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STRUCTURES OF ALLUSION

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INTRODUCTION

The work of Guillaume Paris is organized as a set of relations between clearly defined, heterogeneous elements. This set - or ensemble - is probably not representable in its entirety but its *modus operandi*, being made tangible in specific situations, can be subject to analysis.

The work unfolds as a process of differentiation between elements themselves entangled in variable configurations. This process, I suggest, takes place within the encompassing matrix of a coherent *signifying strategy*. The discreet elements, their multiple integrations, and the gaps purposefully left in between all partake in the generation of meaning.

The constituents of this ensemble (sculptures, photographs, videos) are conceived as articulations within the wider context of the work's signifying strategy (its "way of worldmaking"). It is on the level of this strategy that the work's particularity is located and that it may most productively be analyzed. Indeed, beyond the diverse nature of the work, a unifying frame of reference is provided by an examination of the signifying schemes deployed in its making. The signifying schemes are the building blocks (the material) of the resulting strategy.

In this essay, I would like to highlight some dominant features of this strategy, and hint at its possible significance. I shall do so by borrowing freely from concepts developed by the French sinologist François Jullien, in his inspiring study of Chinese poetics and related commentaries¹. As the following consideration of the work's beginnings suggests, the detour is perhaps not as unexpected as would initially seem.

BEGINNINGS

Coming of age as an artist in an era of post-modern rhetoric and political correctness (New York City in the late 80's), Guillaume Paris cites feminism and post-colonial studies as two of the most formative influences on his intellectual development. Issues of identity (cultural, national, sexual) and its coextensive social construction were of concern from the onset and came to play an essential part in the work's elaboration. These interests were being formulated against a background of polarized debates on multiculturalism. Some of the early works (*Peanuts for Ethiopia*, 1988; *Fin d'Histoire*, 1989) overtly reflect these interests, interests which are still being explored ten years later in a project like H.U.M.A.N.W.O.R.L.D.. A suspicious disposition toward all forms of "purity" and accompanying discourses is also present

in the work from the beginning (*Lye*, 1990; *Dreaming Dolls*, 1991; the *White Magic* series, 1992-96; *True Spirit*, 1992). In these works, purity (and abstraction) is seen as danger. The danger is in the guise of a forced encroachment on reality (see the taxidermied pieces from 1989), or in a radical estrangement from it (*Enhanced Being*, 1991). *H.U.M.A.N.W.O.R.L.D.*, a project initiated in 1992 and still in development today provides, by virtue of its explicit formulation, a useful insight into the themes and ideas explored by the artist over the past ten years.

I would like to suggest that the early works were governed by a dialectical approach to meaning, embodied at the level of autonomous pieces. Dialectical positioning is a forerunning sign of the subsequent signifying strategy.

DIALECTIC

Even with such a seemingly straightforward piece as *Peanuts for Ethiopia* (referring to the “Live Aid” fund-raising media event²), a dialectical ambiguity is set up which proves difficult to resolve, resorb or escape. Such a dialectical tension — and ambiguity — within a singular object is a recurring feature of the work from that period. An emblematic example is the sculpture entitled *Fin d’Histoire*, from 1989. Referring to the then topical “End of History” argument³, the piece presents us with an image of division, a North-South conversation piece of sorts. The board game alludes to the imagery of game theory and its association with Cold War representations (remember the “Domino Theory”?). The two recipients become the protagonists of an ongoing game (the varying levels of milk and coffee indicating an ongoing process), the rules of which are unknown but the outcome inevitable. The ideated end-game is a radical form of hybridity. More abstractly, we are presented with an inextricable situation in which a rule (an operating principle) gives rise to a site (a territory), the process *being* the “game”. This collapsing of conceptual layers is visually embodied in a paradoxical image of harmonious tension. The intricacy of the resulting image brings to mind the Taoist symbol for harmony in balance. It is symptomatic that in writings from the period, Guillaume Paris refers to this work as a “visual koan” (interestingly, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Post-Morality*⁴ — which featured *Peanuts for Ethiopia* — the accompanying notice *is* a traditional koan).

An analogous process is at work in an untitled piece from 1989. Here again we are presented with the black and white motif of a checkerboard. This time the protagonists themselves (wedding cake ornaments) *constitute* the site. The 64 identical brides and grooms are positioned directly on the floor to form an 8 x 8 grid. Any “move” would annihilate the grid, and hence the territory and possibility for action. This paradoxical ground zero reduction denotes a further collapsing of conceptual layers.

CHECKMATE

The dialectical nature of the early works discussed here finds its most accomplished expression in an installation entitled *Enhanced Being* (1991). Although a room-size installation, the piece is clearly a continuation of the logic at work in the discreet, self-contained objects produced up to that date. The black and white checkerboard pattern is once more present and acts as a framing device for the entire installation (the game pieces are now “people”). The motif is emblematic precisely because it images a dialectical polarity and tension. It is becoming evident that this structural bias results not in a static, “black-and-white” vision of the world but in a dynamic one

best qualified as “grey”, and complex. The referents are clear: money, art and fashion in the Soho of the early Nineties. Fashion has finally triumphed in the consummated gentrification process (initiated by artists two decades before). The relevance of the subject matter is explicit. What is more interesting is that the installation as a whole does not lend itself to an easy message or commentary (note the complication brought about by the artist’s collaboration with an insider to the world of fashion). The “greyness”, its complexity and contradictions short-circuit the various attempts at simple decoding. The piece resists reductive interpretations. Proceeding from a “narrow”, “local” reference, the installation opens to a wider realm of interpretation: an allegory on time (a *vanitas*), a reflection on sublimity and the sublime (the platonic volumes, the suprematist abstraction on the wall, the naphthalene which is said to sublime), and more diffusely, a musing on purity, abstraction and danger. I would like to suggest that the complexity at hand is the true pertinence of the work: it does not lead to a general formulation nor does it illustrate generalities. It is however an attempt at circumscribing a *totality*, fraught as it is with contradictions.

GO

Such structural tampering with given orders embodied in the imagery of the board game brings to mind Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion opposing the games of Go and Chess in the “Treatise on Nomadology”⁵ In this discussion, an opposition is set up between the two games “from the standpoint of the game pieces, the relations between the pieces and the space involved”, all three perspectives being necessarily interdependent.

“Chess pieces” we are told “are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties, from which their movements, situations and confrontations derive. They have qualities”. In contrast, “Go pieces are elements of a nonsubjectified machine assemblage with no intrinsic properties, but only situational ones”. In terms of space, “The difference is that chess codes and decodes space, while Go proceeds altogether differently territorializing and deterritorializing it”. “The ‘smooth’ space of Go” is opposed to “the ‘striated’ space of chess”. These structural differences naturally reflect on the possibilities for action in each configuration: whereas Go has synchronous efficacy, that of Chess is diachronic. “Another justice, another movement, another time-space”.

From the examples considered so far, we have an intimation of the strategy deployed in this work being a *combinatorial composite* of these two oppositional orders. This opposition of strategies, articulated in the context of the theory of games, is particularly relevant to my argument and will recur in the course of this essay.

TRIGGERS

The brief interpretation proposed thus far exemplifies the work’s functioning. External (*topical*) referents are initially present as contextual information, in relation to which the work positions itself. The “commentary” (or “critique”) is not an end in itself but a starting point. The critical process (the treatment of information) and its physical embodiment in artworks commonly point beyond the original specificity of the referents, be they cultural, social or political. The contextual referents act as initial

triggers which account for the work's primary necessity but do not constitute its subject matter.

It is one of the work's characteristics - a result of its architecture - not to purport to having complete control over its discursive value. It does not attempt to monopolize the claims on its interpretation. By extension, the work does not constitute an attempt at promoting or illustrating a preordained discourse. The layering of information and the resulting polysemy are intended to give rise to a multiplicity of readings.

DISTRIBUTION

In parallel to and at the same time as *Enhanced Being* (in which early experiments with a dialectical approach to meaning are seen to culminate), the most determinant aspect of Guillaume Paris' work is being formulated in another installation. Entitled *Love Meats* (1991), the installation is a collaboration with Canadian photographer Maja Swannie. The collaboration resulted in an ensemble of 18 discreet elements intended to function as a whole. The various propositions were jointly developed around a common theme: the symmetries and asymmetries of gender relations, as perceived through a spectrum of disparate referents (popular culture, mythology, psychoanalysis, advertising, fine art etc). The act of collaborating is a departure from the singular subject of enunciation: it merges the identities of the separate makers into a new persona (in this case a third or objective gender). The resulting distancing and mediating effect gives rise to a new vantage point. The variously deforming prism of heterogeneous referents similarly establishes an objective distance within the very fabric of the representation. Meaning is no longer located in any singular outward sign but is the net result of the interconnectiveness established. It is (unevenly) *distributed*.

This fragmentation of the work and the contingent dispersion of meaning partake of a different logic from the dialectical one previously mentioned. It indicates a paradigmatic shift which finds its developed expression in subsequent works. *Love Meats* has the feel of a collective exhibition, one which is organized around a central theme: the heterogeneous elements function as different points of view. They are complementary and *possibly* contradictory. It is only as such that they form a totality: not a conciliatory whole (made up of generalities) but a *pluralistic* totality, made up of particulars and open to antagonism. Concretely, this translates into a move away from "perfection" — on the level of individual pieces — toward incomplete, fragmentary and partial objects which force upon the viewer an appreciation for the coherence of the whole.

The move away from generality that I have pointed out with respect to both *Enhanced Being* and *Love Meats*, and the attempt at rendering a totality is determinant to the ensuing organization of the work.

DISPOSITIF

When referring to the display of his work, Guillaume Paris prefers to avoid the term "installation" in favour of the french term "dispositif" (which translates as a mix of set-up, plan of action, device, arrangement, mechanism). Installation has become overdetermined and academic as a form; it is generally associated with notions of theatricality and typically implies a continuous, homogenized, representational space. It also suggests an immersion (if not assault) of the senses. Whereas the

term could still be applied to describe *Enhanced Being*, it is no longer satisfactory when dealing with *Love Meats*, or any of the subsequent exhibitions (*White Magic*, 1994; *Angel Inc.*, 1994; *Théophanies*, 1995; *La Nuit, Tous les Poissons Rouges*, 1996; *White Spirit*, 1996; *Land Of Milk And Honey*, 1996; *Withering*, 1998 etc). The term *dispositif* is used here to suggest a composite, synthetically differentiated, representational space. A space which is, as we shall see, syntactically and semantically disjunctive. The term also allows for the greater distancing and mediation being deployed. The distancing concerns both subject matter and viewer. The *dispositif* is close in spirit to the collective, thematic exhibition already mentioned and shares with it an indirect logic.

ENSEMBLE

From 1991, a deliberate effort is made to establish the interconnectiveness of individual works within the context of an encompassing ensemble. Each element is perceived to be connected to every other, in a network of relations binding constituents over space (in a given *dispositif*) and time (in the context of the work's ongoing elaboration). Within this ensemble, each element is assigned a distinct function. As such an element defines and *occupies* a very specific space: it is irreducible and irreplaceable in the overall design. The heterogeneity of the constituents (heterogeneous to each other) establishes that no single element can ever be metonymical for the whole. The heterogeneity however is constitutive of the whole. As we have seen, the strategy results in a de-localization of meaning (through the effects of dispersion).

ADEQUACY

The distribution of meaning is initially perceived as a structural way of securing anti-dogmatism. Indeed, what had become the main issue for the artist was the development of a language — *a signifying strategy* — in keeping with the intent and content of the work. In other words, the issue at stake was not that of making art with a political (or social) content but of making art *politically*, i.e. of rethinking given or available signifying strategies. This shift in focus is well articulated in the following quote by Trinh T. Minh-Ha⁶ :

More and more, there is a need to make films politically (as differentiated from making political films). We are moving here from the making of a genre of film to the making of a wide range of genres of film in which the making itself is political. Since women have for decades worked hard at widening the definition of "political"; since there is no subject that is "apolitical" or too narrow, but only narrow, apolitical representations of subjects, a film does not necessarily need to attack governmental institutions and personalities to be "political". Different realms and levels of institutional values govern our daily lives. In working to shake any system of values, a politically made film must begin by first shaking the system of cinematic values on which its politics is entirely dependent.

Although referring to film-making, the general implications of this quote are clearly applicable to any medium.

As stated in the introduction, my analysis concerns the structuring features which enable the articulation of particulars to take place. I shall not attempt to individually dissect the various *dispositifs* documented here but endeavour to extract

certain principles and invariants. The reader is invited to refer to the plates for illustration.

MONTAGE

A helpful notion in qualifying the strategy concretely operating in any given *dispositif* is another borrowing from the language of film-making: the idea of montage. Indeed, *the dispositif* is a montage wherein disparate elements are put in relations of apposition to each other, in a syntactic complex, to form a composite whole. The elements individually embody distinct modes of signification: they *signify* differently. Their combination in a montage instrumentalizes that specificity and establishes a complex signifying structure. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of elements exemplifying specific conventions of meaning results in an acknowledgement and awareness of their conventional nature. The reflexivity which ensues renders those constitutive elements *transparent* to each other, and to the viewer. Being transparent, they are also refutable. The transparency has particular implications for the viewer.

EQUILIBRIUM & TENSION

The principles regulating this montage are tension and equilibrium. Their operation, being eminently dependent on context, challenges definition. The regulation they provide, however, ensures the appropriateness of the signifying strategy to a given circumstance and secures its efficacy. The very principle of equilibrium, renegotiated with every concrete instance, is subject to variations and transformations. In practice the regulation equates to an exacting choice of specific elements (“pieces”), a meticulous adjustment of their relationships to each other and a fine tuning of the presentation’s overall mode of address. It accounts for the economy of means displayed in the resulting *dispositifs*, in which a balance is struck between elements omitted and elements included.

Referring to a text by Mencius, François Jullien writes:

There is no logical co-ordination (nor syntactic conjunction), it is the appropriateness of the match, the rigor of the fit which functions here as proof. The text demonstrates not by constructing a reasoning *but by constructing an arrangement (agencement* in French). (...) Instead of forming a concept, it codifies a situation, typifying it; instead of stringing together reasons, it places vis-à-vis distinct positions, the correlation of which it undertakes to highlight. In short, instead of making explicit an argumentation, it functions as a *dispositif*.⁷

This, I want to suggest, is precisely what Guillaume Paris’ *dispositifs* do, with that peculiar efficiency.

ALLUSIONS

The individual elements which form a *dispositif* are embedded in a web of tensile forces and made to react to each other. Being semantically disjunctive, their juxtaposition in a signifying structure sets up multiple processes of closure (processes of extrapolation) which actively rely on the viewer’s capacity for filling in the gaps. Collectively, and through the effects of montage, they constitute an orchestrated system of *allusion*. This system of allusion seeks not to confront

(comfort?) the viewer with the object of a representation but rather to open up multiple perspectives on a subject (or “theme”), which it indirectly circumvents. It is important to establish at this point the notion of structure. Indeed, the specificity of the form being discussed here resides in the simultaneous operation of its diverse components: all the elements (phenomena and information confounded) function on the viewer *synchronously*. The synchrony characterizing this strategy of meaning necessitates a structural approach. For this reason, the *dispositifs* are usefully conceptualized as *structures of allusion*.

Instead of being confronted with a representation then, the viewer is *presented* with a structure, perceived as a *sum of discontinuities*. The structure is made up of *particulars* (signifying elements within the structure) which have an indexical value. They indicate — insinuate even — meanings to be considered. The overall mode of signification of the structure is indirect: it proceeds through a series of deflexions. Each detail acts as an indication of the totality, a symptom of it. The simultaneous operation of these juxtaposed indications results in a non-convergence: they do not coalesce into a *representation*.

INCITATION

As we have seen, the structure “speaks” a non-illusionistic language, one which reveals its constituting features. Its primary purpose is not to illustrate but rather to *incite*. The structure of allusion incites the viewer to grasp its global matter (sideways). It does not attempt to demonstrate but to make multiple positions felt. It is not organized according to a privileged vantage point but aspires to acknowledge a plurality of positions: instead of providing a narrative continuity, it sketches orientations. To this extent, it functions like the collective, thematic exhibition referred to previously. It is not surprising that, as an extension of his own artistic practice, Guillaume Paris has curated thematic exhibitions in which the same principles were being deployed (*Fins d’Histoires*, 1996 and *Colo(u)rblind?*, 1997).

DETOUR

(the detour is the access)

In a press release from 1993, the Canadian art critic John Andrews wrote: “the approach of Guillaume Paris, inclined as it is toward euphemistic expression, invites the mind to innumerable detours”. As I have suggested, the invitation is an incitation. The structure of allusion proceeds indirectly and in subtle ways. The density of its expression and its very efficacy are a result of this predilection. Each *detour* potentially reveals what is fundamental. The indirect mode consists in operating in ways and places one does not expect it to. By hinting instead of stating, it destabilizes the receiver. The allusiveness of the structure is not only a product of the (respectful) distance it maintains with the viewer, but foremost of the distance it establishes with respect to its subject matter. This distance, created through discrepancy and tension, confounds one’s expectations: it is itself allusive. The efficacy of the structure of allusion ultimately resides in the possibility it affords, through detours and deflexions, of preventing the immediate injunction of meaning. It maintains open for the viewer a horizon of possible articulations, unfolding as processes of identification.

However, the work of Guillaume Paris is not always indirect. This would equate to a predictable strategy, sentenced to a diminishing efficacy. It is in the logic

of the indirect to know when to be direct (and still confound one's expectations). The work is best qualified then as a combination of direct and indirect tactics, implicit and explicit motifs brought to bear upon each other through the effects of montage.

Chess is indeed a war, but an institutionalized, regulated, coded war, with a front, a rear, battles. But what is proper to Go is war without battle lines, with neither confrontation nor retreat, without battles even: pure strategy, while Chess is a semiology.⁸

Partaking in the creation of the allusive distance is the use of textual information: press releases and accompanying descriptions written by the artist. Instead of being in an explanatory relationship with its referent, the textual information participates actively in the overall construction of meaning; by expanding it, stretching it or otherwise deforming it. Press releases are in the form of press releases and notices appear to be didactic. They are used as yet another material, another system of signs, juxtaposed to the given presentation.

EFFICACY

The indirect mode is seen to have its own efficacy. The obliqueness of the allusive distance is not a compromise. This efficacy is dependent on subtlety. Subtlety is not only a necessary property of the signifying strategy under consideration: it is its privileged mode of address (and hence that of the structure of allusion).

Far from being gratuitous, does not the refinement of the detour exercise a power — as coercive as it is discreet?⁹

Indirect, allusive incitation necessitates an active receiver. The strategy operates by treating the receiver as an active and *reactive* agent. This naturally implies that viewers posited by the structure of allusion are active viewers. As a result of this, structures of allusion are antithetical to the spectacular.

Indeed, the spectacle's *raison d'être* is persuasion; it speaks of "truths" and necessitates passive receivers. Its expediency is programmatic. Whereas the allusive structure expects time, and a process of assimilation to unfold, the spectacle's efficacy is instantaneous, and I would suggest, limited. The intrinsic value of the allusive structure resides in its ability to expand in the mind of the viewer who engages with it, in a self-willed, dialogic relationship. The process necessitates the inclusive indetermination of the structure itself (as space of articulation), a gradual sedimentation and a free evolution.

ASYMBOLY

The model I am characterizing here has — as François Jullien points out — interesting implications. Namely that *incitation*, as a mode of signification, is in radical opposition to the order of the symbolic. Strictly speaking, incitation is neither mimetic nor symbolic: it is not in a rapport of *representativeness* with the world. Indeed, the incitation mode treats reality not as an object (of representation) but as *a process of interaction*. It leads not to semantic analyses but to structural ones. Its inconsistency (the non-convergence of its signs) and fluctuation (the non-fixity of its organizing principles) lead to what Barthes has termed an "asymboly".

IMMANENCE

In a general manner, signifying strategies are indications of the ways in which the mind relates to the world. Allusive incitation as a strategy of meaning denotes a world view which valorizes immanence. Indeed, in the stricter elaboration of the concept (the Chinese context François Jullien refers to), allusive incitation - unlike the symbolic mode - does not depend on a move from concrete to abstract in order to “make sense”. It has no need therefore to evolve a metaphysical *divide* between the world of things and the world of ideas. It is not concerned with *essences*. Since it does not oppose *being* to *appearance*, it has no use for an ontological perspective: its concerns are with *becoming*. The opposition of Spirit to Matter is transposed as an *interaction* between Consciousness (subjectivity) and Reality (the physical world).

In the resulting signifying strategy, the substitution at work in the symbolic order, which implies a form of transcendence (founded on duality), is replaced by a process of juxtaposition, relying strictly on a phenomenology of mind (cast in a concrete, physical immanence). The transcending opposition between material and spiritual planes is displaced by the continuous ebb and flow of consciousness and the outside world. A horizontal flux replaces a vertical edification. The ideated world of autonomous abstractions and generalities is superfluous and resorbed. So are the transcendent planes of spirit and essence. The prospect of a unifying hermeneutics gives way to multiple *expositions*.

INDUCTION

Since this is not China, and since the work being considered here is entangled - and positions itself - within a given symbolic tradition, I would like to submit the following refinement to the analysis. A distinction can be introduced to qualify the functioning of the elements against that of the ensemble. The articulation partakes of a double process: *induction* on the part of individual pieces and *diffusion* on that of the ensemble. Induction in the sense that each irreducible, individual element is a point of anchorage - a catalyst - for a particular set of meanings. Diffusion in that the structure established places the singular elements in a state of flux to each other, and to the viewer. The relative fixity of a plane of “essence” - embodied at the level of particulars - is subsumed to the variable configuration of immanent affinities. In the resulting structure, a diffuse “aura” of meaning replaces an essence and a concrete totality supplants a plane of autonomous generalities. Once again a parallel can be made with the Chess-Go couple:

Within their milieu of interiority, chess pieces entertain biunique relations with one another, and with the adversary’s pieces: their functioning is structural. On the other hand, a Go piece has only a milieu of exteriority, or extrinsic relations with nebulas or constellations, according to which it fulfills functions of insertion or situation.¹⁰

The “pieces” in the work under consideration combine properties from both Chess and Go. As suggested earlier, the two oppositional orders are integrated here in a new hybrid and made operational as a signifying strategy.

CONCLUSION

By emphasizing *becoming*, these structures of allusion indeterminately suspend synthetic closure and defer to the possibility of a pregnant immanence. As I have maintained throughout this essay, the ensuing concrete *totality* is not a conciliatory whole - aiming to negate, eliminate or otherwise level differences - but a complex structure of articulation which tolerates contradiction as one of its necessary features.

EPILOGUE

I would like to bring this discussion back to a contemporary context by drawing a parallel between the model I have been describing and that of the “Radical Democracy” outlined by Chantal Mouffe in her various publications. Indeed, I would like to suggest that the signifying strategy deployed by Guillaume Paris, as I have presented it, might answer Chantal Mouffe’s wish for a cultural practice open to the constitutive role of social division and antagonism. A practice integrating in its very fabric, difference, plurality and conflict.

To the model of kantian inspiration for modern democracy must be opposed (a model) which seeks not harmony and reconciliation but recognizes the constitutive role of division and conflict. It (such a society) does not seek to eliminate the non-decidable since it sees in it the possibility for decision and hence for freedom.¹¹

The anti-essentialist perspective Mouffe is arguing from acknowledges that there are no given *essential* identities but only identities constituted through *processes of identification*: “no identity is ever definitively established, there always being a certain degree of openness and ambiguity in the way the different subject-positions are articulated”. Such a conception (emphasizing *becoming over being*) recognizes the ongoing transformation of subjectivity through multiple *interactions* with the world. A subject is “constructed at the point of intersection of a multiplicity of subject-positions between which there exists no a priori or necessary relation and whose articulation is the result of hegemonic practices”.

I would suggest furthermore that the model developed in this work strangely resembles her own model for an “agonistic pluralism”. The purpose of establishing an agonistic pluralism is to transform *antagonism* into *agonism*. In order to institute the conditions for such a pluralism, the articulation between the particular and the universal (and by extension, the traditional dialectic between these terms) needs to be renegotiated:

The democratic citizen is only thinkable today in the context of a new type of articulation between the universal and the particular, in the manner of a universalism which integrates diversities, what Merleau-Ponty called a lateral universalism — pointing out that it is at the very heart of the particular and through the respect of differences that the universal inscribes itself.

This “new type of articulation” is ruled by the principles of equilibrium and tension:

It is in the tension between consensus — on principles — and dissensus — on their interpretation — that the agonistic dynamic of a pluralist democracy inscribes itself.

Mouffe goes on to argue that “for such a diversity to find the conditions of its expression, the multiplication of democratic subject-positions must be staged through *dispositifs* which allow the different positions to confront each other, within what they consider to be their common political space”. The shaping of such a space is “the expression of power relations, which themselves can give rise to very different configurations”. “The aim of a democratic politics is therefore not to eradicate power but to multiply spaces wherein power relations are open to democratic disputing”: This is not without evoking the transparency and refutability propounded by the *dispositifs* considered here. I would like to end this essay by suggesting that these same *dispositifs* may be answers to Mouffe’s invitation to envision “new *language games* enabling the emergence of practices and institutions within which multiple forms of democracies could find their place”.

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NOTES

1. François Jullien, *Le Détour et l’Accès. Stratégies du sens en Chine, en Grèce* (Paris: Grasset, 1995) forthcoming translation as *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece*.
 2. The reader will recall that most of the “aid” failed to reach the concerned populations.
 3. Francis Fukuyama’s essay, “The End of History?” was originally published in the journal *The National Interest*, in the summer of 1989. The subject was further explored by Guillaume Paris in a group show entitled *Fins D’Histoires* which he curated in Paris in 1996.
 4. *Post-Morality*, Kettle’s Yard (Cambridge, 1990).
 5. The text was originally published in *Mille Plateaux: Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* (Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1980) as *Traité de Nomadologie: la Machine de Guerre*. For this translation, I am referring to its publication as *Nomadology: the War Machine* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1986).
 6. Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
 7. François Jullien, *ibid.*, my translation.
 8. Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.*
 9. François Jullien, *ibid.*, my translation.
 10. Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.*
 11. All quotations taken from Chantal Mouffe, *Le Politique et ses Enjeux. Pour une Démocratie Plurielle* (Paris: La découverte, 1994), my translation.
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