que le balai alors, on dirait le manche d'un instrument de musique, d'une guitare par exemple, une guitare si sourde qu'elle en serait muette, insonore ou quasiment, bien que le bruit du frottement des poils sur le carrelage ne soit pas si différent qu'il nous paraît de celui du petit balai que le batteur d'un orchestre frotte sur la peau tendue.

Que, pour ce qui est d'exulter, Janmari n'ait nul besoin de cet orchestre, et que ses gestes soient plus de danser que d'accomplir une corvée, faut-il tellement s'en étonner ?

Que nous soyons divisés au point que notre existence en soit cadastrée, travail par-ci, loisir par-là, ça nous regarde : c'est le prix à payer pour cette liberté dont on a dit que c'était la conscience de la nécessité, mais qui peut se dire avoir le choix.

Et, dans le même moment où j'évoque l'allégresse de ce balayer agi par Janmari, je tombe sur ce que dit un professeur de médecine au cours d'un entretien [13] :

« Ce qui nous distingue de la fourmi ou de l'oiseau, c'est le respect de l'individu. Dans les sociétés animales, l'individu n'existe pas. »

Il faut donc nous attendre à une profession de foi d'un humanisme en l'occurrence médical.

« Aucun totalitarisme humain connu n'arrive à la cheville de cette "perfection". La ruche ? Le goulag absolu, insupportable. »

Insupportable pour qui ? Pour le professeur ; mais personne ne lui demande d'être une abeille, de *se* supposer abeille. Mais il ne s'agit pas des abeilles. Il s'agit des formes de sociétés totalitaires. Alors, pourquoi parler des abeilles qui s'enivrent peut-être de leurs trajets volés tout comme le professeur de ses propos.

Cette confusion entre espèce animale et espèce humaine a donc des préoccupations politiques évidentes, de même que la confusion entre individu et sujet, toute société humaine se fondant sur le sujet, ce qui éclipse l'individu.

« Les ordres qui s'y exécutent [dans la ruche ou la fourmilière], inscrits de naissance dans les chromosomes, ne souffrent pas la moindre interprétation. L'homme, lui, dispose collectivement et individuellement, de la faculté de discuter son sort et de choisir son destin. »

Faut le dire vite. Quand je me suis retrouvé, en mai 40, sous les bombes de la Luftwaffe, je n'avais pas eu l'occasion de discuter ni de choisir, de même

13. Jean Hamburger, « Le médecin est un révélé », *Le Nouvel Observateur*, n° 750, 26 mars-1er avril 1979, p. 69-70. Dans la deuxième citation, Deligny a lu « insupportable » au lieu d'« incarcérable », d'où la suite de son texte.
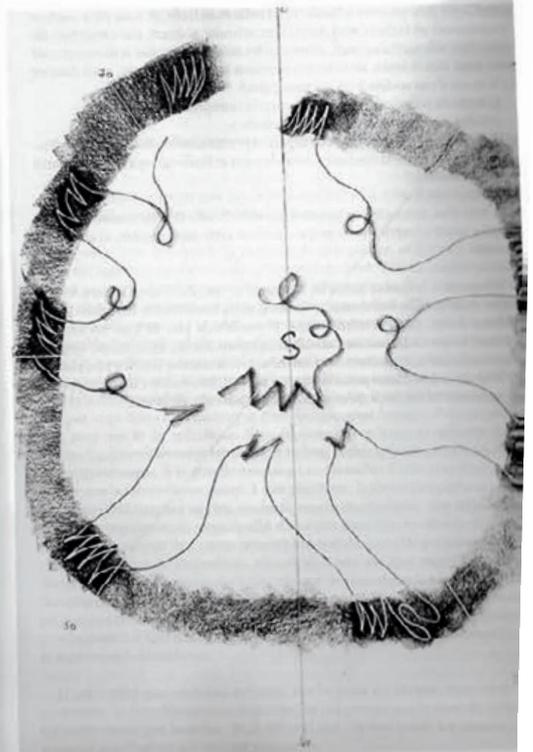
Pages from *Les Détours de l'agir: Ou Le Moindre Geste*, 1979, Fernand Deligny

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There is not the slightest reason for thinking that modes of existence need transcendent values by which they could be compared, selected and judged relative to one another. On the contrary, there are only immanent criteria. A possibility of life is evaluated through itself in the movements it lays out and the intensities it creates on a plane of immanence: what is not laid out or created is rejected. A mode of existence is good or bad, noble or vulgar, complete or empty, independently of Good and Evil or any transcendent value: there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the intensification of life.[26]

When commenting on belief in God, comparing Pascal's proposal with Kierkegaard's, the only criterion used is vital – the question is not whether or not God exists or how much you win or lose by guessing right. Rather the question regards what mode of existence belief implies for those who believe, and to what extent the believer and the non-believer are still on the same plane; and what happens when the plane of immanence that characterises an era such as ours changes:

on the new plane, it is possible that the problem now concerns the one who believes in the world, and not even in the existence of the world, but in its possibilities of movements and intensities, so as once again to give birth to new modes of existence, closer to animals and rocks. It may be that believing in this world, in this life, becomes our most difficult task, or the task of a mode of existence still to be discovered on our plane of immanence today.[27]

This is the challenge revealed by Deleuze and Guattari here – that of a mode of existence to be discovered, in agreement with our plane of immanence, from which all transcendence has been exorcised and where it can no longer fall back on a final plea. A world pregnant with possibilities is what, it appears, is being kept from us on an everyday basis, given the predominance of a universal mode of existence that tends precisely to abort the emergence of any other modes.

It is easy to see the predominance of the middle-class model, propagated as an economic, cultural, subjective and political imperative, and the blatant misery that characterises it, a mix of gregariousness, sensory shields, intensive degradation and impoverishment of life. The dissemination of such forms of generic life, based on the dominant white-male-rational-European-consumer pattern, as well as the moral code that grounds it – such as the theology of prosperity that

infiltrates every part of life, or capitalism as religion, as Walter Benjamin referred to it – calls for analytical instruments and unorthodox reactions. How could one swim against the tide of this hegemony to reveal the multiple forms that resist, reinvent themselves or are even being forged in rebellion, in opposition to the hegemony of a market system, however democratic it may seem? As Deleuze and Guattari write:

Human rights say nothing about the immanent modes of existence of people provided with rights. Nor is it only in the extreme situations described by Primo Levi that we experience the shame of being human. We also experience it in insignificant conditions, before the meanness and vulgarity of existence that haunts democracies, before the propagation of these modes of existence and of thought-for-the-market, and before the values, ideals and opinions of our time. The ignominy of the possibilities of life that we are offered appears from within. We do not feel ourselves outside of our time but continue to undergo shameful compromises with it. This feeling of shame is one of philosophy's most powerful motifs.[28]

Our era revolves around this pathology: market-ready modes of existence. Part of the contemporary effort is to diagnose this illness and retrace its genesis, ramifications and effects. Among them, of course, is the daily rejection of 'minor' modes of life, minority ways of living that are not only more fragile, precarious and vulnerable (poor, crazy, autistic), but also more hesitant, dissident, and at times more traditional than others (indigenous people); modes that are, on the contrary, still being born, tentative, even experimental (those still to come, to be discovered, to be invented). In fact, there is a war between different modes of life or forms of life today, and this war – albeit inseparable from the hegemonic mode of production and its inherent conflicts – is not exclusively reducible to it. Perhaps this is what has led some philosophers recently to dwell on such contrasting and atypical modes of existence, even if they pertain to a bygone era.

Form of life, stylistics of existence

Giorgio Agamben, for example, recently analysed the cult of high poverty among the Franciscans. He demonstrates how life and its rules become inextricably linked in a context of religious and collective reclusion, to such a point that they merge into a kind of art of life. The monastic tradition was no longer about obeying given rules, but living them. Thus, the emphasis shifts from

practice or action to a whole way of life.[29] Cenobitism, a form of collective monastic gathering, was not so much a life according to rules, but a curious inversion, a form of life that engendered its own rules.[30] But the indistinction between life and rule reaches its pinnacle with this Fransciscan innovation, and its cult of the highest poverty (*altissima paupertas*). Poverty as a way of life means renouncing the empires of the world, and making use of things without maintaining any right of ownership over them. It is the moment when life subtracts itself from law, and the world becomes inappropriable.[31] Here are an ethics and an ontology that, in our context, sound almost unimaginable – or, according to Agamben, precisely what should be imagined. As one commentator notes, the notion of form of life, as discussed by the philosopher with regards to the Franciscans, is the antipode to the notion of 'bare life'. If the first books from the *Homo sacer* series examined how a juridical apparatus belonging to a sovereign regime produced a bare life through a game of exclusion and inclusion, thus revealing relationships of domination between law and life, here the question is reversed – namely, how the form of life leaves the legal domain and renounces all rights. The conclusion is categorical: 'to think of life inseparable from its form, the form of life, beyond the Franciscan experience, remains an unavoidable task for future thought'.[32] The meaning of this challenge only becomes apparent in light of the rupture between life and form enacted by the Greeks – an operation whereby bare life (*zoê*) was isolated from a form of qualified life (*bíos*). In contrast, Agamben argues, *form of life* must be understood as the opposite: 'a life that cannot be separated from its form, a life in which it is never possible to isolate something such as naked life',[33] – a life that 'cannot be decomposed into facts but which is always rather about possibility and potentiality'.[34] Here the condition of thought becomes clear: 'Thought is form of life, life that cannot be segregated from its form; and anywhere the intimacy of this inseparable life appears, in the materiality of corporeal processes no less than in theory, there and only there is there thought.'[35] Despite the particular concept of potentiality in Agamben (power of negation), which is where he distinguishes himself from contemporary philosophers who served as inspiration for him, the fact remains that according to him the 'coming philosophy' should be 'life, its form and its uses'.[36]

A comparison must be drawn between the Franciscan example and the case of the Cynics studied by Michel Foucault in the last seminar he delivered in 1983, entitled *The Courage of Truth*.[37] This is so particularly because Agamben seems to address the problem of an ascetic life from the point at which Foucault had left it, namely at the threshold of Christianity. In any case, Foucault understands the experience of Cynicism as philosophy as the elaboration of a modality of life, in which 'life itself becomes ethical material, in which what is at stake is the form adopted by life'.[38] The emergence of life as the main object means that one must perform certain operations on it, put it to the test, sort through it, transform it, etc. This is philosophy as the stylistics of existence – the visible shape that human beings should give to their lives. It is not about the essence of the *soul*, as in the lineage of Plato's philosophy, but a style of existence. Foucault insists that throughout history philosophy favoured the Platonic tradition, a *metaphysics of the soul*, leaving behind care of the self and its work towards the beautiful life through a 'speaking frankly', a 'speaking a truth' (*paresia*). This is Foucault's provocation:

> In any case, I would simply like to suggest that if it is true that the question of Being has indeed been what Western philosophy has forgotten, and that this forgetting is what made metaphysics possible, it may be also that the question of the philosophical life has continued to be, I won't say forgotten, but neglected; it has constantly appeared as surplus in relation to philosophy, to a philosophical practice indexed to the scientific model. The question of the philosophical life has constantly appeared like a shadow of philosophical practice, and increasingly pointless.[39]

Philosophical Cynicism is, however, a historical counter-example of this tendency. According to its principles, Cynics proclaim, with a kind of transvaluation of all values, that for life to become the true life it must be *another life*, *radically other*, in total rupture with all codes, laws, institutions and habits, including with the philosophers themselves. Here is a canonical definition of this *bíos kynikós*:

> First, the *kynikós* life is a dog's life because it is without modesty, shame and human respect. It is a life which does in public, in front of everyone, what only dogs and animals dare to do, and which men usually hide. The Cynics' life is a dog's life in that it is shameless. Second, the Cynics' life is a dog's life because, like the latter, it is indifferent. It is indifferent to whatever may occur, is not attached to anything, is content with what it has, and has no needs other than those it can satisfy immediately. Third, the life of the Cynic is the life of a dog, it received the epithet *kynikós* because it is, so to speak, a life which barks, a diacritical (*diakritikós*) life, that is to say, a life which can fight, which barks at enemies, which knows how to distinguish the good from the bad, the true from the false, and masters from enemies.

In that sense it is a *diakritikós* life: a life of discernment, which knows how to prove, test and distinguish. Finally, fourth, the Cynics' life is *philaktikós*. It is a guard dog's life, a life, which knows how to dedicate itself to saving others and protecting the master's life.[40]

The true life that the Cynics preach is, then, a *life other*, and should also, in its public, aggressive, even outrageous manifestation, transform the world, call for a world other. It is not, therefore, as in the Socratic model, a question of *another world*, but rather of a world other. There is therefore a reversal, the logic of which Foucault scrutinises exhaustively. He demonstrates the extent to which, within this supposedly truly philosophical life, an otherness insinuates itself into the world, with all its plundering, animalism, misery and worship of the dirty and ugly, coupled with traits of self-reliance, and the outrageous self-humiliation and theatricality that these performers *avant la lettre* exercise in public.

Of course, there is an implied relationship to Christianity – namely, humility, asceticism, renunciation. But, for Christianity, the worship of such virtues targets *another world*, not a *world other* – in a way that implies that any change in this world will have the ultimate goal of granting access to another world. Moreover, if 'speaking frankly' was essential to Cynicism, in Christianity it would be abolished in favour of its own truth, as understood and sanctioned by its authorities. Foucault ends his last lecture, shortly before his death, with the sentence:

> It was by this reversal, which put the truth of life before the true life, that Christian asceticism fundamentally modified an ancient asceticism which always aspired to lead both the true life and the life of truth at the same time, and which, in Cynicism at least, affirmed the possibility of leading this true life of truth.[41]

Perhaps the reason for the examination of the Cynics undertaken by Foucault is revealed by the project whose possibility he himself evokes in this seminar, namely, that of a 'history of philosophy, morality and thought that would take as its guide forms of life, arts of existence, ways of conducting oneself and behaving, and ways of being'.[42] This is the Foucauldian thread that Agamben continues in his own manner; it is also the Nietzschean thread that is present in Deleuze, and that is present at our moment in time in many different ways.

A life capable of behaviours

When analysing the reasons why Foucault's research on biopower met the analysis of the techniques of the self, Muriel Combes disputes the idea that it introduced a new phase in the author's thought, as if he were abandoning the problem of power, typical of his genealogical investigation, for that of subjectivity, within an ethical investigation. Combes insists on seeing the techniques of the self, of *relation to the self*, as a subjective interface necessary in order to ponder the mediation between power and life in a biopolitical context, where the relationship between the systems of power and the body can no longer be realised *directly*, as in disciplinary societies – it became necessary to invent this new fold, subjectivity. But, if this is likely to be the case, it is so as well because the life on which the techniques of the self are reflected is understood primarily as a *life capable of different behaviours*, a *life* that is *susceptible to adopt several different directions*.[43] Thus, if subjectivation is a form of exercising power over life, it is so to the extent it convokes work on the self. This self is not understood as a substantive, universal or personological instance, the substantive support that exists behind the subject, but rather as a relational potentiality – a zone for the constitution of subjectivity. If government is a power that is exercised over 'individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities where several conducts, several reactions and diverse modes of behaviour can succeed,' as Foucault affirms,[44] the zone of consistency of power should be conceived as being more on the side of the subject considered as a field of possibility, a field of action for a multitude of behaviours to be invented, than on the side of bare life. If Agamben had the merit of highlighting the difference between bare life and forms of life, bare life must be conceived as a limit, a critical point for a power that is exercised as action upon action, 'because the life on which a biopower focuses is always an informed life, a life capable of different conduits, and for that reason always susceptible to non-compliance'.[45]

Several consequences may be drawn from this. If when thinking of biopower we depart not from bare life but from a life capable of different behaviours, another horizon opens. Even in the concentration camps, but also in the brutal contexts of our own times, it is not the naked and bare biological life, or vegetative life, but the gestures, manners, modes, variations, resistances, as tiny and invisible as they may seem, that make up *a life* that become 'visible', 'audible', 'thinkable', possible to discover, to invent. Philosophical speculation is therefore not inoffensive when it is based on a certain notion of life rather than another. As Isabelle Stengers writes: 'it belongs to speculative thought to fight against the impoverishment of experience, particularly against its confiscation by the great theoretical debates that oppose mankind'.[46] But it is not only in the field of philosophy that this challenge can be found.

In the process of precarisation of work and life beginning in the 1990s, for example, it is evident that

these conditions are the effect of the perverse dictates of neoliberalism, with all of the resulting vulnerability.[47] On the other hand, and simultaneously, forms of sociability and collective care, activism and friendship that rethink the ways of life in common are being proposed by the young under precarisation in many parts of the globe.[48] The problem arises when a demonising theory of the contemporary seems to weave it within the totality that it was attempting to contest. Georges Didi-Huberman, feeling uneasy about the predominance of an apocalyptic tone that prevents those who have survived from being seen – in a strange paradox in which the discourse that denounces, as lucid and enlightening as it may be, helps obfuscate precisely those understated existences being reinvented – articulates the paradox as follows:

> It is one thing to identify the totalitarian machine, and another to swiftly grant definitive and absolute victory to it. Is the world really as enslaved as our current 'perfidious counsellors' have dreamed, designed, programed and imposed upon us? Postulating this is precisely giving credit to what their machine wants us to believe. It means seeing merely the night or the blinding light of the projectors. It means acting like losers: being convinced that the machine did its work without leaving anything untouched, without resistance. It means seeing nothing but the *whole*. It means not seeing the space – whether it be interstitial, intermittent, nomadic or improbably located – within the openings, what is possible, the flashes, the *nevertheless*.[49]

And he adds: 'In order to learn about the fireflies, you need to see them at the moment of their survival: it is necessary to see them dancing alive in the heart of the night, even if the night were wiped out by some fierce projectors.'[50] The challenge consists of maintaining a twilight in which they may appear with their own light, instead of subjecting them to the spotlight of reason or spectacle, which overshadows them. Something similar to what Deleuze did, when, facing the barrage of words to which we are exposed, defended the 'vacuoles of silence' so that finally we would have something to say.[51] Or Deligny, who had to withdraw from the existing institutions and the buzz of the 1960s in order to set up his 'attempt', his 'raft'. And again Deligny, who, faced with the saturation of images that surrounded him, needed to abandon 'filming' in order to reveal a naked image. Isn't this twilight, silence, shriveling, subtraction, deceleration, in the contemporary context the condition that facilitates the instauration of lesser modes of existence? Wouldn't these conditions be necessary to preserve the very possibility of instauration?

Life and capital

Today's reader might wonder if we have not been affected at the core of possibility itself, at a moment in which powers invest in virtuality as such within the *scope of life itself*. Brian Massumi has written: 'Capitalism is capturing the future to produce quantifiable added value. Capitalism is the process of converting the qualitative added value of life in quantifiable added value.'[52] Massumi had already drawn attention, several decades before, to the commercialisation of forms of life at the moment of their emergence, still in their virtual form.[53] The colonisation of the virtual dimension of life has since become a trivial fact. Consider the example brought to mind by Laymert Garcia dos Santos about the effort undertaken by rich countries in the face of the environmental crisis:

> Fearing the disappearance of genetic resources so precious to the development of an emerging biotechnology industry, they hastened to establish *ex situ* banks that could ensure them access to the planet's biodiversity, [including] fragments of the genetic heritage of all the disappearing indigenous and traditional peoples, for future use. It wasn't yet known, and is often still not known, what can be done with the collected resources. What mattered, and matters, is their anticipated ownership. The logic of such operations seems to be: biological beings – plants, animals and humans – have no value in themselves, as they exist; what counts is their potential. If the beings had value in themselves, the task would be to save them from extinction and preserve them in their integrity, to protect them and their habitat. But this is not the idea: the focus was not on the bodies, the organisms, the individual living beings, but on their components in their virtual potentialities. Technoscience and global capital are not interested in biopolitical resources – plants, animals and humans. What counts is their potential to rebuild the world, because this represents potential power in a process of reprogramming and recombination. [...] The only 'thing' that counts is information.[54]

A living being is reduced to a packet of information, and the prerogative of the virtual is directed towards 'preparing for the future so that it emerges having already been appropriated – it is a plundering in the future and of the future.'[55] Life itself becomes patentable through the colonisation of the virtual and the capitalisation of

genetic information. Resistance, notes the author, requires the defence of living people as well as to aim for the 'the possibility of other becomings, different from that designed by technoscience and global capital. That is to say: the struggle for existence ... and the continuity of existence.'[56]

Faced with the performativity of capital, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri say, we would have to imagine something like a *counter-performativity*,[57] whose forms of expression have multiplied in various parts of the globe, including Brazil. It is obvious that the nature of the protests in June 2013 point to another political grammar, where form is already part of the meaning: horizontality and the absence of a centre or a point of command in the demonstrations. If the protests then dramatised the rejection of representation, they may also have expressed a certain distance in relation to the forms of life that have been brutally imposed in recent decades, in our own context as well as all over the world: unbridled productivism combined with a generalised precariousness; the mobilisation of existence in light of purposes whose meaning escapes us all; a pharmapornographic power, as Beatriz Preciado puts it[58] (in Brazil's case, examples of this include the insistence on a cure for homosexuality; Ritalin administered *en masse* to restless children; the medical monitoring of moods, of excitement, of tranquillity, of happiness through drugs); as well as the manufacturing of the indebted man, as indicated by Lazzarato[59] (the derivatives crisis is only a small example of a widespread subjective economic system in which we manufacture both debt and guilt, *Schuld*); the capitalisation of all walks of life – in short, a biopolitical nihilism that can result in no other reaction than the multitudinous life put on display. The movements that took place attest to a new composition of metropolitan labour, which demands circulation throughout the city, going against the tide of the growing privatisation of spaces in cities,[60] a direct relationship between street and the net,[61] etc. But it can be affirmed that, in addition to these detailed analyses, many other desires were expressed in this way once the gates were broken open. We speak of desire, and not claims, precisely because claims can be satisfied, but desire obeys a different logic – it tends to expand, it spreads, infects, proliferates, multiplies and reinvents itself as it connects with others. Maybe another political and collective subjectivity for which we lack categories and parameters is being (re)born, here and in other parts of the world. An insurgent, anonymous, multiple subjectivity, a movement rather than a political party, a current rather than a discipline, made of impulse rather than purpose, where mobilisation and suspension merge, with an exceptionally strong summoning power, without any promises or guarantees, much less that of becoming the new subject of history.

Exhaustion and clairvoyance

Every new mode of existence is the result of a subjective mutation, a break with the dominant meanings. The possible is no longer confined to the realm of the imagination, or of dreams, or of the ideal, and extends towards a field – the field of possibilities. But 'how is a field of possibilities *opened*?', wonders François Zourabichvili examining Deleuze's texts.[62] Aren't the moments of insurrection or revolution precisely those in which we catch a glimpse of the field of possibilities? 'The event creates a new existence, produces a new subjectivity (new relationships with the body, time, sexuality, the environment, culture, work…).'[63] Such moments, whether individual or collective (think of May 1968), correspond to a subjective and collective mutation in the sense that the circumstances that were once experienced as inevitable suddenly appear as intolerable. That which was previously not even imaginable suddenly becomes thinkable, desirable. There is a paradigm shift of affection that redraws the boundary between what is desired and what is no longer tolerable. Would it not then be possible to apply these criteria to distinguish between forms of life? Could a life not be defined by what it desires and rejects, by what attracts and repulses it? For example, what is desired in capitalism, and what is regarded with disgust? Are these the same as within the monastic tradition, an indigenous culture, in the hippie movement and in Leninism? And are they the same among the elderly, poets, skinheads and transsexuals? Planes, spheres and scopes are being purposefully multiplied here, for we should also ask, in the wake of recent decades, what is desirable and what is no longer tolerable in relation to the body, sexuality, old age, death, otherness, misery, etc. Could we not say that this is what defines social sensibility? And is it not this social sensibility that has been experiencing gradual or sudden changes – at times at an unexpected pace – especially during moments of crisis or rupture?

Indeed, something appears to have exhausted itself in those forms of life that once seemed inevitable. This exhaustion can be a political, biopolitical or even micropolitical category, as long as we understand that we are not talking only about mere weariness, nor about a surrendering of the body and mind. More radically, it is the result of disbelief, of a process of tearing apart, a detachment, a deposition – with regards to the alternatives that are available, the opportunities that are presented to us, the potential that still exists, the clichés that cushion and mediate our relationship with the world and make it tolerable but unrealistic and, for this very reason, intolerable and no longer credible. The exhaustion unleashes what 'links' us to the world, what 'supports' us and others, what makes us 'cling' to its words and images, what gives us 'comfort' within the illusion of completion (of
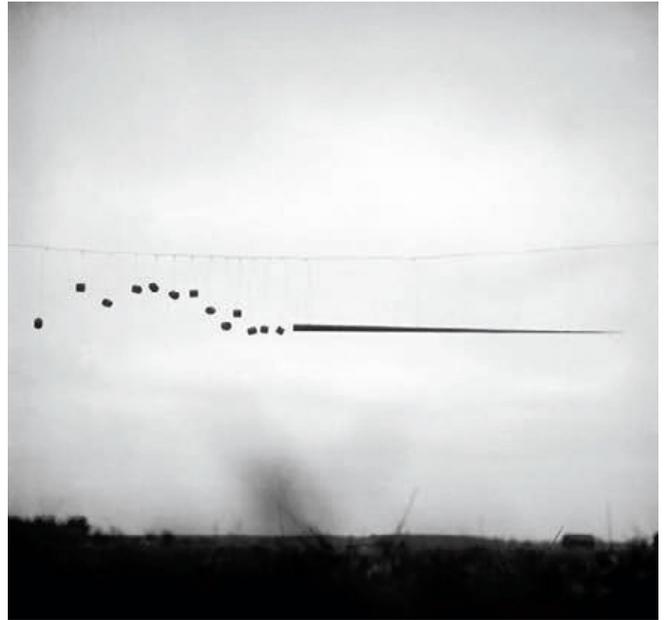
Edward Krasiński, *Spear*, 1963-1965

the self, the us, the meaning, freedom, the future) – an illusion that we have already abandoned at times, even though we still feel close to it. There is a certain cruelty in this attitude of detachment, without a doubt, but such cruelty carries with it a mercy that unties bonds.[64] Only through a coming apart, a detachment, an emptying as well as through the impossibility that is thus established, does the need for something else materialise – something else that we could too pompously call the 'creation of the possible'. We should not leave this formula to marketing departments, nor should we burden it with an overly imperative or whimsical responsibility, full of will. Perhaps we should preserve Samuel Beckett's quivering dimension, which, with calculated precision, points in his visual poems to the undefined state to which beings are elevated. These beings correspond, even in their most concrete contexts, to the indefinition of becomings, where they reach their maximum effect of deterritorialisation – and then people wonder, what is it that is happening? Where is it all going? What do the insurgents want?

This is where one can invoke the figure of the seer, to which Deleuze returns particularly in his books on cinema. In a given situation the seer sees something that exceeds and moves beyond the situation itself, and that has nothing to do with fantasy. Clairvoyance has as its object reality itself in a dimension that extrapolates its empirical contours, in an attempt to grasp its real but not yet fully deployed potential. What the seer sees, as in the case of Beckett's insomniac – clairvoyance can obviously be a collective experience as well – is the pure image, its brilliance and extinction, its rise and fall, its accomplishment. He sees intensity, power, virtuality. It is neither the future, nor a dream, nor the ideal, nor the perfect design, but rather the forces working toward redesigning the real. The seer can be an artist, philosopher, any given singularity, anonymous, poor, autistic, crazy – in any case, the seer is one who in his own manner calls for modes of existence *still to come*. Despite the difference in tone, we are not far from the modes of existence that require instauration, and to which *we* must (but who is this we?) eventually reply. The entire art of instauration is now demanded of us.

Human-inhuman modes of existence

It is not our intention to avoid the difficulties that have accumulated concerning the shifts of meaning in the expression 'modes of existence'. In fact, this expression now seems to refer to a *way of life* of human beings (e.g., active or reactive, noble or vulgar, affirmative or negative, full or empty, in majority or minority), as well as to the *modes of existence* of beings with which these same humans have an intimate relationship (phenomenal, so-

licitudinous, virtual, invisible, possible, or to use another terminology, spirits, gods, animals, plants, forces, etc.). This is an inevitable ambiguity, because there is no way to separate the two: the ways of life of human beings are inseparable from the planes of existence with which they cohabit (and both may be called modes of existence), just as life is inseparable from the form of life, and a life is inseparable from its variations. It is possible that capitalism, or biopower, or eurocentrism, or our outdated ontology invest precisely in a split between the two, thus interfering in the very possibility of other ways of living, just as they invest in sabotaging, monitoring and profiting from certain planes of existence (to use a 'childish' example, the growing production of electronic games and their ubiquity in childhood and adulthood). In order to counter this trend, it would be necessary to become an advocate of those modes of existence that (from our perspective) 'do not exist'.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, who understands a thing or two about modes of existence within the realm of Amerindian anthropology, summed up the challenge of this field of study as that of taking indigenous thinking seriously, and trying to understand what effects it may have on our Western way of thinking.[65] Take the example of knowledge. For us, knowledge presupposes an intentional neutralisation of the object, a total desubjectivisation.

> Our epistemological game is called objectification: everything that is not objectified remains unreal and abstract. The form of the Other is a thing. Amerindian shamanism is modelled on the opposite ideal: to know is to 'personify', to adopt the point of view of what one strives to understand. Or, better yet, the point of view of *whom* one strives to understand. Because the central task is to know the *'who* of things' (Guimarães Rosa) [...]. The form of the Other is a person.[66]

> Thus, ethnographics of indigenous America is populated with references to a cosmopolitical theory that describes a universe inhabited by different types of actants and agents, human and non-human – the gods, animals, the dead, plants, meteorological phenomena and often objects and artefacts as well. They all bear the same general set of perceptual and cognitive dispositions and inclinations – in other words, a similar 'soul'.[67]

Such a world is composed of a multiplicity of viewpoints, each anchored in a body, each body equivalent to a bundle of affects and capabilities; and it is there that those with a soul, the subjects, embed themselves. Alterity

thus reaches cosmic and protean contours, and its virtuality spreads everywhere, without allowing itself to submit to a transcendental unity.

The contrast with our submission to the state is striking. In the postface of Pierre Clastres's *Archaeology of Violence*, Viveiros de Castro writes:

> For there exists a 'way of being' very characteristic of what he [Clastres] called primitive society. No ethnographer who has lived together with an Amazonian culture, even those that show important elements of hierarchy and centralisation, could have gone without experiencing it in all its evidence, as unmistakable as it is elusive. This way of being is 'essentially' a *politics of multiplicity* [...] the politics of multiplicity is more a way of becoming than a way of being [...] in short, it is a concept that refers to an intensive mode of existence or an ubiquitous virtual operation.[68]

The definition of the intensive mode of existence cannot, of course, leave us indifferent, as, along with the concepts and clashes previously evoked, they question the predominant modes of existence among us. But neither should this definition be reified.

Let's remember something Deleuze says: the Other expresses a possible world. The Other does not coincide with another that would embody it. When this reflection happens, as with Albertine in Proust, when her face expresses the 'amalgamation of the beach and waves', the so-called 'possible' world that was previously only implicated, involved and complicated becomes explained, expanded and made concrete. However, the philosopher identifies a risk there, hence his warning 'not to explain oneself too much [...] not to explain oneself too much with the Other, not to explain the Other too much, to maintain its values implicit, to multiply our world, populating it with all of that which is expressed that does not exist outside of its expressions.'[69]

Now, what Viveiros de Castro requests from anthropology in the wake of this warning is that it refuse to 'update the possibilities expressed by indigenous thinking' – whether it be their 'de-realisation as others' fantasies', or 'fantasising them as being contemporary to us'.[70] Maybe this means preserving such possibilities as possibilities – or preserving such virtualities as virtualities, as virtualities of our thinking as well. And he explains: 'If there is anything that is legitimate to anthropology, it is not the task of explaining the world of others, but that of multiplying our world, 'populating it with all those things that are expressed but do not exist outside of their expressions'.'[71] This would be a unique way, among many others, of respecting a mode of existence –

not to realise it, not to explain it, not to make it concrete, to unwrap it – but to let it strike, fluctuate.

What relationship could there be, in the context where the anthropologist operates, between beings, ways of life and planes of existence? They are absolutely inseparable. 'The diversity of forms of human life corresponds to the diversity of the ways we relate to life in general, and with the myriad singular life forms that occupy (and inform) all possible niches in the world we know.'[72]

Perhaps it is along those lines that one could rethink ethics, as it has been done by Pierre Montebello, when he defined the ethical gesture as a 'taking into account of all lives together,'[73] making them resonate. What Combes would term 'a humanism after the death of man'[74], – a humanism without man, built upon the ruins of anthropology.

Modes of existence, modes of giving up, modes of resistance

Fortunately, in this debate no one can have the last word – not the anthropologist, not the philosopher, not the artist, not the psychologist, not the scientist. How could we fail to acknowledge the right of each and every one of them to shape it according to their own rhythm, their misconception being the condition of possibility of this polyphony? Regardless of whether we use the terms 'mode of existence', 'possibility of life', 'aesthetics of existence' or 'form of life', what is at stake, always, is an existential pluralism in which different beings – each with its own mode of existence, in a different degree and intensity of existence – may be instaured but also de-installed, in such a way that between them passages, transitions and shifts might open up, as may also breakdowns, evaporation and exhaustion. Possible existences, virtual states, invisible planes, fleeting appearances, sketched-out realities, transitional areas, inter-worlds, in-between worlds, can all be combined into a whole different grammar of existence. Every time we commit ourselves to a being, a work, a theory, a political or scientific, or clinical, or aesthetical proposal, we instaure a mode of existence and, thus, in a boomerang effect, we experiment a mode of existence with its drifts. Instauration is not vague or nebulous. Latour demonstrates how, in the case of science, instauration requires experimental devices, the active preparation of observation, the production of facts endowed with the power of demonstrating whether the form produced by this device is able to capture them.[75] The same could be said of a clinical device or, at its limit, of the aesthetic that deals with 'lesser existences'. It is no coincidence that Deligny's film is entitled *Le moindre geste* [The Slightest Gesture], and the delicate

documentary shot in the La Borde psychiatric clinic is called *La moindre des choses* [The Slightest of Things] – as if the virtually invisible intensity and molecularity of these fragile and vulnerable beings needed a subtle plan of consistency, of composition, where metamorphosis and change do not represent a risk, but a stage for a trajectory, for a test run. Hence the specific devices in Deligny: wander lines, networks, contiguity; the singing of the shaman conceived as technology that can reverse the cosmological perspective in Davi Kopenawa, or in the transcultural experience of the *Amazonas* opera, etc.

The recurring question is, which beings are to be taken on? Which should we take upon ourselves? How are their whispers to be heard? How to give them a voice? How are we to let ourselves be 'hit' and affected by them? How are we to instaure them while preserving the singularity of their mode of existence? How can we open passages and metamorphoses for them? Not only are we talking about fragile minorities, and a list of them would be almost infinite; they include earthly beings threatened by extinction in increasing numbers, the planes of existence discarded on a daily basis (solicitudinous, virtual), but also the minority becomings of each and every one: of stammering and barely outlined beings, of those that have given up, of beings to come or that will never come to exist, of those decimated by history, of the futures buried in the past, or of that people of zombies that used to be a mere 'background' and that sometimes, like in cinema (or in History?) ends up invading the scene as a multitudinous protagonist.[76] Therefore, it is our own existence, always incomplete, in a state of outline, of a work in progress, that must be continued like a virtual arch of a bridge that has collapsed or is being built.

1 For an overview of this group of writers, among them William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Gabriel Tarde, Gilbert Simondon, Étienne Souriau, not to mention Friedrich Nietzsche and Gottfried W. Leibniz, see Didier Debaise (ed.), *Philosophie des possessions*, Paris: Les presses du réel, 2011.

2 The opera *Amazonas* was a collective work, developed over the course of four years with the participation of European, Brazilian and Yanomami institutions. The opera was presented in Munich and São Paulo in 2010. See Laymert Garcia dos Santos, *Transcultural Amazonas, shamanism and technoscience in the Opera*, São Paulo: n-1 publications, 2013, p.27.

3 Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns* (trans. Catherine Porter), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013, p.201.

4 See Étienne Souriau, *Les Différents Modes d'existence*, Paris: PUF, 2009.

5 B. Latour and Isabelle Stengers, 'Le Sphynx de l'oeuvre' (trans. Stephen Muecke), in É. Souriau, *Les Différents Modes d'existence, op. cit.*, p.10.

6 É. Souriau, *L'Instauration philosophique*, Paris: Alcan, 1939, p.68.

7 É. Souriau, *La Couronne d'herbes*, Paris: UGE, 1975, p.53.

8 *Ibid.*

9 É. Souriau, *Avoir une âme: essai sur les existences virtuelles*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1938, p.17.

10 David Lapoujade, 'Souriau: une philosophie des existences moindres', in D. Debaise (ed.), *Philosophie des possessions, op. cit.*, pp.175-76.

11 É. Souriau, *Les Différents Modes d'existence, op. cit.*, p.109.

12 *Ibid.*, p.192.

13 D. Lapoujade, 'Souriau', *op. cit.*

14 *Ibid.*

15 É. Souriau, *Les Différents Modes d'existence, op. cit.*, p.106.

16 See Fernand Deligny, *L'Arachnéen et autres textes*, Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2008, p.11. The Portuguese translation is forthcoming from n-1 publications.

17 See F. Deligny, *Oeuvres* (ed. Sandra Álvarez de Toledo), Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2008.

18 See F. Deligny, 'Acheminement vers l'image', *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, p.1670.

19 F. Deligny, 'Camérer', *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, p.1744.

20 *Ibid.*, p.1734.

21 Jean-Fraçois Chevrier, "L'image, 'mot nébulouse'", in F. Deligny, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, p.1780.

22 'I have not learned to think about the things of the forest setting my eyes on the skin of leaves, I actually saw them inhaling the breath of life of my ancestors, with the yākōana powder they gave me. This is how they also instilled in me the breath of the spirits that now multiply my words and extend my thoughts throughout [...] However, for my words are heard far from the forest, I did draw on the language of the whites. Maybe this way they finally understand it, and after them their children and, later still, the children of their children. Thus his thoughts about us cease to be so dark and twisted, and maybe they even end up reducing the desire to destroy us. If so, our people cease to die quietly, ignored by everyone, as turtles hidden below the grounds of the forest.' (Davi Kopenawa and Bruce Albert, *La Chute du ciel – Paroles d'un chaman yanomami*, Paris: Plon, 2010, p.51).

23 This expression was coined by David Lapoujade and appears in the article cited above.

24 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (trans. Hugh Tomlinson), London and New York: Continuum, 1986, p.116.

25 G. Deleuze, 'To Have Done with Judgement', *Essays Critical and Clinical* (trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco), London: Verso, 1998, pp.126-35.

26 G. Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell), New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p.74.

27 *Ibid.*, p.75

28 *Ibid.*, pp.107–08.

29 See Giorgo Agamben, *De la Très Haute Pauvreté: règles et forme de vie. Homo sacer*, vol. IV, 1, Paris: Rivages, 2013, p.81.

30 Agamben encounters the expression 'forms of life' already in Cicero, Seneca and Quintilian, where 'form' has the sense of example and model. That is where the form of life adheres to the idea of form or template, becoming inseperable from it and thus constituting an example.

31 It is not any different from what desecration evokes when restoring to common use what had been separated into the sphere of the sacred. See G. Agamben, *Profanations*, Paris: Rivages, 2006.

32 Edgardo Castro, *Introdução a Giorgio Agamben: uma arqueologia da potência*, Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2012, p.195, 213.

33 G. Agamben, *Means without End* (trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Cassarino), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p.3.

34 E. Castro, *Introdução a Giorgio Agamben*, op. cit., p.171.

35 G.Agamben, *De la Très Haute Pauvreté, op. cit.*, p.12.

36 G. Agamben, *La potenza del pensiero*. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2005, p.402.

37 See Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth* (ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Graham Burchell), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

38 *Ibid.*, p.127.

39 *Ibid.*, p.236.

40 *Ibid.*, p.243.

41 *Ibid.*, p.338.

42 *Ibid.*, p.285. It is worth noting that in the preface to the US edition of The Anti-Oedipus, Foucault compared the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by Francis de Sales, considering it a book of ethics, 'the first book written on ethics in France in a long time'. He adds, 'being anti-Oedipus has become a lifestyle, a way of thinking and living. How to avoid becoming a fascist even when (and especially when) you believe you are a revolutionary militant? How to rid our speech and our actions, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How to get rid of the fascism that is engrained in our behaviour? Christian moralists sought traces of the flesh (chair) that had haunted the folds of the soul. Deleuze and Guattari, in turn, look closely into the tiniest traces of fascism in the body.' (M. Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, vol. III, Paris: Gallimard, 1994, pp.134–35.)

43 See Muriel Combes, *La Vie inseparée: vie et sujet au temps de la biopolitique*, Paris: Dittmar, 2011, p.52.

44 M. Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, vol. IV, Paris: Gallimard, 1994, p.237.

45 M. Combes, *La Vie inseparée, op. cit.*, p.90.

46 I. Stengers, *Thinking with Whitehead* (trans. Michael Chase), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011, p.26.

47 See Suely Rolnik, *Geopolitics of Pimping: Between Art, Politics and Clinic*, São Paulo: n-1 publications, 2014 (forthcoming).

48 M. Zechner researched this topic in European collectives in *The world we desire is one we can create and care for together – On collectivity, organisation, governance and commoning in times of crisis and precarity: a reading through the prisms of care and creativity*, forthcoming from n-1 publications.

49 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Survivance des lucioles*, Paris: Minuit, 2009, p.36.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri are right in noting that the paradox of silence as necessary for making thinking possible is only superficial, since for Deleuze 'the problem is no longer getting people to express themselves, but providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say'. (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Declaration*, Argo-Navis Author Services, 2012)

52 Brian Massumi, *Power at the End of the Economy*, forthcoming from Duke University Press.

53 See B. Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2002.

54 Laymert Garcia dos Santos, *Politizar as novas tecnologias*, São Paulo: Editora 34, 2003, p.84.

55 *Ibid.*, p.92.

56 *Ibid.*

57 See M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Declaration, op. cit.*

58 See Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Yonqui*, Madrid: Espasa, 2008, forthcoming in Portuguese by n-1 publications.

59 See Maurizio Lazzarato, *La Fabrique de l'homme endetté: essai sur la condition néoliberale*, Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2011.

60 See Giuseppe Cocco, in various articles published in the Brazilian press and during conferences, recordings of which can be found on Youtube.

61 See L. Garcia dos Santos, Glauco Faria and Igor Carvalho, 'É preciso entender as redes e as ruas', Portal Fórum [blog], available at http://revistaforum.com.br/blog/2013/10/e-preciso-entender-as-redes-e-as-ruas (last accessed on 28 May 2014).

62 See François Zourabichvili, 'Deleuze e o possível (sobre o involuntarismo na política)', in Éric Alliez (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: uma vida filosófica*, São Paulo: Editora 34, 2000.

63 See G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, 'Mai 68 n'a pas eu lieu', in D. Lapoujade (ed.), *Deux Régimes de fous*, Paris: Minuit, 1968.

64 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, 'Tratado de nomadologia: a máquina de guerra', *Mil Platôs*, vol. 5 (trans. Peter Pál Pelbart and Janice Caiafa), São Paulo: Editora 34, 1997, p.13. [English edition: *Nomadology. The War Machine*, New York: Columbia University, 1986.]

65 Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Métaphysiques cannibales*, Paris: PUF, 2009, p.166.

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*, p.21.

68 E. Viveiros de Castro, 'Posfácio', in Pierre Clastres, *A arqueologia da violência* (trans. Paulo Neves), São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2004, p.343.

69 G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (trans. Paul Patton), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p.261.

70 E. Viveiros de Castro, *Métaphysiques cannibales, op. cit.*, p.169.

71 *Ibid.*

72 E. Viveiros de Castro and Renato Sztutman (eds.), *Eduardo Viveiros de Castro*, Rio de Janeiro: Azougue Editorial, 2008, p.256.

73 Pierre Montebello, 'Gilbert Simondon, une metaphysique de la participation', in D. Debaise (ed.), *Philosophie des possessions, op. cit.*, p.138.

74 M. Combes, *Simondon. Individu et collectivité*, Paris: PUF, 1999, p.85.

75 B. Latour and I. Stengers, *Enquête sur les modes d'existence: une anthropologie des modernes, op. cit.*, p.15.

76 Olivier Schefer, 'Les Figurants au cinéma ou le peuple qui manque: pour une histoire invisible des images', paper presented on 'L'Envers du décor: émergence des formes et agencements d'existence' at the Laboratoire International Associé, Paris, 29 January 2014.