

Criticism and contagion: a-signifying communication in Lazzarato and Preciado¹

Crítica e contágio: comunicação assignificante em Lazzarato e Preciado

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the distinction between signifying and asignifying semiotics, conceived by Félix Guattari and continued by Maurizio Lazzarato in the scope of a critique of contemporary modes of capitalist production. For Lazzarato, investigating the significant level is not only insufficient, but it helps to conceal the machinic effectiveness of the asignifying level. By recognizing this as an epistemological problem, we discuss the significance of considering articulations between these levels so that the asignifying becomes intelligible. Thus, we suggest that the experimental attitude of Paul B. Preciado provides a useful route for the investigation and translation of specific asignifying operations.

Keywords: Asignifying semiotics, Lazzarato, Preciado, communication

RESUMO

Este artigo aborda a distinção entre semiologia significativa e semiótica assignificante, concebida por Félix Guattari e retomada por Maurizio Lazzarato no escopo de uma crítica dos modos contemporâneos de produção capitalista. Para o italiano, investigar o nível significativo não apenas é insuficiente como ajuda a dissimular a eficácia maquínica do nível assignificante. Reconhecendo nisso um problema epistemológico, discutimos a importância de considerar articulações entre esses níveis para que o assignificante devesse ser inteligível. Sugerimos, nesse sentido, que a atitude experimental de Paul B. Preciado fornece rota profícua para a investigação e a tradução de operações assignificantes específicas.

Palavras-chave: Semióticas assignificantes, Lazzarato, Preciado, comunicação

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INTRODUCTION

LINKING TO FÉLIX Guattari's thought, Maurizio Lazzarato (2014) returns to the instigating distinction between signifying semiotics and asignifying semiotics in his book *Signs and Machines*, using a wide conceptual vocabulary to demarcate these two levels of semiotic activity: on the one hand, language, meaning, representation, signs, conscience, and the individual; on the other, the machines, the asignifying, the non-representative, the material flows, the unconscious, and the pre-individual. Lazzarato alerts that we always find *mixed* semiotics, justifying the division between levels: while contemporary societies would regulate bodies mainly with asignifying microphysical operations, most theories critical to capitalism would continue considering only the representative stratifications of the power devices. Thus, constrained by the significant determinations of language on culture and collective habits, anti-capitalist criticism would be alien to the most elementary policing of control societies².

² A defining text on the problem of control societies can be found in Deleuze (1992).

However, how do these two levels communicate? Lazzarato recognizes that it is appropriate to think about how the levels articulate with each other, but in his text an opposing relationship sometimes insinuates itself, in order to sustain, at the limit, an insurmountable hiatus between a so-called discursive plan and a so-called existential plan. Until he recommends Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, Lazzarato's text remains committed to reproach the investigation of the linguistic sign and the perpetuation of structuralist limitations in works such as those of Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, Judith Butler, and Jacques Rancière. This critical disposition is greatly significant when paying attention to the technical framework of microscopic material flows. However, we shall distance ourselves from his stated goal of "leaving language behind." Lazzarato himself expresses the need to enhance the generalist critique of representation so that we can conceive an internally machined, operative language. Then, criticism would need to advance from identifying the different levels to the passages where one level becomes another.

We believe one of Paul B. Preciado's recent works (2018), *Testo Junkie*, moves towards the vicinity of this critical problem faced by Lazzarato. Effecting the subcutaneous absorption of a molecularized political regime, Preciado is not satisfied with warning against the subservience of bodies in the face of capitalism and the discourse in face of physical systems – he announces an auto guinea pig principle that culminates in the production of biopolitical fictions. This approach is based on the affirmation of a creative power of body and language, considering the asignifying communication no longer as an untranslatable black box, but as an open field for experimentation.

We organized this article as follows: at first, we briefly raised the specificity of machinic semiotics and the arguments for their predominance in contemporary devices of power. Then, we reinterpret how Lazzarato's criticism removes *logos* from the center of political problems to place machinic processes in its place. Finally, we follow how Preciado allows the transition from a critical attitude to an experimental approach, paving the way for fabulatory mobilization of the body and writing, in which the experience of contagion reveals unique strategies for research in communication.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE ASIGNIFYING OPERATION

Félix Guattari (2012) explains that the effects of asignifying semiotics are not restricted to human language, since they move "equations or plans which enunciate the machine and make it act diagrammatic capacity on technical and experimental apparatuses" (p. 47). Under the semantic aspects of communications, asignifying semiotics would model the relationships of individuals with the world, even accounting for the production of subjectivity. As a disseminator of Guattari's thought, Lazzarato finds a particularly illustrative example of this asignifying and pre-individual semiotization of bodies:

When we drive, we activate a subjectivity and a multiplicity of partial consciousnesses connected to the car's technological mechanisms. There is no "individuated subject" that says "you must push this button, you must press this pedal." If one knows how to drive, one acts without thinking about it, without engaging reflexive consciousness, without speaking or representing what one does. We are guided by the car's machinic assemblage. Our actions and subjective components (memory, attention, perception, etc.) are "automatized," a part of the machinic, hydraulic, electronic, etc., apparatuses, constituting, like mechanical (non-human) components, parts of the assemblage. Driving mobilizes different processes of conscientization, one succeeding the next, superimposing one onto the other, connecting or disconnecting according to the events. Often as we drive we enter "a state of wakeful dreaming," a "pseudo-sleep". (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 79)

As the domination of bodies in the contemporary world passed through the controlled multiplication of these symbiotic man-machine fittings, Deleuze and Guattari perceive a political order worthy of its own concept and call it "machinic servitude." To a politics of meaning – the institution of the strata of identity that cement social hierarchy – is added a de-subjection jungle in which the body becomes gear between gears. The first regency we already

know as “social subjection,” a policy that works on the molar scale of an individualized self, sustaining dualism such as gender and race. But, the machinic servitude acts on a pre-individual level, by molecular intensities, blurring the frontiers between bodies and notably those between human and non-human: “man *composes part with* machine, or composes part with something else to constitute a machine. The other thing can be a tool, or even an animal, or other men” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p. 508, emphasis in the original). Therefore, machinic servitude would distinguish this capitalism that mobilizes asignifying and non-representative semiotics to manufacture human-machine devices:

We no longer act or *make use* of something, if by act and use we understand functions of the subject. Instead, we constitute mere inputs and outputs, *a point of conjunction or disjunction* in the economic, social, or communicational processes run and governed by enslavement. (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 29, emphasis in the original)

While representative social subjection accommodates us to transcendent models, servitude runs at the molecular, immanent level, rising to signs that act directly on the matter: “asignifying semiotics act on things. They connect an organ, a perception system, an intellectual activity, and so on, directly to the machine, to procedures, to signs, ignoring the representation of a subject (diagrammatic functioning)” (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 39).

The implications for political criticism are evident: while thinking on social subjection, the criticism would not suspect that even child belongs to a generalized regime of full-time work, without even buying their capacity to act. The most everyday asignifying membranes are codified and codifying, and the significant semiologies would come to naturalize the effects of this molecular action: the body is not only docile under force – it will also rationalize, justify, and advocate, meaning in the name of the forces that dominate it. Hence, the subjectivity *effect* of asignifying games: although it is clear that the detainee elicits a large network of meanings, “the Panoptic works in a diagrammatic way, that is, non- representative” (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 31), and the signs of imprisonment are related with an asignifying architecture.

Indeed, Lazzarato seeks in Michel Foucault of *Discipline and Punish* (2001), a rigorous description of the asignifying operation, recovering some verbs used by Foucault to deal with power relations – suggest, empower, request, incite, encourage, and prevent. Power is shown as incident on certain actions and mapped based on them, and Foucault (1995) will define it as action on possible actions. Then, we have *to act (on)*, delineating the concept of power and it emerges as an

asignifying verb par excellence: “asignifying semiotics *act* on things. . . [or, more precisely,] flows of asignifying signs *act* directly on material flows” (Lazzarato, 2014, pp. 39-40, out emphasis). In the microchip, as soon as

the polarities of the iron oxide particles are converted into binary numbers when a magnetic strips is passed through a reader equipped with the appropriate computer program. The signs function as the *input* and *output* of the machine, bypassing denotation, representation, and signification. (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 29, emphasis in the original)

But do we not give a thematic or disciplinary background to this problem when we profile the language in the column of significant subjection, delivering, on the other hand, the stock market indexes, currency, mathematical formulas, engineering and information technology to asignifying servitude? Does not the advertising rhetoric surrounding the automobile maintain some relation to the machine-driver coupling observed by Lazzarato? Can computer language not be questioned both at the asignifying level, in the commands with which it acts on the matter, and by interpretations imbricated in a collective assemblage of enunciation?

Let us consider that, as a symbol of currency, an unconscious machination of language exists. However, how can we account for the tension between these aspects? We would have to reach a diagrammatic level, in which an abstract machine already (or still) does not distinguish the planes of content and expression, the systems of bodies and the systems of enunciations, indicating a plane of consistency in which we find only pre-semiotic functions and matter in pre-physical condition (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995). This level is of great interest for the questions raised by Lazzarato in *Signs and Machines* (2014):

Instead of referring to other signs, a-signifying signs act directly on the real, for example, in the way that the signs of computer language make a technical machine like the computer function, that monetary signs activate the economic machine, that the signs of a mathematical equation enter into the construction of a bridge or an apartment building, and so on. . . Considered in this way, sign machines operate “prior” and “next” to signification, producing a “sense without meaning,” an “operational sense.” Their operations are diagrammatic insofar as the subject, consciousness, and representation remain in the background. (p. 40)

Then the machinic action implies a direct effect on the matter, with which it automates the bodies. The contemporary devices of power are distinguished by



having a technique capable of regulate material flows and microscopically taming body tendencies. How, then, would language articulate with such operations?

LANGUAGE IN THE MARGINS OF MACHINES

Lazzarato (2014) notes that a new logocentrism makes anti-capitalist criticism superimpose the empire of verbal sign on other ways of understanding the formation of subjectivity: “structuralism is dead, but the language that underlies the structuralist paradigm is still alive, especially in these theories” (p. 20), here, the author mentions Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, and Judith Butler. Note that Lazzarato’s reprimand of logocentrism has as its adversary not exactly structuralism, but language itself as the founder of the structuralist misconception. But what is called language here? Lazzarato (2014) says that language is a “semiotic trap. . . from which no one escapes” (p. 27). This criticism attacks the centrality of the verbal sign, or the centrality of language as a system, the assumption of a unified and total structure, making Lazzarato’s call for “leaving language behind” understandable. This project calls not so much for the neglect as for the decentralization of the linguistic sign: “with capitalism, we entered, a long time ago, into a ‘machinocentric’ world that configures the functions of language in a different way” (p. 56). However, in this substitution of one center for another, the risk is to revolve around an unknowable existential reality:

How, then, must we articulate the relationship between the discursive and the machinic existential, the actual and the virtual, the possible and the real? A “scientific,” “cognitive,” or “bi-univocal” relationship cannot be established between these two levels because a radical asymmetry exists between the “discursive” and the “existential.” (p. 180)

Lazzarato (2014) seems to allow two attitudes of the discursive towards the asignifying existential: either the insurmountable distance, the impossibility of translation; or an interpretation that *hides* or *dissimulates* what is happening on a machinic level. Therefore, the discourse can say nothing about the production of the real; now conscious discourse acts as the ideological shield that naturalizes machinic operations:

The State, the media and the *experts* ceaselessly produce narratives, stories, and statements that continually reinfuse with meaning the asignifying operations of credit monetary, which, in its specific function (diagrammatic, asignifying), has no use for subjects or objects, persons or things. (p. 108)

If enunciation can simultaneously ratify and cover machinic servitude, it is that its thresholds are technically produced, and we have the asignifying diagrams dictate the possibilities of the significant spectrum, providing the representative semiologies with compliance to the axiomization of material flows. Lazzarato examines this interweaving in the diagramming of verbal exchange in *call centers*, in which the significant semiologies would be reduced to a prefabricated “signage.” There would be a lack of *dialogism* in the interaction between attendant and customer, restricted to a routine of *inputs* and *outputs*. There Lazzarato studies a localized capture of language by the asignifying operation, even lamenting the stifling of a dialogism that, until then, did not participate in his characterization of discursive event.

Programming routines, flowcharts, do we not face densities of language operations, condensation of translatory processes, schemes of operation? Is the “immediate” material effectiveness of the asignifying semiotics not linked to this operational saturation that, molecularized, eliding its translatory routines? Hence, the notion of asignifying echoes the technical re-enchantment by the growing proliferation of black boxes (Flusser, 2011), which today includes, notably, algorithmic routines, from topological conformation of social networks³ to the automation of decision-making on stock exchanges. But it will be unproductive to treat the black box as a fatally unknowable block. It is also Flusser (2014) who compares the criticism to that of opening an object to apprehend its functioning. It is not a question of diluting the asignifying operation in the signifying logic, elevating the latter to the condition of general semiology, but asking how communication occurs between the levels, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (1995) in their program for pragmatics or schizoanalysis.

³Eli Pariser (2012) shows how “bubble filters” today work invisibly, algorithmically structuring the conditions of visibility for users of social networks such as Facebook.

The passages appear as soon as Lazzarato fails to equate language with the language system. Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogism constitutes one of these breaths, since Lazzarato finds in that theory of enunciation an approach that does not begin from language as a system, that is, an irreducible language to significant semiologies. Although he remains skeptical about the possibility of scientific articulation between the existential and the discursive, Lazzarato (2014) discovers, in his most propositional pages, the possibility of an aesthetic articulation:

The self-relation to the self, self-affectation, and self-positioning draw on the signs, myths, narratives, and conceptualizations that, rather than acting as a translation (which is in any case impossible) of the existential into the discursive, serve as a cartography for localization and access to processes of subjectivation. (p. 181)

It is not clear why this suggested aesthetic paradigm does not translate the existential scope – which certainly involves a particular conception of translation – but it is already a window that opens to an emancipatory power within language, freeing the verbal terrain of the monopoly of social subjection and also allowing a field in dispute and capable of a transformational relation before the asignifying: “it is on the basis of this non-discursive, existential, and affective crystallization that new languages, new discourses, new knowledge, and a new policy can proliferate” (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 20).

It is understandable that Félix Guattari has shown growing interest in the concept of transduction, influenced by Simondon’s philosophy (2020). Transduction affirms the progressive updating of expressive potentials of a material medium, reaching molecular processes of shaping, passing information between neighboring membranes. It is not a verbal order process, although Simondon wants to include transduction in logic, precisely because it reaches an ontogenetic plane of indistinction: transduction is material-logical, a condition for the crystallization of sensitive and intelligible forms. Therefore, a transductive approach would ask to language less for its constituted forms than for the process of updating forms, that is, as an act or event of language.

The theory of speech acts by JL Austin (1962) already showed that, more than designating, language has the effective force of *doing*, indicating that enunciation is not exiled in a detached representation of an immeasurable existential scope. Paolo Virno (2005) has insisted on this performative aspect of language, opposing Gilbert Simondon’s philosophy to a so-called “communicative” use of words. Language emerges in the sacrificial rite, in echolalia, in fabulation: “The opinions expressed sometimes openly flaunt their own volatility and lack of foundation; rather than texts with a specific weight, they are *pretexts* whose sole purpose is to draw attention to the act of uttering”⁴ (p. 65, emphasis in the original). Short of the semantic function, saying says the power of saying. The statement “I speak” would exemplify what Virno calls the *absolute performative*. Virno recognizes that the risk of the absolute performative is redundancy, and we have the impression that we are facing a communicational clinic of the Cartesian cogito (“I think”), this voice in the first person touches the indistinction between subject and object, alternating between one and the other to obtain proof of its own activity. But Virno indicates that, rather than ensuring the speaker’s redundant position, “I speak” stages the generic bodily faculty of emitting articulated sounds, of singling out a cut in the sayable – perhaps then the absolute performative is better clarified by the anonymous “one speaks.”

We remember these perspectives because they reach the emergence of language dissociated with the semantic function and linguistic categories – which

⁴ In the original: “Las opiniones expresadas a veces alardean abiertamente de su propia volatilidad y de su falta de fundamento; antes que textos dotados de peso específico, son pretextos cuyo único fin es llamar la atención sobre el acto de proferir realizado por un determinado hablante.”

seem to be at the heart of Lazzarato's discomfort with significant semiologies. A significant reference for Lazzarato, Gilles Deleuze frequently accompanied literary escapes below the significant grid, showing how writing can operate as a machine whose "diagrammatic functions make inscriptions that are operational before they are representative" (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 77).

It would be beneficial if research in communication could pay attention to the transductive passages between these different regimes. In "On Several Regimes of Signs," Deleuze and Guattari (1995) interpret the identification of regimes as the first of four stages of the so-called pragmatic program (or schizoanalysis), recommending to advance, in a second moment, to the transformations of one level to another. They also raise some translation modalities, including symbolic transformations, which operate by interpretation to establish a significant communication regime. But controversial transformations are also possible, which operate by numbering and produce a so-called "counter-significant" regime; mimetic transformations, which operate by subjectification and lead to a post-significant regime; and analogical transformations that, by segmentation, set us on the path to a pre-significant regime.

As factors of analogical transformation, Deleuze and Guattari allude to African-American song, amorous exaltation, sleep, and drugs, making it clear that the knowledge of these processes occur with experimentation. And these pre-significant intensities are experienced because they come in a consistent composition, mobilizing rhythms, tones, temporalities, tensions, ruptures, and approximations. The verbal sign is composed of these intensities, operates intensively, and there is a plane of indistinction that produces and unfolds the forms of the sensitive and the intelligible.

Deleuze (2013, p. 46) defines the diagram, in effect, as a map capable of expose the "relations of forces that constitute power," such a map indicating to a virtual field, inform, not updated, yet neither sayable nor visible. But, for the philosopher, the diagram also reacts to what escapes him, and the Panoptist discipline only emerges as political technology in social orderings already unbalanced by the most diverse liberation movements. Precisely in this aspect that Deleuze and Guattari (1995) take distance from the Foucauldian perspective: in the abstract machines of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the lines of escape are firstly emerging in each assemblage as peaks of creation/deterritorialization.

Without neglecting the capitalistic capture of this creative power (or *potentia gaudendi*, according to the author's more directly libidinal problematization), Paul B. Preciado (2018) invests in liberation movements from within a pharmacopornographic diagram, as we will see below. Thus, while Lazzarato, in critical work, alerts to the relevance of asignifying semiotics

and enunciates the need to consider an unconscious communicational contagion, Preciado advances in an experimental attitude in the face of neighboring concerns.

FROM CRITICISM TO CONTACIO: THE AUTO-GUINEA PIG PRINCIPLE IN PAUL B. PRECIADO

We discussed – with Lazzarato (2014), at the first level of pragmatics – the level called “generative,” which performs the decal of regime mixtures (Deleuze & Guattari, 2015). A next step would be to reach a transformational level, sketching a map of translations, defined less by thematic parameters than by modes of operation:

For example, it is relatively easy to stop saying ‘I,’ but that does not mean that you have gotten away from the regime of subjectification; conversely, you can keep on saying ‘I,’ just for kicks, and already be in another regime in which personal pronouns function only as fictions. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995, p. 100)

Stopping the investigation at the generative level would have been satisfied with the abstract discrimination of each regime, without ever observing its mobilization in a concrete assemblage. The assemblage has a double face: on the one hand, a collective assemblage of enunciation, composed of semiotic systems that formalize a plan of expression; on the other hand, a machinic assemblage of bodies, composed of physical systems that formalize a plan of content. Lazzarato (2014) strives to denaturalize and present the effectiveness of this second, properly corporal, of capitalist domination. However, without a concrete examination of the axiomatization of material flows we remain on the plane of general criticism.

We prepared the pathway to advance in *Testo Junkie*, by Paul B. Preciado (2018), who, documenting a process of self-transformation based on the ingestion of testosterone in gel, experiences a biopolitical machine in an experiment that is both corporal and discursive. Giving himself a concrete assemblage and verifying his proliferation in writing, Preciado manages to no longer map capitalism in general, but rather a more exact regime, which the Spanish author then names “pharmacopornographic,” a lexical invention that announces the junction of molecular and molar, machinic and significant traits. Preciado maps this recent mutation of capitalism in which pharmacopornography takes *potentia gaudendi* as a workforce or “energetic foundation,” updating the Marxist diagnosis, which in the 20th century denounced the industrial capture of the

workforce. Undetermined orgasmic force: neither male nor female, neither human nor animal, inherent even to each molecule, the *potentia gaudendi* does not privilege any part of the body.

The pharmacopornographic regime has semiotic-technical performance, that is, the *potentia gaudendi* is also triggered and channeled discursively. A reiterated set of representations supports, for example, the pornification of certain bodies (women, children, slaves) in the service of others (usually male, heterosexual, white). At the same time, several techniques of excitement are used, which are also control technologies: Viagra, the Pill, Prozac and, not least, audiovisual production as a global masturbation machine, focusing on the fluids of the bodies and participating proficiently in the pharmacopornographic vampirization of *potentia gaudendi*: “This pharmacopornographic capitalism functions in reality thanks to the biomediatric management of subjectivity, through molecular control and the production of virtual audiovisual connections” (Preciado, 2018, p. 54). Thus, pornography would be inseparable from the control of body fluids and affections: “the characteristic of a body stripped of all legal or political status is to serve as a source of production of *potentia gaudendi*” (Preciado, 2018, p. 52). Thus, instead of abandoning molecular fluids to the asignifying domain, Preciado (2018) perceives a congregation of differences that permeate hormones: “bio-artifacts made of carbon chains, language, images, capital, and collective desires” (p. 180).

This interweaving of heterogeneous levels will be studied from this interweaving condition: significant critical discourses of the 20th century initiate voluntary intoxication as a method, as noted by Preciado (2018), mentioning the translation of the effects of cocaine by Freud and hashish, opium, and mescaline by Walter Benjamin. Based on this, a policy of semiotic-technological experimentation, or a “principle of auto guinea pig” could be built, which, recognizing the molecularization of power, does not disregard discursive production, professing, on the other hand, absolute interest in participating in the construction of biopolitical fictions to “rip the biocodes out of private hands, technocrats, and the pharmacoporn complex” (p. 370). Language does not rest on superficial naturalization of dark machinic processes, becoming part of the critical project and development of body autonomy: “The pharmacopornographic emancipation of subaltern bodies can only be measured according to these essential criteria: involvement and access to production, circulation, and interpretation of somatopolitical biocodes” (p. 139). Notably, this passage affirms the possibility and the need for involvement with aspects that are not only interpretive – in the sense of significant semiologies – of language operations.

In a small section dedicated to “mimetic behavior,” in which Lazzarato (2014) refutes the theories of cognitive capitalism, the author deals with the transitivity of affect in terms of pre-personal contagion: “Mimetic communication occurs through *contagion* and not through *cognition*” (P. 88, emphasis in original). We follow this statement by Lazzarato, supported by the philosophical legacies of Spinoza, Simondon, and Guattari, but we feel that Lazzarato (2014) moves the contagion back to a mysterious field⁵, since affective emulation and dissemination “cannot be explained by communication, language or cognition, because affections undermine precisely the communicational, informational, linguistic and cognitive models” (p. 88). Language would have the role of controlling the deterritorialization and de-subjection brought about by diagrammatic events.

Preciado (2018) is not far from this issue when assuming that “as a body . . . , I am the platform that makes possible the materialization of political imagination”(p. 150). But the engagement of Preciado with both body and language seems especially fertile to us, if the two sides of the assemblage go beyond a passive condition to declare themselves fields of experimentation. Preciado decisively supports that communicational contagion is translatable, without ever assuming that it is delivered transparently to consciousness. Language no longer becomes subdued in a relationship with the immeasurable – which is perhaps a condition for criticism to still rise to the surface of the text.

Therefore, it is not a matter of abbreviating criticism in favor of an easy or inconsistent spontaneity – Preciado’s emancipatory project stems from a deep understanding of the molecular engineering of subjectivity. Faced with the inevitability of assigning contagion, Preciado (2018) realizes the key to a micropolitics of disidentification: “The de-recognition, the de-identification is a condition of emergence of the political as a possibility of transforming reality” (p. 414). And writing, instead of raising the familiar faces of identity, can bear witness to this dilution of self: “I am the residue of a biochemical process. . . . I am T”(p. 151). I am a laboratory, mouse and relate – the hierarchy between contagion and what is said about it is no longer preserved, as contagion is *in* the language. This conception of communication finds ways for the translation of asignifying semiotics, assuming body and language as communicating plans.

Testo Junkie is not exhausted in a collection of particular confessions, the author extends himself in the multiple directions that testosterone in gel provides, from the sensitive to an exhaustive mapping of its historical assumptions and the macropolitical assemblage that governs it. The book is crossed by a firm confidence in the deconstructive force of language, anchored in the allied voices that, gathered in a medium of bodily resonance, leak their individual outlines.

⁵ Simondon’s (1989) critical interest in cybernetics already was justified by the possibility of “treating teleology as a cognizant and not definitely mysterious mechanism” (p. 103, in the original: “*Le seul fait de traiter la téléologie comme un mécanisme connaissable et non définitivement mystérieux montre la tentative pour ne pas accepter une situation simplement subie et vécue.*”

The personal consciousness writes under the rumor of an associative practice with which the identity lairs slide:

If the reader sees this text as an uninterrupted series of philosophical reflections, accounts of hormone administration, and detailed records of sexual practices without the solutions provided by continuity, it is simply because this is the mode on which subjectivity is constructed and deconstructed. (Preciado, 2018, p. 14)

This is a project to be carefully approached, so that the disidentifying creation does not decay in self-destructive attitude. However, since it accuses the assignifying contagion it is relevant that the writing does not stop at the terror of servitude and knows how to follow the assignifying intensity until its acts of creation and discovery. The critique of contagion asks for infected voices, and Preciado defends the principle of auto guinea pig as a voluntary, lucid response to molecular enslavement, affirming that an attentive method can know and make machines. Primarily, this is a consciousness of method, in which the laboratory condition is as invented as it is usurped, because, strictly speaking, it is not decided in the subjectivized subject. Lazzarato and Preciado know subjectivity as a result of an involuntary machinic laboratory. Rather than implying the immeasurability or intraductibility of processes, this discovery presents problems of experimentation. If the contagion occurs in the text, in which it is fixed and proliferates, we will still have to catch the existential in the language: “Morning of sleep after smoking. Yes, said I, as if life had been closed in a jar like a canner. And sleep was the liquid in which she drifted, and which, now, permeated by all the smells of life, someone drains” (Benjamin, 2017, p. 165). ■

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