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The Humanist as Engineer Manifesto

Fernando Flores Morador

1. Our time is the time of the end of the paradigm of *criticism*. By "criticism" I understand the discernment of something through an analysis, which results is experienced as enlightening. The result of the critical analysis is an effort of accuracy in the use of concepts and their relation to reality.
2. Starting with the work of Kant, the period of criticism extends to the deconstructionism of Derrida taking similar forms in works as diverse as those of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger.
3. We are undergoing the beginnings of a new philosophical paradigm characterized by the fragmentation of experience. This fragmentation does not allow an overview of the totality of the field of experience and it is impossible to reduce it to a singular analytical moment.
4. The fragmentation of experience is the result of a new jump of the capability to concretion. The "concrete" dominates the scene of thought impeding transcendent generalizations. The only possible generalization is that of the *genealogical generalization*
5. -the reference to kinship between examples, cases and situations. The "concrete" manifests itself defined by the historic context of a nontransferable individuality.
6. The concrete is also a *phenomenological* thing; it is inherent to the culture and history of that thing and transcendental to pure thought. Moreover, "pure thought" itself, is only conceivable as concrete. The new philosophical paradigm focused on interconnections, and boundaries; it focuses on differences, and therefore contains ambiguity as its study object.
7. The thing is *multistable*; a knife can be a screwdriver; a chair may be a table; the arc of war may be a lira. The multiplicity of the usability or an artefact, and their instability at the time of implementation, *creates a gap between intention and implementation* that distinguishes the "full" thing from of the "broken" thing.

8. The full things are oblivious to the action and assume thus fetishistic dimensions. Broken things on the contrary, emerge as products of human action and are accessible to consciousness.
9. Since Marx, criticism has specified the project of transforming the world rather than interpreting it. *But the world no longer supports transformations.* The transformation was possible in a world designed as “full” or of stable forms. When completeness disappears, the possibility of transformation as a founding action disappears; given that everything changes, the transformation becomes secondary. *We have only just the manipulation of the world.*
10. Knowledge in the new philosophical paradigm requires studying realities that have to be touched and manipulated. For the new philosophical paradigm, *knowing is touching and manipulating.* Our time is the time of the manipulated thing; the more manipulated, the more relevant it will be as an object of study. (For example, discussing the nature of life, I distinguish the vital from the mechanical phenomenon by the presence or the absence of the *gear*. I conclude that there are no animals that fly with propellers or that move with wheels).
11. Given the multistability of things, the study of human action requires the distinction between "full" (fetishistic or simply "technical" actions) and "broken" (actions revealed to consciousness). The study of the latter and its relationship with the first is central to the new philosophy of the humanist as an engineer.
12. The humanist as an engineer is a “defetishistizer” of the technical, i.e., a producer of awareness of the possibility of human action. The *defetichization* is exercised through the manipulation of things, understanding this, as an exercise of the power of know-how.
13. The new philosophical paradigm is therefore a philosophy of power.

Montevideo, December 2011