

I propose, without emotion to declaim the cold and serious scene, which you are about to encounter.

You, pay attention to its contents and beware of the painful impression, which it will not fail to leave, like a brand, on your perplexed imaginations. Be, if you can, as calm as I in hearing these lines which I already regret offering you, and do

not blush at the thought of what the human heart is.*

* The Songs of Maldoror, Comte de Lautréamont

When human beings engage they affect each other.

In the first moments of an encounter with an unknown entity, everything is ambiguous.

Often, that what affects us and makes us feel uncertain, is rapidly identified and captured with words.

“All around us, language replaces experience. The sign, so soft, substitutes itself for the thing, which is hard. Yet, I cannot think of this substitution as an equivalence. It is more like an abuse—a violence -.” (quote from [1], page 132).

This replacement doesn't necessarily change the new state we are in, but it changes our interpretation of it. We reduce our feelings of uncertainty by identifying that what makes us feel uncertain and that calms us down. But the possibility for a new way reading the experience that affects us is very soon eliminated if we try to reduce the ambiguity that an unknown situation offers us.

BECOMING AFFECTED

I involved myself in relations with outsider practices that, according to social norms, are not able to adapt. I had encounters with people and things that are considered to be strange, disordered, incoherent and disabled. These encounters in the area of the institution were often muted, disorientated and fragile but vibrant, exciting and full of feelings.

I often got lost.

I had lemonade and silent conversations in therapy rooms, most of them muted by drugs, shyness or the incapacity to verbalize a coherent sentence.

A lady told me her illogical soup story. Her diagnosis classifies her story as a confused sequence of seemingly random words. I preferred to listen to the fantastic combination of words she uttered.

A man that was not able to recognize the difference between a toothbrush and a razor blade and composed two word sentences with the words: door and eva (the name of his wife) that he uttered in complex rhythmic variations.

A girl that felt looked at, filled her mouth with fingers. She stuttered spastically, revealing a spectrum of expressions in her eyes.

A code prohibited me to approach her, because i didn't knew the protocol for interaction.

“Here you are, Lemonade”

“Here you are Lemonade”

“Here, you are Lemonade”

My encounters brought me in uncertain and fragile situations where words are of little use since they have no defined function to fulfil. And in this muted moments of uncertainty, I noticed that when words are out of order, other things become more explicit, such as how a rhythm of someone affected my behavior.

Becoming affected by all those strange natures, I walked through the forest where everything is part of a larger whole of temporary connections and I took time for awareness of the cyclic rhythms and transformations of light and colours appearing in the forest. And I wanted to get lost and find new ways to connect to the strange natures amongst us.

MERCILESS LANGUAGE OF NON-MADNESS [2]

Language, as catalyst that suggests or determines behaviour, plays a powerful role in how we engage with others and how we relate to things. The gesture that refers to a history of submission is not innocent, nor is the choice for words that reveals a political point of view. And I wondered, would it be possible to make language less merciless? Could an abnormal understanding of words contribute to a more open attitude towards the other, the outsider, all the strange natures amongst us?

INCOMPREHENSIBLE STRANGENESS

I read a beautiful essay from Hans-Christian Dany [3] who writes about how he feels affected by the inhumane ongoing channeling and emptying of signs through communication, muting his capacity to speak or act. His proposal to totally interrupt communication by skipping over its own communicability struck me. Instead of an attempt to protest against communication by criticizing it for example, he's suggesting a radically incomprehensible strangeness, which does not depict its radicalness. He also proposes non-figurative gestures that remain incalculable for the apparatus or can only be recognized as the liquidation of meaning. Not against control but rather for freedom of autonomy, not against communication and cybernetic capitalism but rather for a humane community. Not against commodities but for things. His thought-provoking essay made me very curious in which forms this radically strangeness and non-figurative gestures could appear.

Can words skip over their own communicability?

I played with words as a material that can be moulded. I concentrated on the material, non-linguistic qualities of words such as the vibrations of a voice, or the rhythm of breathing. I explored how interruptions, manipulations and repetitions in speaking affect and transform language and its meaning. I became interested in the voice and the body and their power to interrupt the meaning of the word, through changes in intonation or body posture. And I started to improvise with words taking on different shapes on the way of becoming, fluid words, blank words, formless words, words full of disconnections, word salads and words that make you lost.

[1] Serres, Michel, Latour, Bruno. Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time, University of Michigan Press, 1995.

[2] Foucault, M. Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the Age of Reason. Routledge 1971.

[3] Dany, Hans-Christian. We'll be Rich Tonight, Marres/Centrum voor Contemporaine Cultuur, 2011.