

Pioneer designs by nomads. De-territorialization of subjectivity and urbanity

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The action does not take place in the centre of the city but rather in its entries and its outskirts, where nomad tribes of polyglot globe-trotters stop to take a brief break and then continue their journey.

Being a nomad has rhythm: it is festive, risky and carnival like.

I

The design of the cartography of cities has suffered a radical change. Mobility and the *nomadic* characteristic of the current times transform cities into unstable models of impossible totalization. Nonetheless, this situation in itself is not new, but rather a new fissure in a late capitalism. In modern times, the *polis* was designed by the sedentary structure of the State-nation. In this way, sedentariness is not characteristic of the species, but it is born with the invention of the written word, and it consolidates itself with the development of the "imagined communities" (State-Nation apparatus). Thus, the species originally moved between hunters, gatherers and shepherds. Therefore, it is in modern times when the sedentary characteristic gains most importance.

The State-Nation apparatus consolidated sedentary *symbolic emblems* such as flags, hymns, coats of arms, in addition to the disciplinary or intermediate institutions which gave their symbolic and architectural support (schools, prisons, hospitals).

II

Nomad subjectivity implies simultaneity, ambiguity and ambivalence of the identifications, the multiplicity and the schizophrenic way of (un) defining oneself performatively. A nomad is a traveller who moves physically or symbolically and who builds new territories during the de-territorialization process.

Currently, we may observe different nomadic designs: the one relating to *trips (of the migrant, the tourist, the mafias or of the different kinds of traffic)* and the one relating to sedentary-nomads, a paradoxical situation encouraged by long distance communications, another of the main characteristics of a late capitalism.

The trip may take up different modalities: the one relating to the migrant-nomad who travels to liberate himself and to challenge the confinement of the territorial limits of the State-nation. Or we also find the one regarding those migrants who live in solitude and who suffer because they moved away from their territories. Traffic and mafias of different sorts are other types of designs that constitute what has become known as "capital as cocaine". In this way we cannot ignore the massive dislocations, the loss, the poverty and the horrors experimented in our century by mutilated lives and migratory multitudes.

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There are other urban distributions where the migrant and the nomad become confused are linked, basically, when the migrant is trying to escape, to travel in order to transform his life and his situation, in order to challenge the confinement of the theories and techniques derived from the exercising of power. This liberating trip implies the abandonment of established dynamics, those fixed and centred around a certain culture, and it leads onto energies without a home; de-centred and exiled, they are currently incarnated in the immigrant. The contemporary nomad in the shape of the migrant is an *intercessor*, he who always looks for someone, some other being to whom he may speak, so that the minority discourse may be established BETWEEN two or more people.

Another example lies on urban tribes: nomad travellers who challenge sedentary ways and traditions from the State-nation apparatus, as well as its discourse over national identities and patriotism. As a consequence, we see the change of what is urban, that which is designed in the immigrant neighbourhoods, the cultural hodgepodes (religious, educational, culinary, musical, ethnic, the *telephone booths* which are not solely places for long distance communications but also places of intercultural gatherings.

III

India, Japan, China, Hong Kong, they are not just exotic places, but have also become tourist, investment and business trip destinations for millions of Westerners. Thus, the East merges with the West. In Latin America and in the United States, Eastern religious callings have increased exponentially. The other as something distant no longer exists, neither does the primitive Man, but rather a mix and a permanent de-territorialization.

In this way, the current and the past Centuries have seen a radical expansion of mobility among which we may include tourism, migratory jobs, immigration and urban growth. In today's world, the number of people who travel, with the help of massive transit, cars and planes, increases significantly.

Foreign populations find themselves in cities from the six continents, mixing among them almost always in partial and specific ways. That which is exotic is uncomfortably close. We no longer leave our home with the certainty of finding something radically new, another time, another space. Migratory movements are radically changing the cartography in our cities. To this we must add the importance gained by media networks in the symbolic consideration of how citizens imagine and build their own stories about their cities. Television is a virtual city. In this sense, we find ourselves with a *delocalized* virtualization of the Communication space which questions the space-time axis, because the increasing impact of virtuality and simulation displaces us from an unknown process which changes the rhythm and accelerates the space-time experience.

IV

Here's and art related example. The artist Yukinori Yanagi presented in 1994, during the Venice Biennale, a first version of a work that consisted on thirty six flags of different countries made up of little plastic boxes filled with coloured sand which was moved by ants. The following year he reproduced it in San Diego, at the multinational art exhibition inSITE, but this time with the flags of American countries. After a few weeks, the flags became unrecognisable. Yanagi's work may be interpreted in different ways, just as a representation of workers, who, when they immigrate around the world, decompose the different nationalisms. The artist intended to take his experience to the dissolution of identity signs. "The ant species original from Brazil for the San Pablo Biennale in 1996 was too slow for Yanagi, and at the beginning of the exhibition he expressed his fear of them not being able to sufficiently transform the flags", said Garcia Canclini.