

Pespow

ATTACHMENT

Creative

—

Residency

residency.pespow.com

THE LIMITS OF
YOUR LANGUAGE ARE
THE LIMITS OF
YOUR WORLD ARE
THE LIMITS OF
YOUR LANGUAGE ARE
THE LIMITS OF
YOUR WORLD ARE
THE LIMITS OF
YOUR LANGUAGE ARE
THE LIMITS OF
YOUR WORLD ARE
THE LIMITS OF
YOUR LANGUAGE ARE

The limits of your language are the limits of your world.

The limits of your world are the limits of your language.

INTRODUCTION

The production and the exchange of goods and services are the basis of socio-economic development. In recent years, the widening network and the evolution of the production process helped creating international and inter-continental connections. Their purpose is to link the different production stages with the most responsive and appropriate partners.

While it is now a fact that globalization has led to exceptional results in terms of performance and to a general strengthening of the productive apparatus, what has really changed is the mindset of those participating in this process.

With formidable foresight, in 1968, Roland Barthes announced the death of the author: (referring to the size of the text) “[...] the place where multiplicity is reunited [...] is not the author, as stated so far, but the reader [...] the text unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.”

^[1] As he himself said, it is possible to move this concept outside literature. In the socio-economic field, the consumer is the reader. He ultimately enjoys the product in its entirety. He is the only one who can fully enjoy the product without necessarily having to understand its complexity.

Such an analysis is appropriate —today more than ever— to describe the alienation affecting the people involved in the production process. The effects of these sudden shifts in roles and relationships weigh particularly on them. The evolution of the process, fast and unpredictable, leaves few certainties.

LUXURY AND OTHER FORMS OF RESISTANCE

As a consequence of all this, today we are witnessing forms of “resistance” to the system —among which makers, slow movements and self-production— which often bend towards the so-called “Downshifting” philosophy. Along projects by young designers who rediscover the pleasure of controlling a small production experiment (the so-called “makers” ^[2]), we find the luxury goods market, forerunner of the integrated production and usually immune to the relocation process.

We can rightfully include the luxury market in this “resistance”: in opposition to the makers new democratic way, the luxury market labels as exclusive what is being produced anti-globally, thus identifying a new consumer elite.

In its obsessive conservative nature, the hard core of the luxury market has always refused to meet the needs of mass consumerism: increasing production, lowering price, using flexible workforce and so on. By choosing not to follow the path of globalization it may have become immune to its effects.

MANAGING COMPLEXITY

However, not all reactions to this alienating condition follow the road of resistance. There is in fact a widespread faith in technological progress and in a future in which a virtuous management of the production processes will be possible. The development of tools to manage the complexity of systems and networks has never been so intense and has given rise to innovative projects in the information technology field.

Sourcemap ^[3], for example, allows companies to monitor their entire

production chain, tracing a sort of virtual map of it, as it could be seen in the work of a Mark Lombardi 2.0 ^[4] But, paradoxically, the more detailed the analysis becomes the more it measures the extent of the alienation. Is technology responding adequately to the challenges of complex systems management? How does the fundamental human variable fit in all this?

ANACHRONISMS AND DISORIENTATION

The historical, anthropological and geographical confusion induced by globalization makes concepts like time and zeitgeist increasingly ineffective.

Several inconsistencies and multiple anachronisms go through the present ^[5] constantly challenging its identity. By “anachronism” we do not mean the coexistence of archaic and modern, but rather when the past unexpectedly breaks into the present (and vice versa), raising unanticipated and disconcerting questions.

The factory, a symbolic icon of modern times, cannot escape this process. It is no longer possible to conceive it as a mere backdrop for a futuristic “Metropolis” like utopia (or better dystopia), nor for a reformist and “enlightened” technological progress. It has become an intersection of time and process precariously connected to an unstable network. Similarly, the product —caught in an everchanging vortex of methods and morphologies— crosses and connects spaces, times and anomalous meanings.

DEMATERIALIZATION AND NOMADISM

Changes of role and relationship procedures, likewise, have put professional identities and long-established dynamics in crisis. Quite often craftsmen are not

able to witness the finished product they have worked on, if not in thousand pieces stocks. The designer as well must constantly take the public influence and opinion in consideration, since the market can express its preferences in real time. This can happen even when at the earliest stages of creation, strongly constraining the design process.

Professions involved in this field are experiencing an unprecedented crisis. Their physical presence is no longer necessary, but their skills cannot be made without. The physical object (the result of the manufacturing process) is going through a very similar situation as it is physically disappearing and getting lost in the production chain, while still nominally remaining the center of it.

Our thesis —formulated by observing production and consumption dynamics— is that nomadism is emerging once again as a dominant paradigm: people are constantly travelling to follow the production process, moving towards the pivotal marketplaces; professions too have become nomadic, as they are more and more versatile and undefined; and knowledge itself has become nomadic, because the transmission of know-how along the supply chain generates knowledge, culture contamination and unexpected outcomes.

BEYOND LANGUAGE LIMITS

So far no complex system has been able to recreate the articulated and flawless way the human body works. Its efficiency is due to the harmonic control of all its parts: the impalpable stimulation coming from the brain is essential to all action. Just like the nervous system runs for tens of miles in the human body to coordinate all events, the main issue in the market is finding a way of transmitting

information and making it reach destination unaltered.

It is not hard to realize how important having efficient communication is today. Especially when considering the inevitable complications resulting from the process of globalization, as well as the problems which may arise from translating messages for a different anthropological environment.

It makes us wonder whether the content—quite often a know-how which has never travelled through these complex channels or to such far away places—can actually be transmitted and received without losing some of its essence. If in global networks the transmission of knowledge is as important as knowledge itself, what is actually being transferred in terms of know-how and taste, to foreign production centers? How can we measure this knowledge?

If, on the other hand, the communication between the links of the chain is more important than the product—which often becomes just the trigger for information exchange—what meaning can we give to knowledge and language? Especially when we free them from physical and spatial limits. Are our language limits those of our own world?

GIVING MEANING TO A TERRITORY AND ITS STORIES: A MICROHISTORICAL APPROACH

With this competition announcement we want to spark a debate and provoke artists, thinkers, designers and creative people in general. We are looking for an idea, a project, an experience, an installation, a performance, or any other suitable proposal to consistently address this issues: giving a meaning to the many stories that have animated a territory over time.

We believe the projects should be completed involving a community to better understand its recent production dynamics. Therefore, we suggest that all participants develop a microhistorical approach.

This genre of historiography focuses on the advancement of history experienced by individuals or restricted communities. [6]

Traditional history usually chronicles the twists and turns of the elite or those of very large groups of people by collecting huge amounts of information, and then synthesizing it into impersonal “economic and social structures”. Microhistory, on the other hand, asserts that any “superstructure” is the result of interactions and individual strategies, and it arises from the dynamic which occurs between people and social historical evolution.

Therefore microhistory tries to give value to singularity by meshing the social and cultural paradigms with everyday individual experience, thus changing the very idea of history itself. The underlying thought is that you can record and analyze social and cultural dynamics by focusing on a single place, event, or life.

History is full of different experiences. Culture is a set of non-conventional un-homogeneous interpretations. This richness determines the dynamic of historical, social and cultural development. It can be reconstructed through direct observation, starting from a very small scale.

Footnotes

[1] Barthes, Roland: *La mort de l'Auteur* (published on Image-Music-Text), Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1978.

[2] Anderson, Chris: *Makers, The New Industrial Revolution*, Crown Business, New York, 2012.

[3] www.sourcemap.com

[4] Richards, Judith · Hobbs, Robert · Lombardi, Mark: *Global Networks*, Independent Curators International, New York, 2003.

[5] The idea of anachronism is inspired by the philosophical work of Georges Didi-Huberman.

[6] Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.