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Timespace for Emotions: Anachronism in Flaubert, Bal/Williams Gamaker, Munch and Knausgård

ABSTRACT

Quoting Flaubert through time, Mieke Bal and Michelle Williams Gamaker's *Madame B* brings *Madame Bovary's* reflections on love and emotions to the present day, in a productive anachronism. Their work produces an intertemporal space where the past is relevant for the present, and the present enables us to understand the past. Intimacy and routine are central in their exploration of Flaubert's contemporaneity. Those issues are precisely one of the keys in Karl Ove Knausgård's project of literary autobiography, where he expands narration foreclosing the ellipsis and giving visibility to small things and emotions; a project with some resonances with Munch's crude-obscene uses of intimacy. This essay explores how both proposals, Bal and Williams Gamaker in film, and Knausgård in literature, can serve us to connect present and past sensibilities and, more than that, demonstrate resistances to the hegemonic discourses of temporality.

Keywords: timespace, anachronism, autobiography, exhibitions, intimacy.

Emma & Edvard: Love in the Time of Loneliness, the exhibition curated by Mieke Bal at the Munch Museum (Oslo, 28 January–17 April 2017), is a device for thinking. As Mieke Bal accurately states in the book-catalogue, curating, the creation of a contact zone between art and viewers, “could be considered a medium in its own right” (18). Without a doubt, exhibitions think and make us think. Even more so in this case, where, through the confrontation of different tenses, times, spaces, formats, visions or media, it opens a process of thought. Above all, it opens a space for discussion, an inter-temporal space. This is what happens in the exhibition, the opening of a new space, the creation of a sort of device for dialogue and conversation, a “timespace” where works, ideas, visions and experiences enrich one another.

The video installation *Madame B* (2014) establishes an intertemporal conversation with Gustave Flaubert. Quoting the author through time, Mieke Bal and Michelle Williams Gamaker’s *Madame B* transports Madame Bovary’s reflections on love and emotions to the present day in a productive anachronism. And now, with this exhibition, this intertemporal dialogue is transformed into a sort of device to read, see, experience and, in consequence, activate the work of Edvard Munch, making his art engage with the present. So, the dialogic (intertemporal) structure of *Madame B* works here as a device for the activation of the past. It’s a triologue: Flaubert, Munch, Bal/Williams Gamaker.

Due to its power and productiveness, I find here an element with an even greater potential: the capacity to expand that conversation, to open it up to other visions. This is what’s happening during the conference and in this journal with figures such as Ibsen or Charlotte Salomon. And this is precisely why I decided to invite Karl Ove Knausgård to engage in this conversation through time. As I will try to show, his autobiographical project *My Struggle* (*Min kamp*, 2009–11) has something to say about the conversation taking place at the Munch Museum. And, conversely, the experience of the exhibition makes us read and consider Knausgård’s work from a different (and, I believe, richer) perspective.

In this text I focus my analysis on the issue of time.¹ In *Madame B*, in the exhibition *Emma & Edvard*, and also in Knausgård’s project. These three subjects present alternatives to what we could call “the monochronic regime of modernity,” the hegemonic model of time characterized, broadly speaking, by acceleration, linearity and capitalization of experience, where emotions are also capitalized. By the deployment of anachronism, montage, altered time,

¹ For a recent survey on this key issue, see Burges and Elias. On time and contemporary art, see Ross, Groom, Moxey, Speranza.

denaturalized movement, repetition, extension, interruption—in brief—by dismounting time, these works (and this exhibition) resist modern time by creating a *timespace* where, among other things, emotions can have a place.

QUOTING (IN) 'TIME: *MADAME B* AND THE DIALOGUE OF IMAGES

In “What Is the Contemporary?”, Giorgio Agamben states that being contemporary is to maintain a particular relationship with the present, a sort of distancing or anachronism:

Contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one’s own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it’s *that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*. (43, emphasis added)

Being contemporary is based on admitting the crossover of different temporalities in the present, on understanding that time is, by its own nature, heterochronic.

In a similar vein, Georges Didi-Huberman links Agamben’s ideas on the contemporary to the process of montage, in the sense given by Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin, as an intertwining of times:

The montage is an *exhibition of anachronisms* precisely because it proceeds like an *explosion of chronology*. The montage cuts up things that are usually connected and connects things that are usually separate. It thus creates a shake and a movement. (59, my translation)

For him, being contemporary has to do with an opening up of time, destroying the illusion of unity and contributing to showing its intertwining. *Madame B* displays this sense of contemporariness as an opening of time. Past and present tenses are moved and a dialogue in time is produced.

Precisely, the issue of dialogue is central in the *Madame B* videos. The work of Mieke Bal and Michelle Williams Gamaker is a dialogue in itself, a collaborative *oeuvre*. Their early projects in migratory aesthetics revolve around “the other.” The dialogue and confrontation “between two people” always has a central role. Practically all their videos are characterized by this dialogic aspect, even in the way of showing, which requires the presence of a spectator capable of engaging in a conversation with the image.²

² This is the core of the exhibitions *Towards the Other* (Veits) and *La última frontera/ The Last Frontier* (Hernández Navarro).

This is also true for the projects created by Mieke Bal alone (like *Nothing is Missing*) and something similar could also be seen in their previous project, *A Long History of Madness*, in which the dialogic aspect of the structure—situations of characters in a situation of conflict trying to have a conversation and reach a point of understanding—is complemented by the dialogue of the film with *Mère Folle*, the book written by French psychoanalyst Françoise Davoine. *Madame B* (the film and the installation) builds on this way of working through dialogue and conversation and expands on it through time. Dialogue is produced with Flaubert's work in a sort of intertemporal space. It is a conversation that takes place at multiple levels.³

Madame B is not an adaptation, a version or even a visual reading—at least in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, we are confronted with an intervention that speaks with and activates the previous work of art (*Madame Bovary*). In this regard, what *Madame B* does with Flaubert's novel could be understood as a sort of historical performance, a reenactment. Intervention in the present is a way of evoking and transforming history. In this sense, Bal and Williams Gamaker's work would be similar to the series of "historical performances" carried out by artists like Jeremy Deller, in his parodic recreation of the Battle of Orgreave (*The Battle of Orgreave (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)*, 2001) or Doris Salcedo, in her evocation of the assault on the Palace of Justice in Colombia in November 1985 (*Noviembre 6 y 7*, 2002).⁴ These are ways of not only con-vo-king history as a tangible reverberation in the present, but also of establishing in it a difference capable of transforming it. In a book on the recent concern for history in contemporary art, I called these practices "Art of History" (*Materializar el pasado* 11). In a similar way, Ernst van Alphen refers to this reflection on the past as "new historiography" (256–66). I regard *Madame B* as part of this "tendency" in contemporary art, considering that the novel and what it produces is part of reality, namely, part of the past, history in its own right.

Working through the insertion in a previous work, fraught with problems, images and experiences that are already "in motion," is fundamental for Bal and Williams Gamaker. The world is not created out of nothing; it's already there, even before we see it. There is a previous symbolic structure to which the individual is subjected. This circle of meaning is the only one in which artists can intervene, entering into a previous conversation or putting themselves in the position of conversational partner of those who

³ See Hernández Navarro ("Moverse en el tiempo").

⁴ On the strategy of "reenactment" in contemporary art, see Arns and Horn. On Doris Salcedo and the political, see Bal (*Of What One Cannot Speak*).

are already talking, precisely so that others can hear them and have their say afterwards.

Madame B is located in the conversational space of Flaubert. The work is an intervention in this previous space and an update of the conversation. Producing a work that enters into dialogue with time in order to converse with Flaubert has, in this case, an additional meaning. For, *Madame Bovary* itself—as an essential part of Flaubert’s work—is a novel that understands creation in this way. It recycles clichés coming from the romantic novel, which Flaubert gradually undermines. The meaning of the world presented in *Madame Bovary* is based on the idea that the conversation, the language, and the experience of the world are constructed.

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In the novel, just as in the installation, we can see how the education of Emma gradually develops and creates her horizon of expectations. Education, from the beginning, is the space in which, almost in a Foucauldian way, power and systems are introduced to and reproduced in individuals. To this regulated education, which intervenes in our experiences of the world, Flaubert adds, especially in Emma’s case, construction through romantic education, created through novels, which are not only shown as a space of imagination, a way of escaping, but also as a space to create collective imagination and expectations.

As Eva Illouz exposes in her brilliant pages devoted to romantic fantasy, for Flaubert this fantasy is constructed through the act of reading and “the capacity of the novel to elicit identification and imagination” (203). In *Madame B*, the identification processes take place through the use of cinema and publicity, the places from which, today, that construction is undertaken. In Emma’s face we can see, for example, a reflection of the creation of this imagination through television. Almost as if it were the Ludovico technique from Kubrick’s 1971 film *The Clockwork Orange*, the subject becomes more and more captivated by the image. Thus, *Madame B* updates the Flaubertian sense of how the imagination is built from outside.

In Flaubert’s work, the novel functions as a strange interruption of meaning in the repetition of clichés. It calls our attention to its artificiality. It is precisely in this that its critical position resides. Emma develops her imagination through romantic novels and reading. However, *Madame Bovary*, as a novel, also contributes to the creation of clichés. It is just another brick in the wall surrounding the imagination. Flaubert’s strategy to break through this—or at least to bridge the gap and situate it in a place beyond—is self-awareness, as with Cervantes. The imagination of *Don Quixote* is developed through reading. That of Emma is, too. In both cases, the book, through literary self-consciousness, is based on a previous discourse in order to perform a rupture with it.

In the case of *Madame B*, the break is made clear both through the rupture of the narration and through self-awareness. The film or the installation do not contribute, as romantic films do, to the consolidation of stereotypes or the deepening of romantic fantasies, but to the opposite: to highlight the processes of how this imagination is constructed and to create flaws and interruptions in its flow. And in order to do this, to destroy clichés and to interrupt the flow of meaning, Bal and Williams Gamaker implement a change in media, by switching from the novel to the video installation form.

As Boris Groys has pointed out, “installation is for our time what the novel was for the nineteenth century” (77). It is the medium par excellence of contemporary art. It puts things into context by re-signifying them in time and space. This re-signification is created here by placing the spectator in the midst of the problems, facing the screens, soaked up in the image just as Emma is by discourses. In contrast to the authoritarian and imposing models of cinema, here the spectator can wander around from one space to another. The narrative is not “inserted” into him or her, but rather shown at a critical distance. The observer is not constructed by the discourse, then; rather, he or she is a constructor. In order to do this, the structure of the installation is of utmost importance, as it expands into the space and “cuts” up the story into different fragments, identifying issues, feelings, topics, problems or ideas. This dismantling of narration helps the viewer to be aware of the artificial character of the discourse, as well as of the quotability of the images. The spectator is invited to an encounter in which he or she is able to recognize and feel what in real space is not always evident.

This change of medium, from novel to installation, also implies a temporal alteration, a change of times. In his study of *Madame Bovary*, Mario Vargas Llosa suggested four time models in Flaubert’s novel: singular, circular, plastic and imaginary (168–83). In the first place, there is the time of the event, “a singular or specific time” (170). The things that happen and that make the novel move forward: someone comes in, something moves, something happens etc. It is also possible to identify a circular time: the time of routine (172). Whereas the first time is formulated in a specific way—“the director came in . . .”—the second is a condensed time that summarizes a series of situations:

But it was at mealtimes, especially, that she could not bear it any longer. . . . Charles was a slow eater, and she would nibble a few nuts or, leaning on her elbow, amuse herself drawing lines on the oilcloth with the point of her knife. (Flaubert 59)

In the visual domain, this summarized and condensed time can only be shown through the repetition of events. And in *Madame B* we can see

this, for example, in the times of routine actions or in the conversations over meals between Charles and Emma, a circular time that is emphasized through repetition. In the novel, these are synthesized by using specific tenses or structures to indicate these routines. Here, in the image, they are suggested through the chain succession of planes. In this time of repetition, circular time and the time of the event are in contact. Abstract time, indeed, is obtained through the sum of various specific, routine actions.

Vargas Llosa observes a third time, which is the “immobile time or plastic eternity” (177). This is the time of descriptions, the time of objects, but also, at some point, the time of people that are treated like objects. “This temporal plane,” says Vargas Llosa, “gives the novel its physical depth, that materiality with which we associate the name of Flaubert” (178). In *Madame B*, this immobile time can be seen in the things, in the frame, in the detail of the objects. It is neither the time of events nor abstract time; it is an almost photographic, plastic time. It is a present, almost timeless time. That “now” of the descriptions can be found in the profound materiality that each frame possesses. A materiality fostered by the density of what is revealed. At the actual moment in which the experience is dematerialized and liquefied, the screens of *Madame B* show dense bodies, and also colours and objects that are not transparent, but rather shown in their opacity. They are not merely decorative: they are context; they work as characters. At all times, the spectator has the feeling of living in a full-bodied world. It is not a virtual reality in which things are illusory and look real; it is not a simulation. Rather, the image suggests to us a dense life and, thus, an aesthetic experience.

Finally, along with the time of events, circular time and plastic time, we can identify “imaginary time” (Vargas Llosa 179). This is the subjective time of the characters, the time that we cannot see, the experience of duration that is different for each subject. It is a time that is neither historic nor quantifiable, the time of expectation, the time of frustration, of waiting, of desire, of intimacy. In the novel, this time appears through free indirect style, which implies the narration of a historic time with the cadence of thought, which is transferred in barely one sentence from the narrator to the mind of the character. In *Madame B*, that time can be seen in the faces of the actors which transmit the intensity of the emotion beyond language. Faces, like Emma’s, which at times become impenetrable precisely in order to give an account of the impossibility of showing publicly something which is exclusively individual and intimate, no matter how much of it has been built up from the outside.

As happens in the novel, in the installation the four times function simultaneously. However, within the space of the exhibition, these times are opened up and the spectator is even more aware of the experience of

a temporal multiplicity, the experience of the complex, multiple texture of time that Mieke Bal has called heterochrony (“Heterochrony in the Act”). This is even more emphasized through the introduction of a new time: the time of perceptive experience. The fragmented structure that breaks up the linear narration proposes to the spectator the same time of the construction of the story, which is not set by the author, but rather produced in the mind and body—in the senses, that is— of the audience. Even though it is true that there is a plot and a defined trajectory, the spectators can make their own way through it and build their own story. Even when they follow the predetermined path, the multiplicity of screens, narrations, and visual and auditory stimuli confronting them cause breaks in the linearity of the novel’s temporal succession. Even the time spectators devote to each image, the possibility of not capturing the details, of looking at some images longer than at others, all give sovereignty to their perception. They end up becoming virtual narrators, at least for themselves, of the story.

Thus, more than telling a story, Bal and Williams Gamaker *deploy* one, opening it up in order to make it work. They break Flaubert’s structure and, at the same time, give it a relevant meaning: putting Flaubert in touch with the present. When viewing the screens, when immersed in the installation, we still feel that Emma’s story is our own. Emma’s concerns and obsessions, her feelings, are not a matter of the past, but something that clearly affects us in the present.

Returning again to Agamben’s words, we can say that the contemporary

is also the one who, dividing and interpolating time, is capable of transforming it and putting it in relation with other times. He is able to read history in unforeseen ways, to “cite it” according to a necessity that does not arise in any way from his will, but from an exigency to which he cannot not respond. (“What Is the Contemporary” 53)

The contemporary brings the past into the present, so it can express what could not be said in its own time or, as Walter Benjamin suggested, to “read what was never written” (405). To actualize Flaubert is, in this way, to connect him to the present, but also to create a timespace compound of the past that could not be expressed and of the present that can only be seen thanks to those latent aspects of the past. To use Agamben’s formula, “to be contemporary means in this sense to return to a present where we have never been” (“What Is the Contemporary” 51–52); “it is like being on time for an appointment that one cannot but miss” (46). *Madame B* creates the timespace for this appointment. And

in the exhibition *Emma & Edvard*, the installation expands its terms to include Edvard Munch's art in the equation, exploring the relevance of his painting to our current world and sensibility. The inclusive character of this dialogic device activates the possibility for other appointments, other encounters. Not only the exhibition, but also everything that surrounds it (the conference held on 23 and 24 March; the book *Emma and Edvard Looking Sideways*, but also the spectator's memory), could then be conceived of as a sort of magnetic field, a vortex that attracts actors to the stage.

EXPANDED TIME: KNAUSGÅRD'S ANACHRONISMS

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Just by serendipity, when I received the invitation to participate in the conference in Oslo, I was reading the Spanish translation of the first book of *My Struggle*, the outstanding six-volume autobiographical novel written by Karl Ove Knausgård. Although I'm not a literary scholar and I was reading it purely for pleasure, for some reason I felt that this book was indeed pertinent to the discussion being held at the conference.⁵

After its international success, Knausgård's well-known autobiographical project of 3600 pages is being translated into Spanish and five of the six volumes have been published to date by Anagrama. In Spain, as in many other contexts, *My Struggle* has also become a centre of debate and discussion about the limits of fiction, the ethics of storytelling, the issue of memory and the exhibition of intimacy (Aguilar). Although Knausgård's project has been compared constantly with Proust—at least in its ambition and the attempt to construct a long-term memory (Schmitt and Kjerkegaard, Hobby, Sturgeon)—there is an atmosphere, a vision of the modern self, of intimacy, of modern life, a sense of loneliness, something that matches the paintings by Munch.

Munch is explicitly mentioned, albeit briefly, on a number of occasions throughout the volumes of Knausgård's work. For example, in the first book he refers to Munch after describing a particular sensation:

These sudden states of clear-sightedness that everyone must know, where for a few seconds you catch sight of another world from the one you were in only a moment earlier, where the world seems to step forward and show itself for a brief glimpse before reverting and leaving everything as before. (246)

⁵ At the time, I did not know that Knausgård was going to be the curator of *Toward the Forest: Knausgård on Munch*, precisely at the Munch Museum (5 June–8 October 2017).

He has this feeling, observing outdoor nature during a train journey or contemplating some artworks. And, at that point, he refers to Munch as the painter that transformed nature into something human: “It is,” he says, “as if humans swallow up everything, make everything theirs. The mountains, the sea, the trees and the forests, everything is coloured by humanness” (248).

It is remarkable that this passage—one of the micro-essays or digressions scattered throughout the volumes—ends up in a reflection on death, the death of bodies, the body of the father. This death is precisely, as James Wood claims, what really triggers the narration.

When I started to read Mieke Bal’s *Emma and Edvard Looking Sideways* so as to familiarize myself with the exhibition’s conception, the subjects, the concepts, the frames of interpretation and experience, I was strongly aware of how *My Struggle*, beyond the explicit references to the painter, deployed a way of seeing the world that really conversed with Munch’s painting. And not only with Munch, but also with Flaubert, with *Madame B* and with the exhibition in which all these visions work together. From the moment I read Bal’s book, I started reading Knausgård from a new perspective, from that which Munch activated by the powerful device curated by Mieke Bal. And, instantly, I noticed that many of the issues examined by Bal in her book were also present, in one way or another, in Knausgård’s work.

One of the first issues is, of course, the presence of a narrator-character through whom we see the world: a focalizer (Bal, *Emma and Edvard* 49). In the same sense that Bal speaks of Emma or Edvard, here we can speak of Karl Ove, the narrator-character, the protagonist of his own self-presentations, as a fictional figure, that is, that produced by figuration. It does not matter if this character, Karl Ove, corresponds with the real author, Karl Ove Knausgård; or even if the things narrated, or the world, are based on actual facts. As the same author emphasizes, *My Struggle* is a novel, not a memoir (Knausgård and Wood). The character-narrator is therefore the product of a process of figuration. It is curious that, as soon as we pick up the novel, we forget the real Knausgård to begin the dialogue with Karl Ove, actually the one through whose eyes we can see, experience and understand the world. We do not care about Knausgård as much as we do about Karl Ove. Beyond the issues appearing in the volumes of his book, such as solitude, the understanding of modern life as lacking authenticity, the question of identity, intimacy and social roles, what interests me about Knausgård project is the work with time. I think that this is precisely one of the most powerful elements of the book, and also one of the problems that strongly links *My Struggle* with the works in the exhibition *Emma & Edvard*.

This use of time is primarily displayed through a discontinuous memory, made of leaps and returns; a memory where different tenses affect and touch each other. The structure of the novel is built through an alteration of linearity. There is no logical order in the succession of books—the death of the father, life with his second wife, childhood, youth—or in the successions of memories in each book. Memory is not a continuous line, but a series of moments, expanded scenes, feelings, routines, events, and more, presented without any kind of order. Memories come and go. Tenses are often confused. The different pasts contaminate each other. The reading experience is mobilized. There are moments in which the reader cannot know exactly *when* he or she is. Everything becomes anachronism. The only thing that maintains the reader's anchoring is that everything is written from a present, that the flux of memories is created here and now. In this manner, memory is produced in the present.⁶

Those time-lapses focus our attention on the same medium. They could be regarded as similar to the “mistakes” that Bal notices in Munch or Flaubert; the flaws that break the illusion of transparency and underscore the artificiality of the medium (*Emma and Edvard* 34–37). The presence of these “mistakes” is a constant in *My Struggle*. Not only can they be glimpsed in the rupture of linearity, in the disorder of the fragments, but also in the rapid and striking jumps from one scene to another, from one tense to another, as if the writer didn't know how to work with ellipsis. Moreover, these “mistakes” can be seen in the way in which he gives importance to banal moments or infinite conversations, at the expense of other supposedly more important and quickly resolved ones, or in the use of language in non-literary language, mainly in the dialogues. There is a carelessness in the form of writing in some passages, in comparison with others. This neglect brings us back to what Bal suggests about Munch's technical “mistakes,” according to the standards of realism (*Emma and Edvard* 37). To produce these mistakes consciously is a way of highlighting the same capacity—or incapacity—of the medium to translate reality.

Needless to say, one of the mistakes that writers who want to tell a story cannot make, following the standards of standard narrativity, is the slowdown of the rhythms of scenes and the minute detail of banal routine events and situations. But Knausgård can painstakingly describe processes, objects, feelings or spaces. This is the routine time that Vargas Llosa referred to in relation to Flaubert—a time that in Knausgård is also

⁶ See Bal, Crewe and Spitzer.

the time of objects; the time of world materiality. In this time, nothing of importance happens, but the world expands and morphs into something material, tangible; a dense, substantial place.

This expanded time is a constant. In the first book, for example, it is quite relevant in the almost 60 pages describing the preparations for a boozy New Year's Eve party for youngsters, or the more than 100 pages describing the process of cleaning Knausgård's father's house after his death. The excessively detailed description forces the reader to share the experience, room by room:

When the last bottle had been taken and I had been given a receipt I joined Yngve, who was standing in front of the household detergents section. We took Jif for the bathroom, Jif for the kitchen, Ajax all-purpose cleaner, Ajax window cleaner, Klorin disinfectant, Mr Muscle for extra-difficult stains, an oven cleaner, a special chemical product for sofas, steel wool, sponges, kitchen cloths, floor rags, two buckets and a broom from this aisle, some fresh rissoles from the meat counter, potatoes and a cauliflower from the vegetable section. Apart from that, things to put on bread, milk, coffee, fruit, a tray of yoghurts and a few packets of biscuits. (333–34)

This is on the borderline of tedium, requiring from the reader a strange attention. As James Wood states, “there is something ceaselessly compelling about Knausgård's book: even when I was bored, I was interested.” This interest is far from being a morbid or voyeuristic curiosity. Actually, the exhibition of intimacy taking place in *My Struggle* is clearly different from the exhibitionism of social networks or media—the spectacularization of the intimacy and emotions, as happens on Facebook, where our life becomes a superficial, banal image. The way Knausgård works with routine, intimacy or everyday life, is deterrent, dissuasive for the reader's curiosity. It requires attention and also a disposition to share the world of memories. To maintain this attention a bodily engagement is also required. We imagine the body of the character-narrator, but also that of the writer penning these exasperating passages, and our own bodies in tension; a never solved tension that keeps us on the move.

As the Argentinean writer Graciela Speranza indicates, Knausgård's project is about the expansion of reading time to the limit of tedium, in order to allow readers to inhabit the place, hosting there their own mental drift, their own dispenser of memories (145–50). *My Struggle* opens memory and creates a space for actions, digressions, descriptions. More than the flux of memories, what really matters is the world that has been

created, the place for memory; a place that is not so different from the exhibition space. Whatever happens, whatever is told is not as important as the creation of the possibility to tell them, the creation of a world to be inhabited; a world where everyday life can be deployed beyond the accelerated rhythm of our fast, modern world.

CONCLUSION

Graciela Speranza examines Knausgård's work in relation to the more general tendency in contemporary art to overflow established time models, especially what we can call "modern time," described by thinkers like Hartmut Rosa not only as a continuous process of acceleration, but also as a global process of synchronization with the "Western Hour," the monochronic time of capitalism (xx). In this scenario of acceleration and dematerialization of life experience, where even intimacy and emotions have been subsumed by capitalism—emotional capitalism, following Eva Illouz—art constitutes an interruption, a place for resistance.

The authors that I discuss in this essay—Munch, Flaubert, Mieke Bal and Michelle Williams Gamaker, and Karl Ove Knausgård—operate precisely from that space of resistance; a physical space, but also a mental space. A space that, above all, can be considered a laboratory, in the sense understood by Néstor García Canclini: a place to experiment with ways of relation, of thinking, of experience, of inhabiting the world (xi). This social laboratory has a concrete place (the exhibition space or the work of art), but its scope is projected onto the living world. The power of art, the capacity of affecting and mobilizing us is to be found, above all, in its faculty to reverberate in the world beyond the museum. After all, when we spectators leave a museum, when we depart from the immersion in an artistic space, when we close a book and return to "real life," our body remains the same. If some transformation has been produced, this reverberates in the living world. If a change in our experience of time has occurred, this time does not disappear, but travels with us, like a wake, in life.

In *Infancy and History*, discussing Walter Benjamin and the concept of revolution, Giorgio Agamben states: "the original task of a genuine revolution, therefore, is never merely to 'change the world,' but also—and above all—to 'change time'" (91). Here, we could say that to change time in the exhibition space, to change it in our way of experiencing the work of art, to change it like Mieke Bal does in the exhibition *Emma & Edvard*, is not a small change in a limited space; on the contrary, it has to be seen as a big step forward *vis-à-vis* the possibility to move the world forward.

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