

Anthropography: Thinking of man in a material key

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Abstract

Among the diverse ways of thinking about the human, matter is almost always viewed with contempt. It is forgotten that man is matter and is made in the struggle with the material. We wish to offer a kind of anthropology by taking a tour of various works that affirmatively ponder materiality. At first, we recover the philosophy of technology that reveals that any nature is the product of a material reconversion. In a second moment, we review the vitalization of exteriority (which reflect on the material world) and an expansion of language that recognizes that it operates as a stroke, as a registered subject. Finally, we give space to the recognition of the industry as a producer of the world that leads to an expansion of art and includes both the factory and the craft.

Keywords: Man, technique, language, writing, industry, art, matter

It will always be good to think about an anthropology. Especially when what we call human, seems so distant, so strange, so anachronistic. It is not free for many to even talk about post-humanity. We will not run that route. We want to move in some keys that can easily be understood as classic. Our scale, it is worth clarifying, is not metaphysical. We do not look for a possible anthropology in reason or in any kind of spirituality. In substitute, we believe that any attempt to crystallize man goes through his relationship with what surrounds him, with the world in its materiality. And to recognize, in a fair measure, that external dimension that conditions the human, we want to highlight both language (freed from its phonocentrism) and art (ancestral and contemporary) that is recognized as the center of gravity. We offer a small tour of the work of authors who, without intending it (or maybe yes) offer us another anthropology; maybe, we might believe, a material anthropography.

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1. Man - Technique - Writing

Western societies, with the exception of some contemporary readings, have understood myth as a pre-logical space, even primitive, lacking any feature that we could identify as rational. However, today, myth occupies an important place as an alternative space to think about the way we inhabit the world. In the words of Cassirer (1968) the myth implies the synthetic recognition that man is inextricably linked with nature. For this reason we believe that the work of Felix Duque (1984) brings us closer to this synthetic logic of myth, including, in Cassirer's own comments, a sympathetic expression that precedes the divine, between epistemic reason and practical reason proper to the West.

To ask oneself about nature, nowadays, for Duque (1984) implies, to a great extent, abandoning the modern partitioning that most anthropologies took as the cornerstone: nature versus culture. For the anthropological vision, culture, which has its origin in agriculture as a violence that is exerted to give life to a new product, a crop that springs from natural soil, is fundamentally what man produces. That is why there is no alternative but to suppose that nature, dramatically, is the antagonistic character of the producer man. Duque questions this opposition relationship because it is based on a substantialist key. Suggesting an intervention on a given substrate (nature) that is artificially perverted (culture).

Questioning the relationship that man maintains with nature is also an attempt to show how the West is driven by an ideal of domination. Nature is disposed from practical knowledge. Therefore, it is conceived as a lost place. The ecological discourse that begins to be the contemporary touchstone that opposes the expression of the industry as a new domain, seems to conceal a mythical soil of humanity, the search for a paradise snatched from the Garden of Eden and escapes from our hands because of our own faults. However, Duque will show how the relationship with nature is more complex (there is no basic nature). First of all, she points out that she is the product of a crystallization of technical forms. In the second instance, that the technique always involves a production process based on practical knowledge. It is our techniques that make any nature, and this nature always disappears when new groups of invention give rise to other technical knowledge.

It does not mean that it is exclusively man who gives shape to nature as a great inert mass that can be modeled, but that man is-becomes his dealings with it. Duque's surprising reading of the hunt seems to reveal a deeper truth, which challenges any substantialist philosophy, about man's dealings with the world. Reading hunting as a technical act to inhabit the world and its transformations through agriculture and interface machines, seems like an insinuation of how technology shapes us as human beings:

(...) hunting becomes war and domination, agriculture genetic engineering and craftsmanship is carried out as a luxury, through sophisticated instruments, in the heart of the cybernetic bubble, to which the Pauline words could be applied, with all solemnity: we are, we move and we live (Duque, 1984, p 41).

It would not be strange to think that if a philosophy of the technique of nature, like that posed by our thinker, allows us to recognize a model of understanding from the treatment

of the world from human productions, a work like that of Leroi-Gourhan (1971), allows to recognize in the primitive paintings a whole movement that gives rise to the abstraction that the logos of the West look for. In other words, his reading of what he calls mythographies challenges the representationalist spirit of figurative painting. From the beginning it is already recognized to what extent, parallel to the language of the word, modes of construction of meaning were fixed in reality thanks to the stroke, to the graph.

The recognition of paleolithic art as an abstract expression dismantles the idea that the task of man, from the aesthetic domain, is to imitate the world. There is perceived, better, a configuration problem. That is why the close relationship with the mythical that refers to artistic work, to the graphic expression of the inexpressible, allows us to recognize that the configuration violates the limits of the world that the West presupposes regulated by logic. To that extent, man appears as a creator of symbols to inhabit the world. The language, from the origin, is multiple and the idea that verbalization is the only way to symbolize is undone. The hand of the artist creates the mythography that exposes a new form of meaning from the image.

The hand thus becomes a creator of images, symbols not directly dependent on the development of verbal language, but really parallel. It is at this stage when a language is constituted that I have called, for want of something better, mythographic (...) (Leroi-Gourhan, 1971, p 206).

Thinking about the extended work of symbols, from the field of image, from the plastic to new television formats, reveals that figuration can not be reduced to the use of the word as a standard bearer of rationality. The recognition of another territory that is capable of making man think is recovered by recognizing the body as a space capable of creating, as an inscription space. It is not gratuitous, returning to the concerns about the nature of Duque, that the man immersed in the technique of nature is recognized as a corporeal entity, as a practical knowledge that symbolizes the world: "Again I (and the social we) is what I am in nature. I have no body as one has a property: I am corporeal. And my body is a trace (gramme) of a slow and laborious exchange. The mark of the difference "(Duque, 1984, p.48).

2. Man - Exteriority - Expanded language

We are interested, secondly, in the problem of spatiality in contrast to language. In this framework, we believe, man emerges as a kind of effect of the pressures that the expressive systems make on the outside. A bridge can serve as a guide. At one extreme, the thematization of spatiality as a condition of any human production. In another, the emphasis that the philosophy of contemporary language makes on any symbolic system. José Luis Pardo (the forms of exteriority) and Simón Marchan Fiz (the exchange relationships between art and language) will serve us as allies.

To begin with, it could be said that the philosophy of Pardo (1992) is aimed at recovering the problem of space as a category to think about human experience. But such a recovery has a particular affiliation with the phenomenology that has allowed to conceive, in another

record, the problem of the specialty. It could even be thought that the work of this thinker gives continuity to the efforts developed by the phenomenological line and the works of Heidegger (2012) with respect to time, in the field of space. That is why it recovers the vision of temporality that escapes the model of the clock, of the measure, to think of time as a condition of being and thus to profile space as a requirement of habitability.

For Pardo this effort is justified as the two coordinates (space and time) of the mathematical gaze are disconnected. However, it is indisputable that space has been relegated in philosophical discussions, despite the interesting path undertaken by Heidegger's hermeneutics. In fact, it is possible to say that the work of the thinker does the dismantling of the metaphysical primacy that underlies the privilege of time over space. Not only because of the typical Cartesian gesture that supposes the existence of two substances, *res cogitans*, implicitly implies the interiority of the soul, and *res extensa*, which implies a material outside. From there it is discovered, Pardo points out, that the metaphysics of the West has sought a supersensible place, a particular type of interiority associated with the idea of soul or consciousness, which must be privileged over its opposite, the sensible, external, material world.

The recovery of space implies thinking about a territory that metaphysics considers contingent. It is not a transcendental space insofar as it is associated with the finiteness of matter: "(...) space appears to the same as something completely foreign, alien (...) because it designates a place from which the subject is absent that we more or less Cartesian, we think we are" (Pardo, 1992, p 16). The study of space, traditionally, is relegated to geometry, prey to mathematics that makes spatiality an abstraction. While this is key to the exact sciences, for measurement systems, it leaves in suspense the real space that we inhabit as human beings. That is why Pardo is interested in studying spatiality as a habitat in which daily practices take place, thought takes place, a dwelling takes place, the house, the city, the *terra incognita*.

The understanding of space as a form of exteriority, in our author, implies thinking in another key, the problem of human experience. Fundamentally, it is not about thinking how man inhabits space, but how the form of space, the exteriority that folds over the body, determines the ways of inhabiting. That is why the recovery of Kant's work on space and time as pure forms of sensibility is not free. In that register it is recognized that space and time are a kind of imprints that shape the experience. In this same measure, it is not fixed molds, but forms that guarantee thought because they are susceptible to affectation (spatiality and bodies fight to death, but love each other with madness).

However, Pardo overcomes the dissociation of these dimensions. It does not refer to two separate areas but to a single one that retreats on itself. That is why the idea of pure exteriority is not free, where the mind or consciousness, experiences associated with time, an interiority that supposedly lacks materiality, are simple folds of an exterior. And the thought is not dissociated from the outside because it is a fold of it. In a strict sense, we think because we are affected by exteriority, because the exterior activates the body, forcing it to fold. They are the spaces that we inhabit, that inhabit us and allow the exteriority to retreat as if it were an attempt to stop the experience of affectation in order to understand it, to give it a meaning.

On the other hand, we are interested in the strong interest that contemporary aesthetic studies have placed on the problem of language, which implies thinking, in another record, the subject of the general analysis of art, as the work of Simón Marchan Fiz well illustrates. Like Pardo's work on space, Marchan Fiz's (1996) proposal leans towards another register of language for aesthetic analysis. This perspective suggests that aesthetics can not be confined to the field of art; its expansion, runs, among other routes, by the recognition of an expressive modeling of the Outside (spatial register). Although aesthetics, after the work of Kant, is presented as a discourse on sensibility, its other meaning as a regulation of the work of art enters into a crisis with artistic modernity.

It is not simply the fact that multiple artistic expressions begin to appear that defy the classical canons of art, but the fact that these expressions run parallel to the schism of language that the modern world suffered at the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century. The theme of the linguistic turn that announces how work on language is preponderant in all disciplines, from logic as a formal language to art as a language of symbolic type, implied a new way of understanding the aesthetic problem.

One might think that aesthetics even lost its tools of analysis and that works of art were diluted in the linguistic analysis of its components. It seems that the aesthetic had suffered a type of decrease or loss of north that ended up hatching. This new problematic in the aesthetic territory was characterized by two obsessions that, we can say, are the echo of the anguish that the disciplines of language suffered with respect to their objects of study. On the one hand, art was the victim of formalizations characteristic of analytical philosophies that reduced the explanation of every object of language to its constituent atoms and, on the other, of interpretation as the only condition of existence of the work, led by philosophies hermeneutics that suppose that the interpretation founds the being of every entity.

Marchan Fiz ensures that the over-inflation of the sign as a differential unit of all language, becomes the yardstick of artistic phenomena in the twentieth century. Therefore, a reading of the significant-meaning relationship in univocal terms gives rise to the works that seek formalization, the recognition of a language that reveals the nature of a work, from one extreme and, on the other, gives rise to an excess of symbolism as an incomplete entity that the interpretation complements:

(...) the aesthetics of interpretation, heirs to the criticism of the language of the beginning of the century, abandon the equivalences between the signifier and the meaning, the obsession to formalize all the possible senses of the works to cross the thresholds of the labyrinth and participate in the release of the dice, a beautiful metaphor for Nietzsche's aesthetic interpretation. (Marchan Fiz, 1996, p 198).

This process of disarticulation of the existence of a perfect language to understand any aesthetic phenomenon, or of another nature, invites a kind of negotiation for both works of art and other sensitive phenomena. Although, opting for hermeneutical strength enriches reading, this is not possible without contact with the concrete conditions of any work or expressive system. Without solving this difficult dichotomy that captures both art and aesthetics, we must

say that something similar to the body-space relationship occurs. Language-art, expressive language-systems, operate as forces that are mutually conditioned. The sense is in the shock. The human experience, we would say, lies as much in the geographies as in the epochs, and the acts of folding the space towards a supposed interiority, as of unfolding the mystery of a work through language are both a vocation and a condition of the human. Somehow it could be said that the work of art passes through the sieve of language as a constitution, and that the outline of any aesthetic expression by the spatial habits that manifest themselves in the body as an inscription surface.

3. Man - Industry - Artistic objects

Finally, we are interested in a review of the problem of the industry (another way of doing the human) as well as the artistic objects (which remind us how the outside conditions us). A legitimate question, Heidegger thought, is a question that never finds a satisfactory answer. That is why thinking about the invention of the world, how the experience that man inhabits is produced, is still a legitimate territory to be listened to. And that's why we believe The invention of our world. The industry: why and how? of Dagognet offers an answer for the invention of the world from material work, without exhausting the question (and without doubt, echoes of Duque's work are present in terms of the philosophy of nature's technique). Let's say that his work operates in the key of investment, a gesture that aims to think about the productivity of the world from the less favored places (raw material). He distances himself, therefore, from the Platonic aegis that thinks reality in substantial terms, always in transcendent key: "Philosophers (...) do not consider industry as creative or demiurgic in its functioning; they reproach him for even destroying the world" (Dagognet, 1995, p.96).

The thematization of the industry, and at the same time of the machines that replace the instruments, the utensils as extensions of the body, reverses the world of Plato's ideas and, with a certain heretical tone, settles in the sensitive world where the The industry operates in bodily terms: "(...) we clearly distinguish the machine from the tool that only copies the gesture of the man, the hand, while the artifact is no longer inspired by our body and engages in actions that exceed it (...)" (Dagognet, 1995, p.53). What would happen if the motor of the world, thinking of the Greek preoccupation to find a first principle, was the invention from the technical production, and not simply a metaphysical logos that sustains the making of man? From the outset, a budget of this nature tears with the Western way of seeing reality. It is enough to think of the deep fear of the body, its concealment in favor of an immortal soul.

On the other hand, resistance, as Dagognet himself suggests, appears from the ecological discourses that see in industry a perversion of nature or in physiocratic thought that sees in production a deformation of Being, an unwanted mutation of the natural that leads to excessive consumption, in a world of excess. Daring to think the industry, without falling into the easy pose of the critic who sees artifice as a corrupter of values, is a gesture of transgression, as transgressive as the industry that multiplies the world and amplifies the small defining a new nature: "(...) the modern factory creates a world that advantageously replaces ours; it

is also characterized by the emergence of one more from an almost nothing or, in any case, from a less "(Dagognet, 1995, p.50).

Dagognet is opposed to an understanding of industry, the productivity that transforms the raw material, which exerts a profane transubstantiation of matter, as an obverse of nature. To think of agriculture as the origin of industry is a prolongation, a genuine nature that, in the final analysis, is the product of technology. Hence his concern to describe how the machine exceeds the body while allowing a productivity that blurs the limited impulse of each subject. It is not gratuitous that the industry is understood as a place for collective social construction, since it gives way to a large public, not to an individualizing production.

In the aesthetic territory (Dagognet himself expressly suggests), industry (far from political economy) supposes a discourse on invention. It implies ways of doing (not only objectively) that condition our ways of living. The industry creates both in material and immaterial terms: "(...) the machine is not limited in its effects, it is not limited to the single power; it penetrates all the domains, including the most human or the most spiritual ones that it revolutionizes "(Dagognet, 1995, p.64). The model landscape of a classicist art or the self-destructive world of the modern poet is broken by the industrial artist who no longer has a canvas, but a world of prolonged artifice in the exterior of any museum. Dagognet begins and ends his work giving shape to a philosophical object and extolling the I can and poetry as production (concepts taken from the work of Valery):

(...) the artist is the man not of being but of doing (poiein), the poet. When he assures us that he is visited by the Muse, it is with the purpose of hiding better the achievements of his constructive technique and dazzle us with the sole result of his musicality (Dagognet, 1995, p.128).

The result is a man who goes from thinking to recognizing that his own future depends on articulation with hyper-productive techniques. It is basically to think of man in another key, a key so obscure because it is camouflaged on the surfaces of the world, in a place so obvious that it hides at a glance. "The manufacturing universe can be defined as the one that decides on the urban landscape; we also call it a philosophical object because it conditions the whole in perpetual recomposition "(Dagognet, 1995, p.7). To this extent this new object of study, this philosophical object, is recognized as a different plane to its products, gives body to the goods, but it is more than them, it is an enabling entity, which maintains the perpetual cycle of invention open and gives rise to a world of networks and interactions. Dagognet does what we could call a Copernican turn towards the material world. But that turn is a vitalization, a deeper understanding of the technique, a recognition of the nature produced by the machine, and the experience of the factory as a new anthropological condition.

Contemporary art, in direct relation with industry, distances itself from spiritual pretensions and reveals the importance of materiality. Dagognet assures that a vindication of the material that becomes a central condition for artistic creation takes place. Art as Platonism (open contempt for the sensible) vivifies the spiritualization of works: "We must learn to die to the sensible. And this Platonic social classification will subsist in the West: the priest and the soldier prevail for a long time on the farmer or the pilot "(Dagognet, 1992, p.9). And it is

necessary to recognize that any kind of spirituality is only possible through material struggle. It is essential to weigh the role of the object in artistic production. It is not possible, as it happened in romanticism, to maintain at present a concept of nature where technique, organized in a subject, is forbidden.

To that extent, Dagognet proposes a philosophy of the object. Basically supposes to think the object like human production conditioned by the fight between subjectivity of the creator and the matter that offers certain possibilities. In this regard, he says: "Let's not cut the object of the subject that invests it! And if we add the ingenuity of the one who made it, it becomes a semi-objective, semi-subjective constellation" (1992, p.13). Thus, the work is clearly differentiated from merchandise mediated by its exchange value, and from things not nuanced by the hand of man. In fact, behind this philosophy of the object is not only the critique of Platonic idealism, but a process that translates the problem of being into doing. In this sense, the utensil discovers the subject that uses it. (Hence, Dagognet remembers Heidegger's reading of Van Gogh's laborer's shoes).

Dagognet explores the problem of contemporary art in two lines. On the one hand, he is interested in artistic work that challenges the two-dimensionality of the plastic canvas and reveals the weight of the material. That is to say, the capacity to make art become an object (for works to be recognized in their condition of materiality). On the other hand, it listens to the objects produced industrially or handcrafted that overflow the functionality to operate in artistic key giving rise to a new look in the daily environment. It is about showing how, from the experiences of contemporary art (pop art, ready made, fluxus, etc.) the object becomes a device of material sense. In this line we have in high esteem the work of the artist who is no longer trying to generate the copy of a reality-model, but, on the contrary, use materials to present the real in the work. To some extent, a piece of the world is placed in the work of art and its material condition will reveal that it is an extension of the world (not a copy).

The materials connected with the world give greater ontological dignity to the art objects that try to presentify the real. In relation to Picasso, Dagognet says:

It is not a delight for the repulsive and the miserable but to ask for help from pieces of the real that are more dense or more charged than the others (...) they contain in their plot, damaged and frayed, the remains of the manipulations and the use (1992, p.72).

They drag behind them a piece of the world, a historical trace of their own journey. Thus the concern to bend the relationship inside is manifested in the objects-art or, even, in the elimination of an interiority that is only a resignified fold (thanks to the artist and his struggle) of the Outside.

Dagognet reminds us that, in everyday life, the modulation of the object form is not only the result of creation but also affects social dynamics. The artist's vision, set in motion by the craftsman or industry, makes morphology a mechanism capable of scaling objects to artistic forms. Whether it is an ashtray, or a table, we are no longer in the presence of objects that operate functionally, but rather of new bodies that create a functional-social aesthetic that

transforms the daily spectrum, opening literally habitable spaces. In other words, dwelling is created from the object that has become art. This is what our author calls a domesthetics: "(...) the designer, the common artist, the specialist of the dome-aesthetics, the interior architect is asked to create shapes and reinvent our lesser utensils, everything that surrounds us and of which we serve "(1992, p.96).

To conclude, it is worth noting that matter, where the spirit of art takes shape, is not an accessory. It is, as we have suggested both condition and obstacle. For this reason, man is made in the middle of combat. Be recognizing that the technique operates to open the material world, that exteriority implies the recognition that matter resists, that industry is one of the anthropographic keys to recognize human modes of operation. And there the language of the graffiti (which reveals the materiality) present in the Paleolithic or the art, become object in the contemporary world and are an interesting way of remembering that we are stardust, in-baited matter.

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