The non-monuments: Popular artifacts

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The article pursues two main aims: first, to construct a definition of what I call a 'non-monument', based on a dialogue with the field of commemorative monumentality and deconstructive anti-monumentality; second, to describe possible variants of these popular artifacts as well as potential criteria that allow their classification. Inspired by the reflection on American aesthetics proposed by Rodolfo Kusch and in dialogue with semiotic categories developed by Juan Magariños de Morentín, I take the assumption that non-monuments, despite proposing a deconstruction of the commemorative as anti-monuments do, they do so from a different perspective: they put into practice those discourses located in a specific territory that belong to the doxa, to the people, to the forms of popular saying (Magariños 2010). In this sense, they are non-monuments because a) they do not continue neither deny the commemorative monumentality nor the different forms of anti-monumentality and counter-monumentality; b) they do not recover official, social, historical or underground memories; c) they do not propose the same themes as the commemorative sites for the construction of collective identities; and d) despite all this, they are singular artifacts that propose to articulate the habituality of the discourses in order to put popular culture into action.In this way, from the development of this definition, in a second moment, different non-monumental proposals are described, as popular artifact projects for the Viedma-Carmen de Patagones comarca, province of Río Negro and province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Projects that are born from an archaeological work with popular discourses for their implementation.

Keywords   Non-monuments, Anti-monumentality, Commemoration, Popular Artifacts, Argentina

Introduction

The field of contemporary art is confronted with the issue of setting theoretical categories for the analysis of works of art holding no direct relation to the conditions and places within

which art is created in the context of Latin America. Stemming from Western philosophy, the suggested conceptualizations on art in Latin America establish a kind of analysis that seems to disregard the wide variety of ways to do and to think about the *est-ético* (esthetic-ethic) in this territory (Ongaro Haelterman 2016). In this sense, developing a proposal to validate a planned work of art which I have entitled non-monuments/popular artifacts is, above all, a controversial task within academic spheres, as it challenges previous work that has historically allowed to prove the validity of artistic creations.

Firstly, as it involves a methodological and epistemological approach that questions the positive grounds for the concepts taken into consideration when considering a work of art. This opens the possibility for a kind of reflection that suggests deconstructing the methods to stay away from building mere tautological knowledge (Kusch 1975). Secondly, putting such a proposal into practice also involves considering art, the subject and the object, from a new philosophical field reconciling the body, the act of inhabiting and cohabiting in the symbolic universe in progress. In other words, the illusion of referentiality of that modern subject disappears and, as a hypothesis, he is built up through a way of inhabiting, speaking, emerging with the language. Thirdly, it is the symbolic order that enables us to consider culture as the necessary framework for the development of a theory. This theory is born from a praxis, a way of doing or a state of being throughout that process as the conditions, in our case, of the culture within a specific territory – as a symbolic template that shapes life. Such theory allows to develop interrelations with this proposal to establish the meanings to build the scope of memories and stories projected by the work of art under consideration.

In the present paper, the term *territory* refers to the concept of country as a crystallized convention of the idea of nation state. In this way, it is possible to go back over the process of doing that takes into consideration not only historic determinations of a continuist discourse, but also, the reinvention of a heterogenous place that when spread allows for the emergence of a new space where we can think about ourselves. Furthermore, I also deem necessary to define what is understood as theory. The purpose of Kusch´s philosophical anthropology is not to define a theory, but a way of doing which lead to a theory, as the categories of technical rationality are left aside in order to consider a new subject of study: the people. Being this the case, theory does not precede practice, but practice reinvents theory (Kusch 1975).

Next, it is worth mentioning that the present epistemological development that comes from the Latin American anthropological philosophy is introduced in the present paper in an experimental dialogue with categories developed at a semiotic level by Juan Magariños de Morentín in his last two papers: the research project *La Universidad de la calle* (The University of the Street, 2011) written in Jujuy, Argentina and the lecture presented at the *X Congreso Mundial de Semiótica* (10th International Congress on Semiotics) entitled *Relación entre la historia de la humanidad y la historia de los sistemas semióticos* (Relation between the history of humankind and the history of semiotic systems). This is not a random convergence

but the result of my own eclectic journey as, along the different paths, I was able to establish connections between the field of semiotics and the field of contemporary art, and in this case, this experience establishes a unique articulation for this planned work of art in progress: the non-monuments.

Finally, this paper aims to hold a dialogue with a developing area within the field of semiotics from a propositional search that describes the conditions of possibility for the construction of a concrete artifact in a territory. In this sense, the present paper may share, in some way, the analytic framework of contemporary semiotic research on monuments and memorials, such as those by Federico Bellentani and Mario Panico[1] in their work on the meanings of monuments and memorials, Natalia Krzyżanowska[2] analyzes the counter-monument discourse and the material commemoration in contemporary urban spaces and Ignacio Brescó and Brady Wagoner, that describe a possible analysis of the affective intertwining of personal and collective memories, looking at the connection between monuments and an inclusive *we*.[3]

After these first clarifications, this paper provides an epistemological foundation that provides support for the non-monuments to take part in or be part of the construction of public space. In this way, they may be able to bring together the different meanings introduced by official discourses in the cultures with in Latin America. In this sense, this paper does not exhaust the subject it deals with: on the contrary, its main purpose is to set the conditions for future developments that help systematize the current proposition.

Between commemoration and Western deconstruction

A monument, in its oldest and most original sense, is a human creation, erected for a specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations. (Riegl 1903)

What we call non-monumentality can be firstly defined taking as a reference the definition of monument introduced by Alois Riegl at the beginning of last century. The elements present in this definition may serve as suggested guidelines that lead our thoughts. First, Riegl states that a monument is a human creation; second, that it is created for a specific purpose: to keep single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations. Therefore, this creation that is the monument intends to communicate what happened so that future generations can keep this classification in mind and the past can become a closed file that gives the illusion of acting as a reference. A symbolic icon which seems to spare ourselves of the need to remember. Nevertheless, keeping these facts as symbols of the illusion of immobility of the past, we need to count on the performativity of the artifact, and also on a series of rituals and rules that set the conditions for potential interpretations and expressions.

As Rosalind Krauss (1979) points out in connection with the gap in the conception of mod-

ern monumentality in the late 1960´s, regarding both, the different ways to do in sculpture within an expanded field, and the questioning of the continuist historicism of a history of art that seems to be waiting for facts to emerge in order to place them along the same time line, what seems to validate the transformation of monuments is the appearance of works of art in the public space which take distance from their possible reference, opening the possibility for conceptual dispersion and allowing us to bring to the forefront those elements that are part of the artifact, the different roles artists may have and the possible meanings that interact with the landscape and the architecture when we do not only have a commemorative purpose.

This point of view suggests breaking away from modern forms of commemoration, while being pioneer in denying the modern, Western and European monumentality, from this experimental connection with sculpture and with the different languages combined in the public space. From experimentation, this gap sets the conditions of possibility to engage into a discussion within the field of arts and the interrelation between contemporary art, social and human sciences to create public art and, specifically, anti-monumentality and negative memories. In this way, what several authors and artists define as negative memory and anti-monumentality in the West[4] is the result of not only a new conceptualization of memories and histories after gathering other facts, such as tragedies and crimes against humanity, but also the construction of works of art that deny Western monumentality. In this sense, and along two paths that complement each other and come together, the use of metalanguage suggested by European and American contemporary art, which revolves around the object monument with the aim of exposing its boundaries and a conceptual ambiguity that deconstructs that modern ritual, finds the need to establish a new representation of the memory of tragic and collective events after World War II. In other words, anti-monumentality is possible thanks to a previous experimental period, a practice that elicits certain ways of thinking, and expressing. Hence non-monumentality becomes a new practice to aesthetically and conceptually deconstruct traditional commemorative monumentality: see for example the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1982) by Maya Lin; *Aschrott Fountain* (1987) by Horst Hoheisel; *Monument against Fascism* (1986-1996) by Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz; *Stolpersteine* (starting from 1990) by Gunter Demnig.

At this point, we can observe that the theoretical pair *monumentality/anti-monumentality*, which holds a correlation with the pair *positive memory/negative memory*, seeks to regroup different actions, site-specifics, architectures, performances to make negative memories clearly visible essentially in the second pole: anti-monuments. Anti-monuments are diverse and heterogenous, but they share a common feature: they establish a criticism of commemoration from recovering some versions of the past set aside and/or absent, disclosing tragedies and crimes taking place in a specific territory or included in the rituals and the agenda of nation-states. Nevertheless, this proposal has been introduced from a static interpretation, as a result of the political group or groups taking part in the project development. As stated by Horst Hoheisel (2009):

> Everything produced by artists to remember the crimes of the past is wrong, in-cluding my own work. We simply have the chance to do it more or less incorrectly. However, we will never be able to draw the real picture of true history. What is true history? Is true history the one told by those in power to keep power, or is true his-tory the one suffered by the oppressed? The Holocaust has been the most extreme event in the history of humankind so far, and every attempt to find an artistic met-aphor for this event shapes a single great metaphor: the impossibility of portraying and reminding ourselves of the Holocaust through art. (Hoheisel 2009: 263)

By opening the possibility for deconstruction, this dichotomous pair developed in Europe establishes a necessary connection with monuments and turns them into places able to revise history and places of remembrance (Nora 1984) even by denying, demystifying or pluralizing them, as there is still a monumental reference in this criticism of a continuous lack of reflection in conflict. I also believe that anti-monuments are still places that hold an opposite referential link to monuments as it exists a correlation between the territory where they are created and the ways of building and conceptualizing both artifacts. Nevertheless, there are some Latin American cases (among others, Nele Azevedo in Brazil and Doris Salcedo in Colombia) that engage in a dialogue with the features of artifacts created in a different territory, establishing a transcultural conversation with anti-monumental experimentation making a significant dis-tinction from those proposals. This is the case, for example, of the remembrance of the Jewish Holocaust, as its recent wounds are still open. In some of these cases, the work of art can be an artifact used by the state as a landmark to commemorate certain events or identities, as it is the case of Salcedo's *Fragmentos* analyzed by Patrizia Violi in this very issue.

As a result of the unique way of being-there in the territory of Latin America, apart from the contemporary proposals mentioned above, there may be other artists that aim to create different aesthetic artifacts based on certain semiotic operations providing the possibility to recover other histories and memories, which emerge from a new place: popular practices and discourses. There is a third position that neither commemorates in a positive way nor de-constructs in a negative way (nor the combination of both) but proposes to recover popular knowledge to give context to other ways of living and projecting, not only with a sense of the past and the present, but with the founding operation of a mobile identity.

State of being in the streets, a dialogue along the borders

In one of the last papers that Juan Magariños de Morentín published before his death, he reflected on the Argentine popular expression 'the university of the street' with the aim of

specifying the possible scope of this concept, defining a research problem and, at the same time, developing a unique approach to the concept of social cognition from the analysis of semiotic behaviors. In this article published in issue 39 of *Cuadernos de la Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales* (Notebooks of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences) of the *Universidad Nacional de Jujuy* (National University of Jujuy), Magariños (2011:20) defines the university of the street as such: '(...) the knowledge gained outside any specific institution (1) but acquired through the daily effort to live or survive in this vast area of personal relationships: in short, what people do to make a living or have an even better life'.

I believe this popular oxymoron allows the author to establish an articulation with the analysis of the doxa by understanding that the field of indicial semiotics and semiotic behaviors are those capable of creating the necessary conditions to produce popular discourses, metaphorical projections and projections of different objects, shapes and images that we learn without a systematic education and in connection with different practices represented/interpreted in the great teaching classroom called university of the street. Magariños conceives the streets as a unique place for the social construction of life skills needed for survival. These are learnt without our consent while inhabiting a specific time and place, while we are out in the streets, in a specific cultural context. According to this view, being-there in the streets, in a specific cultural context, projects a dynamic and open interpreter that moves around borders (Magariños 2008). Even when it comes from a different epistemic origin, this being-there can have a dialogue with the proposal developed by Rodolfo Kusch that defines the diversity of the being when there is a being-there that, as a sign, becomes the prelude for multiple possibilities of being.

Following Kusch, to inhabit a territory means to inhabit a language, as culture involves populating the world with signs and symbols in search for an existential home.[5] Those signs and symbols provide, yet momentarily, the understandings of the world needed to survive; as the author points out, it is needed to return to being-there as a condition for the pre-ontological possibility for the multiple ways of being we can project, while inventing our lives in Latin America. The term *inventing* is used because this is not an essentialist issue proper of inhabiting the South American region to seek an origin or an ultimate truth. On the contrary, what Kusch develops from his study on indigenous thinking, or on the 'style of thinking in the south of the American continent still present in some Creole populations' (Kusch 1970: 259)[6], is a close bond between being-there and thinking in a specific context. He makes evident the need to deny Western academic thinking to go back to those ways of inhabiting and saying that allow to articulate our own way of thinking in the context of a specific territory. For this reason, he understands that 'in order to trace that primary substrate, aboriginal tools are more important than the latest contributions of anthropology and psychology, as they both fail to understand the unique inwardness of the American people (Kusch 1970: 261).

In *Esbozo de una antropología filosófica Americana* (Outline of an American philosophical anthropology), Kusch (1978) considers the difference in meaning between being and being-there

in Latin America by establishing and defining some of the etymological meanings of these verbs. This distinction, proper of the uniqueness of the Spanish language, introduces a signification of the terms *ser* (being, to be seated and static) and *estar* (being-there, to be standing and ready for action); this distinction allows Kusch to suggest a change in the attitude to think of and from Latin America: in his proposal, being-there comes before being, which is ultimately a temporary consequence of being-there[7]. In this and many other senses, this dialogue between Magariños and Kusch may pave the way for new criteria to do research on our ways of gaining knowledge in the collective space. At the same time, this unique semiotic operation described by Magariños may become the starting point to consider what is popular and what are the popular discourses arising from behavioral manifestations of personal and collective knowledge. From Kusch´s perspective, this knowledge is gained by the state of being with others in Latin America.

In the proposition of his research paper *The University of the Street*, Magariños analyzes the existing connection between popular saying, proverbs and behavior in the street. All these are not learnt through systematized teaching and are not taken into consideration as pedagogical knowledge:

> No pedagogical program includes such knowledge among its objectives, as it is considered degraded, vituperable and not deserving academic discussion (or is it the other way around?). I believe, however, that this practice involves cognitive aspects of which there is little awareness, either because it is preferred to leave them in the subconscious, for not considering them worthy to take the form of concrete and politically structured thoughts, or for keeping them to the unconscious, with the intention to ignore them in order to deny the importance of the vulgar in the construction of our identity.

> It is curious that, however, they have given rise to an extensive textual production and that this has been analyzed and interpreted in multiple ways in the academic contexts: such are the proverbs, which I consider to be verbal expressions of that popular and materialistic knowledge, which is not taught in schools or universities. Whose production and empirical transfer I intend to address. Nevertheless, I do not suggest going from proverbs to behavior, because once again we would fall into the trap of the words which, with its rules and constructive demands, would make us see the phenomena we are studying as their mere reflection, without being aware of that trap and assuming that what we see are common behavioral characteristics rather than features of the language that describes them; as a consequence, it would be included again in the formal knowledge. In any case, I believe that the itinerary should be the opposite: going from behavior to proverbs next. (Magariños 2011: 24, my translation)[8]

Both proposals by Kusch and Magariños suggest a unique bond between being-there and a way of gaining knowledge, from which the opportunity to project unconventional forms of history and memory in public spaces is created. Histories and memories allow us to witness popular behavior and discourses that come to life when conducting an archaeological excavation of popular knowledge in discourses that arise from different human relations in a specific territory.

Popular imagination as a gap

At this point, I would like to return to the semiotic process of popular non-monuments in concrete aesthetic operations. To do that, this section defines the suggested epistemological framework. Following both Kusch and Magariños, the considerations on being-there in a certain culture allows to understand the way in which the experience with what is unnamed and non-systematized becomes knowledge useful to live, to coexist with others, to live our emotions and eventually to survive. In this way, Magariños de Morentín goes back to the definition of social cognition provided by the cognitive-sciences dictionary, which is as follows:

> [...] The field of knowledge and competences related to people (oneself and others); the interpersonal relationships between individuals identified by functional and personal standards, in an immediate or relayed relation (communications, processes of mutual positioning and influence); relationship within a human group or between groups; social situations. These knowledge and competencies are related to emotions and affections, motives and intentions that animate social agents, habitually or in a particular circumstance, to the processes of adjustment, influence, avoidance and dissimulation. (Magariños 2011: 22, my translation)[9]

According to this definition, Magariños increases the distance between what he considers the learning style introduced by the intermediary social discourse of modern pedagogical practices, the knowledge of the world suggested by nation state and popular discourses resulting from other experiences, which help create other possible worlds.

> In short, when we try to study the world, what we study is the way in which the social discourse we perceive allows us to perceive that world. This social mediating discourse is constituted by the set of texts constructed with symbols, images, objects and behaviors, and reconstructed, always from a contemporaneity, like the update of those historical social discourses that have managed to be memorized, the spread of the current social discourses that have been heard and the display of social behavior that has become visible.

> I am saying this to be able to establish a space apart from all this, constituted by other apparently unnecessary or even embarrassing knowledge and, as such, excluded from conscious memory, hidden from perception and unprovable, and where one is witness to another landscape which is the result of another history; a space where one can find the cognitive contents of the University of the street, away from the golden prison of the pedagogy, but equally conciliatory in the construction of another world. (Magariños 2011: 23, my translation)[10]

Therefore, following the author´s ideas, it is possible to consider the way popular practices, or the semiotics of behavior in the streets, set the conditions for the development of popular expression. This popular expression creates a gap as it projects and shapes the everyday knowledge that is not gained through systematic study and is yet learnt and used as metaphors in popular discourses, even when forgetting about it[11]. That said, the conceptual hypothesis that the condition of possibility for the existence of non-monuments, as popular artifacts, is given by the behavior and popular expressions artists use or can use to create a new gap going from words to material projections. By combining different languages, this gap projects that knowledge in places other than memorials and official discourses pronounced by the pedagogy of a nation state, where other memories and histories may describe that untold closeness that was possible through the collective practice of being-there with others in the street, in a certain cultural context.

Popular artifacts: A located aesthetic-semiotic operation

At this point, the process that gives origin to non-monuments might be defined as ontopoietic, following the way Magariños considers the history of our understanding of the world where, apart from the reason, he also includes emotions and behavior in the streets (Magariños 2009). In his lecture at the 10 International Congress on Semiotics in La Coruña, Magariños looked at the history of humankind and the history of semiotic systems. He found a connection between three concepts to postulate the necessary semiotic operations that help explain the way we understand the world. This connection established through ontology, ontopathy and ontopoiesis, allows Magariños to explain how heart and reason come together when understanding the world. Reason is not enough: what remains untold, that feeling under our skin and that suffering can only be explained through an intended intervention in grammar. This perspective allows to get closer to understanding the world through ontopoiesis, i.e. the cornerstone for rational knowledge and sensorial perception. In the former case, with an explicit agreement with the grammar rules applied in a specific language at a given time; in the latter, introducing an interruption to create a gap for the emergence of emotions.

This intentional pause in the continuity of grammar opens the possibility for aesthetic con-

siderations in any materiality. At the same time, in contemporary art, there is a unique articulation of artistic languages that come together in the creation of a work of art. Even if Magariños points out that this pause in grammar is not enough and there must be something that remains unexplained and keeps our emotions awake, a pathos), we can suggest this initial scheme as a possible semiotic description to consider not only modern art, as illustrated in the text quoted by the author, but also popular artifacts or non-monuments. In this way, this extrapolation opens the field of aesthetics-semiotics to the possible description of artistic gestures as conscious voluntary actions from which to establish a connection between sensory impressions and the intellect; an aesthetic operation or, as defined by Claudio Ongaro Haelterman taking Rodolfo Kusch´s ideas, operative aesthetics as a meeting point with the funding operation that defines the voluntary gesture made by the artist by breaking grammar rules and forcing an indicial ambiguity that bridges the gap between the heart and reason (Ongaro Haelterman 2008; Magariños 2009).

As Rodolfo Kusch explains, the American continent is a territory of mixed races where the ways of European thinking have had an influence on the available conceptual schemes to analyze the Latin American reality in that place in the world; epistemological assumptions have defined the being of Western modern philosophy as the necessary substrate for the genealogical development of this way of thinking in the south of the American continent to understand the world.

In the same way, to develop an American way of thinking, following the proposal introduced by Kusch, it is necessary to go back over the European philosophical pronouncements that have defined the peoples of the American continent. At this point, it is particularly important to look at the work developed by Kusch in which he suggests considering the temporality of the being, i.e. to learn about their mobility, their unique way of dwelling in provisional symbols that do not crystalize a specific meaning, but allows to temporarily inhabit a territory by being-there (Kusch 1978). In this sense, behavior is shaped by the pre-ontological being-there. Nevertheless, it is not pre-semiotic because even when there is no being: there can be a sign to name that stage as a state of doing, acting, moving. That state of doing that remains unnamed but we all know by means of the experience of learning by being-there and that has already become a sign, facilitates the emergence of new knowledge.

Likewise, the semiotic process for the projection of non-monuments could be the following: a given set of behaviors (being-there) is organized under different metaphors included in popular discourses and proverbs (a possibility of being) and eventually represented in the work of art located in a territory where other histories and memories (state of being) can appear. One of those beings is made up by popular behaviors and discourses as they help shape life´s lessons: proverbs, metaphoric projections in the streets, acting and inhabiting a territory.

Another possible being, that suggests a movement for this process of recovering knowledge from the university of the street, is bringing to life these discourses and behaviors through a work of art in the attempt to name our being-there, yet transitionally. In this way, a new artic-

ula1The experience is intimate, collective and unspeakable because that popular knowledge is created in the interaction with others, but also in our emotional privacy. These emotions remain untold and, in this way, allow to renew our suffering and other histories and memories that may, even temporarily, find a place in a specific territory.

Nobody will build a monument in your honor, a work in progress

Drawing on the epistemological framework proposed above, it is possible to develop the research and artistic creation project named *Nadie te va a hacer un monumento*[12] (hereafter Nobody will build a monument in your honor), which takes into consideration popular behaviors and discourses to build and develop different ways of making a work of art.

Nobody will build a monument in your honor is an Argentine popular proverb that means no matter the effort we make to achieve our goals, nobody is actually going to build a monument to commemorate our life or any aspect of our existence (Barbieri 2017). This demonstrates our marginal participation in the official history and makes evident that any possibility for assemblage is the result of conditions beyond our will. Nevertheless, *Nobody will build a monument in your honor* is a popular discourse resulting from the experience and learning gained by being with others in the streets, creating a language proper of our bodies, gestures and behavior designed by which takes into consideration popular behaviors and discourses aiming to build and develop different ways of making a work of art.

In his work *Geocultura del hombre americano* (Geoculture of the American man), Kusch develops a relevant idea for the present project by describing the opposition between being someone and just being-there, establishing a dialogue with another dichotomous pair: external encyclopedic knowledge and inner knowledge, inside ourselves. Kusch points out that being someone in our American culture involves using the tools provided by the Western encyclopedia, a tautological form of knowledge or instrumental knowledge, to be part of the cultural property, individualize ourselves and, in this way, overcome the fear of being dispersed.

On the other hand, being-there involves confronting the knowledge of not knowing we live and that we cannot explain, and as that knowledge is common to all, because it is part of our emotional privacy and it raises questions regarding the experiences of our daily life:

> (...) a child is born, a relative dies, we pass an exam, we feel bitter or happy, things that happen. It may be that 'just being-there', and it is interesting to note that for that being-there there is no explanation, apart from those mythical 'why' questions we confront in our lives and that, after all, provide no explanation. (Kusch 1978)

That is why just being-there, as it brings out our unique way of dwelling in the Latin Amer-

ican territory, becomes the starting point to invoke what is temporary. In this way, it establishes the possibility for the existence of what is ephemeral, nomadic and two-sided (Kusch 1958), i.e. the necessary mobility to understand and accept the uniqueness of inhabiting Latin America without having the need to be someone.

NOTES

1 The present paper includes the foundations for a semiotic approach that projects, among other things, the way the context surrounding the construction of monuments allows to explore the origin of their meanings, by opposing different interpretations provided by diverse communities in a specific cultural context (Bellentani and Panico 2016).

2 Krzyzanowska describes counter-monuments as particular forms that follow a semiotic code based on the recontextualization of languages and ways of commemoration, both within private and public sectors, and that are actively displayed in the urban space not just as a place, but also as an issue or possible speaker to exchange reflections on memory and identity that are being introduced (Krzyzanowska 2009).

3 According to Vygotsky´s account of semiotic mediation (1987), memory and experience emerge and are shaped through different cultural tools and symbolic means. They are taken from a social group and work as mediators for memory, as culture in action. This mediation involves the transformation of a relationship through the intervention of a new factor, as it might be to remember through a photograph, a knot in a rope, or a monument´ (Brescó and Wagoner 2019).

4 I highlight the work developed by several authors in the book *Memorias urbanas en diálogo: Berlín y Buenos Aires* (A dialogue of urban memories: Berlin and Buenos Aires, 2009), collective work on this type of memories.

5 'The deep cultural sense is given by the fact that it populates the world with signs and symbols, creating our place of residence in the world to avoid feeling naked or helpless' (Rodolfo Kusch 1975).

6 'The problem of the indigenous way of thinking –as we understand it– has two aspects in the American continent. On the one hand, it might be connected with one ethnic group so it is related to seven million of natives according to the last statistics issued by Rosenblat. However, on the other hand, it is worthy to take into consideration the creole population that, be it for their physical appearance or their lifestyle, is connected to the first group. The latter reaches more than seven million inhabitants, it comprehends a greater number and includes the city center. What has been known as *cabecita negra* in Argentina, *roto* in Chile or *cholo* in Bolivia and Peru, has no direct relation with the indigenous world, but takes, in some way, some characteristics from a distant past, which are, at certain times, useful for the political, social and cultural cohesion in open opposition to mere Western peculiarities' (Rodolfo Kusch 1970).

7 According to Kusch, the territory of Latin America is a relevant and contextualized practice that gravitates and moves centrifugally from being-there to the possibilities of other beings that will appear in time and space. Being-there in the streets, being-there in Latin America or simply being-there constitute a learning stage for life as we are not but in a state of being. And we are in a state of being with others, as that being-there constitutes a *we*. The possible being that emerges might be able to express that can be appear in different transitional ways, what we can define as people and/or seminal thinking.

8 (...) ningún programa pedagógico incluye a tales conocimientos entre sus objetivos, se los considera como degradados, vituperables y no merecedores de respaldo académico (¿o es a la inversa?). Creo, no obstante, que esa práctica pone en funcionamiento aspectos cognitivos de los que existe poca conciencia, ya bien porque se prefiere dejarlos en el subconsciente, por no considerarlos dignos de tomar la forma de pensamientos concretos y políticamente estructurados, ya bien por remitirlos al inconsciente, en cuanto al deseo de ignorarlos para poder negar la importancia de lo vulgar en la construcción de la identidad.

Es curioso que, no obstante, hayan dado lugar a una extensa producción textual y que ésta sí haya sido objeto de múltiples consideraciones analíticas e interpretativas, desde los sitiales académicos: tales son los refranes, a los que considero formulaciones verbales de ese conocimiento popular y materialista, que no se enseña en las escuelas ni en las universidades, a cuya producción y transferencia empírica pretendo dirigirme. Pero no sugiero ir de los refranes al comportamiento, porque una vez más habríamos caído en la trampa de la palabra la cual, con sus reglas y exigencias constructivas nos haría ver los fenómenos que pretendemos estudiar como su mero reflejo, pero sin advertirnos de esa trampa y como atribuyéndole al comportamiento lo que son características del lenguaje que lo describe; con lo cual volvería a quedar incluido en el conocimiento formal. En todo caso, el itinerario, a mi parecer, es el opuesto: ir del comportamiento a los refranes. (Magariños 2011: 24)

9 (...) el campo de los saberes y competencias relativos a las personas (uno mismo y los otros); a las relaciones interpersonales que intervienen entre individuos identificados por parámetros personales y funcionales, en relación inmediata o retransmitida (comunicaciones, procesos de posicionamiento mutuo y de influencia); a las relaciones en el seno de un grupo humano o entre grupos; a las situaciones sociales. Estos saberes y competencias se refieren a las emociones y los afectos, los móviles e intenciones que animan a los agentes sociales, de manera habitual o en una circunstancia particular, a los procesos de ajuste, de influencia, de evitación y de disimulación. (Magariños 2011: 22)

10 En definitiva, cuando pretendemos estudiar el mundo, lo que estudiamos es la forma conforme a la cual el discurso social, que se nos permite percibir, nos permite percibir ese mundo. Ese discurso social mediador está constituido por el conjunto de los textos construidos con símbolos, con imágenes y con objetos y comportamientos y reconstruidos, siempre desde una contemporaneidad, como la actualización de los discursos sociales históricos que han logrado

quedar memorizados, como la propagación de los discursos sociales actuales que han logrado hacerse perceptibles, y como la exhibición de los comportamientos sociales que han logrado hacerse mostrables. Y digo esto para poder establecer un espacio al margen de todo ello, constituido por otros conocimientos aparentemente innecesarios o incluso vergonzantes y, en cuanto tales, excluidos de la memoria consciente, ocultados a la percepción e inmostrables, y donde se es testigo de otro panorama que es el resultado de otra historia; espacio donde se sitúan los contenidos cognitivos de la universidad de la calle, evadidos de la dorada cárcel de la pedagogía, pero igualmente mediadores en la construcción de otro mundo. (Magariños 2011: 23)

11 Because these discourses have become fossilized and located, besides, in a marginal place in discourses that are available as semiotic materiality when projecting the world. 'We start learning directly out of experience (it would be absurd to assume we started learning only after there was a teacher telling us what to listen to or what to look at or what to smell or what to taste or even, what to touch, or, much later, what to read). We learned to keep memories in our mind, to remember past events associated to their consequences; association (and not only this) that was even referred to as its meaning and, after different experiences and the experience of different consequences of each experience, we would talk about different meanings of the same object, phenomenon or behavior. And we started trying to transfer this experience to others, because we either loved them or hated them, teaching them how to listen, look, smell, taste, touch and read. Others began learning indirectly through experiences they had not experienced or perceived, but that had been transmitted to them through other people´s words, images and attitudes. Faith and science emerged and, this means that people started trusting other´s knowledge (simultaneously with the opposite)' (Magariños 2011).

12 To do so, we will take different proposals from other artistic languages (or their combination) that include behaviors, proverbs and/or popular sayings for the creation of works of art. From this point on, also, the creation of a polyphonic, artistic and popular file that may serve as a new field of work for a kind of research that allows to set certain regularities to describe recurrent possible aesthetic operations used by Latin American artists when projecting the materialization of that popular knowledge projected in the mobility of the metaphors developed through works of.

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