



## *Reaching imaginary places: resonance and reverberation*

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### DIFFICULTIES OF DREAMING WELL

For Bachelard, imagination is anything but a stable and static activity. Under the guise of pre-constituted schemata and the oppression of self-sustaining forms, imagination conceals its latent dynamism, awaiting a to be liberated and performed as a mode of existence which, more than anything else, links us to the intensity of freedom. This psychodynamic liberation needs to be exercised and educated: “The counsel to *see well*, at the base of the culture realism, easily outweighs my own paradoxical advice to *dream well*, to remain faithful to the oneiric archetypes deeply rooted in the human unconscious” (Bachelard 2002: 2).

However – “to dream well” does not appear an easy task. One has always to face an encounter between formal and material imagination, a frequently outbalanced opposition within our mental life. Formal images, obviously, tend to dominate over material ones, reducing our creative energy to the reproduction of visual patterns. It is a type of imagination that relies on the primacy of perception and does not confide in its own capacity to reveal what is new. It focuses on surfaces, meanings and signs, whereas the material imagining craves for the contact with the dynamism of four elements. The latter escapes the logic of signification and occurs through a psychic expansion of the self into the surroundings – a chance of cosmological fusing within the world. Material imagination, for Bachelard, gains the meaning of psychic sensitivity, which grants consciousness with an immediate experience of matter.

My research is not directed at the imagination of forms [...]. I will therefore consider modeling only in its tentative stages – when matter first reveals itself, inviting us to give it form; when the dreaming hand exults in its first constructive pressures. Furthermore, I will call attention only to the boundaries of dreams and of reality, attempting to capture the dream of sculpting rather than the success of wise, dexterous hands, adroit in the imitation of visible models. (Bachelard 2002: 71).



Although form gives structure to the material, it is not easy to level the “dual participation” between the two. Their reciprocity is often downplayed by the human tendency to stabilize the living and vivid flow by constituting rigid geometrical structures. It is as though the same mental activity containing the double gesture of kneading and modeling could maintain its power only through the experience of ambivalence, which is always exposed to the danger of reducing the process of creative development to the summarization of the final results.

Speaking in the context of the contemporary world, the mental ego tends to digitize her/his dreaming capacity, to codify it, to interpret it, to reshape it according to conventional schemata. In this way, idealization of the formal imagination facilitates the installation of an individual into the system of global control – a giant structure of mass communication, which functions by exercising the transmission and propagation of information enveloped in pre-fabricated sets of dreams, visions, and reveries. The seductive aspects of modeling are emphasized by the development of industries of memory, imagination, and information. A glut of iconic flows keep an individual constantly connected to homogenizing mass projections: through audiovisual objects and devices, imagining consciousness finds itself being modeled according to cookie-cutter products and industrial lifestyles. Although a human being is free to imagine, to dream and even to be creative without any limitations, her/his actions can be accomplished only in a pre-constituted orbit, within a continuous and constantly supervised network. It seems that nowadays we can glorify all our possible liberties and witness how the old-school boundaries have been extinguished. However, all these magic words – globalization, Internet, market economy, advertising, independent media, new technologies – tend to conceal a very dangerous ambivalence. They provide us with an illusion of freedom. Gilles Deleuze, in his analysis of the creative work of Francis Bacon, gives a stunning example of this mental entrapment:

there are psychic clichés just as there are physical clichés – ready made perceptions, memories, phantasms. There is a very important experience here for the painter: a whole category of things that could be termed clichés already fills the canvas, before beginning. It is dramatic. (Deleuze 2003: 71-72).

The world is normally immersed in this state and inundated with noisy triviality that is difficult to escape.

Formal imagination is, therefore, reproductive imagination and, as such, is based on perception which is considered to have taken place prior in time. It still refers to the distinction of object-forms and presupposes the judgment of the qualities of things. Its function consists of recreating the ‘faint copy’ of sensations; its creativity is reduced to a poor imitation of perception. Impoverished imagination, imagination ruled by clichés (i.e. still horizontal,) stems from cookie-cutter made visual samples. Deleuze again offers a very insightful parallel concerning the authenticity of our mental life:

The dream of those who are dreaming concerns those who are not dreaming. Why does it concern them? Because as soon as someone else dreams, there is danger. People’s dreams are always all-consuming and threaten to devour us. What other people dream is very dangerous. Dreams are terrifying will to power. Each of us is more



or less a victim of other people's dreams. Even the most graceful young woman is a horrific ravager, not because of her soul, but because of her dreams. Beware of the dreams of others, because if you are caught in their dream, you are done for. (Deleuze 2007: 327).

Although it is rather difficult to assert what this idea is exactly about, it could also be plausible to interpret a warning to "beware of the dreams of others" in the context of the supremacy of the cinematographic and digital industries, integrating, adopting and incorporating vast audiences into the field of programmed collective consciousness, broadcasted worldwide on-line 24/7. The stream of individual consciousness is never independent as long as it is embedded in the flux of communication performed and stimulated by centers of power, sometimes notoriously called "dream factories".

Conversely, Bachelard's take on material imagination, emphasizing the experience of fluidity and pliability in creative development, counterbalances the geometrical (i.e. digital) and codified patterns of psychic behavior as well as the primacy of perceptual forms. As he states clearly, in the material imagination „image may *precede* perception, initiating the adventure in perception" (Bachelard 2002: 3).

This inspirational power opens up the horizons for new experiences not by forming, but, on the contrary, by deforming the psychic sedimentation and rudiments of preconceptions. It is namely this distortion that frees consciousness from immediate images and changes them:

The fact that it is possible to separate the pleasures of kneading from the pleasures of modeling is, in my opinion, sufficient proof that *material imagination* corresponds to a specific, self evident activity. Kneading is in some sense the antithesis of modeling. It tends to destroy form. (Bachelard 2002: 71).

Moreover, imagination must be drastically purified in order to achieve deliverance from the constraints of the world of forms:

We could say that a stable and completely realized image *clips the wings* of the imagination. It causes us to fall from the state of dreaming imagination that is not confined to image, and that we may call *imageless imagination*, just as we speak of *imageless thought*. (Bachelard, 1988: 2).

The idea of "fancy" or "creative phantasy", conceived as a field of activity where our inventive faculties are exercised, needs to undergo some radical corrections. The novelty of images should not be constituted from 'above', within an architecture of prefabricated and seductive fictions, which induce us into a codifying structure of control. A belief that our imagination can create and invent something (if inventing here still remains a proper word) should stem from the premise of liberating power of decomposing negation leading to the incomprehensible modality of existence that material imagination may encounter. Or, to speak in Heidegger's manner, creating could occur only as un-creating: the escape, the rupture, and the negation of our perceptual categories.



This aspect of creative inspiration requiring inner explosion as well as decomposition is confirmed by the idea of graft. By not representing a simple metaphor, graft can truly provide material imagination with an exuberance of forms giving vitality to their dangerous schematic appearance and transmitting the richness and density of matter to formal imagination. The homeopathic counter-action of competing powers might form a union of dream-producing and idea-forming activities for the creation of a poetic work. But before this harmonious mystery can be restored, the rediscovery of material imagination is needed. And, it seems, in order to be immersed in the activity of material imagination, one must learn to cultivate the state of continuous performativity and dynamism:

I might mention here a few short works in which I have recently examined, under the name of *material imagination*, the astonishing need for “penetration”. Going beyond the seductive imagination of forms, it thinks matter, dreams matter, lives in matter, or – what amounts to the same thing – it materializes the imaginary. I felt justified in speaking of a law of the four material imaginations, a law that *necessarily* attributes to the creative imagination one of the four elements: fire, earth, air, or water. Several elements, of course, can intervene to constitute a particular image. There are *composite* images, but the life of images has a more demanding purity of filiations. The moment that images form a series, they designate a primary matter, a basic element. Even more than its autonomy, the physiology of the imagination obeys the law of the four elements. (Bachelard 1999: 7).

A curious detail could be observed in this case. Although material imagination, as is emphasized by its name, constantly refers to the world of matter, i.e., to action occurring in space, to the field that could be experienced almost empirically, this psychosomatic encounter is carried out through the physical action of penetration. What does Bachelard mean by setting a complicated challenge – “astonishing need for ‘penetration’”? It is not a simple digging inside things, but rather a reconciliation with a dimension of being which could only be articulated in temporal terms. Hence it might be useful to remind ourselves of the concept of rhythmanalysis which was proposed by Bachelard in his early writings, and functions as an approach that takes into account the temporal nature of the surrounding universe.

## RHYTHMANALYSIS: UNDULATING EXISTENCE

Rhythmanalysis, as it is claimed in the “Dialectic of Duration”, aims to examine rhythms of life in detail, looking for the correspondence between the great rhythms forced upon us by the universe and the more subtle rhythms, those which are difficult to grasp and those that, contemporaneously, relate to the vibrant sensibilities of the human psyche. This kind of analysis, as opposed to psychoanalysis, would allow us to work through and reconcile the ambivalences found in the mentality of disturbed modern psyche. The world is composed of changing and developing systems, containing their own appropriate oscillations as they respond to variables. The unique temporalities that are concentrated in concrete spaces open up diversity in which opposites find and recognize each other in a unity more complex than their original elements.



Rhythmanalysis, consequently, looks everywhere for the occasions of rhythms and confides in their natural correspondence among each other. In collaboration with poetry, it elaborates a very intense sensitivity to one's surroundings as well as providing one with an active and vibrant feeling, or, in the words of M. Pinheiro dos Santos, a Brazilian philosopher to whom Bachelard refers in the last part of the "The Dialectic of Duration", *l'état lyrique* [a lyric state of mind]. Through the revelation of the logic of oscillations, "rhythmanalysis" comes to represent a unique role in the perceptual processes, existing only in their rhythms, intervals and pauses. Being oneself is played upon as the "musicalization" of identity – tuning up to the liberating concept of a greater symphony performed everywhere around us.

Henri Lefebvre, who conveys this principle to its extreme, describes how this ambiguous nature of things functions behind the systematic order of reification:

Our sensations and perceptions, in full continuous appearances, contain repetitive figures, concealing them. Thus, sounds, lights, colors and *objects*. We *contain* ourselves by concealing the diversity of our rhythms: to ourselves, body and flesh, we are **almost objects**. Not completely, however. But what does a midge perceive, whose body has **almost** nothing in common with ours, and whose wings beat to the rhythm of a thousand times per second? This insect makes us hear a high-pitched sound, we perceive a threatening, little winged cloud that seeks our blood. In short, rhythms escape logic, and nevertheless contain a logic, a possible calculus of numbers and numerical relations. (Lefebvre 2004: 10-11).

Hence rhythmanalysis is said to operate through the redemption of vital forces, which require attentiveness and a certain amount of time. To grasp these rhythms turns out to be a psychodynamic experience opening up an acoustic manner of embodied durations. The rhythmanalyst has to be prepared to listen to the world, and "above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said to be without meaning, and to murmurs [rumeurs], full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences" (Lefebvre 2004: 19). Only in this process of concentrated examination of oscillating creativity that surrounds us, one could not only recognize but also appropriate *l'heure de la fraise, l'heure de la pêche et du raisin* which are the occasions of psychic renewal following a change of seasons (Bachelard, 1936: 147). This is how a widely dispersed variety of natural temporalities slip into the modes of consciousness, which refreshes the tonality of being in the world.

And since "the evolution of an individual is undulating" (Bachelard 1936: 142), rhythm stands for the principle which engenders the possibility of change. In cultivating the rhythmanalysis, there is an inciting call to re-organize our psychic activity according to a vitalizing process of the sometimes hidden constellation of rhythms. While the rhythmanalyst's body serves him as a metronome, he must pay particular attention to his five senses, without allowing any one of them to dominate. He doesn't have to "jump from the inside to the outside of observed bodies; he should come to listen to them as a whole and unify them by taking his own rhythms as a reference: by integrating the outside with the inside and vice versa" (Lefebvre 2004: 20).



## CYCHOPOLIS: RESONATING EMOTIONS

Bachelard's take on the temporality of imagination and the experience of rhythms allows drawing an interesting parallel with a few works conducted by Marcos Lutyens, a contemporary artist, whose main interest consists of working with the collective mind. What he aims to accomplish in his artistic practices is the act of bypassing not just the conscious mind but also the individual unconscious mind, which may be mired in its own fragmentary bias.

Thus, by reshaping the rhythmical organization of one's perception (using hypnosis, a trance state and registered body automatisms), Lutyens tries to trace pathways related to unconscious thought processes. Shifting the experience of duration, he moves through imaginary environments within the preconscious that are progressively charted and recorded. His role seems to be similar to the one of a *psychic engineer*, a concept Bachelard created describing a person who works alongside the radio engineer as a kind of the DJ of *Radio Reverie* (Bachelard 1988b: 168).

Cychopolis (2003)<sup>1</sup>, for instance, is Lutyens's project that involved participants being asked both to abandon their usual habits of behavior and their acquired habits of thought in order to carry out the mapping of the city based on chance experiences and emotions, extracted from the unconscious. The students were divided into groups and asked to choose 6 different points in the city of Cagliari (Italy). Each point corresponded to one of 6 different categories: commerce, circulation, public spaces, public buildings, private spaces and green spaces. Having undergone a short hypnotic induction in the selected places, the volunteers listened to the commands to open up the senses to the location. In trance, the students drew or imprinted their impressions, and, upon awaking, precisely described their experience and charted it on an orthogonal scale of intensity.

Although this project clearly references a "psycho geographic" terrain, as explored by the Situationists and Guy Debord in the 1950's, it seems that an interpretation of space not in terms of objective qualities, but rather as a sphere of intensities and forces interrelated with psychic experiences should more accurately be conceived of in accordance with Bachelard's ideas regarding his research on the topological imaginary. As he states in the "Poetics of Space":

Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed." Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms", we learn to "abide" within ourselves. Now everything becomes clear, the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them. (Bachelard 1964: XXXVII).

It seems that the collapse of formal borderlines between a subject and her/his inhabited space could be conceived in terms of rhythmanalysis as well. Optical geometry dominating in the digitalized version of our world perception, as a rule, overshadows the diverse temporalities emitting emotional and energetic fluctuations.

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<sup>1</sup> This project was done in collaboration with Daniela Frogheri, Oliver Hess and Eric Lozano.



Everything that is happening in “mental space” has its temporal value, performed through rhythmical oscillations, and occurring in tune within the duration of the surrounding events: shifting, regulating and integrating the vibrations of a concrete place. Hence “in this dynamic rivalry between house and universe, we are far removed from any reference to simple geometrical forms. A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space” (Bachelard 1964: 47).

The results examined during the Cycho polis project gave an enormous set of data which afterwards was mapped back into the city of Cagliari. It became clear that certain areas or zones elicited a strong, intuitive response, whereas other areas or zones seemed, for instance, to arouse feelings. These zones, one could claim, corresponded to emotionally transformed series of durations, occurring through excitation and augmentation of an internal motion (or e-motion) of locations.

It could be remembered that Bachelard offers two concepts that bring about an altered temporality of material imagination: resonance and reverberation. Resonance is a dynamical condition through which the world discloses its imaginary opportunities: it oscillates with larger amplitude at some frequencies than at others. Under this intense state, the attunement of two rhythms – the rhythm of consciousness and the world-rhythm – can occur. Reverberation technically means a further step, i.e. the change of configuration of our rhythmical settings through the intrusion of alien vibration. A single and immediate image can touch the whole world by its echoing musicality:

Very often, then, it is in the opposite of causality, that is, in *reverberation*, which has been so subtly analyzed by Minkowski, that I think we find the real measure of the being of a poetic image. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being. The poet speaks on the threshold of being. (Bachelard 1964: XVI).

In the case of Cycho polis, reverberation reveals itself as energy that is “soaked up” through multiple interactions between surfaces and minds, energy that is absorbed and integrated, energy that awakens sonority of being and energy that can be measured and traced. Hence the map of Cagliari gets distorted, exposing its spatial plasticity: some topoi, where students responded most strongly, emerged with larger values; conversely, locations of weaker response began to shrink. These emotional nodes or vortexes that run through the city functioned as echoing resonances, which we hear and feel dispersed in different places, and bounced back to the field of concrete existences, offering themselves to be re-integrated and re-actualized while enhancing the sensitivity to emotional vibrations in general terms. This spatiotemporal circulation of energies allows one to conceive of the psychogeographical mapping of a concrete city as a rhythm analytical process: focusing on the condensed oscillations of urban zones increases the capacity to grasp their temporal intensities and restores the dimension of lost psychic intimacy. On this account, the dialectics of inhabited space turn out to be the source of creativity, which, according to Bachelard, is often cultivated by artists: “both room and house are psychological diagrams that guide writers and poets in their analysis of intimacy” (Bachelard 1964: 38).



## “SECOND SKIN”: ARCHITECTURE OF AN ENLARGED SELF

The link between psyche and space is also explored in Marcos Lutyens's "Second Skin"<sup>2</sup> (2004), a project involving selected architectural and professional students from around the world who were invited to listen to a trance-inducing audio track designed to extract architecturally based forms from the unconscious. As the artist himself explained, he and his colleagues, asked the participants "to imagine themselves growing into a dwelling, to build an archetypal structure". Afterwards, the students drew their impressions on paper in a trance state, and gave a detailed description of specific qualities relating to size, form, structure, materials, viewpoint, kinesthetic and proprioceptive experiences related to their own "Second Skin". They input all the data relating to the structures and 'bred' these structures via a genetic algorithm program, in order to establish patterns and traits of convergence among the different forms.

Using the techniques of rhythmical modulation (i.e. shifting the frequency modulation of "normal perception" and disengaging consciousness from what Deleuze called "psychic clichés" (ready made perceptions, memories, phantasms)", from the "dreams of others" and from the contamination with prefabricated mental patterns, the students were incited to enhance the activity of consciousness by developing a "Second Skin" – an architectural space that corresponds to an enlarged self and that comprises aspects of memory, brain function and deeply rooted notions of protection and shelter. This concentration of the world into a self-integrated momentum coincides with the fusing of what is deeply personal and what is archetypically universal. As Bachelard puts it:

But much is to be gained for a psychologist of the imagination if to "social" he adds "cosmic" reading. He comes to realize that the cosmos molds mankind, that it can transform a man of the hills into a man of islands and rivers, and that the house remodels man. (Bachelard 1964: 47).

The strategies of architectural design usually move from general to specific, from concepts that are born in a subjective mind to the concrete applications of ideas in urban landscapes. "Second Skin" inverts this dynamic, starting by searching for structures seated within the unconscious that, although related to the feeling of shelter and dwelling, refer to Jung's ideas on universally valid unconscious archetypes and Kant's investigation of schemata. The overall research leads to the discovery of intratypes – recurring dynamic patterns of unconscious interactions and mental programs that give coherence and structure to our experience and manifest as conscious thought, intelligence and actions. In this way, the intratypes that emerge from "Second Skin" are then exteriorized, stimulating their process of growing out of the internal depths as well as maintaining the intrinsic link with unconstrained psychic intimacy.

Bachelard too, on numerous occasions, observed the correlation of space and consciousness as well as their reciprocally stimulating dynamism. For instance, speaking of

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<sup>2</sup> "Second Skin" was done together with Tania Lopez Winkler (architect).





the experience of the dreaming mind, he notices its tendency to contract into a rounded self-sphere:

A space that abandons its horizons, draws in on itself, becomes rounded and enveloped is a space that trusts in the power of its core of being. It normally brings dreams of security and repose. The images and symbols punctuating this process of concentration should be interpreted precisely in terms of their progressive centralization. (Bachelard 1988: 155).

While focusing on its systolic and diastolic circulation, a possibility of objective articulation might be accomplished out of this pulsating self-world: „The geometric form to be shaped calls the attention, so to speak, to the cutting edge of extroversion. For these two reasons, the dialectic of introversion and extroversion – so mobile and so rhythmic – in an idle life is strongly biased toward extroversion“ (Bachelard 2002: 34).

The rhythmanalytic take on processes of mind as a model for architectural approaches implies a loss of their optical and representational dimensionality: space is imposed here as a flux stemming out of a centralized concentration through rhythmical concatenations of repetitive mental patterns. Moving in one’s inner space means soliciting one’s forgotten cosmological temporal integrity, one’s capacity to evoke emotionally marked durations that are related to our capacity of sensation in general. A structure that emerges and evolves from a morphing and merging of a collective of intratypes stimulates almost tactile experience of penetration or invasion. Reversing the classical subordination between space and time, it imposes temporalities on locations, liberating the suppressed sources of mental topography through the experience of actual gestures of creativity. The space is born during the act of being performed and transformed. In fact, under the state of trance-induction, the architecture volunteers were given a substance to mold and asked to couple this process with the imagining of a dwelling place. This kinesthetic or even tactile mode of imagination, which overwhelms all the sensing processes, resonates with Bachelard’s material imagination. Imageless, deformed, disorientated, it spurts out as a metamorphosis of space, the extraction and contraction of mental geography. Contemporaneously, it requires the physicality of sensation: “We are thus obliged to acknowledge that the intelligent imagination of shapes imposed on matter through labor must be coupled with the energizing imagination of the physical force this involves” (Bachelard 2002: 38). Visual forms are indeed sensed and touched, inasmuch as they are completely internalized by the manual movement that produced them. The material imagination could be found in the core of all sensing processes.

#### “SENSORY FAMILIAR”: RHYTHMANALYSIS OF FLESH

“Sensory Familiar” (2012), another project by Marcos Lutyens, is an experiment, which involves threefold poles of interaction: a man, a robot, and a reptile. Without any pre-constituted order which should be introduced for converting the patterns of behavior into linguistic signs, it focuses on mapping the emotional response between himself and



such creatures as pythons and lizards, which have very little in common with human beings, not just genetically but also behaviorally.

Technical tools are used here to trace the spontaneity of interaction as well as the states of emotional intensity. The robots are linked to Lutyens's heart rate, and when he gets excited or nervous the lines become jagged and disconnected and when calm and relaxed the strokes and lines are fluid and continuous. "Sensory Familiar" is neither about speaking with animals nor about understanding the hidden meaning of their language. This project aims to concentrate on being with animals, i.e., intensifying the situation of co-existence and exploring what Jakob von Uexküll called an "umwelt" – a particular "environment-world" constituted from the perspective of every living creature.

It seems that Lutyens uses robots as metronomes, which track the process of rhythmanalytic interchange between an artist and an animal, disclosing what was always present: our bodies themselves are the metronomes which, by changing their frequency modulation, may stimulate and energize shared experiences. According to Bachelard, "Tools, those veritable themes of intentionality, enable us to experience instantaneous time, prolonged time, rhythmic time, corrosive time, unhurried time" (Bachelard 2002: 39).

Marcos Lutyens's heart beating, its blood circulation, systolic and diastolic fluctuations, does not represent the reaction to an animal but overcomes it by opening the world of all the possible interactions and intertwinings of rhythms. Thus the overlapping of umwelts occurs through the combination of a bundle of rhythms – different but in tune. "Sensory Familiar", in a way, could be conceived of as an eurhythmia of perceptions, the polyphonic but harmonic interchange of temporalities between a human being and an animal.

Although there is a limited chance to develop the same kind of smelling capacity as a lizard possesses or a vision analogous to the one of an eagle, the overlapping umwelts bring about the discovery of the plasticity of our sensing consciousness. If bodies are forces, as Deleuze claims, their reciprocal interaction in the world enhances the limits of experience. One could recall here the neuroplasticity – the capacity of undamaged brain areas to take over some of the functions of the damaged ones or even to change the structure of the healthy brain enhancing its sensitivity or even exposure to happiness (as it was demonstrated in the celebrated case studied by neuroscientist Richard Davidson, whose MFRI scans of meditating Buddhist monks showed that activity in the left cortex associated with happiness swamped the activity of the right cortex, related to negative moods).

The plasticity of the brain, in a broader sense, leads to the discovery of plasticity of matter itself to the self-molding experience meaning that "my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is perceived), and moreover that this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world *reflects* it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 248). Hence the whole set of five senses cannot be conceived of as the reality of transmitting sensors reacting to stimuli, similar to locators or intermediating tunnels, but is enrooted in a deeper unity, prior to any function-distribution among the organs. Sensation of the world precedes the localization of concrete empirical data. For Bachelard, one might add, it would necessarily require a response from material imagination: "An image is, in fact, an integrating force. It converges the most diverse impressions, impressions from all of the senses" (Bachelard 2002: 12).



Along these lines “Sensory Familiar” could be considered as a project of perceptual re-orientation. It seems that Marcos Lutyens’s aim to discover “how our senses may overlap” and “what happens when the umwelts coincide” leads to the opening of an unexpected field of correlation requiring the intensification and sharpening of one’s own sensory capacities. Turning towards the umwelt of a lizard, a snake, or a bird implies the destabilizing of the conceptual schemata of human perception as well. For Bachelard, it might mean a haptic experience of double opening of the very essence of matter:

The tactile sensation of digging into matter with one’s fingers, discovering its substance beneath form and color gives one the illusion of touching the very *essence of matter* [...]. A material image dynamically experienced, passionately adopted, patiently explored, is an *opening* in every sense of the word, in its real sense and its figurative sense. It assures the psychological reality of the figurative, the imaginary. The material image transcends immediate existence and deepens superficial existence. This deepening reveals a double perspective: opening into the interior of the active subject and into the inner substance of the inert object encountered by perception. (Bachelard 2002: 24).

Perhaps it might be pertinent to draw a parallel with the celebrated story of John Hull. This highly educated and religious man lost his vision completely but soon after gradually became a so-called “whole-body seer”. By shifting his attention to the other senses, he managed to enhance their powers in such a striking manner that this even changed his mode of being-in-the-world. As one reads in his book “Touching the Rock: An Experience of Blindness” (1990), Hull could, for instance, conceive the surroundings only by listening to the sound of rain, so delineating the contours and throwing a colored blanket over previously invisible things.

Oliver Sacks pointed out that Hull represents an outstanding example of an individual who, deprived of one form of perception, could totally reshape himself to a new identity and disclose a particular “sense of intimacy with nature” (Sacks 2010: 150). The same intimacy could be recognized in Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of “flesh” (*chair*), which is an expression of the intertwining of both “subjective experience and objective existence”, both “touching” and “tangible”. This relationship of kinship, which exists in principle, not only shows the ambiguous status of human bodies already interlaced in their perceptual surrounding (i.e. always bringing about a reciprocal circulation to their umwelt), but works also as the initiation to and the opening upon a tactile world. Thus the sensate body foreruns any intellectualization and linguistic interpretation, melting into “prepossession of the visible” and performs an art of interrogating as well as inspired exegesis of the environment.

Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it; the two systems are applied upon one another, as the two halves of an orange. (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 133).

It is curious that numerous cases of sensorial deprivation coincide with the increasing intensification of overall sensitivity. Besides the mentioned example of John Hull, Oliver



Sacks (2010: 151-152) refers to the research, led by Lotfi Merabet, Alvaro Pascual-Leone and others, who demonstrated that even sighted adults, after five days of being blindfolded, underwent the physiological changes in the brain that went along with this. It might be added, that this human flexibility to fuse within one's surroundings distorts the concept of what could be called a "normal perception". With these discoveries one might acknowledge that a fully functioning body is often much more deprived of an actual experience than a person who is deaf or blind. It is as if, possessing the normal sensory capacities, we tend not to make use of them, blocking and taking away the primordial sensitivity or, by conceptualizing and verbalizing the experience, reducing it to the controlled system (in Deleuze's sense), which turns out to be a form of perceptual anesthesia. The tendency to objectify the perceptual processes of our bodies leads to a disconnection from the circulation of intensities within the flesh-world. This kind of "unplugged experience" preserves the formal overview of the surroundings though rendering the body insensate by blocking its attention of perceptual musicality.

This new kind of sensory dialectic might show that rhythms reinforce each other over time to create strong tendencies, so the exploration of these subtle and intimate moments between person and animal may reveal the broader workings of interspecies coexistence. These are also the moments in which the already mentioned phenomenological doublet of resonances and repercussions must be sensitized. As Bachelard claims in his description of poetic experience, reverberation enters subjectivity as a repetitive echo, overcomes the conventional border-lines and dissipates the subject-object distinction. We are possessed by external rhythms; the so-called depth of our interiority is affected by alien energy; we vibrate in tune with alien rhythms. In a way, this could be considered to be a process of depersonalization that opens a possibility of transformation in our experience.

The resonances are dispersed on the different planes of our life in the world, while the repercussions invite us to give greater depth to our own existence. In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own. The reverberations bring about a change of being. It is as though the poet's being were our being. The multiplicity of resonances then issues from the reverberations' unity of being. (Bachelard 1964: XXII).

What is "penetration" in space is marked by resonance and reverberation in time. Henri Lefebvre's insight seems to give us a broader explanation in which way rhythms function on the intersection of space and time. "Rhythm is easily grasped whenever the body makes a sign; but it is conceived with difficulty. Why? It is neither a substance, nor a matter, nor a thing" (Lefebvre 2004: 64). According to Lefebvre, although the rhythm has all these aspects, it can't be reduced to them, as it implies something more. This "something more" is energy, which "unfolds in a time and a space (a space-time)" (Lefebvre 2004: 65). It is as if rhythm would mark the junction of time and space, which occurs only through energetic flow and which constitutes the third unifying dimension of the world. Energy is what time and space have in common.

To interpret "Sensory Familiar" along the lines of rhythmanalysis is to claim that it performs a liberating gesture of self-metamorphosis and escapes from the imprisonment of the numerical language of control. In this sense, this rhythmanalytic experiment by Marcos Lutyens is an act of counter-communication: an opening to the world of constantly



tacit nature, an attempt to fuse with the silence of a living creature. Perceptual incompatibility between a human and an animal is transformed here into the experience of vibrating presence – the interchange of energies performed through the rhythms of cosmological symphony as well as the liberation of material imagination.

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