

## ***Alice Beyond the Selfie. To be worthy of what happens to her***

by PAOLO VIGNOLA\*

When I say ‘Alice becomes larger’, I mean that she becomes larger than she was. By the same token, however, she becomes smaller than she is now. Certainly, she is not bigger and smaller at the same time. She is larger now; she was smaller before. But it is at the same moment that one becomes larger than one was and smaller than one becomes. This is the simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present. [...] Alice does not grow without shrinking and vice versa.

Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*

Alice’s becoming, as becoming simultaneously larger and smaller, provides the opportunity to diagnose the present through a phenomenon more “current” than ever: Tiqqun’s “Jeune-Fille” (young girl), which today is amplified by social networks. At the same time, Alice’s becoming indicates a political strategy that is rigorously untimely, which means inclined to find singular virtualities that escape the chronology of the commodification of the time of existence. Following Deleuze’s *Logic of Sense*, but also projecting it onto the present (hence in-actualizing it), the commodification of existence occurs first in chronological time, which is why one says, “time is money”. This is the time of consumption, time that literally consumes itself, but it is also the time in which we consume and consume ourselves. With incomparable style, Deleuze opposed to that sort of metaphysical hourglass, i.e. Chronos, the flashing of another temporality, the one of Aion:

In accordance with Aion, only the past and future inhere or subsist in time. Instead of a present which absorbs the past and future, a future and past divide the present at every instant and subdivide it ad infinitum, in both directions at once. Or rather, it is the instant without thickness and without extension, which subdivides each present into past and future, rather than vast and thick presents which comprehend both future and past in relation to one another... Whereas Chronos expressed the ac-

---

\* Prometeo researcher, Yachay Tech. This publication was sponsored by the Prometeo Project of the Secretariat for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of the Republic of Ecuador.

tion of bodies and the creation of corporeal qualities, Aion is the locus of incorporeal events, and of attributes which are distinct from qualities. Whereas Chronos was inseparable from the bodies which filled it out entirely as causes and matter, Aion is populated by effects which haunt it without ever filling it up... Always already passed and eternally yet to come, Aion is the eternal truth of time: *pure empty form of time*, which has freed itself of its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound its own circle (Deleuze 1990: 148).

It is indeed from Aion's point of view that the becomings of Carroll's Alice are to be understood, Aion being the extra-corporeal and ineffectual modality of Time itself, split between past and future, escaping for this reason from the trap of identity. If it is with Chronos that one can tell the story of what happens to him and of his gestures as a succession, it is only Aion that allows us to deal with the events happening on another plane, that of Thinking, which experiments with, counters the effects of and, by this, extracts the sense of, our actions and passions within that which occurs: "the Event is in what happens". Furthermore, as *The Logic of Sense* teaches us, this Thought moves through paradoxes, that is, by overcoming opinion, common sense and all the images imposed or suggested by philosophy, politics, science, power (from religion to the market, from the state to culture). These are the images that indicate to us how to think and how to watch ourselves in the mirror.

In this sense, *La Deleuziana* desires to think Alice's becoming as a becoming-woman both in its a-chronological theoretical paradoxicality and in the political paradoxicality that is expressed in actuality. Aware of and enthusiastic about the inseparability of the two dimensions (theoretical and political) within Deleuze's writing and thought, the journal suggests a pathway to sense the entrance to which resides in the most general recognition of becoming, as the movement of thought unfolding through its conceptual personae. It deals with a particular entrance, or a precise paradox, inasmuch it immediately opens onto that middle ground between philosophy and literature, from which comes Deleuze's Alice herself. It is indeed in the interstices between concepts and writings, from which "one comes back with red eyes" (Deleuze 1997), that there occurs both the becomings (becoming woman, child, animal, imperceptible, etc.) and the creation of conceptual personae. Hence the front door to becoming allows us to enter the Outside, to "breathe some possibility", that is, to feel and observe the lines of flight that Deleuzian thought makes available confronted with a present that it wishes to elude, but only so as to be able to survey and overfly it, and in this way to invent strategies capable of critiquing it.

Why Alice? Because she becomes both young girl (Jeune-Fille) and woman at the same moment. It should be remembered that, amongst all the becomings, for Deleuze and Guattari becoming-woman is the pre-condition and the unavoidable starting point of the entire process of minoritarian becoming.

The reasons for such an incipit are essentially political, and they refer to the phallogo-

centric valency inscribed in the constitution of Western subjectivity. The man (male) is indeed “the privileged referent of Subjectivity, the standard-bearer of the norm/law/logos [that] majority represents, the dead heart of the system” (Braidotti 1997: 65). Consequently, the masculine can be nothing but a site for deconstruction and critique – becoming is only minoritarian – and moreover becoming-woman is to be understood as “a fundamental step in the process of becoming, for both and for all sexes”. It is in this sense that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, “even women must become-woman”, while today, from the Alps to the Pyramids, from the Manzanares to the Rhine, it seems that the trend is that of becoming young girls – and of selfies, or the self-/auto-exposing use of subjectivity’s digital showcase, with Facebook representing the symptoms of this “infantility”.

Certainly La Deleuziana, a woman and young girl within the same becoming as Alice, does not intend to lash out either at a mass phenomenon or at the tendencies of a gender that would also include her – not to mention the fact that she is on Facebook as well... Thus the moment has come to explicate the sense of being a young girl today, by returning to Tiquun’s theory (conceived at the end of the last century), for whom the “Jeune-Fille” is a sort of updating of this anthropomorphosis of capital (Cesarano 2000), which is the result of a phenomenological description that concerns the anthropophizing and anthropopoietic process of Capital. The latter makes itself human, incarnates itself in it, and by this makes every man a part of itself – building the human starting from its axioms. In this sense, we feel obliged to add, we must also investigate, at a conceptual level, the paradoxical feminization of work, which colors or affects and abuses cognitive capitalism beyond and within any gender distinction. Moreover, and in line with the “Postscript on the Societies of Control”, the Jeune-Fille best allows us to understand the valorization of individual differences by marketing and Data Behaviourism (Rouvroy 2013), inasmuch as they are objects of promotion and exploitation, as used in post-disciplinary societies.

Why the Jeune-Fille? First, because “she” is not a sexuated or generational concept (and thus to be confined within a singular social figure, precisely that of the young girl), inasmuch as she can be identified with every subject – *in primis* the male – that embodies the becoming-commodity of human being. Because, therefore, she “is only the model citizen such as commodity society has defined it since world war one, as an explicit response to revolutionary threats against it” (Tiquun 2001: iii). Because, definitely, as a product of the valorization of difference, the Jeune-Fille becomes a singularity perpetually in the mirror, and she “would be that being that has no more intimacy with itself except as a value, and all of whose activity, in all of its details, will finally come down to self-valuation” (ivi: v). Here it is thus the selfie, as the current mirror of the Jeune-Fille, the contemporary screen that, in the auto-valorization of the user, gives vent to the symptom of presence’s and the present’s neurosis, a neurosis that marries the symbolic misery generated by the hypertrophy of communication grown on social networks and

through their communicative models.

Unlike Tiqqun, we do not think (ourselves) from the height of a theoretical and political community, as adamantine revolutionary subjectivities<sup>1</sup>, because we are conscious of the milieu of capitalistic control, the one of the digital screens where our unconscious lives. We must also be aware, as Veronique Bergen emphasizes, of the tendential capture of Aion, i.e. of becomings, by the Market: Aion is increasingly reterritorialized, hence chronologized. Nevertheless, or maybe precisely for this reason, we can desire Aion only because we are dangerously immersed in this chronological present that offers to us only sterilized differences and nomadisms. And it is for this same reason that becoming is possible and, firstly, revolutionary becoming. To ignore our immersion in this present would be to be worthy only of what happens to others. Therefore, we have no need to cry, nor to hope, but let us try to find new weapons – following Deleuze’s parodic suggestion of an art of control:

Television is the form in which the new powers of “control” become immediate and direct. To get to the heart of the confrontation you’d almost have to ask whether this control might be reversed, harnessed by the supplementary function opposed to power: whether one could develop an art of control that would be a kind of new form of resistance. (Deleuze 1995: 89)

Yesterday the television, today the selfie and the social network: these are almost impossible words for some Martian attempting to learn English, but they are nevertheless functional, each in relation to the other, for the capitalist exploitation of relationships (Stiegler 2015) and paired together by His Holiness Communication. The fact that the selfie, as a monadography of the 21st century, has captured so much territory as to become the most used practice on social networks gives pause for thought. Perhaps it is a kind of reaction to something that no longer exists. And precisely because this is what it lacks, capitalism – which is an artist of lack – flaunts its presence. Deleuze, following Klee, already said long ago that “the people are missing”; today one could say that “the social is missing”. The social of digital technology seems indeed to be substituting itself for the social itself, emptying it of its meaning, to the point that psychic and collective individuation (Simondon 1989) gets lost in the cracks of individualization, while “taking care of the self and of others” (Foucault 1986) – without which there can be neither complicity nor solidarity – degenerates into taking care of selfies and avatars. This is the ground zero of sociality, in which one is tied with another only in being driven to adhere to what is offered to us, as monads that can touch each other only through screens – it is not even a matter of profile, but of profiling.

If the mirror, like that composed of water within which Narcissus is entombed, was the first screen, in the case of the myth it was neither a selfie nor stupidity, because the

---

<sup>1</sup> For a critique of Tiqqun’s position see Consigliere, Paravagna 2008.

two, as we know them, are products of the most soporific of powers, i.e. capitalism, which today stirs up the drives to annihilate desire. The Jeune-Fille in selfie and per selfie thus expresses regression to the drive to commodify the process of subjectivization, which works like a kind of walled path dedicated to an essentially blind and entropic *jouissance*, inasmuch as it is entirely flattened into consumption.

If desire is for Deleuze and Guattari a productive social power, negentropic and vital, it is not by chance that Tiqqun describes the Jeune-Fille as a corpse wearing flawless makeup – and this is even more true thanks to the filters and tweaks of Instagram, Photoshop or smartphone apps. Instead, Alice, even in front of a mirror, has no need for makeup, or for sexy or cheeky poses, or tags and sharing; nor does she need an identity or a nickname, her becoming escapes from cookies and profiling, and she has no need to login, because she already has her “intensity card”. Hence we would love to suggest that Alice, between her becomings, also becomes La Deleuziana, and vice versa.

Furthermore, with this issue we would like to attempt to concretize what we wrote in the Manifesto of this journal:

La Deleuziana is above all a figure of thought, or a conceptual character: a girl, a woman, or even a becoming-woman – of concepts, of authors, of a century that otherwise will never be Deleuzian. As a woman, La Deleuziana is a response to the Jeune-Fille of capitalism, who is the commodified subjectivity through which desire is systematically addressed, which means destroyed, in favour of the algorithmic computation of behaviours. If one must dare once in life, we hope that La Deleuziana would be a bit like L’anti-Œdipe of this age: *l’anti-jeunefille* that tries to trace a line of flight from the sad passions to which thought is often led.<sup>2</sup>

Hence we dare, even if only for a moment, and with those who desire it, to unleash a barrage of concepts that attempt to incise the present. In short, it seems that the moment has come for La Deleuziana, too, like (the) woman, to become Deleuzian.

Why, finally, do we choose woman? Because the only weapon that we hold, that is, critical sense as the power of creation, can be shaped only by writing – in any form, even digital – and for Deleuze to write is to become-woman, “a becoming-woman that could be obtained only through a fight” (Deleuze, Guattari 1987) against the forces attempting to degrade and dissolve us into the ever-increasing current of stupidity and micro-fascism. And the woman can be everything, but not fascism. More generally, the vital and emancipatory gesture of writing consists in conjugating the molecular fluxes crossing the subjects and their identitarian segments (genders, species, ethnic groups, ages, classes, etc.) in order to bring them to the thresholds of dis-identification, which alone allows for revolutionary alliances to form between minorities. And one can be sure that as long as there is life, there is minority. Furthermore, the becoming-woman of writing – that is, being in the minority even if in front of one’s own identity and that Deleuze sees

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ladeleuziana.org/manifesto/>

in many writers (Kafka, James, Lawrence, Miller and Virginia Woolf herself) – does not consist in “writing as” a woman (just as becoming-animal is not reached by “imitating” the animal), but in making alliances with those who suffer the effects of a majority.

So here, then, is a first step towards rebuilding the “social that is missing”: writing as the tracing of a line that dis-identifies us and as the encounter with an other with whom we would be able to join. And for this reason, too, Woman seems to us the name to give to the strategies of transformation and counter-effectuation of the torrent of events that is annihilating critical thought. Woman as Greece, as Lampedusa, as the Moon and the Earth, as (geo)philosophy.

## Contents

We decided to open this second issue of the journal with a sort of present that Veronique Bergen sent to the editorial board after reading the call for paper of this issue: a portrait of La Deleuziana, which the reader can find in French (original version), in English and in Italian. Such a portrait, which is generous and critical, bright and visionary at the same time, represents for us a kind of second manifesto, for which we will try to become worthy.

As in the previous issues, La Deleuziana proposes a meaningful path through its sessions, in order to disclose the key elements that have been suggested in the call for papers. Hence, within the “Necessity/Concepts” category the reader could find three different insights of what Alice’s point of view might mean for our present. Rosi Braidotti’s *Vitalismo – Materia – Affermazione* (transcription of a lesson given in Bologna on 21 Oct. 2014), focuses on several contemporary issues, such as digital ‘second life’, genetically modified food, advanced prosthetics, robotics and reproductive technologies. Thanks to her deep engagement in Women’s Studies, Braidotti brings the reader to a fundamental question for the present issue of La Deleuziana: “is woman *anthropos*?”. This question involves a radical inquiry about the phallogentrism behind the meaning and the postures of western civilization – to which Braidotti has dedicated her own work.

Elonora De Conciliis’ *Il divenire donna dell’idea e la verità della Jeune-Fille* grabs from another angle the philosophical issue about woman, gender and capitalism. Starting with a deep reading of Derrida’s deconstruction of the image of Woman in the history of philosophy and in Western civilization, De Conciliis suggests using this very thesis for a diagnosis of Tiquun’s “Jeune-Fille” as a valid concept to describe the anthropomorphization of Capital. While the female, according to Tiquun, seems to become the image of contemporary capitalism, De Conciliis, passing through Lacan, Derrida and Baudrillard, indicates Woman as the subject capable of escaping both from philosophy’s traditional phallogentrism and from neoliberal capitalism.

On this emancipatory path, Gianluca de Fazio's article (*Etica delle composizioni. Sul divenire-donna e le linee di fuga della corporeità*) could represent a useful tool in its description of Deleuze's concept of 'becoming-woman'. As the author explains, if this concept can be thought at the crossroads of two key Deleuzian issues, the body and the event, the becoming as movement of social transformation also indicates its ethical and political actuality.

The section "Symptomatology" hosts two articles focusing on Deleuzian "becoming-woman" as well, but their purposes are more focused on "what is happening to us". In particular Stefano Dughera, with the article *Per una lettura deleuziana del capitalismo cognitivo. Sul divenire-donna del lavoro contemporaneo*, proposes to use becoming-woman as a lens to investigate the transformation of contemporary work within the so-called cognitive capitalism. The broad field of authors Dughera involves allows the reader to develop a deep understanding of both the contradictory movement that characterizes contemporary capitalism and the relationships between Deleuzian becoming and the social and political production of the Common.

The second article, written by Öznur Karakaş (*La petite fille de la surface comme figure de la dissolution du soi*) investigates the possible traces of the Jeune-Fille contained in *The Logic of Sense*, whose contemporary symptoms have been described by Tiqqun. After a recognition of the key concepts involved to describe the feminine in *The Logic of Sense*, Karakaş emphasises, with the help of Luce Irigaray, the fundamental difference between the Jeune-Fille and the becoming-woman: while the former represents the result of the capitalist apparatus of capture, the latter calls for a conception of the feminine to fight against any patriarchal symbolic, political and economic system.

The section "Regions" hosts the Italian translation of Theresa Senft's article, *The Skin of the Selfie (La pelle del selfie)*, which reflects upon the political stakes of *aisthesis* in the age of touch-screens and the selfie. At the centre of the essay there is the public dissemination of selfies featuring the face of Sandra Bland, an African American activist with the group Black Lives Matter, who was imprisoned after a routine traffic stop. Sandra Bland died in prison, leaving us with the traces of her life on social networks. Starting from this fact, Senft has developed a meaningful discourse on public images of private life and individual death that calls for a reconfiguration of the relation between aesthetics and politics. For Senft this new political relation to *aisthesis* should focus on the surface of our existences, that is on their and our skins.

The "Red Eyes" session presents two articles focused on Deleuze and literature, which is also the starting point of this issue. Valentina Maini's article (*"Io sono grande e piccola insieme": divenire Amelia Rosselli*), suggests a parallelism between the work of the Italian poet Amelia Rosselli and Deleuze's Alice. Such a parallelism is found by Maini in the common tension towards that paradoxical form of becoming, by which both the poet and Deleuze's conceptual character express their unsettled identities: becoming bigger and littler at the same time. This kind of paradoxical tendency concerns all the political

questions raised by the essay of the present issue, thus testifying to the strong relation between politics and literature that inspired Deleuze's writing.

Olga López's article, *Proust-Deleuze: les signes des jeunes-filles*, analyses the becoming woman in the work of Marcel Proust. Following a Deleuzian suggestion, López shows that Proustian aesthetics cannot be separated from a tension towards the becoming woman through which the affects seem to be created in *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Describing this kind of artistic methodology, López's work at the same time develops a singular point of view, or more precisely, its own singular methodology in relation to the present issue of the journal. If most of the articles of this issue describe the becoming-woman either in general or from the point of view of this woman, even if written by men, López attempts to provide a paradoxical alternative, in the wave of the whole issue: as woman, describing the becoming-woman of a male writer.

In the section "New Weapons" the reader will find Angela Balzano's article *Tecnocorpi e vie di fuga postumane* and the reason is immediately evident. By reviewing both the theoretical assumptions of post-structuralism (Deleuze and Foucault) and the contributions of neo-materialist feminism, the essay describes the metamorphosis of subjectivities in the age of biotechnologies. With the help of Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway, Balzano tries to develop a theoretical and political path based on the political-transformative dimension of the cyborg and nomadic subjectivity. The goal is then to trace the condition of possibility of the invention of new critical weapons for a non-anthropocentric and non-phallogocentric subjectivity – a subjectivity still to come.

Daniel Ross article, *Touch/Screen*, is the content of the section "Anomalies", through which La Deleuziana attempts to approach the major questions of the issue from a different point of view. If the screens are one of the key points of the present issue, what has not been so clearly declared is the question of cinema and of tele-technology in relation to subjectivity, desire and becoming. Nevertheless, such a question is unavoidable in order to understand most of the causes that brought us to deal with the Jeune-Fille, the selfies and other troubles for subjectivity signalled in the call for papers. Ross develops a genealogical critique of such causes, in order to show, with the help of Bernard Stiegler, how cinema, television and contemporary screens not only describe or even pervert our desire, but essentially participate in the constitution and possibility of this very desire. Understanding this might allow the development of that Deleuzian art of control signalled above, an art that became possible precisely in the aftermath of the invasive effects of television.

In the last section "Precursors" we will find Alexander Wilson's text, *Comment choisir ce qui aura été ? Réflexions sur l'optimisme prométhéen contemporain*. This section hosts essays different from the general subject of the present issue that call for the next one. In this regard, Wilson's article represents a sort of bridge from the "anomalous" Ross' text and the issue 3 of the journal. Indeed, Wilson posits two movies on the backcloth of his reflections about pessimism and optimism for climate change and technological acceler-



ation: von Trier's *Melancholia* and Nolan's *Interstellar*. The opportunity disclosed by those movies is thus to reflect, following contemporary philosophers such as Deleuze and Stiegler, but also with Leibniz, upon a fundamental question: what could living without a compossible future in relation to climate change mean? How can we live within the risk of a generalized death, not (only) of human being, but of the very Earth? The goal of thought becomes, once again, "not to cry, not to hope, but to find new weapons".

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Braidotti, R. (1997) "Degli insetti e delle donne". in Vaccaro, S. (ed.), *Il secolo deleuziano*. Milano: Mimesis. pp. 59-94.
- Cesarano, G. (2000). *Manuale di sopravvivenza*. Torino: Boringhieri.
- Consigliere, S., Paravagna, S. (2008). "Da dentro: relazioni con il possibile". in Coppo, P., Consigliere, S., Paravagna, S. *Il disagio dell'inciviltà*. Milano: Colibrì. pp. 103-137.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *The Logic of Sense*. London: Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations 1972-1990*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Deleuze, G. (1997). *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The Care of the Self. History of Sexuality 3*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Rouvroy, A. (2013). "The end(s) of critique : data-behaviourism vs. due-process", in Hildebrandt, M. & De Vries E., (eds.). *Privacy, Due Process and the Computational Turn. Philosophers of Law Meet Philosophers of Technology*. London: Routledge.
- Simondon, G. (1989). *L'individuation psychique et collective*. Paris: Aubier.
- Stiegler, B. (2015). *La société automatique I. L'avenir du travail*. Paris: Fayard.
- Tiqqun (2001). *Raw Materials for a Theory of the Young Girl*. <http://younggirl.jottit.com/>