40 - THE CITIES AS ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE SUBJECTIVITY PROCESSES OF THE BODY: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WALTER BENJAMIN

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INTRODUCTION

In an essay called RestauraçãodaCidadeSubjetiva, Felix Guattari (1992), in the wake of the recognition that the world's population tends to live ever more concentrated in urban areas, stresses that even peopleremainingout of the big metropolis as main habitat will also suffertheir technical and civilizing influences.Really, the formal distinctions between city and nature are eventually becoming more and more fluid, being the remnants "natural" territories subject tothe imputation of complex schedules determining them as spaces for leisure, sport, tourism, ecological reserves, etc.

In accordance with this "globalization" of the cities, Guattari (1992) underlines that them, organized in large archipelagos connected by telematicand communication channels, have become pointsofa large rizomaticnetworkwhose extension holds all over the planet. Metaphorically, they function as mega machines producing individual and collective subjectivities. "O que conta, com as cidades de hoje, é menos os seus aspectos de infraestrutura, de comunicação e de serviço do que o fato de engendrarem, por meio de equipamentos materiais e imateriais, a existência humana sobre todos os aspectos em que se queira considera-las" (Guattari, 1992, p . 172).

But what subjectivity comes to be? At awork entitled Heterogênese, Guattari (1992) defines subjectivity as a set of conditions that make possible fellows and/or collective groupsconceivethemselves in the position of self-referential existential territories. The author warns that we should not consider subjectivity as something built only through the psychogenetic phases of psychoanalysis or driven by the themesof unconscious, asthe traditionof the structuralism points. The large urban machines, followsGuattari (1989), also intervene in the aforesaid process, since they engender streams of economic (monetary instruments, financial, accounting...); legal (titles of properties, laws, regulations...); scientific (plans, diagrams, research, studies...) and spatial (architecture, urbanism,...) signs,which, step by step, go forward on the remaining conventional ethological territories where human corporality have been built (family, clan, village, worship, corporation etc).

Therefore, the contemporary nets of cities correspond to large ecosystems, whose features shape the human condition too. Hence, the wise diagnosis of the thinker:

> Não é mais um problema dentre outros; é o problema número um, o problema-cruzamento das questões econômicas, sociais e culturais. A cidade produz o destino da humanidade: suas promoções, assim como suas segregações, a formação de suas elites, o futuro da inovação social, da criação em todos os domínios. Constata-se muito frequentemente um desconhecimento desse aspecto global das problemáticas urbanas como meio de produção da subjetividade. (Ibid. p. 173).

By the way, if the cities, understood as ecosystems, potentially keep the destiny of humanity, then the type of prefigured relations between their multiple components can provokeserious ecological devastation in mental, physical and social spheres as well as the development of new ethical criteria for social association. Particularly, in the case of the body, despite the confirmation that the conditionsof the urban daily life form him, we must ask ourselves:what forces are taking part in this task? In addition, mapped such content, which scenarios and problemsdo they draw to the pedagogies of human movement? Build a philosophical reflection on this theme is the objective of this paper.

THE BODY, THE MODERN CITY AND THE SUBJECTIVITY: FROM TECHNO-SCIENCE TO WORK; FROM ART TO LEISURE

Some of the more clever analysisabout the impacts of urban life in bodily dimension of persons were presented in the studies of Walter Benjamin concerning the processes of transformation observed in the city of Paris during the transition from the 19th century to the 20th century. Considered the most trusted place where the many defining characteristics of modernity were materialized, Benjamin showed how the macroscopic union of a new style of life opposite to the values of tradition generated effects impactingthe sensorial dynamic of body and, of course, in the development of perception.

Particularly, in the essay Sobrealgunstemasem Baudelaire, Benjamin (1989) reports how the masses of thousands bystanders crossingthe avenues of London and Berlin, each one isolated in their personal needs forwarded by capitalist logic, caused feelings of surprise and disgust in Engels and Hegel. Besides, the writer Edgar Allan Poe stated theamount of workers, bourgeois, liberal professionals, entrepreneurs, etc. crossing the quotidian of the large metropolitan areas were an obvious demonstrationthat barbarism was still alive, but with a new connotation. Such phenomenon hasn't gone unperceived to Charles Baudelaire, because the crowds in movement have become anaesthetic reference through which he imagined the meanders of the city. However, highlights Benjamin (1989), the philosopher Paul Valery is the one who offers, with rare insight, a working hypothesis (even if implicit), about the essence of the events in vogue:

> Valéry, possuindo uma acurada visão da síndrome da 'civilização', assinala um fato pertinente. 'O habitante dos grandes centros urbanos (...) incorre novamente no estado de selvageria, isto é, de isolamento. A sensação de dependência em relação aos outros, outrora permanentemente estimulada pela necessidade, embota-se pouco a pouco no curso sem atritos do mecanismo social. Qualquer aperfeiçoamento desse mecanismo elimina certas formas de comportamento, certas emoções...'. O confortoisola. (Benjamin, 1989, p. 124).

It follows from the foregoing that the more the human groups createsocial relationshipsdepending on the sphere of necessity,higherare the chances of future barbarism, isolation and lack of affection. The gradual technological sophistication of products and processes, based on scientific evolution, since enters the universe of praxis and there set its roots, becamethe touchstone of this new state of things.

Benjamin (1989) cites as an example the innovations forwarded with the invention of matches, which generated a

series of complex processes with few body gestures. "A evolução se produz em muitos setores; fica evidente (...) no telefone, onde o movimento habitual da manivela do antigo aparelho cede lugar à retirada do fone do gancho. Entre os inúmeros gestos de comutar, inserir, acionar, etc. (...) o “click” do fotógrafo trouxe consigo muitas consequências." (ibid. p. 124). The reason is that, in the case of the camera, a simple digital pressure in a button causes the register of events practically forever. Here is the case of an optical experience never seen before in human history.

Near the new sensory mobilizations offered by the emergence of the camera or by the evolution of the format of the phones, the philosopher includes the amazing tactile experiences occasioned by the mere walking in large urban centers. "O mover-se através do tráfego implicava (...) colisões para cada indivíduo. Nos cruzamentos (...), inervações fazem-no estremecer em rápidas sequências, como descargas de uma bateria. Baudelaire fala do homem que mergulha na multidão como em um tanque de energia elétrica" (ibid. p. 125). About the men in the situation of shock experience in the crowds, Baudelaire rate them as real kaleidoscopes endowed with consciousness, because they are obliged to manage flows of sounds, colors, smells and touches coming from all sides in order to transit in the avenues and streets. "A técnica submeteu, assim, o sistema sensorial a um treinamento de natureza complexa." (ibid. p. 125).

The universe of arts suffered too this range of technical changes and their effects on the sensorial sphere of the body. The cinema, says Benjamin (1989), represents the artistic manifestation that best corresponds to the "principle of shock" as referential standard of stimuli and subsequent bodily behaviors of the individuals living in the cities of the modern era. "No filme, a percepção sob a forma de choque se impõe como princípio formal. Aquilo que determina o ritmo da produção na esteira rolante está subjacente ao ritmo da receptividade, no filme." (ibid. p. 125).

Such a relationship of similarity between the pace of production, in the treadmill of the factory, and theaesthetical receptivity of film is anchored in the fact that, in both cases, the presence of science is undeniable. In fact, it is known that the dynamics of modern industrial organization, given the need of frequent elevations in the productivity of labor, reductions of costs and better employment of inputs, found in the principle of rational management of products and processes itsguiding parameter. We can say that the doctrines of Taylorism and Fordism strongly supported this idea, because they esteemed the operating time of productive chains based upon detailed calculations concerning how much time each worker spentat the realization of a given activity until the last unit produced. Based on this information, one determinedhow many times fellows could work without error. The putting into practice of this procedure causedthe automatic conditioning of the bodies during the labor process, because submitted them to the imperative of performing repetitive tasks regardless the subjective wishes or personal temper. After all, it is worth remembering that the amount of wage received by men operating in assembly lines was proportional to the performance objectively efficient over the inputs stored in the respective departmentsthey work (Beaud, 1981). Thus, to ensure the minimum remuneration indispensable to their survival, the workers should intervene on multiple material and immaterial elements that, understood as stimuli, entered the range of their corporeality accordingto the rhythmic cadence of the factory. It follows then that the submission ofworkman to an intense and metrically repeated overload of sense organs, comparable to a dynamo generator of "shocks" coming from all sides, is a seminal characteristic of modern factory.

On the basis of this event is the factory while a gigantic cybernetic body, in which each machine, endowed with particularfeatures, is responsible for a singular part of the whole.The worker must adapt himself to this context. Thus, the interlinked machinesgive to the plant of the factory the connotation of a great organized system, in whose interior the isolated elements occupy adequate places. In such environment, the technological mediation rises as themain factor of orchestration, being the "soul" governing thisimmense body.

To Benjamin (1992), the logic of cinematic production presents traces of industrial organization, because despite the film sets have an organization where each fellow performs established professional roles within a complex mechanism of specialized division of labor, since the actors, directors, script writers, set designers etc. should do only the unique functions that are assigned to them, it is also true that the entire creation of the film, from the writing of the narrativeuntil the final edition, requires intense participation of techno-scientific gadgets.

> O significado principal [do cinema] reside na tendência para promover a penetração mútua entre arte e ciência. De facto, num comportamento cuidadosamente preparado, em determinada situação – como um músculo num corpo – é quase impossível determinar em que reside o seu grande fascínio, se no seu valor artístico, se na possibilidade de um aproveitamento científico. (...) Isso porque o cinema, através de grandes planos, do realce de pormenores escondidos em aspectos que nos são familiares, da exploração de ambientes banais com uma direção genial da objetiva, aumenta a compreensão das imposições que regem a nossa existência e consegue assegurar-nos um campo de ação imenso e insuspeitado (...). Aqui, a câmara intervém com os seus meios auxiliares, os seus “mergulhos” e subidas, as suas interrupções e isolamentos, os seus alongamentos e acelerações, as suas ampliações e reduções. (Benjamin, 1992, p. 103 – 104).

Beyond the cinema, the astute power of observation of Walter Benjamin identified in the incipient reconfiguration ofthe leisure times of modern Paristheaforesaid "principle of shock". In the essay Jogo e Prostituição, Benjamin (2006) seeks to present the casino gambling games as practices where the imminence of chance invoked by the purchase of a letter from the deck or by the launching of a ball betted in a number of roulette, sometimes named lucky or unlucky depending on the results obtained in relation to the expectations of the player, presupposes endless succession of independent events. In many testimonies collected by the philosopher in the literatures of the epoch considering thistopic, there are commentaries and evaluations where the players express the feeling of a true "electrification" of the bodies while they wait the ultimate score of the game and, of course, the name of the winner. Known this fortunate man, another game starts until the repetition of the phenomenon, following hereafter for hours and even days.

Summarizing, the analysis of Benjamin are fruitful becausethey suggest that not only the economic organization of modern industrial production obeys the techno-scientificexhortations. Quite the contrary, the social modern tissue is replaced and ruledby the same vector, including the domain of arts, leisure and the mere urban come and go. As complementation, Benjamin (1972) have already detected the same trend in the didactic proposals proliferating in German education during the second half of the 19th century, excessively based on behavioral psychology. Thus, the ideas of the author are of great value to support investigations on the cities while large ecosystems in whose womb innumerable historical values are put into circulation. In the case of theirassimilations, in so far as this dynamic occurs in the sphere of the body, it contains too the possibilities of a subjective recreation of groups and individuals and, therefore, of their personal and collective identities.

THE CITIES AND THE CONTEMPORARY NON FORMAL PEDAGOGIES OF CORPORALITY

In the wake of the preceding considerations, and remembering that the descriptions of Walter Benjamin focused on

the transition from an aristocratic Paris to its modern version, it is worth asking: what sort of sounds, colors, smells, tactile stimuli, tastes, etc. supersede the post-modern cities and their inhabitants? What kind of bodily subjectivities are being fertilized? How the pedagogies of human movement should behave before such circumstance?

The complexity of the issue prevents the delineation of immediate answers, because they would be superficial and frivolous. Thus, only a brief mapping of what exists and that can come to appear is what we are able todo.

In a first moment, one should make it clear that many of the elements detected by Walter Benjamin in theParisian modern scene of 19th century likewise predominate until nowadays. Probably, not with the same physiognomy and the same intensity; however, any fellow more or less attentive knows that, even today, in the avenues and streets of large and medium sized cities, thousands of people wander bumping anddivertingunder the light of inscriptions; screens showing ads in real time; metallic sounds of cars; odors that vary from food being prepared until the smokes of cigarettes and exhausts of motor vehicles; flavors of sweetmeats made brims as toys; whistles of agents of the state etc.

Taking into account that the frequency of these stimuli are, nowadays, higher than in the times the philosopher wrote his reflections, and not forgettingthey were also added with new ingredients, then we conclude that cities are spaces of an hyperactivity of sensorial organs.

Then, from where would come those new stimulatingfactors of sensory circuits? What is the substance of their constitution? How can we situate them? Dialectically, the very notion of "principle of shock" allows the addressing of some elucidation if read through the contributions of anthropology of technology. When Walter Benjamin has formulated this concept after reading Charles Baudelaire, Engels and Edgar Allan Poe, he was unintentionally speaking about a phase of socio-historical development of humanity once located by Darcy Ribeiro (1975) as between the first and second Industrial Revolutions, in which the technologies memorably portrayed in steam and calorific machines began to be counterbalanced by the ascension of electrical energy. It seems that the idea of shock precisely relies on the densification of the social life at a pace never seen before, whichelects the image of the power of electricity its touch stone.

At the current time, the historical background of the current large and medium cities gathers traces of a third, fourth and fifth Industrial Revolutions, in the meaningsRibeiro (1975) grants the term, all anchored on machines: 1) whose basis are synthetic fuels; 2) telematics; 3) computer oriented. Seeing this context, if Walter Benjamin was still alive, it would not cause surprise thedisuse of the expression"principle of shock" in favor of some other electing the countless quantities of bytes surrounding the human bodies daily through microchips while virtual indexes of contemporary subjectivity, because these little artifacts can be seen as vectors of the constructionprocesses of fellowsembodiment since the end of the 1980s.

How so? Paraphrasing Adam Schaff (1995), in the globalized societies of our time, where the institutional boundaries between public and privatespheres are increasingly disappearing, the generation, conversion and dissemination of information at high speed became the "Ariadne line" joining the private fields of economy, politics, culture, art, education, knowledge etc. This is a proof that information management has become the equipment coordinator of these sectors, responding by the efficiency of their operations. What does that mean? That the parameters of human relations, regardless the degree of abstraction in which they occur, passes to be structured by possibilities of the digital computerized languages. In this amalgam, the formation of bodies should beput.

Curiously, if the accurate aesthetic sense of Charles Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe has picked up, according to Walter Benjamin, the deep aspects of modern life, much before the systematic investigation of the philosophers or sociologists, it follows undeniable that in the "post-modern world" the artistic view of literature is successful in formulatingthe modes that embodiment absorbs the impacts of a reality progressively guided by computerized machines.

The William Gibson novels of cyberpunk science fiction, whose most prominent are Neuromancer (which inspired the movies trilogy Matrix); Count Zero; Mona Lisa Overdrive; Burning Chrome and Virtual Light, plus Santa Clara Poltergeist, of the brazilianwriterFausto Fawcett, report in detail the existence of future worlds where men bodies and technological artifacts overlap each other, featuring a legion of subjects with artificial arms, legs, necks, eyes, etc. and humanized robots in perfect interaction. A huge world market of goods of high technology, dominated by artificial Intelligences, meets the needs of those who want to be stronger, beautiful, powerful or intelligent, and, it is obvious, have economical surplusto pay such acquisitions. Anyone who does not have the necessary resources must go to the hidden worlds of technological traffic to buy them.

To Gama (2007), the books listed above share the idea that ontological polarizations such as natural/artificial, lively/unanimated, organic/inorganic and othersare supposed to disappear from thesocial imaginariesandfrom the course of the material production. Consequently, the fields of politics, culture, arts and education tend to be potential receptacles of this new value. In truth, the high level tecno-science has shown that the development of chips complementing the functions of vision, hearing, brain, taste, etc.is something possible. In addition, cloning experiments have already proven the possibility of invention of hybrid beings in lab, without forgetting the endless discoveries in the field of chemical and engineering of materials responsible for the appearance of new drugs and synthetic products that were previously unimaginable.

Thus, what sort of expressions could be invented to denominate such peculiar transformations, considering the new imaginaries being fertilized inside them? In our understanding, in the same way that the "principle of shock" covered the metamorphosis in progress at the dawn of modernity, we believe that something likethe "principle of cyborg", serve as a metaphor of the contemporaneous processes of the subjectivity.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: AND THE PEDAGOGIES OF HUMAN MOVEMENT?

The great lesson we can draw from the discussion above is the certainty that habits and attitudes anchored in a close relationship betweenhuman body andtechnological artifacts of last generation are emergingon nowadays global scene. One could say that the modern and post-modern societies are based on the introduction of subtle and fruitful pedagogical processes, rooted in electronic communication and computer networks. These processes, in their informal profiles, reach individuals all over the world. The recent literature of cyberpunk science fiction makes this fact explicit.

As regards the contents and skills that these societies spread, it is noticeable that the agents producing them intend to shape fellows, create moral standards and stimulate behaviors. In a certain way, a given vision ofthe world guide their steps, materialized in combinations of languages that wanttokeep collectiveattention in the messages they carry.

In the wake of these placements, it is urgent to ask: what tasks still unresolved are arising in the horizons of the scientific pedagogies of human movement, observedthe virtual transformations suffered by the human body in this context?

From the start, it seems important to discern, in accordance with empirical evidence: 1) what level of perceptions are being constructed concerning human body, while phenomenological substrate of being-in-the-world; 2) what sort of social representations of body proliferate in the deep intimacies of such groups.

The proposing of inquiries related to such issues are welcome when we assume as hypothesis that social identities are beingbuilt due to changes in physical features of the human body asnew social rule. The own transformation of body

capacities by synthetic ways, while social and cultural value, notwithstanding the justifications for this option (mere aesthetic enjoyment; increase of performing powers; fighting the aging processes; physiological correction of organs; strategy of increasing self-esteem etc.), beckons to a new plateau of bioethical problems.In short, the voluntary metamorphosis of body by intentional access to technological resources of last generation became a guiding parameter of subjectivities, since acts of this kind have become an undeniable mean from which thousands of people rethink and recognize themselves.

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THE CITIES AS ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE SUBJECTIVITY PROCESSES OF THE BODY: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WALTER BENJAMIN

ABSTRACT

The present paper aims the proposition of a reflection on the processes of constitution of body subjectivities in the current days. For such, adopts the philosophy of Walter Benjamin as reference for conceptual analysis of modern and contemporary cities. The choice by this author is due to the fact that his thinking enables designing the urban centers on the quality of social complex ecosystems, of which depends on the dismissal of most goods and services are essential to the satisfaction of human needs in the world today. Then, it comes to characterize cities as spaces triggers of subtle educational processes, whose effects on the body opens up a series of questions still thirsting for further investigations of part of pedagogies of human movement.

KEYWORDS: Cities; Ecosystems; Body; Subjectivity; Walter Benjamin.

LES VILLES COMME ÉCOSYSTÈMES ET LEURS IMPACTS SUR LES PROCESSUS DE SUBJECTIVITÉ DU CORPS: LES CONTRIBUTIONS DE WALTER BENJAMIN

RÉSUMÉ

Lebut de cet article consiste à proposer une réflexion sur le processus deconstitutiondes subjectivit és corporal esaujourd'hui.Pour cela,nous adoptonsla philosophie deWalterBenjamincommeun cadre conceptuelpour analyserles villes moderneset contemporains. Le choixpar l'auteurest en raison du faitque leur penséepermet deconcevoir descentres urbainscommedes écosystèmessociaux complexes, qui dépendent de laproductionde la plupart desbiens et services essentielsà lasatisfaction des besoins humainsdansle monde d'aujourd'hui. Ensuite,ce travailestde caractériser lesvillescomme des lieuxqui produisent desprocessus éducatifssubtiles, dont les effets sur le corpsd'ouvrir uncertain nombre de questionsqui nécessitentmaïsprofondesinvestigationsdespédagogiesdu mouvement humain.

MOTS CLÉS: Villes; Écosystèmes; corps; subjectivité; Walter Benjamin.

LAS CIUDADES COMO ECOSISTEMAS Y SUS IMPACTOS EN LOS PROCESOS DE SUBJETIVIDAD DEL CUERPO: LAS CONTRIBUCIONES DE WALTER BENJAMIN

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo consiste en proponeruna reflexión sobre el proceso de constitución de las subjetividades delcuerpo hoy. Con este fin, adoptamos la filosofía deWalterBenjamincomoreferenciadeanálisisconceptualde las ciudades modernasy contemporáneas. La elecciónpor el autorse debea quesu forma de pensar permitepensarlos centros urbanos como complejos ecosistemas sociales, que producenla mayoría debienes yservicios esenciales parasatisfacer las necesidades humanasen el mundo de hoy.Enseguida, este trabajo vieneacaracterizarlas ciudadescomo espacioscreadores deprocesos educativos sutiles, cuyos efectos en el cuerpoabren una serie de preguntas que requieren mayores investigaciones da parte de laspedagogías del movimiento humano.

PALABRAS-CLAVES: Ciudades;Ecosistemas;Cuerpo;Subjetividad;WalterBenjamin.

AS CIDADES ENQUANTO ECOSSISTEMAS E SEUS IMPACTOS NOS PROCESSOS DE SUBJETIVIDADE CORPORAL: AS CONTRIBUIÇÕES DE WALTER BENJAMIN

RESUMO

O objetivo do presente ensaio consiste na proposição de uma reflexão sobre os processos de constituição das subjetividades corporais nos dias atuais. Para tal, adota a filosofia de Walter Benjamin como referência conceitual de análise das cidades modernas e contemporâneas. A escolha por esse autor deve-se ao fato de que seu pensamento possibilita conceber os centros urbanos na qualidade de complexos ecossistemas sociais, dos quais depende o provimento da maior parte dos bens e serviços indispensáveis à satisfação das necessidades humanas no mundo de hoje. Em seguida, trata de caracterizar as cidades como espaços desencadeadores de sutis processos educacionais, cujos efeitos sobre o corpo abrem uma série de questões ainda sequiosas de maiores investigações da parte das pedagogias do movimento humano.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: Cidades; Ecossistemas; Corpo; Subjetividade; Walter Benjamin.