

Double Edge in Actos del Habla exhibition  
Museo de Arte. Universidad Nacional de Colombia  
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In *De Doble filo* [Double-Edged] we come once again face to face with performatory language at work. Performatory language – as stated already – is a constant concern in Clemencia's work. The language that appeals to her is one that is not useful for telling, for narrating, for describing, for theorizing; it is rather a language that functions, that makes, as it speaks: a voiceless speech. And this is because her work gravitates around the retrieval of *the event*.

The event refuses to be spoken. It runs against learned knowledge, against certainty. It resists the act of "making known", as Derrida would put it. It unfolds itself within the secret, in the promise – which is the very basic principle of language – and it is always the possibility of impossibility. We cannot master the occurrence consciously and, therefore, we are not able to pronounce it..

This language meant for silence, how does it work?

That is perhaps a question that the artist asks herself over and over. What we find in the works displayed in the exhibition *Actos del habla* [Speech Acts] is something quite close to the experience of the ritual in language, and that is how I have addressed those works. This operative process of language has to do with the body, with the gesture, with repetition.

Repetition is fundamental to language. In order to have speech it is necessary to have repetition. This would be one more contradiction that is difficult for us to negotiate by way of the knowledge we have in regards to language: How can we experience *the event* – which is always exceptional and stands apart from every rule – on the bases of language? Is there for us perhaps another possibility for relating to this experience of the occurrence aside from language?

In *De doble filo* we see writing being iterated once and again – literally so – as a house is drawn on the screen, and later that house is sketched over and over on a surface of mud. This writing is displayed as a trace of the passing of a flood whose residual waters keep erasing the lines that had been drawn. Already we can see the avalanche making its appearance. We listen to the violence of nature as it demolishes. Then there is a blank space and then the sound and the image of a slash produced by the stab of a cutting edge. There is no doubt, then, that this subject who draws with his/her body upon mud is witnessing the passage of the death of others (his/her own); confronting the ultimate loss of a habitat; standing before an unarmed and torn forsakenness (as in the gash made by the cutting edge on the screen), given the impossibility of harboring whatever comes upon him/her vertically from above and without warning: that which leaves him/her destitute, "homeless."

The experience that we are led into by means of the clues that this performatory process provides is one that cannot be assimilated on the basis of mind comprehension, of erudition, of learned knowledge. We stand before an experience that cannot be sensed but through the speech of silence. It is such *scripture* which generates a *personal experience*. And just as in *Treno*

[Funereal Song] – in the sense that they arise from the act of mourning – these end up being “*actos del habla*,” speech acts.

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This *mise en presence* of the occurrence that Clemencia attempts in her video-installations is made possible and indeed effective through the use of video media, a strategy that has come to span the entire production of this artist. The fact is that in these *stage settings*– which use moving images and sound, warily handled from the bases of their profound cultural meaning and, thus, of the effects they have on our psychic life – a labor of the unconscious comes into play (in the psychoanalytic sense), which acts upon the spectators who come face to face with these works.

Audiovisual media – the one closest to filmmaking above all – is a challenge that must be addressed with a fresh analysis and included in the field of visual studies. It is a matter of interest, now – once again calling upon him in this brief text – to consult Derrida’s reflections on filmmaking. Let us quote from one of his interviews, where he speaks about filmmaking – from the perspective of the cinematograph – as a phenomenology:

Both the vision and perception of details in a film stand in direct relation with the psychoanalytical procedure. The enlargement not only enhances details; it gives access to another scene, a heterogeneous scene.. There is no equivalent for the cinematographic perception, since it happens to be the only one that is capable of making one understand, by way of the experience, that which is a psychoanalytical practice: hypnosis, fascination, identification, all of these terms and procedures are shared elements of filmmaking and psychoanalysis; and there we have the sign of an “ensemble thinking” that appears to be primordial.

The emotional proximity of the spectator, which arises in the event of personally experiencing such works, is what actually makes it possible for the pieces to have an effect upon us: the work comes into being just at the moment when an encounter takes place between the spectators and their own obsessions, their phantoms. That is where performatory speech acts upon the spectator’s present personal experience in a – so to speak – ritual situation; and that is Clemencia’s main concern. The spectators create – complete – the *apparitions* in visual images as well as sound, and those return to them as an echo (of their memories and of their unconscious.) “... Apparitions in their memories, in their bodies, in their desires (in a mode that no representation could bring about).” Within the relationship that we establish with the piece, which hangs on a return of the very self, there is an added one that is established: a relationship of belief – almost child-like, total – in whatever happens there, in that which we are “seeing.”