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Dwelling as a space of differences

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The proposal "dwelling as a space of differences" contains in itself a kind of claim that comes from a connection between "to dwell", the verb, and "the differences" not as "The Difference", unique and categorical, but as something that only can be expressed by the plural. The conjunction "as" implies a "mode" and this mode cannot be previously given, it must be built: Dwelling is not, but should be a space of differences. And this duty is the mode the relationship establishes itself as politics. Political is, in this case, the tension between the identity of the act of dwelling and the differences that do not fit him.

Dwelling is always a question of identity. Differences contradict the act of dwelling.

While the word dwell carries the memory of "habit", that which is of habitude, of the everyday doing, and even of the routine and repetition, the word "Differences" places us on the reverse of everything that we are accustomed to. Dwelling is a data related to the need of including the whole non-identity within the field of identity, or, in other words, of the Same. But "Dwelling as a space of differences" can only be said in the sense of a desired construction. The difference implies some of "eros", of bridge, of symbol, of "love".

Dwelling is of the order of Identity. Different is what can not be mixed, what is not reducible to identity. Difference is a term that is always used in relation to the identity. One thinks Difference related to something. Difference is non-identity. When it is about dwelling, Difference refers to the conflict within the very act of living exclusionary of the act of cohabiting. Only if and when to dwell must cohabit, differences are not annihilated.

But it is not possible to speak of dwelling without the identity. Identity's force (and violence) is what we need to evaluate as it is inserted in the condition of the dwelling. So, the question that can guide us in this brief reflection is: who dwells? Who cohabits?

Within the conflict there is a danger: if the difference overcomes identity, it may become the new identity. In this case, actually, the principle of identity has won. Therefore, what dwelling is it when one wants to preserve the differences without becoming the new identity?

Dwelling as a place of differences without the differences becoming the new identity is only possible when the act of dwelling is perceived as sharing, and thus, as a democratic co-dwelling. In this sense, co-dwelling is a political act, as dwelling is rather a private act. The word democracy does not say much in the context of an abusive rhetorical use as we see it today. Dwelling as a space of differences points out the practical urgency in which the ethical and political action be a part of the private order. Ethics is the preservation of the uncommon, politics is the construction of the common. If the symbolic term "house" can translate what is desired with "dwelling", then we have the activity of welcome, hospitality, gratitude. It is a part of our practical experience the difficulty of living together with differences, as philosophical and psychological limits of human subjectivity.

We can test its supportability from a question-limit that has the power to confront us with our own subjectivity. In the paragraph about the eternal recurrence of the Gaia Science, Nietzsche places a question at a demon's mouth but directed to the reader. It concerns the courage to live again everything one has already lived aiming at confronting he who is being asked with his own future, to him to decide whether he loves it or hates it, if he denies it or recognizes it. I would like to use here Nietzsche's experiment intending to test our relationship with differences, leaving the answers opened up to allow every reader to make sure about his own ability to recognize the other.

Experimentum Crucis I

In order to think the question of dwelling as co-dwelling I can ask myself: Am I able to share the room of the house or apartment where I live with the beggar who lives on the street? Would I accept his difference in the place where "my" dwelling is installed? Do I answer "yes", "no" or "depends"?

Can I share my working room with that person who differs from me in social, economic, aesthetic and political terms? To what point is the private democratic and to what point is it the mere assertion of private property? Can I abdicate of my privacy?

In practice there is no sharing, there is dwelling, not co-dwelling. Would it be possible a reconciliation between theory and practice? Between private and public?

Experimentum Crucis II

We know that space (either wall or clothes) determined gender. The house was a concentration camp for women. And it still is in many cases. The gentle expression "private life" does not regard the character of "exception" as exclusionary inclusion that refers women's lives. If women left home attaining public life, many men, in turn, gradually return home.

In our days, the roles determinations are unsettled in a way that was unthinkable not long ago. Gender and sex are expressions which have already suffered elucidative dismantlings. Gradually people learned to live-with, or co-habiting with the simple singular character of each of them. Many no longer bother to look like women or men because they intuitively realized the personages constructed character; they realized the cultural character of gender constructions.

However, this kind of acceptance is still rare. Since we become increasingly more able to deal with differences concerning the binary character "man and woman," we must ask: can I accept he who, being an intersexual, does not fall into any gender? Can I tolerate he who is outside the "norms" as subject of total difference? Can I live with the hermaphrodite body of another? With a style of dressing or acting which is not defined by any standards?

In the end, the demoniac question: if my child is born with a unclassifiable body in terms of gender (since sex is a cultural construction serving the gender) Can I give him to the medicine to settle him under the rule, the "standard"?

The agreement made with the "legal" and the "scientific" is the end of differences, that suffer - and die - under the sign of identification for which ethics and politics are nothing more than weak rhetorical terms, as well as the beautiful word love that many are already ashamed to use in the context of co-dwelling.

What can I do when such thoughts attain me?