

Microtimes

/Microspaces/Microaffects/Microsexes

Metaformance Technologies:
Undoing control in Capitalism of Affects

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ABSTRACT:

The paper will address onto-epistemological and performatic issues in a transdisciplinary crossroads in order to show how dominant linear time-space conceptions, foundational to contemporary economies of control, relate to specific modes of perception and perceptual alignment, in particular as developed since the Renaissance through perspective. The presentation will also show how through radical transformations of perception, sensation, movement and affection, linear time-space may dissolve into multiple, non-quantifiable microtemporalities and illegible affects. Examples will be shown of metaformance and performance projects by Reverso such as www.microsex.org, where perception is transformed through a subverted use of control technologies, and www.metabody.eu, where the first fully interactive non-linear, emergent architecture will be built.

From Performance to Metaformance

Performing perception, performing the dualism

How is it that the cartesian, humanistic and logocentric subject-object divide has come to be in terms of the articulation of sensory anatomies?

I will focus on some of the technologies that are bound to this genealogy. In particular technologies of vision and the camera-screen-stage paradigm.

Since the XV century, the emergence of perspectival vision and the camera obscura affirmed a dualistic perceptual regime, whose roots we can trace back to geometry and to the architecture of the ancient greek theatre. A paradigm which expanded through the photographic camera, film and with the ubiquitous proliferation of camera-screens-interfaces in information society.

Fixed framing, distance and exteriority to the observed, centralized perspective, clear focus and "correct" exposure time became normative and standardised parameters, indeed conditions of possibility for the very notion of objectivity, specularity and representation.

Fixed framing relates to the faciality of the humanist subject, where the camera acts as an extension of the eyes, or the reverse: the eyes as extension of the camera, that

produces the subject as an abstract, disembodied and rational mind. Distance allows to situate oneself as exterior to the observed thus making the subject-object divide possible. Centralized perspective accounts for humanism's anthropocentrism and universalism and for space as extensive reality. Clear focus allows for the mapping and re-presentation of the object as exterior to the subject, its subjection to control. "Correct" exposure accounts for the fiction of real and linear time, of the present as an instant between past and future. All these perceptual choreographies *transform a movement into an object*, thereby *producing a new kind of reality*.

I will argue that the production of the subject and the object as pervasive political fictions relies upon the sensory standardisation induced by the proliferation of these parameters of the technical image, without which the subject-object divide, and its related dualisms (mind-matter, soul-body, culture-nature, mental-physical, virtual-real, artificial-real, masculine-feminine, heterosexual-homosexual) would not be possible. This perceptual regime lies in the foundations of information, communication and control society at large.

Visualization and control

Visualization is a long-standing control technique that has evolved in the midst of, and foundational to, imperialisms of diverse kinds. The attempt to subject all of reality to control, (which is more present than ever in media and simulation culture), is the teleology which underlies the production of visualization technologies.

In surveillance societies such as ours, cameras need to have a fixed framing, distance, perspective, focus and exposure that allows for an object to be identified as such and be subjected to control. But sensing technologies of other kinds are being assimilated in this regime, where biometric inputs and haptic/kinetic data of all kinds (of the body and of the earth) are visualized and placed on grids of measurement coordinates.

The production of the subject as something distinct from its environment relates directly to this long tradition of control, which is however challenged increasingly from the most diverse perspectives going from aboriginal and non western cultures to quantum mechanics, symbiogenesis, enactive cognition theories and posthumanist critique: all of these question the possibility to place oneself as an exterior observer and stress the way in which we are part of immanent relations which are indeed productive *of* us and the world: from the atomic and molecular through the bacterial and cellular, to the social and planetary, we are effects of relationalities happening at multitude of interrelated levels. Quite contrary to what the humanistic dream attempted to make us believe, with its tales of autonomy, superiority and free will.

What control is it possible to exercise upon something that we are part of and which is constitutive of what we are? Arguably, in order to exercise control it is necessary to place oneself, however fictional and problematic this may be, outside of the controlled. Since this can never be really the case, control is continually failing, and life is exceeding its boundaries in always unexpected movements. There lies our hope. For the control paradigm prevailing at present is so ubiquitous, imperceptible, has become so *desirable* that there was never perhaps such a sophisticated totalitarian system of control as now.

Control happens through coreographing the movements of bodies, its anticipations and trajectories, its relations and inertias, therefore its affects and desires. Control is not merely a gesture of reproducing the given, but of preemting the new, of capturing emergent affects-desires in a modular "fishing network" such as the Web 2.0, capable of registering and adjusting itself to minute global mutations of desire. (Parisi, Deleuze)

Behind the apparent liquidity of media culture and web 2.0, ubiquitous interfaces and camera-screens are reproducing frontiers and barriers, those of the cartesian subject-object divide, where every subject connected to a terminal assumes the tragic (and delusive) erasure of the body's specificity for the sake of reproducing the fiction of the abstract disembodied mind, capable of transmitting universal signifiers and meanings.

The notion of information itself, as Katherine Hayles points out, relates to this pervasive attempt to erase corporeality. Yet, if according to enactive cognition, other cognitive theories and phenomenology, consciousness is the effect of bodies moving in relation to other bodies, i.e. the effect of relational movements, whatever we call the mind cannot be other than bodily. Information produces bodies, modulates bodies and movements in its attempt to capture them.

The architecture of theatres, concert halls, auditoriums and cinemas, with their centralised perspective and their framing of the stage is equivalent to the camera-screen, where the spectator is placed, sitting at a certain distance from a fixed framing, a distance that safely allows to identify, in this case, the limits of the fictional, and to place oneself problematically outside it. Yet ubiquitous interfaces have disseminated in each body the perceptual alignment of the theatre, the ancient Greek Theatre, which 2.500 years ago captured the forces of the nomadic and orgiastic Dionysian choruses, *generating the perceptual dualism*. Now, each body is connected to a mobile terminal, anywhere at any time, where permanent traceability, exposure and subjection to control, has become the utmost collective dream of connection, of belonging, of existing. *To control and be controlled, is now the ontological question*.

Linear space-time as control architecture

The production of linear space-time as perceptual apparatus, is linked to many of the aforementioned technologies, from geometry and architecture, to the perspectival machine. Linear space-time allows the reduction of movements-perceptions to controllable points, lines and planes of capture. Yet linear space-time has no ontological status, other than as technology of perception. Linear space-time choreographs our movements-perceptions according to the points-lines-planes they superimpose on a complex and emergent, multidimensional or metadimensional reality of movement.

Yet movement is always escaping linearity and control. The question is, how to develop new ecologies of perception that don't aim to subdue movement to points, lines and planes of control? And, how do we *disalign* current perceptions from the dominant perceptual regimes?

The circularity of the clock, the linearity of the cartesian space, the dualism of the perspectival machine, generate the perception of space-time as quantifiable objective entity, an immersive machine of control, in so far as we align ourselves with the choreographies of those circular, linear and dualistic frames of capture. Yet outside these, endless microtimes and microspaces are emerging from our non-linear movement relations. And each microtime and microspace constitutes emergente microaffects and microsexes that exceed given formations of desire.

Capitalism of Affects: Interfaces and the Panchoreographic

One of the reasons why movement is crucial in order to understand power in contemporary capitalism is that bodies are increasingly choreographed by interfaces and globalised media that shape our perception and therefore our modes of relationality.

Capitalism of affects is the conglomerate of technologies aiming directly at the production of the desires and affects of consumers-subjects, capitalizing aspects of life that were previously not possible to capture. Now, every flow of desire that was considered useless in the industrial era, can be capitalized.

That affects are not an offspring of the free will isn't something new. Marketing technologies have always been about producing desires and desiring subjects. Capitalism has always been an implicit machine of affective-desire production, yet the emergence of new forms of capitalization have recently placed affects and desires as the explicit target of capitalistic production. A new market bubble is raising: the bubble of the affective market (Porta), that requires affects to be traced, parametrized, kinetically controlled, captured, measured, reproduced when possible, or else anticipated.

By *panchoreographic* I refer to the diffuse set of globalized technologies that distribute discreet choreographies and affects in the bodies. Contagious getures, microgestures, disseminate affects-desires at global scales.

Amongst these, interfaces, moving images and music are some of the most significant nowadays, without disregarding transport technologies, urban planning and many other technologies that choreograph our movements, some of them inherited from industrial society, others emerging in the digital paradigm. Multiple strata of social choreography constitute our metabodies (Bench, Diprose, Hewitt), the bodies of relations in which we emerge as co-constitutive agencies.

Stereo systems centralize our hearing while commercial music disseminates standardised affects through a reduced repertoire of musical styles and forms. An ubiquitous and immersive bodily architecture: the *panacoustic*.

Interfaces, as mediations between the face that represents the abstract subject, and the machine, are reproducing humanism's erasure of corporeality and assuming the universal abstraction and exteriority of the mind.

Interfaces absorb us in their movement coordinates and cause-effect relations, while HCI attempts to visualize non verbal communication "in its entirety" trying to subject once again the whole of reality to control. Biometrics surrounds us in emerging biologizations of our behaviour and movement, in increasingly microscopic scales, while nano-tech is just starting to fathom new dimensions of control. The future of interactive architecture points in this direction, as immersive hybrid space administering all control scales.

Metahuman/Metaformance/Metabodies

Metahumanism¹ proposes an approach to embodied experiences in terms of their relationality, their in-betweenness: to understand reality and ourselves, not as two independent entities, but as mutually constitutive and transformative relational processes, thus emphasising the meaning of in-betweenness, emergence and mutation that the prefix *meta-* also had in ancient Greek. In proposing the *Metahumanist Manifesto*, both Stefan Sorgner and I felt that this prefix was more to the point than the prefix *post-* since our interest lies in the relational, emergent, incipient; that which is excessive of the actual, the intelligible, and the given.

Every technology is a relational technology, is articulating or setting to motion modes of relationality. We have seen what modes of relationality cartesian technologies of information society puts into motion: exteriorities and borders hidden behind façades and rethorics of connectivity.

The process of reworking relationalities at different levels is what I call a *metaformance*, which exceeds the dualisms of spectacular control society, and goes beyond perspectivism to introduce immanentism: we are never exterior to that to which we relate, we are never exterior to the relationality itself.

Arguably some of the artworks that have been called performances could be understood in terms of metaformance, since they were reworking relationalities at different levels (of the body in its capabilities and potentials, of the relation to the audience, etc). Even the most apparently non-procedural works of art can be reviewed under this light. It is tragic in this sense that the notion of artistic object, so suitable to markets, has pervaded discourses of art for so long, while it may well be that many painters, for instance, have experienced their work as a neverending, transformative, emergent relational process.

Metaformance puts emergent relationality in the forefront of investigation. Metaformance is metamedia, since it operates in the conditions of possibility of media themselves not trying to define another fixed sensory anatomy, but in an endless *amorphogenesis*, where new potential perceptions emerge, without ever actualising or fixing into a disciplinary anatomy.

Microtimes/Microspaces/Microaffects/Microsexes is a metaformance, a laboratory of perception that inverts the millenia long tradition of perceptual

¹ see *A Metahumanist Manifesto* by Jaime del Val and Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, www.metahumanism.eu.

alignment (euclidean space, renaissance perspective, ubiquitous cameras) which is foundational to global surveillance culture, control society and capitalism at large.

Through placing surveillance cameras on the skin, looking at the skin, while the voice is electronically processed live, the body moves through a new mode of selfperception induced by the amorphous bodylandscapes "seen" by the cameras and projected on walls, and the amorphous soundscape of the spatialised electronically processed voice. The eyes are no longer in the face, they disseminate on the skin. Vision has no longer a fixed framing, fixity, focus or distance, it has become haptic, tactile, amorphogenetic. The perceptual framework of the dualistic cartesian subject falls apart. Platonic transcendence of form dissolves in permanent amorphogenesis. Surveillance collapses in the realm of the amorphous.

Hovering on the frontier of the intelligible, this metaformance fosters intimate one-to-one encounters where the participant experiences herself this transformation of perception in which morphology, identity, and fixed meaning disseminate in endless incipient potentials, microsexes, opening to the realm of the unspeakable: a thousand postintimate affects and posthuman sexes emerge in a thousand non linear modes of temporality and spatiality, the body becomes an emergent nonhuman species, a body of microperceptions.

It is a spinozian and nietzschean machine of perceptual disalignment from the totalitarian machines of perceptual fascism that constitute the substrate of contemporary information and control society. A new paradigm opens up in which what matters is not repeatability or predictability, but generating creative, unpredictable affections for an emergent world of multiplicity and plurality that defies the onset of permanent preemption and control.

A metaformance is an ongoing transformation of emergent perceptions and proprioceptions, in which there is no external observer, in which the parts entering the relation emerge and transform in a process of *intra-action* (Karen Barad), while the very conditions of the activity emerge in a process of *transduction* (Gilbert Simondon).

The metaformance happens mostly in the form of one-to-one encounters, post-intimate encounters in the frontier of the intelligible where there is no predefined object of perception, but an always emerging perception/proprioception that never fully actualises into a form. It is a disalignment from the perceptual machines of control, a perceptual exorcism from the intoxicating belief in Information.

The project has different formats and versions, tending to a disappearance of the audience in favour of a immanent process of perceptual transformation:

- Microformance - Postintimate one to one encounters <http://www.youtube.com/3g71heHypSk>
- Metaformance at homes/hotelrooms - 45 min. <http://www.jaival.org>
- Telematic Microformance - 20 min online via skype or similar <http://www.youtube.com/gNdCMICXm6k>
- Street interventions - Mobile Unit <http://www.reverso.org/Anticuerpos-DISOLUCION.htm>
- Workshops <http://www.reverso.org/TTC.htm>
- Lectures <http://www.reverso.org/TTC.htm>
- Indoors Performances with audience <http://www.reverso.org/Anticuerpos-microdanzas.htm>
- Durational Metaformances <http://www.jaiser.info/>

- Architecture - Metabody <http://www.metabody.eu/>

Microspace-times

Dominant linear time-space conceptions are foundational to contemporary economies of control, and relate to specific constructions of perception, in particular as developed since the Renaissance through perspective. Yet through radical transformations of perception linear time-space may dissolve into multiple, non-quantifiable microtemporalities.

Perception may be transformed in various ways through a subverted use of control technologies, such as surveillance cameras placed on the skin, which become the eyes of the body, where vision has no longer a fixed framing, distance and exteriority, linear time-space disappears, the transposition and kinetics of perception generates a non-linear and multidimensional or metadimensional time experience.

Metadimensional means that it never actualises into a set of defined dimensionalities, since the notion of dimension is a perceptual construct, part of the longstanding tradition of visual control.

Furthermore the relation of time to movement and affect is explored, where affect is any mode of movement, of affecting and being affected, whereby the queerness of minoritarian affects and expressions emerge as ongoing processes of disalignment from aligned trajectories of movement/desire.

New movement ontologies should allow to understand how time emerges from movement, thus accounting for the materiality of time-space as never fully actualised, always opening up un new potentials, to moves into the unthinkable.

Movement is irreducible to four dimensions. The four dimensions of linear time-space are a reductionism of movement. Planes and lines of geometry, perspective, architecture and design are technologies for capturing movement into controllable and aligned trajectories.

But every movement generates its potential dimensions, it is metadimensional or microdimensional. Every dimension is affective. Every movement is multiple, diffuse, irreducible to a singularity, a trail or density fading into other trails and densities that constitute the memories of bodies.

The prefix *Meta-* points to the amorphogenetic character of movement, whose perpetual becoming exceeds the notion of change, since it is not a about change from a given form to another, but a perpetual becoming that never fully actualises into forms.

Yet we need to disalign perception from the dominant framings, the superalignments. We need to undo perceptual anatomy, to produce a postanatomical body whose ecology is not measured in terms of the rights of an individual or a collective of individuals, but of the tendencies of the movements that inhabit and generate a metabody: how far the movements are superaligned in trajectories of foreclosure, how far they are open to unforeseeable potentials. The first is a nihilistic tendency, dominant

now and in the past millenia. The second points to an ecology to come, of mutliplicity and potential. Whereby it's not about an abstract plane of potential, rather it's in each complex movement that different digrees of alignment or disalignment can be found, reproduced or disaligned.

***Clinamen* - Microdeviations**

In the project **Microsexes** the perspectival machine of vision is disaligned as surveillance cameras placed on the skin become the eyes of the body. The body becomes amorphous, its vision haptic, tactile, blurred, always in motion, immanent to motion.

The body, having lost its form, has no binary anatomy, no sexual morphology, it is amorphogenetic, post-queer and post-intimate. It doesn't operate at the level of performance and performativity (the iteration of more or less intelligible gestures within a given perceptual grid), but at a level of **metaformance and metaformativity** (the ongoing emergence of perception/proprioception).

Affects hover in the frontier of the intelligible, opening up the lines of foreclosure in non oppositional manners, yet operating in the frontiers of the given alignments, the legible, intelligible, speakable.

*Clinamen*²: Infinitesimal disalignments of perceptions and affects. Metahuman affects in permanent amorphogenesis.

The body becomes metadimensional: its affects-perceptions project endless microtimes and microspaces, endless affectives modes and tonalities whithout ever fixing or actualising into a form, a plane, a line or a point of capture.

Devisualized, extruded from the empire of vision, the body is metasensorial, its proprioception an otherception, a becoming-other that doesn't relate to, or go back to a subjective formation. An aperspectival, metadimensional ecology of emergent kinetic relations.

Metabody Project - amorphogenetic architecture

METABODY³ is a 5 years project starting July 2013, with the support of the European Commission and the participation of 28 partners from 14 countries, coordinated by Reverso.

Metabody will elaborate a critical study of cultural homogenisation, social control and global surveillance in Information Society and develop new technocultural paradigms that highlight embodied differentials: the irreducible and changing differences of bodies and contexts, expressions and relations, not for the sake of predicting, but of

² The constant infinitesimal deviations of the atoms from their movement trajectories that accounts for emergence of novelty and change in the world, a concept introduced by Epicurus and expanded by Lucretius.

³ www.metabody.eu

developing a social ecology that foregrounds unpredictability and emergence, exceeding capitalistic appropriation and preemption.

The project will undertake a critical study of contemporary aesthetics of control, in which quantification of all activities via reduction to information patterns permeates all areas of life, subduing it increasingly to an implicitly militaristic regime of control while being presented as a desirable condition where connectivity equates liberation, and control becomes a hidden variable of the fallacious equation.

At the same time Metabody will develop new technological paradigms that take into account the changing differentials of bodies, contexts and movements in their irreducibility, valuing and highlighting the importance of unpredictability for a livable life and generating the conditions for a new social ecology.

In the 4th year the project will develop a mobile experimental architecture containing interactive multisensorial laboratories for performances, installations, workshops, seminars, residencies and continuous research, that will tour throughout 9 European cities in the last year of the project as an observatory of diversity and a laboratory of difference.

Amorphogenic architecture

Metabody will build the first fully intra-active, metaformative, amorphogenic mobile architecture, that will physically transform through body movement in its spatial, sound, light and multisensorial aspects, connecting and affecting bodies and contexts through novel embodied forms of intra-action in which both space and body will have agency and co-constitute one another.

The architecture will also be the first standalone interactive, performative module yet it goes far beyond in the conception. The difference with prior experiments in the field points to the openendedness of the emergent process, which doesn't have a goal in improved performance of space according to given values of functionality, it is rather conceived as an instrument for a new ecology, a kinetic instrument whose primary function will be no other than opening up bodies to unforeseeable potentials, disaligning bodies from "unecological" movement relations.

Unecological movements relations will be those that *impose* either a repetition of given movements-perception, or an anticipatory capture/preemption and capitalization, since both foreclose potentials of becoming while imposing a transcendent ideal tending to homogenisation or smoothing of differentials, and thus negating creative forces, therefore nihilistic.

This architecture will be a machine for social ecology, a spinozian machine, in which to subtly disalign bodies from their given imposed movement-perception alignments (of gender, sex, ability, functionality, race, species, etc.) opening them up to new potentials and becomings.

Most contemporary paradigms of interactive, performative and morphogenic architecture tend to expand the paradigm of control of cybernetics by thinking of reality as computational-informational process. But what an informational system

captures as data is an already reduced and partial perception of a much larger reality. What is perceptible or intelligible to one perceptual modality isn't so for another, and this process of emergent perception is a neverending one. On the other hand the now-imperceptible unintelligible potentiality of reality, is not a negativity, but a creative stratum present in all our movements, it is this openness of potentials that gives creative emergence to our lives, rather than the capture of these potentials into anticipatory systems of prediction or repetition.

This comes to the question of pluralism: rather than having an atomized space of niches for social minorities, this project proposes to develop a differential space of radical heterogeneity, i.e. one that takes into account the non-actualised potentials of our intra-actions in order to open up movements-bodies to infinite potential connections, relations, becomings. This is a specially urgent task considering the probability that interactive architecture develops into future's immersive field of total and ubiquitous control, traversing the micro fields of the nano- bio- neuro- and info- while forming the macro physical reality. The project thus aims at preempting the emergence of immersive control spaces to which interactive architecture points at the moment.

On the contrary Intra-active/transductive architecture foregrounds the idea that bodies and space co-constitute in their relational kinetic process, and generate their own onto-epistemological conditions, which transform all along in the intra-action process. Therefore no given values can be set by which to measure the efficiency of a system nor its limits, what needs to be understood is the ecology, i.e. how far is the process subduing emergence to problematic alignments, captures or capitalizations of different kinds.

Amorphogenetic architecture, rather than pointing -as in morphogenetic models- to simulations of biological representations of form, points to the way in which perception doesn't have to be oriented to a form, or settle into a form: a haptic perception of infinite affections.

Metaformative architecture points to the idea that perception itself emerges, while never settling, in the kinetic relation of bodies that constitutes a space, as an onto-epistemological process of becoming of infinite micro-space times.