Abstract:
The purpose of our article is to set up a unified theory of translation and diaspora which does not subordinate one term to the other or leaves their relation in a state of 'in betweeness'. The cultural economy of this relation can be divided into three dialectical stages or moments. Firstly, 'empirical disorder' characterizes the subordination of both translation and diaspora to the colonial authority of the Original. Aesthetically speaking, such an economy produces totalitarian classifications. Secondly, 'differential continuity' designates the attempt deconstruct the colonial order of the Original in order to create a *regulated* form of chaos. Differential continuity engenders all kinds of montage, collage, and work of embroidery. Finally, 'transcendental multitude' defines the radical identity of translation and diaspora posited as two equally consistent terms. G. Kieffer 'non-Euclidian Illusions' are remarkable illustrations of the aesthetical possibility to replace the (quasi-)homogeneous space-and-time of culture by a chaotic and non-linear one.

Diaspora and Translation

A/ Empirical disorder and mimesis

Colonialism produced a reordering of geographical, political, and textual space-time characterized by a structural discrimination between centre and periphery, metropolis and colonies, signified and signifier. This colonial order relies on the idea that the weakest term of the couple can be ideally subverted by the strongest to reflect its self-proclaimed domination. Setting up a centralized space, a teleological time, and a hierarchical organisation of meaning, colonial absolutism had no other goal than that of ensuring the permanence of its authority. T. Niranjana and S. Bassnett have pointed out how the activity of translation proves to be a privileged location to assess this multileveled domination whose symptomatic expression is the pre-eminence of the Original-Signifier-Colonizer over the copy-signifier-colonized. The concept of translation will be used here as a pragmatic means to describe unequivocally the identity of diaspora. Not that the latter lacks consistence in itself, but these two notions are often conflated (e.g., by Rushdie, Bhabha, Derrida, Hall, Gilroy, Clifford) in a way that needs to be re-examined. Thus, the purpose of a unified theory of translation and diaspora will be neither to establish a hierarchy nor to effect a metaphorical translation of one term into the other. It will consist of inventing a new theoretical space where both terms will be granted an identity stable enough to avoid any (philosophical) case of subordination and/ or convertibility. To put it another way, the concept of translation is not being used here to overcome and/ or supplement the concept of diaspora. Rather, it is being invoked here as a contingent occasion in order to demonstrate how translation and/ or diaspora could be at once equally autonomous and yet irreducible to one another. Translation, diaspora will then be counted as two (not one and a half or two and a half) relatively untranslatable terms within a non-totalitarian multiplicity, which we will characterize as 'radically democratic' and generalize as an unprecedented utopia for cultural and aesthetic invention.

Within the colonial context, the concepts of translation and diaspora have no specific consistency: they just reflect or mediate – consciously or not - colonial universalism without affixing their particular seal to it. Both of them are indeed considered as *degenerated* repetitions or variations of the same Platonist-essentialist-nationalist ideal. More precisely, translation and diaspora received – always imperfectly - their meaning in contrast to the Original's perfection in the light/ desire of which they are immediately consumed. Just as minorities played the historical role of a scapegoat comforting the established transcendent-national-dominant order, so translation was traditionally condemned to be outshined by the perfection of the original and thus become invisible. Caught up in a circular history, minority peoples and translation had no other alternative then than to revert back to the myths of national territory and Platonist originality (Berman 1986). This metaphysical teleology largely conditions the French, English and even Spanish translations of Herzl's *Judenstaat*, which oscillate between a religious-literal ('The Jewish State') and a Zionist-figurative ('The State of the Jews' or 'The Jew's State') interpretation. To say nothing of the post-modern 'differentialist' reading supported by B. and D. Boyarin (Boyarin1993: 721) which universally identifies the Jewish diaspora with its own movement of exile. 19th century Germany is another relevant example of a nation culturally unified on the basis of a process of translation (i.e., Luther's translation of the Bible) yet structurally confronted with the (political, cultural and philosophical) question of otherness-and-unification undermining the *Bildung* ideology (Berman 1984: 56). More fundamentally, philosophical policies of

interpretation-assimilation have their own tricky way of manipulating otherness through strategies of adaptation, aggravation, capitalisation, etc, (Rao 2003).

In its widest philosophical extension, the notion of diaspora designates the texture of an empirical *datum* - be it human (e.g., pre-anthropological being), geographical (e.g., pre-centralized space), or historical (e.g., pre-national Germany) - *supposedly* lacking unity and thus waiting to be ordered, represented or unified within the teleological movement of the colonial synthesis or rationale. Without neglecting the close relationship between these figures, we will focus our attention on the case of the anthropological texture. The anthropological unification-exploitation of the human *datum*, which dialectically reinforced the unitary design of colonialism, occurred in different configurations, all of them equally open to criticism. In the course of the 18th century, it presented itself as a sort of naturalistic and hierarchical classification of a more or less differentiated reality, which was based on an arbitrary standard of perfection with 'Whiteness' (Buffon) or '*homo Europaeus*' (Linnaeus) as its yardstick. Within the particular context of Buffon's anthropology, the texture of human reality was supposed to be made up of a 'degenerative' or 'variable' stuff that was sensible to its physical environment. The perversity of the colonial rationale consisted in acknowledging – albeit to a limited extent – the diversity of human types/ characters while simultaneously trying to capture this diversity through a taxonomy that sought to formalize the teleology of (de)generation in a putatively scientific manner (Pratt 1992: 28).

In contrast to Buffon's 'generative' monogenesis or Herder's hypothesis of *generatio univoca* (i.e., continuous transformation within the multiplicity of species caused by a primitive force), Kant supported the thesis of a 'germinative' epigenesis. Such a conception allowed the German philosopher to construe empirical diversity in an objective manner that freed it from Buffon and Herder's metaphysical teleologies of material degradation and ideal parenthood. Kant's epigenetic position could not be understood without mentioning his dialectical criticism of multiplicity (of genus). In order to overcome both the sterility of empirical chaos and its *deliberate* or 'evil' manifestations (i.e., *propentio*, despotism, egoism, etc), Kant introduced the hypothesis of 'seeds' and 'natural predispositions' (*Anlagen* to be distinguished from *propentio*). These were supposed to be latent in every human being and actualised irreversibly by certain environmental circumstances. But Kant's exacerbated distinction within generative continuity, which was based on the concepts of 'seed', 'race', and 'colour', merely provided a critical reinforcement for the totalising (anthropological, historical, and political) power of colonial synthetic reason. Far from leaving all teleological assumptions aside, Kant invoked an 'internal finality' directed toward a liberating progress (i.e., autonomy, universal community, cosmopolitical laws, etc.,) that the human species was biologically predisposed to perform following a certain rational order. Raised to the rank of *a priori*, the concepts of 'seed', 'race' and 'colour' gained henceforth an almost universal legitimacy.

Contrary to Kant who anticipated the phenomenal finitude of his own enterprise *vis-à-vis* the sublime destiny of Reason and therefore remained – as is (etymologically) implied by the biological notion of 'seed' – aware of his finite dia-sporic condition, Hegel set out to achieve an absolute consummation of the latter. Hegel's analysis of Africa (neglected as such by Kant) provides a paradigmatic illustration of his denial of the very essence of diaspora as a *particular* or finite process, i.e., one that is independent of the self-representation of Spirit. For Hegel, Africa functions as a 'tenebrous' signifier, one incapable of achieving a self-reflexive elucidation of its own identity and therefore materially consumed by its own cannibalistic means. Similarly, translation lost its terrestrial identity to become the universal

(self-)mediation of Hegelian Spirit (Berman 1984: 198-199). Besides, it is important to distinguish the African people, who offer little resistance in the face of their historical (self-)materialisation, from the Jewish people, who are 'murdered' as the ambivalent support (i.e., one that is not completely emancipated from nature though) of a division that is only *half* consummated. Deprived of carnal and/ or biological consistency, the process of 'becoming' (*Werden*) forms the ideal texture of Hegel's concepts of diaspora and translation.

B/ Differential continuity and proliferation

Speaking from a postcolonial perspective, many thinkers such as S. Rushdie, H. Bhabha, A. Khatibi, W. Mignolo, M. Tymoczko, and H. Cixous have discovered in the process of translation a new paradigm from which to re-consider and/ or overcome the semiotics of colonialism. Abandoning the colonial stasis of relative fixity, the postcolonial world has become fluid, mobile, metaphorical, and indeterminate. This acceleration of speed, which is particularly perceptible in the fields of economics (e.g., the global movements of capital flows) and history (e.g., the re-reading of history from the dynamic perspective of migration), has found a powerful theoretical catalyst in poststructuralist philosophy (e.g. Althusser, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze). Like its colonial counterpart, the postcolonial order has implemented its own geopolitical agenda based essentially on the critique of colonial representation, the rehabilitation of the Other's perspective/ location, and the shift from a logic of repetition to a desire for performance. As a result, all that remains of the self-centred and homogeneous topology of colonialism is a fragmented cultural territory full of folds, margins and wrinkles. At the same time, the continuous chronology of colonialism has given place to a distorted temporality scattered with interruptions, 'syncopated times' (Gilroy), and 'time-lags' (Bhabha). In this new world where 'borders gain a paradoxical centrality, margins, edges, and lines of communication emerge as complex maps and histories.'(Clifford 1997: 7), both diaspora and translation have gained a new consistency and aesthetic visibility.

Contrary to the colonial ideology, which gave no consideration to the experience of mediation (be it translation or difference), postcolonialism has laid a strong emphasis on travel stories, cross-cultural/ transnational encounters in the fields of history, literature, and linguistics, and, more generally, on the movement of the signifier. As J. Clifford emblematically reiterates at the beginning of his literary travel: '*Routes* begins with this assumption of movement, arguing that travels and contacts are crucial sites for an unfinished modernity.' (Clifford 1997: 2). Translation supports the differential relationship (e.g., Middle passage, Rhythm, Route, Displacement) between the assumed failure of the signifier and the new vitality of the signified. Whereas translation is the mobile, postmodern horizon of diaspora, the latter is the scattered, postcolonial location of translation. In Bhabha's words,

> 'Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational an translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the "middle passage" of slavery and indenture, the "voyage out" of the civilizing mission, the fraught accomodation of Third World migration to the West after the second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement – now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of "global" media technologies – make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue.' (Bhabha 1994: 172)

Both dimensions have merged into an ambivalent dialectics that drives the postcolonial theory of culture. In fact, ambivalence lies at the heart of diasporic experience, which 'mediates, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/ desiring another place.' (Clifford 1997: 255). One of the tasks of a unified theory of translation and diaspora will be to effect an unequivocal separation of these two terms. Reconsidered in the light of postcolonialism, both terms have gained the supplement

they formerly lacked. More precisely, they have turned their lack or material *finitude* into the supplement of power they require in order to undermine the authority of colonial originality and/ or identity. In so doing, postcolonial translation and diaspora have not only revealed the sterile fixity of the colonial order; they have also 'supplemented', 'diffracted', and 'estranged' (Bhabha) its ideal process of self-representation by stressing the side of difference, otherness, and finitude. Indeed according to S. Hall, 'Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.' (Hall 1990). Thus, instead of being imperfect copies of an original identity, they have contributed to its *fertilisation* from the particular perspective of their difference. Some examples of this extreme fertility are the 'creolisation' of colonial English (Mercer 1988: 57); the 'rewriting' of Sophocles's *Antigone* by Hölderlin. In this connection, one can also think of R. Chow's 'opportunistic' (*weiji*) tactic of enunciation as a Chinese diasporic intellectual from Hong Kong who is faced with the commodification of Chinese literature required for Western translational needs, strong academic Orientalism, and Chinese political nationalism (Chow 1993). Thus, in this renewed trajectory of postcolonial narrative, the naturalist metaphor connecting Benjamin's *Task of the translator*, Derrida's concept of 'dissemination', Bhabha's 'hybridity' and even Deleuze's 'rhizome' finds a fruitful extension in the Greek etymology of the word 'diaspora' (*diaspeirein*).

Derrida and Deleuze have provided many postcolonial thinkers with a powerful theoretical and dynamic framework within which to re-consider translational and diasporic disorder. The former has set difference in motion within the failure of (metaphysical) identity. Derrida, making Hegel's nightmare come true, provides an unprecedented approximation of the totalitarian excess of metaphysics or *logocentrism* and the irreducible defect of Otherness. In fact, deconstruction marks a breach in the continuous system of metaphysical self-representation, which is thus forced to rush into exile and germination:

> 'No thing is complete by itself, it can only become complete through what it lacks. But what every particular thing lacks is infinite; we cannot know in advance what complement it "calls for" […] A difference: such is the radical nature of cause.' (Derrida 1972 : 337)

Eventually, imperfection and growth become seminally and metaphorically continuous. Within this context, diaspora and translation become *generalized* as the quasi-immediate and deficient signifier, as the 'trace', 'reflect' or 'germ' of their own absolute and terminal closure. They designate, always imperfectly (i.e., without the self-sufficiency of an ideal referent or signifier), the proliferating and equivocal performance of differe(a)nce at the limits of their metaphysical definition; the very 'undecidable' *possibility* of their self-representation as well as the spontaneous or transcendental activity of their difference. Spinning out Derrida's 'ammetaphorical' translation of Benjamin, we could say that the process of deconstruction engenders a travesty of the signifier by weaving together its 'floating' or 'supplementary' defect and the living material of the text in an infinite work of montage, embroidery, collage, incision, metaphorical chain or germination, and displacements.

Deleuze's rhizomatic philosophy shares with Derrida's dissemination a Nietzschean emphasis on affirmative vitality. What distinguishes them is Derrida's quasi-Heideggerian emphasis on finitude. Both philosophers do in fact favour a genealogical and dynamic comprehension of 'g/terms' and 'concepts' as an infinite continuum of ruptures or intensities rather than as an immobile and transcendent reality. However, whereas Derrida connects these cuttings (*coupes*) through the germinal unity, which is to say the floating or better shimmering (*miroitement*) of the signified; Deleuze joins in a creative way the irregular pieces of concepts within the reversible flux of the concept. In other words, while the Derridian cutting inseminates or fertilizes the sterile metaphysical representation, the Deleuzian fold is

fluidified within its moving middle[1]. In this context, movement and multiplicity grant consistency to everything (Deleuze 1991: 40) including the concepts of diaspora and translation. The former finds a non institutional or topological location within the 'plane of immanence' as the moving and non binary multiplicity of 'tribes' or 'nomads' traversing it; nomadic multiplicities that are absolutely exterior or 'minor' rather than marginal. The latter conveys not only the immanent and infinite movement of becoming (*devenir*) but also its infinite reversibility with diaspora.

It is precisely insofar as it has become conflated with Derrida's *différance* or Deleuze's nomadism that translation has become one of the most significant instruments not only for fluidifying colonial antagonisms but also for opening up an 'authentic' access to Otherness, whether transcendent (i.e., Derrida's Jewish Otherness) or immanent (i.e., Deleuze's immanent Subconscious). At the same time, the previously abandoned notion of diaspora has re-emerged as a fashionable pattern – far more dynamic than the concept of minority – through which to (re)collect the pieces of the national framework. From a singular name traditionally not to say exclusively associated with Jewish exile or *Galut* (Kitaj 1999: 35; Clifford 1997: 247-8), diaspora has evolved into a 'plural' and 'uncountable' noun describing the equivocal and deterritorialized representation of postcolonialism/ postnationalism. In this connection, Safran's classification of 'expatriate minority communities' based on the ideal standard of the Jewish diasporia provides evidence that even discourses on diasporas can also rely on a certain colonial rationale (Safran 1991). Traversed by the metaphorical movement of translation, the various diasporic tragedies (e.g., African, Greek, Armenian, Indian, etc.,) have come to be more or less comparable, politically associated, and even convertible one into the other: 'The Hebrews could not see or serve God in the land of the Egyptians; no more can the Negro under the Anglosaxon' wrote Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic*. In essence, diaspora is the indeterminate ontological unity (e.g., fold, cutting, in-between, middle-passage, etc.,) of the postcolonial decentred multiplicity.

Even though the postcolonial concept of 'diaspora' is no longer conditioned by an authoritative conception of centrality, it still remains partially within the latter's scope or proximity. Significantly, many postcolonial thinkers seem to be aware of the ambiguity of their own position: assuming something of the colonial past and performing more *arbitrarily* than ever before the *neo-logos* of difference. Such is the 'postmodern diasporic dilemma': 'how can something be visualized that is adequate to guide us round what is so widely felt to be new, when all that is available is the discredited apparatus of the modern?' (Mirzoeff 1999: 7). There is also the disturbing complicity between global capitalism and trans(l/n)ational displacements, which leads W. Göbel to express a Deleuzian suspicion concerning Bhabha's postcolonial enterprise: 'Is fluidity not first and foremost a product of imperialism and global capitalism?' (Flüdernik 1998: 75-76). This question finds a concrete answer in Clifford's critical account of the North American low-wage sector requiring 'massive transnational flows of capital and labor – depending on, and producing, diasporic populations.' (Clifford 1997: 256; Ong 1993); an account which echoes L. Venuti's penetrating denunciation of the connivance between globalisation and a certain practice of translation:

> '(…) the recent neo-colonial projects of transnational corporations, their exploitation of overseas workforces and markets, can't advance without a vast array of translations, ranging from commercial contracts, instruction manuals, and advertising copy to popular novels, children's books, and film's soundtracks.' (Venuti 1998: 158)

Paving the way for its own subtle and almost tolerable order, postcolonialism is nevertheless deficient insofar as:

1) it is either tinged with a nostalgia that refers back to the myth of a lost Origin(ality)/ Nation(ality) (e.g. the romanticism of Langston Hughes's *Poems from Black Africa*, or

W.E.B. Dubois concept of 'double-consciousness'), or merely 'interrupting', 'postponing' and 'pluralizing' colonial temporality instead of severing all ties with it;

2) it remains ultimately homogeneous with (or translatable into) colonialism's ontological plane as its 'limit', 'periphery', '*re*location', 'margin', 'folding', 'horizon', 'exteriority', 'fragmentation', etc.;

3) it considers the concept of Diaspora as a mixture that is relatively homogeneous and 'negotiable' within colonial space and time. No wonder then that most recent debates about Black or Jewish diasporic identity (e.g. the Gilroy/ Mercer, Safran/ Boyarin antagonisms) invariably oscillate *between* the romantic appeal of a lost Africa or Promise land and a frustrated desire to invent Africa or Israel by pluralizing, fragmenting or fluidifying it.

In light of these critical remarks, an efficient theory of translation and diaspora will have to invent:

1) a conception of Identity immanent enough to avoid imposing its self-sufficiency in either an authoritarian manner (from the colonial perspective of universality, absolutism, transcendence), or in an arbitrary one (from the postcolonial perspective of particular locations, finitude, absolute-relative immanence);

2) a type of activity transcendental enough to avoid being caught up within and/ or in between the vicious dialectic of memory and oblivion, past and present, centre and periphery, original and copy, and more generally within the philosophical pattern of Difference;

3) concepts of diaspora and translation differentiated enough to be neither the inconsistent media consumed/ ordered by colonial self-representation, nor the '*media res*' that only displaces the stability of the colonial order and sets it into (its) movement (e.g., *différance*, fluidity, becoming, growth, etc.,).

C/ Transcendantal multitudes and unilateral performance

François Laruelle's unjustly neglected 'non-philosophy'[2] furnishes us with a powerful theoretical background within which to radically re-consider the notions of translation, diaspora, and their relationship. In fact, non-philosophy allows us not only to capture the self-sufficient order of (post)colonialism without participating in it, but also to find an unprecedented alternative to the circular dialectics of fixity and movement, centrality and exile, establishment and nomadism. In essence, a Unified Theory of Diaspora and Translation (UTDT) relies on the following axioms:

1) There is, by hypothesis, a 'radical immanence' (also called 'the One' or 'the Real') radically deprived of transcendence (e.g., interiority, exteriority, middle, dimension, etc.,) and foreclosed to the World (e.g., Thought, Language, Being, Other, etc.,). In Laruelle's words, the One is :

> '(…)immanence and not thinkable on the terrain of transcendence (ekstasis, scission, nothingness, objectivation, alterity, alienation, *meta* or *epekeina*) (…) The One is immanence (to) itself without constituting a point, a plane, without withdrawing or folding back upon itself. It is One-in-One, that which can only be found in the One, not with Being or the Other. It is a radical rather than *absolute* immanence.' (Laruelle 1999: 140-141).

To put this differently, the One is neither visible in its objects, translatable into its effects, divisible into its parts, or displaceable into its movement. Contrary to Deleuze's 'planomenon', Laruelle's radical immanence is not topologically reversible – as a metaphorical Moebius strip – within its (transcendent) plane. From the perspective of its indifference, the One escapes indeed both the self-sufficiency and arbitrariness of the (post)colonial World insofar as it does not seek to reflect its unity or maximize its effects by taking advantage from otherness. Defined, strictly speaking, as the 'vision-in-One', the One makes possible the objective presentation of the philosophical hallucination of colonialism to

(self-)translate or (self-)unify the World. From the non-philosophical viewpoint, the UTDT pre-empts the possibility of materializing, without metaphorical confusions, the terms of translation, diaspora, and their relationship. These terms will be henceforth characterized as foreclosed to both the colonial authority of the Original and its postcolonial reactivation through reversibility, *différance*, hybridity, etc. Therefore, translation is no longer commensurable with the original whether as its mere copy or as its transcendent effects. Similarly, diaspora is no longer commensurable with unity whether as an empirical disorder awaiting to be unified or as an unstable plane of differences or intensities.

2) Accordingly, there is a transcendental identity of diaspora as well as translation which is relatively autonomous or translatable *vis-à-vis* the One but radically contingent or occasional from the indifferent viewpoint of the latter. To put it another way, these terms are no longer transcendent reflections of the metaphysical Original (e.g., double, representation, *Potenzierung*, *Embellissement*, parts and moments). Moreover, they are no longer quasi-immanent symptoms of its finitude (e.g., margin, location, fragment, trace) or even the dynamic combination of these two movements (e.g., infinite reversibility, *différance*, hybridity). Thanks to what Laruelle calls the mechanism of 'Determination-in-the-last-instance'[3], the relationship between translation and diaspora is no longer embedded either in a dialectical circle or in a state of 'in betweeness'. It is structured as a "unilateral duality" which means that between these terms there is a unilateral 'division' without ontological mediator or middle (e.g., a topological plane, a proliferating signifier, textual surfaces) to allow relocation.

3) The unilateral medium or texture 'between' translation and diaspora does not reconstitute an unifying interiority and/ or exteriority. Strictly speaking, this medium cannot be posited within the confused middle or 'in between' of colonialism and postcolonialism, original and representation, immanence and transcendence. We have tried to demonstrate how the (post)colonial middle always interferes with its own terms, thereby producing effects of hierarchy, classification but also displacement and mirroring occurring on a more or less ductile surface or texture which is metaphorically compared to water or sand's fluidity. In the extreme case of Derridian and Deleuzian postcolonial philosophy, this surface takes the paradoxical form of a 'two-way mirror' or 'double bind' and a 'Moebius strip'. Both of them in fact combine oppositions within a 'floating' unity, a unity that 'surveys' and 'overviews' (*survol*) these opposed and fundamentally unstable terms (in Derrida this is the unity of an infinite metaphorical excrescence, while in Deleuze it is the unity of absolutely immanent plane without exteriority). In complete contrast to postcolonial differential unity, the transcendental chaos unleashed by non-philosophy cannot be totalized or 'texturized' even tangentially within a continuous and dynamic platonic line, ontological plane or floating surface (such as Gilroy's Atlantic ocean, Deleuze's desert, Derrida's proliferating signified). Strictly speaking, this transcendental chaos, which inaugurates the possibility of a real encounter (and no longer that of a compromise) between translation and diaspora, and also, more fundamentally, that of a utopia of unified space and time for culture, is defined by the following axioms: a) there are no more totalising classifications, planes, or surfaces including and/ or excluding the terms of the multiplicity but rather a 'transcendental multitude' of occasions or identities all equally consistent vis-à-vis the One; b) this infinity of non-successive occasions constitutes the chaotic material (*chôra*) or texture of the "non-colonial" world deprived of its totalising self-sufficiency; c) the 'difference' between two terms (e.g., translation and diaspora) is not synthetic but radically *unilateral* or *fractal* in essence:

> 'What are the qualitative characteristics of this unilateral structure ? We move from rather vague notions of irregularity, interruption, fragmentation, notions that need to be quantified in order to be rendered precise, to a figure that is already qualitatively precise and that, in addition, also constitutes the

> core or germ of all fractality. Unilaterality is a radical, directional asymmetry, pure irreversibility or the uniface, the non-system of a relation that is radically open, no longer teleologically circumscribed by an opposing term. Every putatively opposed or reciprocal term has already been rendered radically contingent. The fractal structures of geometry are characterized in terms of an "irregularity" of form, rhythm, figure, or structure, in other words, in terms of properties that are transcendent and reversible. It is this irregularity that is reproduced in these structures, as though the internal resemblance at different scales which is the hallmark of fractal structures could only be brought about through extreme variation. With unilaterality, however, this irregularity is shorn of its transcendent aspect, it becomes internalized and autonomized as a fractal instance or "fractal order"'. (Laruelle 1992 : 176-177)

D/ Diaspora as an aesthetic utopia for culture

Such a re-definition of diaspora as a transcendental multitude inaugurates an unprecedented philosophical and cultural space and time shorn of self-sufficient homogeneity, juxtaposed or serialized minorities, colonial ruins and fragments, luxurious borderlines or deserted planes, and other postcolonial physical catastrophes. In this sense, it discloses the possibility of a radically new *aesthetic utopia for culture*.

R. B. Kitaj, who defines himself as a 'Diaporist painter', characterizes his work as 'resisting codification', as enmeshed with his particular Jewish condition of émigré and exile in general, and as fundamentally 'contradictory':

> 'Diasporist art is contradictory at its heart, being both internationalists and particularist. It can be inconsistent, which is a major blasphemy against the logic of much art education, because life in Diaspora is often inconsistent and tense; schismatic contradiction animates each day. To be consistent can mean the painter is settled at home. All this begins to define the painting mode I call Diasporism. People are always saying the meanings in my pictures refuse to be fixed, to be settled, to be stable: that's Diasporism (…).' (Kitaj 1999: 38)

Kitaj's dynamic contradiction is at the heart not only of his writing and painting but determines the ambiguous relationship between literature and art in his work. As the artist expresses it in a *New York times* interview from 1965: 'You might say that books have meant to me what trees mean to a landscapist.'. As a diasporic painter and prolific essayist, Kitaj does not seem to completely leave the totalising space of textuality or palimpsest. Not only is he influenced by writers such as E. Pound, T.S. Eliot, or W. Benjamin, from whom he borrows compositional principles of versification, intertextuality and fragmentation, but his works (especially his prints) use literary materials (e.g., book covers, literary references, typed prints, etc.,). The importance Kitaj ascribes to the choice of a title for a work of art is indicative of the biblical weight he assigns to the link between word and image (Kitaj 1964: 53). Familiar with Derrida's deconstructive incisions, Kitaj cuts into the traditional continuities of history (of art, literature, Judaism) along the horizontal and vertical lines of traditional two-dimensional space. The effects produced are mostly contrastive: anachronisms, comparisons, tragicomedies, or black humour. A montage by Kitaj such as *In our time: Covers for a Small library After the Life for the Most Part* (1969), where book jackets provocatively form the images for a series of 50 prints, provides an obvious example of the way Kitaj *displaces* perspective through the diachronic continuum of intertextuality/ picturality. In other words, the line of cuttings materializes, within a two-dimensional space, the imaginary book binding, library or museum – always limited inasmuch as it is part and parcels of another bigger library - holding together Kitaj's multiple literary and pictorial influences (i.e., Matisse, Renoir, Van Gogh, and Dürer amongst others). Some pictures are books and some books are pictures used to say the artist.

In contrast to Kitaj's montages, which carry out an always imperfect totalisation of their own diasporic multiplicity of references along the discontinuous yet classical perspectives of books, libraries, or museums, G. Kieffer's 'Non-Euclidian Perspective'

provides us with a radical viewpoint from which to envision diaspora as a transcendental multitude. Using a non-philosophical reading of Einstein's Theory of Relativity as its theoretical basis, the French painter's approach introduces physical disruption within the Euclidian illusion of a two-dimensional space with continuous and/ or curved perspectives.

> 'The continuum of general relativity comprises local distortions in intense gravitational fields. That is why a fixed reference system is no longer appropriate for it. There is no longer an absolute reference point, no longer an immutable spatio-temporal framework wherein references could be fixed. Everything becomes distorted.' (Kieffer 1996: 198)

Such perspectives cannot be spatially, chronologically, and culturally totalized within unitary forms (e.g. the two-dimensional space of Cartesianism, the Hegelian encyclopaedia, Kitaj's incomplete library, Deleuze's philosophical plane, etc.) because they take place within a radically immanent or non-reflexive plane. Kieffer's *polyptiques - Visions Non-Euclidiennes* (1988), *Le Concerto des laves* (1990), *Tremor* (1991) - deconstruct the totalitarian illusion of Euclidian space (which is reflected in that of the dis-continuity of art history) by deforming perspectives through video effects, multidimensional objects, and the combination of various panels. Each single deformation of illusory Euclidian continuity endlessly reveals a new diasporic figure, which eventually configures crystal-like multi-faceted forms as opposed to traditional Euclidian objects. However, as the artist makes clear, deformation must not be construed as a new 'absolute', complicating yet extending Euclidian perspectives. It is used as a crystallographic artefact to diffract the metaphysical illusion of Euclidean space in an 'allegorical' and neutral way (i.e. without being subjected itself to its hallucinatory perspective).

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[1] Contrary to Derrida, Deleuze assumes that the philosophical plane is deprived of (Jewish) exteriority apart from its own internal movements or 'Cross-cap' (Deleuze 1991: 43).

[2] Laruelle (born 1937) is currently Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris X Nanterre. His work – which has yet to be translated in English and which, even in France, has been neglected in comparison with that of his contemporaries– can be divided into three structural moments: 1) *Philosophy I* (1971-1981), which comprises *Phénomène et Différence* (1971), *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* (1977), *Machines textuelles* (1976), *Le déclin de l'écriture* (1977), and *Au-delà du principe de pouvoir* (1978), attempts a critical reading of Husserl, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Henry, and Deleuze and mobilizes a 'machinic materialism' that aims to effect a disorganisation of the 'ideology of the signifier' from within philosophy. 2) *Philosophy II* (1981-1992), which includes *Le principe de minorité* (1981), *Une biographie de l'homme ordinaire* (1985), *Philosophie et non-philosophie* (1989), *En tant qu'Un* (1991) and *Théorie des identities* (1992), initiates a "scientific" formalization of Philosophy by identifying 'Philosophical Decision' (*Décision philosophique*) as an invariant from the non-philosophical viewpoint of 'radical immanence', also characterised as 'the One' (*l'Un*) or 'the Real' (*le Réel*). 3) Lastly, *Philosophy III* (1995-present), which encompasses *Théorie des étrangers* (1995) *Principes de la non-philosophie* (1996), *l'Ethique de l'étranger* (2000), *Marxisme et non-marxisme* (2000), *Le Christ futur: une lecon d'hérésie* (2002), and a book of interviews, *L'ordre ultime des intellectuels* (September 2003), is dedicated to perfecting the non-philosophical tools forged by Laruelle, which finally achieve their definitive emancipation from philosophy here, and sets out to apply them to various philosophical fields, including psychoanalysis, ethics, and marxism. For an excellent pedagogical introduction in English to Laruelle's non-philosophy, see Brassier 2001; 2003 whom I thank for his re-reading and translations.

[3] 'A duality which is an identity but an identity which is not a synthesis : this is the very structure of Determination-in-the-last-instance. Non-philosophy thinks without constituting a system, without being unitary. For example, the subject in accordance with which it is produced ("the Stranger") is not something facing me, it is as a uniface and is for this reason a stranger to the World, but not a stranger to the Real.' (Laruelle 1999: 143)

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