

Second-Hand Technologies: Migratory Aesthetics / Politics Of Resistance

Miguel Á. Hernández-Navarro

This text aims to further develop some arguments which I mentioned briefly in my contribution to the 1st Encuentro. Just as on that occasion, my reflections will evolve and they will be based on *2Move: Double Movement /Migratory Aesthetics*¹. I believe it is essential to point out from the outset the essential link and closeness between the text and the exhibition, since many of the ideas which will be developed below have been created from the visual proposal of the artists included in *2Move*. Many of those dealt with beforehand have been revised after careful contemplation and study of the works and the relationships that have been established between them. The thought has been transformed starting from the art. That is to say, art thinks, or in a certain way, promotes thought, or produces knowledge².

An aesthetic paradigm

One of the essential objectives of *2Move* was to show the way that contemporary mobility, supported by the migratory paradigm, is based on insurmountable contradictions. In particular, when faced with a homogenizing system such as the globalized one, the objective of *2Move* was to show how

¹Detailed information on the exhibition can be found at the following website: www.doublemovement.org. There you can find the details of the artists as well as pictures and descriptions of the works, which will be fundamental to the comprehension of some of the arguments of this text.

² On that point, see Pollock (2003) and Van Alphen (2005).

the works of the exhibition resist, presenting precisely these kinds of contradiction, nucleus of resistance, fractures or blind spots which are not absorbed logically.

In the essay I wrote for the catalogue (2007), my approach was perhaps not particularly orthodox in the way that it was based on a number of sources which are not perhaps the most "established" ones in the field of visual culture studies. In fact, the first part of the text, which opens the argument, defended the recovery of something that, in principle, could appear to be outdated, but whose relevance to the present seems to me to be worth illustrating. It is the concept known as "weak thought", in particular the version proposed by Pier Aldo Rovatti (2000).

The study of Rovatti's thought introduces three extremely useful points when examining the works of the exhibition, as well as the issue of migration. These three points could be summarized as: experience, contradiction and metaphor.

The first point is concerned with everyday experience. Over and above great projects or stories, weak thought deals with the daily experience of the subject: that which is present and close. The Nietzschean unstoppable motion of the subject makes it concentrate almost centrifugally on the world around it, and this new look at the world changes the objects which surround it. What was fixed before is now mobile. In this way changes are produced that are definitive, not only in time but also, consequently, in space. Spaces are diluted, mobilized, erased and made porous.

The second issue is related to the demonstration of the contradictions of mobility. Rovatti enlightens us about the presence of a nucleus of resistance within mobility itself; a nucleus of nonsense which can not be completely mobilized and which is related to the impossible Real of which Lacan speaks (1988). This shows an essential contradiction within movement itself. There is a force which pulls us downwards

and that same force, which would cause us to sink, is what enables us to float. There is an impossibility of resolution in the experience which is unstable in itself and cannot be stopped: an inherent paradox. Within movement "...there is a 'no' which moves. There exists something which stops, which does not stop, which stops not stopping" (Rovatti 2000 : 45). Weak thought is then, a paradoxical thought, a thought of instability. Perhaps the expression which best sums this up would be the Nietzschean "inhabiting distance", which encompasses the origin of the contradiction³.

Finally, weak thought proposes an evaluation of metaphorical thought or a certain poetic reason, which gets to places that logical thought does not quite reach. Rovatti suggests that this unstable inhabitability of distance appears before us through the metaphor, through a poetic reason which is in itself contradictory. The contradictions of experience make traditional thought obsolete and the best way of observing experience is that kind of poetic reason which is found in certain literature, such as that of Peter Handke or Michel Serres. In this sense, García Canclini noted, in his contribution to the 1st Conference, precisely the possibility that artistic language is the most capable of presenting these movements and journeys, especially because the artist "is attracted, more than by the production of knowledge, by the management of the uncertainty in the experiences of sensibility and imagination." (2007)

These three aspects (experience, contradiction and metaphor) help us to establish a reflection on migration in art, not as a theme or representation, but rather as an aesthetic paradigm. Seen in this way, 2Move did not aim so much to present an art "about" migration as a "migratory art", not a thematic art⁴, but rather an art that was essentially formed by

³ See for this Rovatti (1994)

⁴ In her contribution to the 1st Encuentro Jill Bennett clarified the difference between the two points (2007).

the paradigm of migration, an art of instability, continuous movement or double movement: a migratory aesthetic.

It is true that in the exhibition there are many works which present the issue of migration in a literal way, but other than that, its very configuration, its way of understanding space or time is permeated with the migratory. Works as seemingly different as Mona Hatoum's *Measures of Distance* or Javier Pividal's *Coreografias de sombras*, whilst covering different issues and originating from diverse contexts, both stem from the migratory paradigm. Hatoum's work has to do with the construction of memory and identity at a distance from the home. That of Pividal on the other hand, is related to the construction of western intimacy. In the former the migratory issue is more obvious than in the latter, in which *a priori* there is nothing to relate the work with migration: a western subject carries out absurd and minimal actions in private contexts. Over and above the individual meanings and implications however, both works unfurl a poetics of instability, an off-beat and unbalanced movement which we could call "a movement of parallax," not so much in the sense as understood by Žižek, but rather in the sense of optics: the apparent resistance of objects to move with us (2006).

In this sense, to understand the migratory issue as a paradigm, it is necessary to distinguish it from the representation of the journey. The journey has a beginning and an end. Contemporary mobility, homogenizing, is heading towards localization. The technologies of localization go hand in hand with the technologies of mobility. To a certain extent GPS and the mobile phone are homologous technologies.

James Clifford (1999) and Ermanno Vitale (2006) have distinguished the journey from migration via the obvious criteria of forced or painful movement, or movement for external reasons. What is really interesting however, is the idea that while the journey stops in a certain place and is localized, the migrant is always arriving. Wherever he may be, from the moment of setting out, or even before, with the

“thought about setting out”, the migrant is transformed into an “intruder”, or an “inhabitant”, as there will always be something within him that is not completely fixed. The migrant, to use an expression that Nancy gives to the transplanted heart “is always on its way” and never quite fully arrives (2000).

However much Vitale (2006) insists on the idea of an “*ius migrandi*” as a transfer of the rules, the migrant cannot escape from the border, which is inscribed in his body and his daily life, in such a way that he is always migrating. He is always trying to go over that invisible border which, like an abyssal force, pulls him downwards again and again. This invisible inscription of the border, this insurmountable trauma, is what, according to the anthropologist Alice Cherki, contributes to the constant movement of the migrant, and it is this that she calls “wandering”, understood as a disease of time and space (2006). It is a wandering that is related to the diasporic and which presents itself magnificently in the metaphor which Iván de la Nuez uses, when analysing the Cuban exile: the perpetual raft, or the condition of being a boatperson forever (1998).

In one way or another, all the works from the exhibition present this condition of inhabiting in the distance, of moving from a future to a past. The migratory issue appears then as a way of thinking, as an aesthetic but also a cultural paradigm.

Antagonism and Migratory Times: Demolishing the western chronological regime

So far I have presented some of the key ideas from my 1st Encuentro essay. The contradictions of mobility, that “thing” that does not completely move, that sensation of “always arriving” seems, in principle, to be concerned most of all with issues of place. To move is to go from one place to another. To migrate is, above all, to look for a place. A home, a place to be able to inhabit. Therefore, the metaphors of migration that I

presented were mainly concerned with the place. They were space metaphors, or at least that is how they could be considered initially. If one observes well however, moving or changing place is not only an issue of space, but also, and especially, time. All motion implies a time: a sequence, but also a duration; a *chronos* and a *kairos*, a passing and an experience.

As Doreen Massey has indicated, it is not so easy to separate time and space, and we can even talk of time-space (2005)⁵. Places are composed of space, but also time. They possess a temporal specificity that makes all movement in space, at the same time a movement in time. But time-space places are not fixed, rather they are in motion. Within them there does not exist a synchrony or a monochrony that could come from structural analysis. They are constantly changing and being modified. Thus, as Massey has observed, it is not possible to consider space as something fixed and time as something mobile. Rather both are mutually involved, meaning that to some degree the place is movable and multiple, and that in time there are fragments of location and fixedness: i.e., small things that do not change with the passing of time, resistances to time. Thus we can say that the contradictions of mobility are contradictions of time and space.

Normally migration is perceived as a displacement in space, but it is also necessary to think of it as a displacement in time: a change in time and space. As Mieke Bal has pointed out

Migration also consists of the experience of time as multiple and heterogeneous. The time of haste and of the wait, the time of movement and of stagnation; the time of memory and of an unsettling present. The phenomenon that I call multi-temporality; its experience, heterochrony (2007).

⁵ See also May & Thrift (2001)

If until now I have focused fundamentally on the spatial aspect, in the following sections I am going to reflect upon the issue of time. The essential argument of the remaining pages will be essentially to do with the way that migration introduces fundamental changes in western time. I will focus particularly on the examination of a number of strategies that arise in works from the *2Move* exhibition: strategies of resistance to western monochrony, what we could call the chronological hegemonic regime or the "single time"⁶ of globalization.

All time is multiple, dynamic and heterogeneous, composed of countless little mobile and changing shades (May and Thrift 2001). There is a time of the succession and a time of the duration, a quantitative time and another qualitative one; *chronos* and *kairos*, two inseparable modes of time that, as Guadalupe Valencia has noted, form that which we could call 'temporality' and what would be something like 'the experience of time' (2007). Every society possesses a specific experience of time: a temporality composed as much by the rhythm of events as by the way the subject experiences them.

Many people say today that precisely this original multiple time tends to be the great thing that is sacrificed in the western conception of time (Baier 2002). The time discourse of western contemporaneity talks constantly about the appearance of a "single time", of a chronological imperialism. Massey has observed a tendency in the official discourse of globalization to talk about the compression of space and time (2006). This compression is related to what Mary Ann Doane has called the emergence of cinematic time, the time of the ellipsis or the time of narrative, linked also to the technologies of communication, light and power (2002).

⁶ Translator's note: "single time" refers to the temporal regime linked with "single thought" from the French *pensée unique*. It is also known as "only time", "one and only time" or "only one time".

According to Virilio, we are heading towards a new unicity of time: a time that is characterized by acceleration, the compression of space-time, almost the actual elimination of time (1996). It is zero time, the age of urgency, more than of speed as Lipovetsky claims (2006). The imposition of an only time, the redeeming time of speed, of 'the western hour' (Agacinski 2000) would serve to abolish all the local temporalities. A hegemonic temporality, that of global time, tends to eliminate and to subsume the various local times.

The discourse of globalization makes us think that the latter is inevitable in terms of time and space, that it is as difficult to resist as the force of gravity. This idea, according to Massey, represents a conceptualization of time and space: "The proposition turns geography into history, space into time" (2005: 5). It is about making us think that there are no differences or that they can be abolished: "That cosmology of 'only one narrative' obliterates the multiplicities, the contemporaneous heterogeneities of space. It reduces simultaneous coexistence to place in the historical queue" (2005: 5).

One of the most interesting aspects of migrant temporalities is that they help to destroy the fiction of the new only one time that is compressed and accelerated. In a way, they promote a fracture in the western chronological regime. The immigrant's multiple time collides with the only time of globalization. The change of 'hour' –in Agancinski's words– that takes place in the immigrant is a metaphor of the drastic change of temporality, for the whole system is implicit in that clock, a chronological regime, a temporal structure, a history and a perception of time.

The contemporary theories of hybridization also advocate a hybridization of time⁷. As well as a third way or a third space, you could also speak of a third time (Bhabha

⁷ See García Canclini (2002) and Bhabha.

1994). Homi Bhabha himself has examined this hybrid dimension of postcolonial time, a sort of in-between time in which the hybridization of temporalities would be possible, where the local and global temporal specifics would coexist without a problem: a temporal utopia of mestization that, however, beneath its apparent goodness, hides a dark reverse side. Hybridization and the discourse of the in-between and of mestization are too close to the new only time. Just as the third space, the third time is effected in western time. It is a time conceived from the western present, from its chronological regime; a time that, in the background, tends to cancel the local times. It is a time of adjustment.

I believe that it is necessary to override the temporal model of interculturality because it is misleading. Perhaps it would be more productive to think of the coexistence of times as a collision and an unsolvable tension, like a fundamental dyschrony, impossible to assimilate. The immigrant changes time zone⁸, he moves around in time, but the change is never tidy, never complete. There is always a surplus, something that cannot be moved, something that stands still. There is something chronic, in the sense of something specific and personal, like a chronic illness, that cannot be mobilized, that can never be adequate. *There is a chronic dimension in the chronology.* There is one 'Real', to say it as Lacan does, that cannot be assumed. And that Real is the one that produces the contradiction, the one that shatters the illusion of integration. The adjustment, then, is never possible.

This will lead us to conceive an antagonistic temporal model, in which the differences are valued and there is no possibility of solving the originating conflict because any agreement without fissures is an act of masking reality. In this antagonistic model, that would be derived from Laclau's and Mouffe's theses on democracy, agreement between the parts would not be possible, since there would always be empty

⁸ See Morgan & Muir (2004).

spaces, impossible to fill⁹. Temporal vacuums, errors, blind spots, non-homologizable temporal specificities that, on the one hand would contribute to enrich the spectrum of temporalities of the present and, on the other hand, could be useful in demolishing the fictions of the western chronological regimen; a regime that, precisely, under the model of the imaginary hybridization of time, proposes a single narrative and a single time: the imaginary time of globalization (García Canclini 1999).

Considered carefully, the model of antagonistic temporalities answers to a mental scheme that is not representative, in the sense that the conflict and its resolution cannot be considered structurally, among other things because it is mobile, changing and not all places are accessible to reason.

If we were to write a history of subjectivity and modern times, we could easily represent them mentally, almost spatially as if it were a map. Modern temporal thought has been essentially topographic, representable in a Euclidean space: a fixed and motionless space. It could be said that in this space Modernity appreciated the time of the One, and forged its project on evolution and the Self's progress. Postmodernism attended to the minorities and was built up on the time of the other, that is, the time of the minus one; and what we could call interculturality, the official model of the present, has been forged on the sum of the time of the Other, local time, with the time of the One, global time, the hybridization of the Other with the Self; that is, the minus one plus one. It is a perfectly representable equation in the mental map of time. It is a perfect equation, without fissures; fixed, visible and, consequently, localizable and controllable.

⁹ The classic formulation is in Laclau & Mouffe (1985). A reflection of time and space introducing the concept 'dislocation' is treated in Laclau (1990)

The three temporal models are, if one observes with great detail, completely spatial: rational and mentally representable, and they all are constructed from the same place: the time-space of the One. Everything happens on the same game board, and although the counters are different, the structure is the same.

It is necessary to introduce a fourth time model: a time beyond interculturality and hybridity, a discontinuous and antagonistic time that cannot be added or subtracted, and neither can it, therefore, be represented. It is a movable, changing, multiple and absurd temporality. In short it is an antagonistic temporality in constant conflict.

Furthermore, in an antagonistic time model that values the non re-usable excess and leftover stock, the dead-ends and the errors of time, it seems necessary to break the topographic structure in favour of a topological "de-structure": a temporal space that is not Euclidian, but möebian; without an inside, an outside, a near or a far away, where there is no correspondence nor completely rational neighbourhoods (at least if we understand reason as a spatialization). This time is governed, as Jacques Lacan already mentioned (Ragland & Milovanovic 2004), by another series of correspondences and neighborhoods that suit the psychic time and space better than the geographical and historical ones: a confusing time-space, where before, after and now mix and intercede, a space where the exterior makes up the interior. It is a space that subverts intuition, a *scotomic* space, with a blind spot; the blind spot of an empty place, of a missing centre, around which all this topological space is configured.

A topological thought of time would lead us therefore to value discontinuities, breaks, inadequacies, absences, etc.: in short, to value down time. It is precisely these times that have tended to be eliminated from all the discourse of the elliptical time of the cinematograph and the narratives associated with it (Doane 2002).

Perhaps we should consider the contemporary subject and its time from the topology, beyond the location and beyond linear time in the time of absence, not in an eternal intemporality, but rather in a multiple and heterogeneous temporality, although not a hybrid one (at least not if by hybrid we mean the sum of the parts). A discontinuous temporality, a heterochrony, or rather, to emphasise the issue of conflict, a *dyschrony*, an asynchrony impossible to resolve.

What is really interesting about the subject that we are dealing with is that the migrant temporalities introduce and evince the conflict within the supposed western hegemonic temporality, and this conflict fractures and shatters the illusion of the only time, of the imaginary monochrony of cultural capitalism. For that reason one should not see conflict from a negative perspective and agreement from a positive one. It is necessary to eliminate the idea that the resolution always is positive: a resolution without fissures is often a triumph of the dominant party. Conflict or disagreement is a constitutive element of the community (Rancière 1995). Resistance in the face of power has to be produced precisely by means of disagreement, by means of tension.

One of the most interesting tasks of art at present will be precisely to make evident, to visualize, to bring to vision, this temporal conflict to show the inconsistencies, falseness and artifices of chronological imperialism. This strategy is found in a large part of the works of the exhibition *2Move*, works that are configured essentially as temporal resistances, metaphors of an antagonistic time, places of temporal disagreement.

Perhaps the work that best incorporates and encompasses all that I have exposed previously is *Mimoune*, by Gonzalo Ballester. The work is very simple, but its simplicity makes it very effective. The artist records a video of Mimoune, a Moroccan immigrant who works in Murcia (southern Spain), looking straight into the camera to send a message to his family. It is a message made up of sentimental clichés: I am all

right, I have got work, but I miss you. Afterwards the artist takes the video to Mimoune's family in Morocco, and records their reactions to Mimoune's message. Next he records a message from the family for Mimoune. Finally the circle closes when the message returns to Murcia, where, once again, Ballester records Mimoune's face while he views the video of the message from his family.

In all, we have four sequences of images that belong to different moments: 1) Mimoune sending a message, 2) his family receiving the message, 3) his family recording a message, 4) Mimoune receiving the message. Between the first and last sequence of images a time period of not less than several weeks has passed, since it implies a real journey, a distance, and an inevitable time lapse. However, and this is extremely interesting, Ballester has assembled the images as if they were simultaneous, by means of the shot-countershot. In this way, we see Mimoune speaking and in the following scene we observe his relatives' reactions to his words. The western spectator, accustomed to the instantaneity of the television, immediately thinks that the images are happening at the same time and that there exists an instantaneous communication between Mimoune and his family.

If we observe carefully, Ballester is playing with three temporalities. In the first place, there is the epistolary temporality of the message. A message is sent, which takes a certain amount of time, it arrives at its destination, and afterwards it can return or not¹⁰. It is the time of uncertainty, the time of the real distance, because the letter takes the same time to arrive as a person would take. The distance that, for example, our modern communication technologies have contributed to eliminate symbolically. The telephone and e-mail have compressed the long temporal regime of the epistle in favour of an instantaneity that seems to abolish geographical distances and, consequently, temporal ones too.

¹⁰ On epistolary time, see Baier (2002) chapter five.

The second time of the image in *Mimoune* is the time of the television, the instantaneous time of western image technologies. While the first time belonged to what could have been the specific chronological regime of Mimoune's hometown, the time of the television belongs to another moment and to another chronological regime, the contemporary western one¹¹. It is the accelerated zero-time that we find in temporary discourses, for example, of Virilio or Lipovetsky. This is the time of Mimoune's country of adoption and also the time of the work's viewer.

The third time is the time of the conflict that makes the two specific temporalities collide, the two regimens of communication, the epistolary and that of the television. This is the true migrant time because Mimoune is stranded between two times. Although in principle it could be thought that Ballester's work is conceived as a hybridization of temporalities, it is actually composed of the unsolvable tension between the two, a tension that refutes the fictitious tale of the dominant time, the means by which the message is emitted.

Like a paradox to the world of communications and the fast pace of globalized society, the slow time of emission and answer enters here as if it were a parallel universe producing a breach in time, a breach that makes conflicting temporalities emerge, an asynchrony between the means and their utilization. The video, characterized by its immediacy, is used here in a slow time, the same as the television, breaking the tendency of live transmission to operate in playback, with a different time from that usually expected for the medium. Furthermore, the television in *Mimoune* is tele-vision in the temporal sense, because the vision takes place in the distance, more temporal than spatial.

Compared to the supposed immediacy of the voice that many immigrants experience in telephone conversations,

¹¹ One interesting recent reflection on TV is in Joselit (2007)

the image still has difficulties in arriving with such speed, and usually does so by means of photos or postcards from relatives and hometowns. Hence, compared with an immediate voice that is apparently close the image shows the true distance, the unsurmountable distance between the places. Ballester's work emphasises how out of synch the visible and the audible are, an essentially temporal out-of-synch-ness that changes the meaning, because in front of the camera, rather than stories we come across bodified voices. This is what really seems to be important: that the voices have a place in the body. We could say then, that Mimoune's tears are not so much due to the significance of the words but rather to the reconstruction and re-composition of voice and image, of word and body, something that is always lost with distance.

The temporal antagonism that *Mimoune* presents contributes, on the one hand, to shatter the myth of the only time, introducing a plurality of times that clearly shows the heterogeneity of the experience of time. On the other hand however, the work also manages to abolish the supposed compression of the space-time which is so present in the contemporary discourses on temporality. The compression of space makes us think that all places are accessible at any time, and that, precisely for this reason, we will find the same thing in all places: "because space has been marshalled under the sign of time, these countries have no space –precisely– to tell different stories, to follow another path" (Massey 2005: 82). This new Atlas however, in which distances are abolished is no more than a fiction¹². As García Canclini observes, it is an imaginary construction: there is no 'free space', but quite the contrary, a space that resists moving and being eliminated (1999). This is precisely the space that appears in *Mimoune*. The temporal collapse of the work shatters the illusion to show that there exists a "real distance" that cannot be abolished by

¹² On this 'New Atlas', see Serres (1994).

communication technology. In this way, *Mimoune* presents a strategy of resistance to the compression of space and time.

Challenging technology

In the collision of times that occurs in *Mimoune* it is necessary to pay attention to an issue that the text would appear to have avoided until now: the issue of technology. The two times that collide in this work are found located in two technologies of communication, two time-systems: the video and the epistle. Therefore, the antagonism that ensues is a technological antagonism. The tension takes place between two technologies. Technologies that are, more than just some simple tools, foundations and condensations of the whole cultural system.

In her contribution to the I Encuentro, concerning the work of Isaac Julien, Ranjana Khanna introduced the issue of technology in a Heideggerian sense (Khanna, 2007). For her, technology would have two fundamental meanings. On the one hand, it referred "to the instruments employed as tools in order to achieve something through altering our relation to a world which does not automatically offer the thing desired", and on the other hand it could be conceived in a wider sense, "as something systematic". Following Heidegger, Khanna will notice that technology is not merely a means, but also a mode of knowledge, that *techne* is most of all to do with knowledge and, somehow, with poetical production, with poiesis. When taken to be a form of knowledge, technology has to do with the uncovering of the truth, "a way of bringing out the occult. The technical essence in the region in which it happens brings out the occult and the state of uncovering, where the *aletheia*, the truth, occurs". (Heidegger, 1994: 15)

We will understand technology in this way, as a complex system of knowledge, and a way of relating to the world. A way in which, as in the Foucaultian archive, the following things are included: power, the possibility of knowledge, and subjectivity in all its complexity. Technology

would then be one of the foundations of a whole cultural system. Thus, much more than the tool as something neutral, technology would be loaded with cultural meanings and it would have something like a system memory, an ideology that would be present independently of the end for which it is used. Jonathan Crary has observed with precision how, behind many of the technologies of vision that began to evolve throughout the nineteenth century, there is hidden an ideology of control and domination that has to do with a bigger process of rearrangement of knowledge and individuals in modernity (Crary 1996 and 1999).

It is technology then, as a window of approach to the world, as a mode of configuration of truths; it is knowledge or a way of knowledge. As Félix Duque observes, "we call these ways of saying and making the world '*technical*'". (Duque 2006:183).

Before continuing it is worth pausing for a moment to consider the distinction that Heidegger makes between ancient and modern technology, like two ways of approaching the truth. Furthermore, it is also necessary to clarify the terminology used. In Spanish, there is a clear division between "the technical" and "technology". In this sense, Heidegger does not refer to technology, but to the technical. In fact, the original German term is *Technik*. Heidegger's classic essay "Die Frage nach der Technik" has been translated in Spanish as "La pregunta por la técnica"¹³ (Heidegger 1994). In English, however, the translation is "The Question Concerning Technology" (Heidegger 1977). There is no distinction made between the two. In Anglo-Saxon Heideggerian tradition, technology and the technical have a similar meaning, thus they talk of ancient technology and modern technology¹⁴. However these are not synonymous terms for Heidegger.

¹³ "The question about the technical".

¹⁴ See Rojcewicz (2006)

Technology is a later stage of the technical. In fact, as Eduardo Sabrosky mentions, what Heidegger understands as technology is nothing more than the modern technical (2006).

The distinction between the ancient and modern technical in Heidegger has nothing to do with the level of sophistication of the devices or the tools, rather it relates to the way both make the truth appear. As Richard Rojcewicz observes "the essential difference resides in the theory, in the attitude that underlies the use of the means: namely, a pious attitude toward the object of the practice, versus an imperious, hubristic, 'unbridled imposition of ends'" (2006: 11). Ancient technology (the technical) relates to the *techne*, knowledge and thought. It is concerned with nature, and the *physis*. It is not something manufactured, but rather a bringing-there-in-front, a sort of revelation. The decisive thing about the technical as mode of the truth would be production (*poiësis*). It is a way of thinking, a questioning of the opacity of the truth.

The modern technical (technology), on the other hand, dominates nature and knowledge: "Revealing the occult that prevails in the modern technical is a provocation that puts before Nature the requirement to supply energy that as such can be extracted and stored" (Heidegger 1994: 15). That is to say, technology uses the *physis* as a place in which everything is given beforehand: it progressively transforms the world into a deposit of out-of-context resources arranged for enjoyment and manipulation. The way of revealing this world as a store of resources is what Heidegger calls *Ge-stell*, "structure of emplacement" or "composition". No longer has it to do with a production, a *poiësis*, or a question about being, but rather a simple utilization of world's resources as a warehouse.

A key aspect of the elucidation of the issue of the technical has to do with the resistance of the truth to show itself and its supposed elimination that takes place in technology. In the technical, doing and thinking are conceived facing a resistance, the resistance of the truth to show itself. The truth, which always remains hidden, only shows itself in

the clearing of light (*lichtung*) of the thought and the doing, but in a conscious doing, in which the individual is implicated. In technology on the other hand, the issue of resistance is eliminated. It is concealed. The "being hidden" of the truth is hidden:

In this way then, the provoking Ges-tell not only conceals a previous mode to the bringing out of the hidden, the bringing-there-in-front, but rather conceals the bringing out of the hidden as such, and with it That in which the state of de-concealing happens in its own way, that is, the truth (Heidegger 1994: 25).

Heidegger's language is obtuse and complex, but *a grosso modo*, the idea that prevails in his conception of the modern technical is that it no longer makes the truth appear because it does not question itself about it (the truth). That is to say that it works only through the illusion that there is nothing hidden, that everything is in the open, that there is no resistance of the truth to reveal itself, because the world is given in existences in its image¹⁵). The world becomes clear by means of the extension of technology to all the spaces of daily life, and then the illusion is born that "there is no longer anything to discover". Also in the world that has intended to show everything, to discover everything, technology stops being *techne* and stops possessing the privilege of the *aletheia*, the uncovering of the truth. Then, as Arturo Leyte affirms "of the thing, understood now as an object, only its sides, its faces, its images are left, but not the *base* of just what was understood, that the image was an image: there is no base because only images occur and remain" (Leyte, 2005: 110).

Among a number of other points, the difference between the technical and technology (modern technical) would also have to do with the way in which time is conceived. The technical possesses a human time: "It goes

¹⁵ See Heidegger (1988).

with the flow" (Heidegger 1994: 23). Its pace is that of man. Technology on the other hand introduces the paces of the machine. Although the machine adapts to the man, the ideology of the machine, its rhythm, is the one that prevails.

In order not to persist unduly on the question of Heideggerian technology, we could sum up by saying that, definitively, technology destroys the poetical dimension of the technical, the human and affective dimension of the *techne*, because the way of uncovering the truth of the modern technical is "essentially" *instrumental*.

According to the above, it could be thought that the recuperation of that poetical dimension leads to an involution and almost to a reversing of the technological processes. Many have called Heidegger a technophobe or a Luddite. The interesting thing about his thought however, that still continues to be useful, is the consideration that danger is not in the devices, but in its essence: "What's dangerous is not the technical. There is nothing diabolic about the technical, what there is is the mystery of its essence. The essence of the technical, as a destiny of bringing out what is hidden, is the danger" (Heidegger 1994: 26). Heidegger did not attempt to demonize the technical in terms of the creation of machines and apparatuses; the danger is not so much the technical as something produced by the human being: the technical is not the devil. The true danger entails the essence of the technical: the structure, the *Ges-tell* that is destiny.

If we take this into account, the possibility appears of recovering the productive, poetical, affective and close dimension of the *techne* without necessarily getting rid of technology. The key would be in changing the essence, or to say the same thing but in less transcendent terms, in surpassing its value of use, questioning it, fracturing it and dismantling it from within, taking it even to absurdity and making resistances emerge in it. Resistances that would not be too far away from that which, at the end of his discourse,

Heidegger called "the saviour" (*das Rettende*), or the return to the artistic dimension of the technical: *poiēsis* and creation.

Perhaps all of the above is better explained if we consider *Gaussian Blur*, a video by Roos Thews. The work shows two superimposed images, each one of them moving at a different pace, as if they belonged to strange times. The slow time of the corporeal images that seem heavy, contrasts with the movement in real time of a storm whose image however is almost transparent. The effect that takes place in the superimposing of the two sequences of moving images is similar to the effect one would get using the "gaussian blur" function, pre-programmed in video editors: the fade-out and scumble of the image. To get a similar effect (although not exactly the same) the artist carries out a much longer and more arduous task, a job that is almost a craft, completely alien to the medium that he uses. It is a task that implies the questioning of technology, because it accomplishes the proposed effect in a different way from that which is pre-determined in the device. That is to say, in a way, it subverts technology.

Heidegger notes that technology is related to an impulse "toward the maximum utilization with the minimal expense" (Heidegger 1994: 16), that is, to the attainment of the maximum benefit with the minimal effort. Contemporary technological devices are all going in this direction. The attainment of the Gaussian Blur effect would have been possible with "the minimal expense", simply pressing a button or setting a function. That way, between the effort (or the thought) employed and the result there is an insurmountable abyss. Thews, however, takes the longer route and breaks the Ges-tell system of technology, that stops being merely a transparent means that eliminates the subject. Here resistance comes into play once again, the time of the individual, the *techne* as it was thought in the ancient technical. In the face of transparency, de-corporalization, dehumanization and technological domination, Thews introduces opacity, the

corporalness of work, individuation and "care" (*sorge*) about the process. In consequence there takes place an act of creation, a purely poetical act. And also a political act, in the sense that the work presents an act of resistance¹⁶. It is an act of resistance to the ideology of technology. Its aberrant or non-programmed utilization would have to do with a micropolitical dimension of the artistic practice. Gaussian Blur shows us the possibilities that art has of dismounting the essence of technology, remaking the very affectivity of the *techne*, its poetical production, its mode of bringing-there-in-front what is hidden.

Second-hand technologies

After observing the exhibition in great detail, we found that a large number of works seem to operate with the same modes of temporal-technological collapse that we have seen in *Mimoune* or *Gaussian Blur*. In some cases, such as in the work of William Kentridge, where the technical aspect of the drawing and the technology of the video work together mutually modifying each other, specific conflicting temporalities are produced as well. In other cases perhaps, this collapse is more subtle and less visible, as occurs for example in Ursula Biemann's *Remote Sensing*. In her research on sexual exploitation, each of the stories of this work begins using images of satellites and modern technologies of location, and from there the technology "descends" to the pure reality that does not seem to change. The advanced technology used seems to be in clear contraposition to the inequalities that reality and the dramatic situation confirm. Specific unequal temporalities collide with the global unified temporality, and the metaphor has a literal sense here because satellite images of earth show the time and global technology that controls and that unites the times of exploitation.

¹⁶ On resistance, see Bensaïd (2001)

I would like now to turn our attention from *2Move*, to relate this inclination to collide temporalities and technologies with a sort of recent tendency in the present-day arts. It has to do with what Hal Foster has called *the asynchronous*, one of the master strategies of the artistic practices –together with the spectral, the traumatic and the incongruent– that take place after death of the history of art (2004). It is a strategy of montage of asynchronous forms that involves "making a new means from the residues of journey forms, keeping together the different temporal indicators in a single visual structure" (Foster 2004: 137). According to Foster, this discourse could include James Coleman's slides, Kentridge's videographic drawings, Kara Walker's narrative silhouettes and Stan Douglas's film installations.

One of the most interesting dimensions that the asynchronous brings into play is that of the out-of-fashion and the obsolete. This is related to the surrealist imaginary where, according to Benjamin, this obsolescence of the out-of-fashion could stimulate the revolutionary energy that was trapped there (1980). For Benjamin therefore, what's obsolete can be political, because it makes us relive the unaccomplished futures, the utopias that were never realized and the dream world of the past. In this sense, it could be confirmed with Foster that:

the unfurling of the asynchronous pressurizes the totalist assumptions of capitalist culture and challenges their hope of being intemporal; it also defies this culture with its own augural symbols, and requests that it remembers its own lost dreams of freedom, equality and brotherhood (Foster 1994: 139).

In a way, the cohabitation of conflicting technologies which belong to different temporalities that I have analyzed in this text would also examine different roads from those along which the global technological discourse has led us. It would introduce resistances to the incessant passing of time,

shattering it, breaking its perfect equilibrium and, most of all, giving the subject the protagonism of his destiny.

But what interests me most about Foster's argument about the asynchronous is the presence and the potential of the obsolete, most of all for the "used" nature that this has. As José Luis Molinuevo says, "technologies do not die, they fall into disuse. Their being is their use, their disuse is the Nothing" (2006: 39). The obsolete is related, therefore, to that which no longer suits someone's purposes, that has stopped being useful, that has lost its instrumental value¹⁷. At the same time the "used" also has a surplus, excess and residual dimension, and in this sense it has an almost "indexical" link to the subject that has used the object. The term "second-hand" which gives the title to this essay refers precisely to this, to the "tactile" and close relationship that the subject has with the used object. As Gregson and Crewe observe, there exists an emotional component in second-hand objects, a sort of memory that goes beyond their instrumentality and that places these objects and technologies in the area of affectivity (2003).

I would like to use the metaphor of the "second-hand" to refer to the close and not exclusively instrumental presence that the obsolete or non-contemporary technologies possess – understanding by non-contemporary those external to western technological progress, that seems to be the only place where the *telos* of history still survives.

If we return now to the Heideggerian argument shown previously, according to which the modern technical broke the poetical value of the ancient technical by introducing only the value of use and eliminating man's close and almost empathetic relation with the tool, it would not be far-fetched to affirm that these second-hand technologies would restore the human character of the *techne* and bring back the enigmatic

¹⁷ On Obsolescence and technology, see Acland (2007).

and hidden value of the true that had worried Heidegger so much.

To conclude, the arguments given until now that migrant times and technologies introduce second-hand technologies in time and global technology, and this almost spectral invasion produces cuts and unsolvable discontinuities in the "ideological programming" of the technological progress. The beginning of *Un Trabajo Limpio*¹⁸, the video by Mieke Bal and Gary Ward, clearly shows these discontinuities. The work begins at an Internet café where immigrants use advanced communication technologies (video chat) to contact their relatives. These technologies belong to the western technological regime but they do not fit the regime of the home countries. The most interesting thing however, is that the immigrant gets into them in a direct way, without a previous process of indoctrination and technological learning. This provokes unexpected results and uses that have not been pre-programmed. Internet chats that we observe at the Internet cafés seem to be minor interventions. They have the status of events or happenings. They are disconnected and discontinuous. To a certain extent they escape the structure and system of technology, that which Heidegger called *Gestell*.

What this heterodox and anachronic use of technology teaches us, is that perhaps it is necessary to introduce a dose of technological illiteracy, an illiteracy that produces aberrant uses of technology, uses that are not pre-determined, that break the teleological discourse of technology and bring it closer to the subject. In this way the chronological discontinuities, the time periods that are produced with this migrant use of technology, would propose modes that have not been considered and roads not yet walked by the contemporary subject, roads that lead beyond instrumentality and transparency. Roads that return to proximity and affectivity, and that, to continue with the argument that I

¹⁸ Spanish for *A Clean Job*.

presented in the 1st Encuentro, constitute little resistances, acts of nanopolitics, barely visible... infra-light, but convincing.

References

- Acland, Charles R. [ed.] (2007) *Residual Media*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Agacinski, Sylviane (2000) *Le passeur de temps. Modernité et nostalgie*. Paris : Seuil.
- Arturo Leyte (2005) "El arte a la luz de la muerte", in Duque, F. (ed.) *Heidegger y el arte de verdad*. Navarra: Universidad Pública de Navarra, pp. 101-138
- Baier, Lothar (2002) *Pas le temps! Traité sur l'accélération*. Translated by Marie-Hélène Desort and Peter Krauss. Paris: Actes Sud.
- Bal, Mieke (2007) "Double Movement", in *2Move: Double Movement/Migratory Aesthetics*. DVD. Murcia / Enkhuizen: Murcia Cultural / Zuiderzee Museum.
- Benjamin, Walter (1980), "El surrealismo. La última instantánea de la inteligencia europea", en *Illuminaciones 1. Imaginación y sociedad*. Madrid: Taurus.
- Bennet, Jill (2007) "Migratory Aesthetics: Art and Politics After Identity", in *Thinking Mobility*. Murcia: Cendeac.
- Bensaïd, Daniel (2001) *Résistances. Essai de taupologie générale*. Paris: Fayard.
- Bhabha, Homi (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Cherki, Alice (2006) *La frontière invisible. Violences de l'immigration*. Paris : Elema.
- Clifford, James (1999) *Itinerarios transculturales*. Translated by Mireya Reilly. Barcelona: Gedisa.

- Crary, Jonathan (1996) *Techniques of the Observer*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Crary, Jonathan (1999) *Suspensions of Perception. Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- De la Nuez, Iván (1998) *La balsa perpetua. Soledad y conexiones de la cultura cubana*, Barcelona, Editorial Casiopea.
- Doane, Mary Ann (2002) *The emergence of Cinematic Time. Modernity, Contingence, The Archive*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press.
- Duque, Félix (2006) "La técnica del mundo", in Sabrosky, E. (ed.) *La técnica en Heidegger. Vol. I*. Santiago de Chile: Universidad Diego Portales, pp. 179-204.
- Ragland, Ellie & Milovanevic, Dragan [eds.] (2004) *Lacan: Topologically Speaking*. New York: Other Press,.
- Van Alphen, Ernst (2005) *Art in Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foster, Hal (2004) "Este funeral es por el cadáver equivocado", in *Diseño y delito*. Trans. Alfredo Brotóns. Madrid: Akal, pp. 123-144.
- García Canclini (1999) *La globalización imaginada*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- García Canclini (2002) *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la Modernidad*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- García Canclini, Néstor (2007) "Inmigrantes: los que tienen el oficio de las metáforas", en *Thinking Mobility*. Murcia: Cendeac.
- Gregson, Nicky & Crewe, Louise (2003) *Second-Hand Cultures*. Oxford & New York: Berg.
- Pollock, Griselda (2003) "Does Art Think? How Can We Think the Feminine, Aesthetically?", in Arnold, Dana & Iversen,

- Margaret (eds.) *Art and Thought*, Londres: Blackwell, pp. 129-155.
- Heidegger, Martin (1977) "The Question Concerning Technology", in *Concerning Technology and Others Essays*. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row.
- Heidegger, Martin (1988) "La época de la imagen del mundo", in *Caminos del bosque*. Trans. Helena Cortés & Arturo Leyte. Madrid: Alianza, pp. 63-90.
- Heidegger, Martin (1994) "La pregunta por la técnica", in *Conferencias y artículos*. Trans. Eustaquio Barjau. Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, pp. 9-32.
- Hernández-Navarro, Miguel Á. (2007) "Little Resistances: Contradictions of Mobility", in *2Move: Double Movement/Migratory Aesthetics*. DVD. Murcia / Enkhuizen: Murcia Cultural / Zuiderzee Museum.
- Joselit, David (2007) *Feedback: Television Against Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Khanna, Ranjana (2007) "The Rhythm of the Specter in Isaac Julien's 'Fantome Afrique'", in *Thinking Mobility*. Murcia: Cendeac.
- Lacan, Jacques (1988) *El seminario. Libro 7. La ética del psicoanálisis*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal (1985) *Hegemonía y estrategia socialista. Hacia una radicalización de la democracia*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Laclau, Ernesto (1990) *Nuevas reflexiones sobre la revolución de nuestro tiempo*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.
- Lipovetsky, Gilles (2006) *Los tiempos hipermodernos*. Trans. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- Massey, Doreen (2005) *For Space*. London : Sage Publications.

- May, Jon & Thrift, Nigel [eds] (2001) *Timespace. Geographies of temporality*. London: Routledge.
- Molinuevo, José Luis (2006), *La vida en tiempo real. La crisis de las utopías digitales*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Morgam Jessica & Muir, Gregor (2004) *Time Zones. Recent Film and Video*. London: Tate.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc (2000) *L'intrus*. Paris: Galilée.
- Rancière, Jacques (1995) *La méésentente. Politique et philosophie*. Paris: Galilée.
- Rojcewicz, Richard (2006) *The Gods and Technology. A Reading of Heidegger*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Rovatti, Pier Aldo (2000) "Transformaciones a lo largo de la experiencia", en Vattimo, Gianni & Rovatti, Pier Aldo (eds.), *El pensamiento débil*. Trans. Luis de Santiago. Madrid: Cátedra, pp. 43-75
- Rovatti, Pier Aldo. 1994 *Abitare la distanza. Per un'etica del linguaggio*. Milán, Feltrinelli.
- Sabrosky, Eduardo (2006) "Introducción: Una filosofía de la técnica", in Sabrosky, E. (ed.) *La técnica en Heidegger. Vol. I*. Santiago de Chile: Universidad Diego Portales, pp. 9-37.
- Serres, Michel (1994) *Atlas*. Paris: Julliard.
- Valencia, Guadalupe (2007) *Entre cronos y kairós. Las formas del tiempo sociohistórico*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- Virilio, Paul (1996) *El arte del motor: aceleración y realidad virtual*. Buenos Aires: Manantial.
- Vitale, Ermanno (2006) *Ius migrandi. Figuras de errantes a esta lado de la cosmópolis*. Trans. Piero Dal Bon & Isabel Fernández Giua. Barcelona: Melusina.
- Zizek, Slavoj 2006 *Visión de paralaje*. Trans. Marcos Mayer. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

