

*This text belongs to Colectivo Situaciones and it prologues the book **Hyphoteses 891. Beyond the piquetes**, written by Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) (movement of unemployed workers) of Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, both from Argentine Edited by the independent argentine editorial De mano en mano, November, 2002.*

Prologue

On Method

I

Is a prologue interior or exterior to the text that it precedes? As we know, the prologue precedes from the end: it starts the book, but is the final part that is written. Then it is neither a text interior to the book, nor something completely exterior to it. Better to say it is both at the same time.

It is exterior; yes it is 'post'. It talks from after the closing of the book. It is a second closure that opens. But in this new beginning –starting from the end– it makes the major body of the text exist in another way: prolonging into itself: *projected*.

This prolongation is not a mere extension, it is an operation that reveals a way of working. This book is always a prolongation: prolongation of an encounter into a workshop, of one workshop onto many others, from those to a first publication, from that to the original magazine, from the magazine – now re-edited and revised for exhaustiveness- to this book that will itself be prolonged in it's reading, and is available for lots of other possible prolongations.

The names of it's authors – Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) (movement of unemployed workers) of Solano and Colectivo Situaciones- could be taken as excessive.

This situation became evident for us when we wanted to legally enscribe the publication. For the institutions of the state responsible of to regulate and register all that has the form of a book – being whatever with the capacity to take this form- the author is a piece of information that cannot be missed. If for any reason this name wouldn't be available, well, one would have to resort to a pseudonym (that always refers to the responsible person, being the author or the editor). The author must appear, someone must take on responsibility of what is said.

We do not believe to be amazingly original in reminding that the author – authorship, authority - has died. This book will then be what other forces, other realities, will be capable of doing with it. That the author has died is not only a frase that is fashionable; it has concrete implications; it means that the intention of the 'authors' is not what counts here. That authorship is only a

resource, an element, a means of production of which it is not worth the trouble getting stuck on.

This prologue does not intent to promote a certain ‘correct’ reading of the text –if so, it would suggest perspectives- nor to give ‘adequate’ conclusions of the intentions of those that participated in it’s making. Prolongation here, does not mean restriction to certain ways of reading, but exactly the opposite: a gift (offer), delivering an object –that condenses encounters, thought- to the forces of new encounters and thought.

And although there is no ‘author’, there is a work of pulsations, passions, strengths, inspirations, thoughts and affection. Those are the ones that demand prolonging and epilogues. Those are the ones that could reveal something about themselves below, while at the same time gathering some clues on the figure of the militant researcher –a game of words, to give a name to the precarious existantial equilibrium that operates as the productive force of a new form of commitment-.

II

Militant¹ investigation, as we understand it, lacks an object. We are aware of the paradoxical nature of this announcement – if one investigates, one investigates *something*; if there’s nothing to investigate, how can you talk of investigation?- and at the same time, we are convinced that it is exactly this nature that gives it it’s potency. To investgate without objectifying, means we already abandon the conventional image of the investigator. And that’s what the *militant investigator* aspires to.

In fact, investigation could be a road of objectualisation (again, it is not our originality to confirm this old knowledge. And, still, this effect is one of the most serious limits of the conventional subjectivity of the investigator). Like Nietzsche reminds us, “theoretical man (and woman) – which is something more complex than the man (and woman) that reads- is the one that perceives action from a point of view completely exterior” (meaning: his/her subjectivity is constituted in a completely indepent way in regard to this action).

This way, the theorist works *attributing* an intention to the subject of the action. Let’s be clear: every attribution of this type supposes, in relation to the protagonist of the observed action, an *author* and an *intention*; awarding values and objectives, and producing “knowledge’ *on* the action (and the actor).

Following this road, the critic remains blind at at least two essential moments: on the one hand concerning the *subject* – exterior – that makes the critique. The investigator does not investigate himself. He can construct consistant knowledges *on* the situation in the way of –and precisely thanks to – his being *outside*, the prudential distance that, supposedly, guarantees a certain *objectivity*. And yes, this objectivity is authentic and efficient in the same way that she is nothing else than the other side of the coin of the objectualisation –*violence*– of the situation *on* which she works.

¹Militant has a different meaning in Spanish than in English: in Spanish it refers to someone active in political struggle. It doesn’t have the connotation of violence or armed struggle it has in the English language. I have kept it like this because other terms, like activist, are also insatisfactory.

But there is a second aspect in which the critic remains blind: the investigator –in his act of attribution– uses the available resources of his own situation of investigation, which he applies to the gaps of knowledge on his research object. The investigator, in this way, converts himself into a machine that awards –to his object– feelings, values, interests, affiliation, causes, influences, rationalities, intentions and inconscient motives.

Both cases of blindness, or the same one towards two points (in relation to the *subject that attributes* and in relation to the *resources of attribution*), come together in the configuration of of a *single* operation: a machine to judge the good and the bad in accordance with the set of *available values*.

This production method of knowledge puts us before an evident dilemma. The traditional universitarian investigation –with its object, its method of attribution and its conclusions– obtains knowledge regarding values –most of all descriptive– in regard to the objects it investigates. But this descriptive operation can in no way happen after the shaping of the object, because the shape of the object itself is already the result of the objectualisation. Universitarian research would be so much more effective, when it would employ these objectualising powers better. This way –science, and especially the one we call social– operates more as a separator –and confiscator– of the situations in which it participates then as an internal element in the creation of possible experiences (practical and theoretical).

The researcher offers himself as synthesizing subject of experience. He is the one that explains the rationality of what occurs. And like that it remains preserved: in a situation of blindness towards the synthesis.

He himself, as the subject *giver of meaning* remains exempted from any self examination. He and his resources –his values, notions, his perspective– shape the machine that classifies, gives coherence, enscribes, judges, discards and excommunicates. In the end it is the intellectual that ‘does justice’ regarding matters of truth, in the administration –or accommodation – of what is allowed to exist under the present horizon of rationality.

III

We have mentioned commitment and militancy. Are we perhaps proposing the superiority of the political militant in regard to the university investigator?

We do not think so. The political militancy is also a practice with an object. As such, it has remained tied to a mode of instrumentalism: one that connects itself to other experiences with a subjectivity already formed, with knowledge beforehand –the knowledge of *strategy*–, embodied with announcements of universal validity, purely ideological. Its way of being in relation to the other is *utilitarianism*: there is never *affinity*, always ‘agreement’; never encounter, always ‘tactics’. Political militancy –above all the party variation– can hardly say it is shaped in an experience of *authenticity*. From the very beginning it gets stuck in *transitivity* What it interests in a situation is always another thing than the experience in itself.

From this point of view, political militancy –and we are not excepting the militants of the left– is as exterior, judgemental and objectualising as university investigation.

We add the fact that neither the humanitarian militant -let's say the one of the NGO's- escapes from these manipulative mechanisms. The humanitarian ideology is shaped from an idealised image of a world already made, unchangeable. Faced with this image, they see the need of dedicating efforts only to those places – more or less exceptional – where misery and irrationality still reign.

The separating mechanisms of humanitarian solidarity not only dispel any option of creation, on top of that, they naturalize –with their compassionate resources from beneficency and their language on *exclusion*- the victimizing objectualisation which takes away people's subjective and productive possibilities.

When we refer to the commitment and the militant character of investigation, we will do it in a precise way, connected to four conditions: a- the character of motivation that underlies the investigation; b- the practical character of investigation (elaboration of practically situated hypotheses); c- the value of the investigated: the result of the investigation is only to be compared in its totality in situations that share the problematics investigated as the constellation of conditions and preoccupations; and d- its effective procedure: its development process is already a result in itself, and its results lead to an immediate intensification of the effective procedures.

IV

In fact, every *idealisation* strengthens this mechanism of objectualisation. This is an authentic problem for militant investigation.

Idealisation – even when she falls back on an object not dedicated to these effects – is always the result of a mechanism of attribution (also when it is not under the pretext of scientific or political pretensions). Because idealisation – like any ideologisation- expels from the constructed *image* everything that could break the *ideal* of coherence and completeness.

What follows, is that every ideal –contrary to what the idealist likes to believe- is more on the side of death than on that of life. The ideal amputes reality from live. The concrete – the alive – is partial and irredeemably unknowable, incoherent and contradictory. The *alive* –in the way it persists in its capacities and potentials- does not need to adjust itself to some image to be given meaning or to become justified. It is the other way around, it is in itself a creating fountain – no object or keeper- of values of justice. In fact, the entire idea of a *pure* or *complete* subject is nothing more than the conservation of the *ideal*.

Idealisation obscures an operation that is secretly conservative: behind the pureness and its call for justice that seems to give it origin, hides – once again – the root of dominant values. Therefore the justifying appearance of the idealist: he wants to do justice, in other words, he wants to materialize, to make effective, the values that he holds for good. The idealist does no other than projecting these values on the idealised (at this moment what was multiple and complex turns into *object*, of an ideal) without asking himself about his own values; more importantly, without realising a subjective *experience* that transforms him/her.

This mechanism shows itself as the most serious of obstacles for the militant investigator. Originating in subtle and almost imperceivable ways, idealisation produces an almost *unbridgable chasm* To the point where the militant will not

be able to see, but his own projections on what appears him as complete.

That's why this activity cannot exist without a very serious work *on* the investigation collective itself; in other words; it cannot exist without investigating seriously oneself, without changing one self, without reconfiguring one self through the experiences you have taken part in, without revising the ideals and values that you hold dear, without criticising permanently your ideas and readings, and finally, without realising practices in all directions possible.

This ethical dimension adds to the complexity of the militant investigation: the subjectifying work of deconstructing every inclination towards objectifying. In other words: realising an investigation without object.

Like in *genealogy*, it is about working on the level of the '*critic of values*'. To penetrate and destroy 'your statues', like Nietzsche affirms. But this work that is oriented by –and towards– the creation of values is not done in mere 'contemplation'. It requires a radical critique of the values in use. That's why it implies an effort of *deconstruction* of the dominant forms of perception (*interpretation, valorisation*). Therefore there is no creation of values without production of a subjectivity capable of submitting itself to a radical critique.

V

One question makes itself evident: is such an investigation possible without at the same time awakening a process of falling in love? How will the link between two experiences be possible without a strong feeling of *love* or *friendship*?

In fact, the experience of the militant investigator resembles that of a person in love, on the condition that we understand by love that what a certain large philosophical tradition –the materialist one– understands by it: meaning not something that happens to one in relation to the other, but a process that as such *takes* two or more. That transforms the 'self' in the 'common'. In such a love one *participates*. Such a process is not decided intellectually: it *takes* the existence of two or more. It is no illusion, but an authentic experience of anti-utilitarianism.

In love, in friendship, contrary to the mechanisms we have described until now, there is no objectuality nor instrumentalism. Nobody is spared from what the link can do, or comes out incontaminated. One does not experience love or friendship in an innocent way: we all come out reshaped by it. These potentialities – love and friendship – have the power to shape, qualify, and remake the subjects they catch.

This love -or friendship- is created like a relationship that goes beyond that what until that moment was preserved as individuality, creating an integrated figure composed of more than one individual body. And, at the same time, such a qualification of the individual bodies that participate in this relationship breaks up all the mechanisms of abstraction –dispositives that turn bodies into quantified, interchangeable objects–, so characteristic of the capitalist market as the other mechanisms of numbered objectualisation.

Therefore we consider this *love* as a condition of militant investigation.

In the text of the book we refer various times to these processes of friendship or falling in love, under the –less compromising– name of *composition*. Different from *articulation*, *composition* is not merely intellectual. It is not based in

interests nor in criterias of usefulness (be it political or other order). Different from 'agreements' or 'alliances' (strategical or tactical, partial or total) founded in textual similarities, composition is more or less inexplicable, and goes beyond everything one can say about it.

In fact –at least while it lasts- it is much more intense than every merely political or ideological compromise.

Love and friendship tell us about the value of quality above that of quantity: the collective body composed of other bodies does not raise it's potential according to the mere quantity of it's individual components, but in the relation to the intensity of the tie that unites them.

VI

Love and friendship, then: the work of the militant investigation is not to be identified with the production of a political line. It –necessarily- works on another level.

If we sustain the distinction –like we trie to do all along this book– between politics (understood as the battle for power) and the experiences in which come into play processes of production of sociability or values, we can distinguish then between the political militant (that founds his discourse on a certain set of certainties) and the militant investigator (that organises it's perspective from the basis of critical questions concerning these certainties).

Still, it is this distinction that is often lost from sight, thinking to see in the experience of the MTD of Solano – presented as a false ideal; particularly in the *Situaciones 4* magazine- a *political line*, no more.

In a certain way, people have thought to have seen the birth of a 'situationist' line, like the idealised product of the language -or better, *jargon*- of the publication and the image that –apparently– the magazine transmits –at least in some readings– of the experience.

Dissenters and adherents to this new political line have made it a motive for disputes and conspiracies. Regarding this we can do no more but admit that out of all the possible outcomes of this encounter, these *reactions* are the ones that motivate us least, as well because of the manifested improductivity that result of such repudiations and adhesions, as for the way in which such idealisations (either positive or negative) usually replace a more critical look on those that make them in the first place. Thus, rapidly a too closed position is adopted on what is supposed to be a practice of opening.

Well, we have already admitted that we cannot control *interpretations*. But perhaps we did not think on a certain implication of this point of view. The death of the author converts the *reader* into the subject responsible of creating a meaning on the basis of the text. In this very operacion, the reader-author is *produced* (that didn't preexist and will not endure further than what he can do with the text). Thus the supposed original author has lost his rights to reclaim from the reader what this one does with his reading. What the author can do (like *talking corpse*) is read the texts that have been made of his texts, in other words, intervene as reader. It is only in this character that we pronounce ourselves decidedly in open refusal of the *purely political* interpretation of the present text.

VII

Let's take another step in the construction of the concept of an investigation *without* object. *Interiority* and *immanence* are not necessarily identical processes.

Inside and *outside*, *inclusion* and *exclusion*, are (if we are permitted such an expression) categories of the *dominant ideology*: they usually hide more than they reveal. That's it: the experience of the militant investigation is not that of being *inside*, but that of working in *immanence*.

Let's say the difference can be presented in the following terms: the *inside* (as much as the *outside*) defines an organisational position *on the basis* of a certain *limit* that we consider *relevant*. Inside and outside refer to the location in relation to a body or element regarding a choice or a border. Being inside is as well –in this line– sharing a common characteristic, that makes us belong to a same set.

This system of references interrogates us concerning the place where we are *situated*: nationality, social class, or even on where we choose to be *situated* against... the next elections, the military invasion in Colombia or the programming of the cable canals...

In the extreme, both the 'objective' *belonging* (that derives from the *observation* of a common characteristic) and the 'subjective' one (that derives from *choice* against) unite for the happiness of the social sciences: if we *are* unemployed workers we can *choose* to enter some piquetero movement; if we are of the middle class we can *choose* to be part of some neighbourhood assembly. Trough *determination* –collective belonging to the same group, in this case the social class– the choice (the community group with which we will group) is made possible –and desirable–.

In both cases the *being inside* implies respecting a pre-existing limit that distributes places and belonging in a more or less involuntary way. It is not about denying the possibilities that derive from the moment of election –that can be, as in the case of the proposed example, highly subjectifying–, but to distinguish the mere 'being' and it's 'inside' (or 'outside', the same), from the mechanisms of subjective production that come up disobeying those destinies. On the limit, it is not about reacting against the options that are already codified, it is about creating the term of the situation ourselves.

Thus it is worth the trouble to present the image of *immanence* as another thing than merely being *inside*.

Immanence refers to a mode of *living the situation* and works from the basis of *composition* –love or friendship– in order to give space to new possible materials of this situation. Immanence is, then, a belonging that *constitutes* that traverses transversally or diagonally the representations of 'inside' and 'outside'. As such, it is not derived from being, but requires an operation of living, of composing.

Resuming: *immanence*, *situation*, *composition*, are internal notions to the experience of militant investigation. Useful names for the operations that organise a common being and, above all, *constituting* If in other circumstances they become jargon of a new political line or categories of a philosophy in fashion

–matters that interests us in the most minimal way- they will, for sure, obtain new meanings on the basis of these uses which are not ours.

In other words: the operational difference between the ‘inside’ of representation (basis of *belonging and identity*) and the *connection* of immanence (the *constituant* being) is formed by the greater *availability* that this latter form grants us in participating in new *experiences*.

VIII

It seems like we have arrived at producing a difference between *love-friendship* and the forms of objectualisation against which the –precarious, as we insisted- figure of the militant investigator seeks to rebel.

Still, we have not entered at all in the –fundamental- matter of the ideologisation of confrontation.

The struggle activates capacities, resources, ideals and solidarities. As such we can speak of one vital mechanism, dignity. In it , the danger of death is neither wished nor wanted. Thus the significance of the dead companeros will never be worthy, but always painful. This dramatism of the struggle is, still, banalised when the confrontation is ideologised, until the point of putting it as as only meaning.

When this passes there is no space for investigation. As we know, both –ideology and investigation- have opposed structures: while the first is constructed according to a set of certainties, the second only exists on the basis of a grammar of questions.

Still, the struggle –the necessary, noble struggle- does not in itself lead to the exaltation of confrontation as the dominant meaning of live. Without doubt the border can appear very thin in the case of an organisation in permanent struggle like a piquetero organisation and still, to give up on this point would be prejudice.

Different from the militant subjectivity that is usually sustained through a meaning given by the extreme polarisation of live –the ideologisation of confrontation- , are the experiences that seek to construct another sociability that actively try to not fall into the *logic of confrontation*, that if followed would lead to the reduction of the multiplicity of experiences to this significant and dominant one.

Confrontation, on it’s own, does not *create values*. As such it does not go beyond the dominant values.

The result of a war would show us who would appropriate the existing. Who would have the property rights on the goods and the existing values.

If the struggle does not alter the ‘structure of meanings and values’ it will only assist to a change of roles, which is a guarantee of the survival of the structure itself.

Arrived at this point, two completely different images of justice –because in the end that’s what it’s about- are sketched out before us. At one side, the road of the struggle for the capacity to use the *judging machine* To make justice is to demand for yourself what is considered just. It is only interpreting the distribution of existing values in another way. The other suggests that it’s about becoming *creator* of values, of experiences, of the world.

IX

This prologue affirms that the book that it opens for us does not speak of a *model*-experience. It is more, it maintains –insistently- affirming itself against the existence of such ideals. It is said –and with reason- that one thing is to utter this principle and another very different one is putting it into practice. One can conclude as well- and there start our doubts- that to make this noble aim be reality there would be the need to make ‘our critiques’ explicit (in this case, of the *Colectivo Situaciones* to the *MTD of Solano*). If we observe well this demand, we would have to see as to what point we are asked to *guard* the *model* –now in a negative way- by comparing the *real experience* to the *ideal model*, a mechanism that is used by the social sciences to extract their ‘critical judgements’.

As we can see, all these reflections on critique and the production of knowledge are not smaller matters, and they are not because they concern forms of justice (and the judge is no other than the judicial form of justice).

This book can give nothing like a juridical fact, nor does it provide resources to make judgements on other experiences. It is rather the opposite: if we have looked for something as ‘authors’ –talking corpses that write-

It has been to offer an image completely opposed to juridical justice, meaning, a justice founded in *composition*. *What is that good for?* There are no predetermined answers.

C.S., October 17th 2002