

Global hands on the planet: semantics of a “liquid” power

Riassunto. - Mani globali sul pianeta: la semantica di un potere “liquido”

Omogeneizzazione e standardizzazione sono i caratteri più evidenti dell'attuale processo di globalizzazione, vista peraltro da una certa prospettiva politica come un processo neocoloniale di appiattimento culturale sugli standard di MacDonald e di una comunicazione per via elettronica e televisiva eccessivamente a senso unico, nella quale la lingua inglese minaccerebbe di causare l'estinzione delle altre lingue, anche europee. Secondo un altro punto di vista, invece, il flusso “liquido” veicolato da Internet potrebbe finire per “coagularsi” e la dominanza dell'inglese potrebbe implodere, analogamente al latino, gradualmente sostituito dalle lingue romanze. In Europa potrebbe affermarsi così una lingua artificiale. Come in passato si era provato con l'esperanto, oggi si prospetterebbe la possibilità di un ipersemplicità “europanto”. Tali ipotesi appaiono quanto meno utopistiche.

This contribution intends to examine separately the concepts that, more than others, express the sense of what is, at the present time, universally known as globalization, i.e. the economic-cultural dominion on a world-wide scale that seems more and more unstoppable, and, of course, of its linguistic implications; also in the perspective of a diagnosis, and a reasonable prognosis, of the Italian language and the others ones between the major languages of culture. Along the way that I have decided to undertake it will happen here and there to accompany the discourse with images of works of art, created in the century just passed. The reason for this choice, from my point of view, is not the gratuitous taste to satisfy an aesthetic

fancy but the attempt to summarize in the immediacy of the artistic synthesis the value of a reasoning followed in its analytical and more or less articulated developments.

Homogenization and standardization

According to the American sociologist Theodore Levitt, director of the “Harvard Business Review”, the globalization of markets, thanks also to the employment of the new technologies, would have by now produced the homogenization of needs. From this derives Levitt's exhortation to the enterprises not to differentiate the offer and to introduce instead one single product at a single price, the lowest possible, in the world-wide market, promoting that product in the same way wherever it is commercialized, and taking advantage everywhere of the same distribution channels. It is the adapted and extreme version of brand serialization, transferred from the consumer-advertising imagination to the production economy, reproduced as it is by who has used it for years without seeing it (neither wanting to see it) ever changing; the supermarket-type serialization (but today we would rather say the shopping-center-type) that Andy Warhol has photo-mechanically fixed in the linear multiplication of the tinned Campbell's Soup (Fig. 1).

On a linguistic level, Levitt's appeal to the market immediately recalls the repeated exhortations to use, in the field of international exchanges, one single language: English. And, of course, it recalls

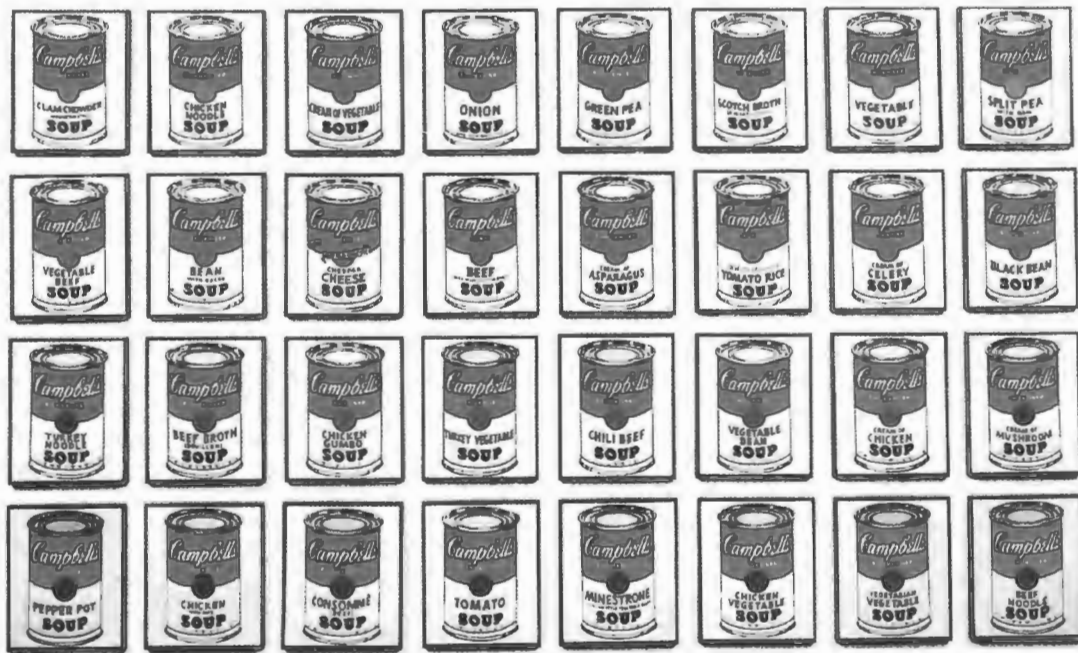


Fig. 1. Andy Warhol, Campbell Soup cans, New York, Museum of Modern Art.

the consequent actions aimed at favouring a wider spread of this single language. The most advanced forefront of the coalition in favour of homologation is represented precisely by the economic-financial sector, that, if we take for good Levitt's remarks, we should expect more and more unwilling to employ languages other than English in the promotion and sale of the different goods. If those remarks hit the target, the choice of a single language to which entrust the fate of a determined product would fall perfectly, from a market point of view, in with the logic of a standardizing strategy that has simply acknowledged the fact that languages are not so different from goods. Surely this is not a new idea, like not new, and indeed of very old origin, is the idea itself of the convertibility into cash of the linguistic object; an idea that, however, has never appeared before socially and culturally relevant as much as in these recent years and that obviously stems precisely from a more general perspective of a market (cfr. Calvet 2002), in which every single language, like any other consumption goods, is more or less marketable or buyable.

Colonization

"Colonization" is the second word that crosses my mind, called unavoidably into play by all the

scholars on the subject. The sociologist Domenico De Masi has constructed on it an entire table structured in ten points, everyone of which delegate to represent a particular type of globalization. The nine following aspects would have to be considered in this idea of "widened" globalization (De Masi 1999, 163 and following):

i) the human exploration of our planet, and, subsequently, of other planets of the solar system, for knowledge purposes and for exploitation of the resources available each time; in this case, precisely the great explorers would be the ones (from Ulysses to Magellan, from Columbus to Gagarin) to incarnate the movement of progressive extension of the territorial areas subject to human control or dominion;

ii) the progressive widening, up to covering completely the earth surface, of the areas of the planet destined to the exchange of goods; it would be possible to provide, as the representatives of this point, both "pernicious" examples (like the slave trade) and "noble" examples (like the exchange of scientific information between research laboratories all over the world);

iii) the aspiration of certain nations to militarily prevail on adjacent peoples and, therefore, gradually on peoples farther and farther away, until extending their will of conquest to the entire planet's surface; some great emperors and similar figures, more or less far back into the past, would



represent examples of this will of dominion on the world (from Cyrus the Great to Charlemagne, from Napoleon to Hitler) and the United States today;

iv) the attempt, carried out by the multinational companies (Coca Cola, Microsoft, Sony, etc.) and by some large professional lobbies (from the American oil tycoons to the Italian designers), to distribute their goods in the markets all over the world;

v) the progressive widening of the reach, or the range of the influence capacity, of the capital of a great enterprise, of the currency of a country or a confederation of States, etc.;

vi) the relocation of industrial production towards areas more and more distant from the countries of origin, with the consequence of going beyond not only the territorial borders, but also the power of single countries each time involved in the operation;

vii) the attempt to spread own ideas (religious, philosophical, political, etc.) everywhere in the world; the Catholic Church with its missionaries, the Enlightenment with the *Encyclopédie*, the present United States with their customs and their cultural models are some possible examples that, according to De Masi, could be given in relation to this;

viii) the institution of authorities, at international level, able to regulate trade between countries, to cope with conflicts and controversies with in a logic of a world-wide peaceful coexistence, to promote or to take common initiatives in defense of peace, atmosphere, infancy, human rights, etc.;

ix) the organization, by the great industry, "of multinational machinery aimed at mitigating, through international agreements and exchanges, the dangerous fluidity of global competition" (De Masi 1999, 166).

The tenth aspect contained in the list prepared by De Masi would summarize the meaning of global dominion in its strict sense, i.e. of that particular and very topical globalization by which we commonly indicate a model of colonization that, involving the responsibilities of the world, proceeds according to terms substantially different from what happened in the recent and less recent past. It would be the concurrence of six various factors, still according to De Masi, to make the phenomenon absolutely original to the eyes of those that carefully examine it (see Held *et al.* 1999):

i) the simultaneous presence of all the nine indicators just brought in support of a more generic hypothesis of global colonization;

ii) the *de facto* rule exercised on the world by the United States, that do not conceal the aspiration after continuing their colonial travel beyond the earth boundaries (towards the Moon or Mars);

iii) the real perspectives, after two world wars and forty years of Cold War, of a future political unification on a world-wide scale;

iv) the ever increasing easiness with which goods, people and, thanks to the Internet, data are moved from a place to another in the world;

v) the "lubrication", carried out by the media and the computer science technology, of the "processes of social and cultural unification" (De Masi 1999, 167);

vi) the sharing, by all mankind, of the same fundamental fears (from the nuclear war to atmospheric pollution, from environmental catastrophes to the AIDS; and we could also add the terrorist actions of Islamic origin, the atypical pneumonia, the bird flu, etc.).

Consumption, according to De Masi, takes on the role of "detector and collector of this new, showy form of globalization, that on the one hand transforms the globe into a huge airport, standardized in smells, noises, colours, rituals of its duty-free stores, on the other hand feeds a deep subjectivity, refuses standardization, consumerism and fashion so as to favour more and more discreet and elegant ways of life" (De Masi 1999, 168): elsewhere, even drawing consequences partly different from those that De Masi has reached, and although analyzing the issue from a strictly linguistic point of view, I have substantially embraced this last proposition, noticing that the strong impulse exercised by the global civilization towards a linguistic homologation that sees the English language prevailing at world-wide level is *de facto* counterbalanced by many more or less strong pressures that move instead (and, presumably, will continue to move still for a long time) towards various directions of a subjectivity nourished by centrifugal forces of varied nature. Those that, for example, seem set upon defending the single dialect varieties those that, in recent years, have been engaged on different fronts to protect national languages, in some ways at war between themselves too in order to gain a place in the sun (see Bollman 2001, De Swaan 2001, and also Calvet 1987), from the threat of that only vehicular model that it would be destined to replace them everywhere.

George Ritzer's analysis gets as well into the perspective of an American supremacy considered under the consumerism and fashion profiles; he has gained support for his theories about the ex-

ponential increase, at planetary level, of fast-food, shopping centres, holiday-clubs, amusement parks and so on. Ritzer (1996) speaks in this regard of mcdonaldization (see also Ariès, 1997/2000, and Barber 1995/1998), that in this way represents a general formula applicable to the field of the catering industry as well as to any other social field (from education to the family, from politics to the food culture) and symptomatic of a standardization that cancels differences and, doing so, acts towards a basic depersonalization. Umberto Bossi has referred to it as well with a recent and well known statement with which he has vividly represented the challenge between the cause of our national language and the cause of the international communication like a clash between the “polenta”, civilization and, precisely, the McDonalds civilization.

Not much different from Ritzer’s mcdonaldization is the californization of what has talked about, referring to tastes and fashions of the new generations, another expert on globalization such as Kenichi Ohmae, according to whom the values system transmitted by the globalized world would keep by now only a simple trace of the dominant geo-model (California and, therefore, still the United States) and would have instead all the characters of a universal system.

Division

This term as well has not had a great difficulty to find a favourable acceptance by the scholars on globalization issues. Division in the first place, as a result of frictions and conflicts fed by various forces that oppose the phenomenon (as it has been pointed out in the previous section), has been accepted naturally by the same analysts who notice in the globalization process the effects of colonization. “According to this concept, the network of institutions that defines the structure of the new global economic system is not seen in structural terms, but as intentional and contingent, subject to the control of individuals that represent and try to carry on the interests of a new international capitalistic class (...). Considered from an alternative perspective, the ‘globalization’ is neither unavoidable nor necessary. Like the plans of capitalistic development that have preceded it – modernization, industrialization, colonialism and development – the new imperialism is full of contradictions in the position of generating contrast and resistance forces that are able, and at certain conditions they want, to undermine the process of ac-

cumulation of capital as well as the system from which this depends” (Petras/Veltmeyer 2001/2002, 17).

However, for other scholars, that have put themselves in a different perspective, globalization itself would be the result of a complex interlacement of multi-causal logic, of various impulses, various forces in competition amongst them (to be guided and controlled in order to subordinate them to the development of humanity: compare Griffin/Kahn 1992) and not the fruit of a system of power guided by a dominant logic, that one, for example, of a precise plan of class. A considerable part of them, indeed, thinks that the idea of a division is included in the nature itself of the global civilization. The same alleged American aspirations to colonize the world have found in this way in many cases, within this vision, a partial reappraisal. Jasper Johns, a neo-dada artist, has become the protagonist of an analogous partial restructuring in a famous painting. The perimeter of the American flag, in the mentioned painting (Fig. 2), coincides exactly with the perimeter of the canvas, that, therefore, is not able to oppose to the rule of the represented object any space, however small, able to contain it. However, the “resistances” to that dominion are perceived and come from the inside: from the encaustic technique, that renders the picture (painted on newspaper sheets glued to the canvas with the colour-fields technique) similar to a fresco.

The sharpest and most penetrating reflections on globalization are due, as everybody knows, to the work of one of the greatest contemporary sociologists, Zygmunt Bauman. According to Bauman, “globalization divides as much as it unifies; it divides while it unifies, and the causes of division are the same ones that, on the other side, promote the uniformity of the globe. At the same time as the emerging process of a planetary scale for the economy, finance, trade and information, another process is set in motion, that imposes spatial constraints on them, what we call ‘localization’. The complex and close interconnection of the two processes imply that the standards in which entire populations, and different segments within single populations, live, grow different in a drastic way. What looks like an achievement of globalization for some, represents a reduction to the local dimension for others; whereas for some people globalization marks new freedoms, upon many others it falls as an undesired and cruel destiny” (Bauman 1998/2002⁶, 4).

Division is also a central element of thought within the frame of the world-system devised by





Fig. 2. Jasper Johns, Flag, New York, Museum of Modern Art.

Immanuel Wallerstein. The world-system, according to the American historian, would represent the logical consequence of capitalist development, that would embrace, in a completely natural way, a global vision and would be composed of a single market subdivided into three different levels corresponding to as many geographic areas: central, semi-peripheral (or semi-central) and peripheral (see Wallerstein 1974-1980/1982, and Wallerstein 1995/1999). In these areas, that cover the entire planetary system, the trans-national mankind moves beyond the borders established by the single States and contributes to giving shape to a life experience in which the concept of distance itself is practically cancelled.

The division of the world into three different spaces (central, semi-peripheral and peripheral) can evidently offer a breach on the possible future scenarios towards which the destiny of the various languages, in relation to their distribution on the globe surface and to the sheer possibility of their survival in the face of English, is projected. A survival that according to someone would be in serious danger and that, precisely because of this, would demand some kind of answer in terms of downright opposition, or at least of a reasonable alternative to the overwhelming domination exercised at the world-wide level by the English language. At the present time, for example, by now it is possible to count more and more numerous side-takings in favour of a *language of guarantee* able to replace English at least in international communication. A *language-bridge* able to oppose

English, in particular, on the two fronts that appear the most exposed to the risks stemming from that supremacy:

- i) the political one, that watches the excessive power of the English language as a dangerous offshoot of American imperialism;
- ii) the typically linguistic one, that perceives English as a serious threat to the survival of the single national languages.

In recent times, several hypotheses of creation of an appropriate artificial language have been put forward once more, so as to guarantee the establishment of an authentic democracy of communication. It could be the same old Esperanto, of course, set up by Ludovico Lazzaro Zamenhof at the end of the 1800's, like many other artificial languages (mainly based on Latin, supported by French and German, the most widely spoken languages in Europe at the time). Or, within the narrow but decisive Eurocentric perspective, the more recent Europanto invented by Diego Marani, a translator at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the European Union as well as, for some years now, a novel writer (see the *Nuova grammatica finlandese*, Milano, Bompiani, 2000, that was awarded the Guinzane Cavour Prize, and *L'ultimo dei vostiachia*, Milano, Bompiani, 2002).

Devised almost for fun by its creator, who after having launched it in a column of "brico-politics" on the Belgian weekly magazine "Le Soir Illustré" (on which he has had as well to answer questions expressed in that language by the most zealous

readers), has run a second successful column on the Genevan “Le Temps”, Europanto has been in more occasions been picked on precisely by the Esperantists. Compared to the 16 rules of Esperanto, that it is therefore a language that has to be studied, however elementary it may be, Europanto, in the intentions of Marani, should be learned with no need for rules: it would be enough to have a smattering of English and to mix it with the most common international words coming from other languages. People intending to write in this language, asserts its inventor, need only to construct sentences in which there are at least three languages: the rest comes by itself.

Marani himself, that has published a collection of stories in Europanto in France (*Las adventures des inspector Cahillot*, Paris, Mazarine, 1999), explains, in a synthetic and effective piece of writing put on the Internet (EUROPANTO. *From productive process to language. Or how to cause international English to implode*, <http://www.europanto.contagions.com/gram.en.html>), his model of a new language that, he makes it clear, can however be considered artificial only in part. “Europanto is a mixture of words and grammatical structures borrowed from a number of different languages which anyone of average culture with a basic knowledge of English can understand. But it is not a language, nor is it intended to become one. At least not yet. Europanto is a linguistic code of conduct, a series of guidelines or ‘precautions’ to be taken if we want to communicate with someone who does not speak the same language as ourselves without using a specific lingua franca”. In the same article Marani explains also the reasons that could lead to prefer Europanto to English; whose dominance, at any account, “cannot be challenged. With the exception of a few small areas that have been cut off from the processes of industrialization and globalization, English has become the universal language of our time. Europanto has a different goal. Rather than an artificial language, it is a system for the creation of a new language of the future. It is intended to give voice to the frustrations of the vast majority of people who are forced to use English even though their command of the language is not very good.

This can be achieved by speeding up the process of the internationalization of the English language and by its isolation from the Anglo-American culture. Instead of trying to compete with English, the aim is to cause the language to implode, to destroy it from within. The mechanism is

very simple. Nowadays, virtually everyone knows a few words of English and is capable of putting together very simple sentences, but most people are unable to speak the language properly because they do not know all the nuances, the subtle differences in meaning that only a mother-tongue speaker knows. In a conversation in English between two non-native speakers with just a smattering of the language, the register is naturally very low and only the basic message is communicated – often little more than could have been achieved by gesticulating. But what would happen if the two speakers could enrich their vocabulary with words from their own languages or from other important European languages? The worst that would happen is that the level of understanding would remain the same. If, however, the words used were similar to ones in the other persons language or were somehow recognized, then their mutual understanding would be enhanced. This is the mechanism on which Europanto is based.

The structure is essentially English, but the words are borrowed from other languages and, if necessary, transformed to make them easier to understand. Imagine, for example, a French speaker and an Italian speaker who have to communicate in English even though their two languages are very similar. If the two of them were to add words from their own languages, they would almost certainly find it easier to understand one another. The result would be a kind of English contaminated with words and forms borrowed from other languages, i.e. Europanto – or rather one of the many possible Europantos”.

Surely, it could not lack, at this point, an example of Europanto. Marani gives it in the version of a text written up by Belgian readers and example of “a Dutch-German-French variant of Europanto”; a version, however, not devoid of others (besides the French) Romance linguistic elements:

Aquello agosto postmeriduo, Cabillot was in seine officio un crossverba in europanto solvente. Out del window, under eine unhabitual sun splendente, la city suffoqued van calor. Zweideca vertical: “Esse greco, esse blanco und se mange”, quatro litteras. Cabillot was nicht zo bravo in crossverbas. Seine boss le obliged crossverbas te make ut el cervello in exercizio te keep, aber quello postmeriduo inspector Cabillot was mucho somnolento. Wat esse greco, esse blanco und se mange? tinqued. May esse el glace-cream? No, dat esse italiano aber greco nicht. Cabillot slowemente closed los ojos und sich endormed op seine buro. Der telefono ringante presto lo reawakened.

“Hallo-cocco! Cabillot parlante!”.

“Aqui Capitan What! Come subito in meine officio!”.



"Yesvohl, mein capitan!" responded Cabillot out van der door sich envolante.

Capitan What was muchissimo nervoso der map des Europas op el muro regardante und seine computero excitatissimo allumante.

"Cabillot! Nos habe esto messagio on el computero gefinden! Regarde alstubitte!".

As it can be easily noticed the present participle form (*ringante, envolante, allumante, solvente, splendente*) and the modality of formation of the superlative (*muchissimo, excitatissimo*) derive from the relative models taken on by Latin and, therefore, inherited by Romance varieties (to which the formative model for adverbs of manner refers too: *slowemente*); the auxiliary verbs "to be" and "to have" "have been turned into the clearly Latin-based forms 'esse' and 'habe' for the present tense while for the past tense the English form 'was' is used"; the possessive adjectives (*mein, meine, seine*) and most of the prepositions (*aber, on, op, out, und, under, van*) have been borrowed from Germanic languages, whereas for the definite article Marani has mostly made use of the Romance domain (*el cervello, el glacecream, la city, los ojos* and, in composition, *on el computero, op el muro, out del window*; but also *der telefono, out van der door, der map des Europas*) and for the personal pronoun system (*le obliged, lo reawakened, se manges vs sich endormed, sich envolante*) and for the demonstrative (adjective: *aquello augusto postmeridio, quello postmeridio*; pronoun: *dat esse*) a mixed model has been chosen; the termination of preterite tense forms such as *suffoqued, obliged, tinqued, closed, sich endormed, rewekened, responded* has been drawn from English, while "the English verb 'find' is 'europantized' into 'gefunden' for the past participle form by adding the Germanic past form to the English root"; *yesvohl [sic] e alstubitte* "are two examples of interjections which, although formed by mixing two Germanic languages, are also widely understood by speakers of Romance languages"; etc.

Marani concludes: "It is clear that great things are going on in the Europanto laboratory and that a new European lingua franca is being created in the most natural way from the magma of multilingualism. Like any living creature, it will contain a number of flaws and contradictions, but, unlike other universal languages, it will be successful because it is being produced from the lowest levels. And just as Vulgar Latin replaced Latin at the beginning of the first century, so Europanto, at the beginning of the third millennium, will cause international English to implode and will prevail over European multilingualism."

This is a quite hasty prediction. Not to mention that, at the state of facts, the comparison with

Vulgar Latin and with the conditions which have originally permitted its development do not hold at all.

Massmediatization of experience

For the English sociologist Anthony Giddens, globalization, which would not be simply represented by the creation of a single world-wide market but would also decidedly involve the socio-cultural and political fields (compare Giddens 2000, 74, and in general Giddens 1999/2000), would consist in the "intensification of world-wide social relations that interconnect very far off places, so that local events are shaped by events that are happening thousands of kilometres away and vice versa" (Giddens 1999/2000). A process, that looks a little like the "butterfly effect", thanks to which an event that happens in a certain place of the world is therefore able to condition the course of events, even the farthest ones, that happen at the same time in other places receiving similar conditioning. The electronic media would play a fundamental role within this process; they, allowing the activation of contacts between various individuals independently from the places and the physical times of social interaction, would upset the space-time reference system of those individuals. The space and time categories, as we are accustomed to consider them, would thus appear as images of a "liquefied" modernity (compare Bauman 2000/2002), like the modernity represented by the watches painted by Salvador Dalí (see Fig. 3): hanging or put on uncertain and disturbing surfaces and only partly able to maintain the original solid consistency (compare also Fig. 4).

Therefore, we might end up in many cases perceiving what happens, at a certain moment, even at enormously far away places, as an integral part of our personal experience, equally and even more than local events by which, every day, we are assailed by. At first, the unavoidable reappraisal of the traditional values of our relationships with the surrounding physical world, and, more generally, of the value of belonging to one or the other national community, would have derived. The mass media, in weakening the complex of values, even the symbolic ones, of which the national feeling is made up, might end up in triggering a new process able to favour precisely what, initially, appeared to be particularly threatened by the assault of the global culture: the regional or local particularism. Which basically is what said above commenting on the voice colonialization. However,





Fig. 3. Salvador Dalí, *The persistence of memory*, New York, Museum of Modern Art.

from the viewpoint of Giddens' thought, the global community would not be the direct consequence of a process of homologation and cultural homogenization, like in most of the theories on the subject, but the effect of becoming aware, by those who take part in the global culture, of the serious risks that nowadays loom over the entire human race. A mankind that tries to take shelter drawing as much information as possible from every, even the farthest, corner of the planet.

The most immediate reflections about language that could be made ensue from the principle of the massmediatization of experience, chosen, as it has just been seen, as the fundamental pillar of the global culture, regards the medium and long range effects caused particularly by the "internetization" of the different languages of culture on the linguistic acquisition and the written/spoken paradigm; whose current transformation, mediated by the use of the web, passes also through the transformation affecting the action of writing itself, that has in the meanwhile become word processing. In fact, who is in front of the computer screen completes a double movement, different from that one, fundamentally "analogue", to which the alphabetic civilization has accustomed us: the continuous, "analogue" movement, by which we operate the mouse, alternate with the discontinuous movement, "digital",

ticked by the pressure exerted each time on the single keys of the keyboard. It is, in many cases, a daily (or nearly daily) practice; no more, as it used to be with typewriting, generally temporary or absolutely occasional. The net and its points: this is what we involuntarily mime when we word processing: the mouse evokes the net, as it is able to reach every point on the screen; our fingers, while hitting the keys, evoke instead the virtual places along which it develops. It is roughly what happens with the pictorial technique of 'dripping', that is, in the realization by Jackson Pollock, an alternation of movements giving the colour coats, that results from dripping the paint itself from a rod positioned over the canvas (compare Fig. 5). Discontinuous, brusque movements alternate with continuous, harmonious movements: with the firstones Pollock makes paint drops fall down on the canvas, that determine as many points, i.e. those on which the drops fall; with the second ones instead, the "thread" that connects those points to one another, prevails on those points themselves.

But another subject, raised by Jakob Nielsen, the most famous American net-philosopher, would deserve being directly connected to the aspect at issue: the danger that the breathtaking increase of information transmission speed, promised since the advent of the Internet (promise, up



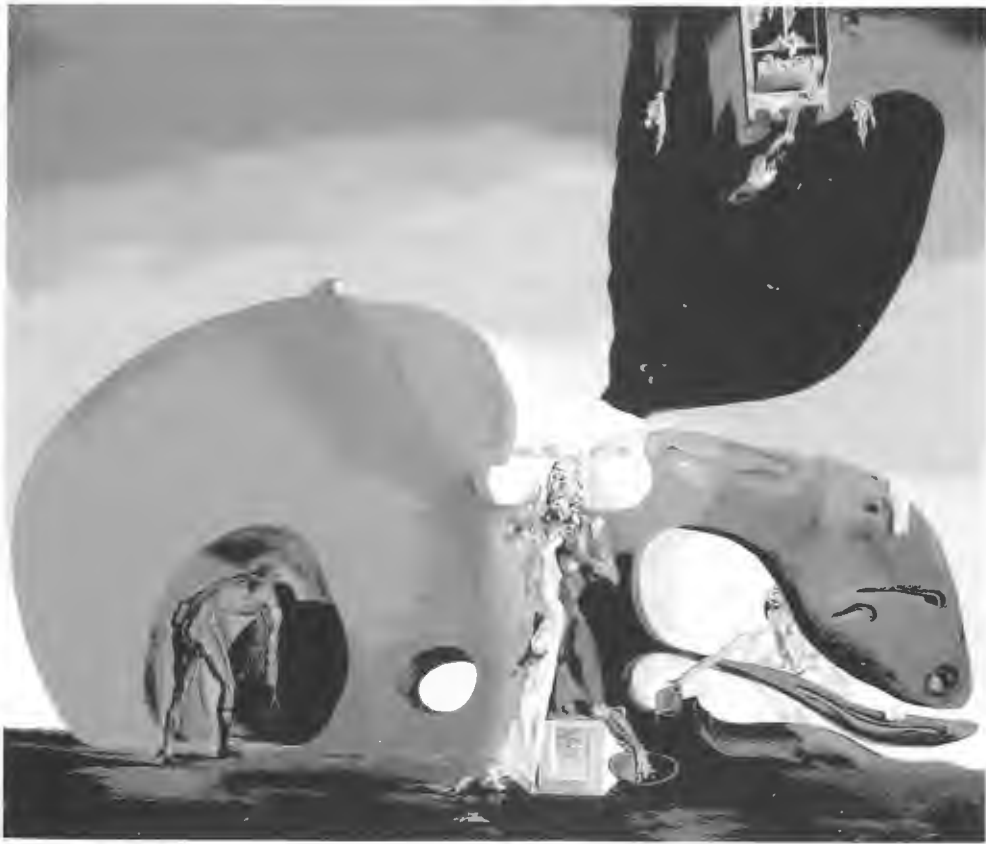


Fig. 4. Salvador Dalí, The birth of liquid desires, Venezia, Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

to very recently, substantially kept), meets sooner or later with, or is already partly suffering from, a sharp slowing down. As if the flow of data put in the web, wandering and changeable like a fluid and, therefore, up to now believed unstoppable,

was destined to regain the weight and compactness of solids. Not to mention that, together with such slowing down, the message of the mass media is more and more loaded with a low profile of information to which a high profile of the verbal

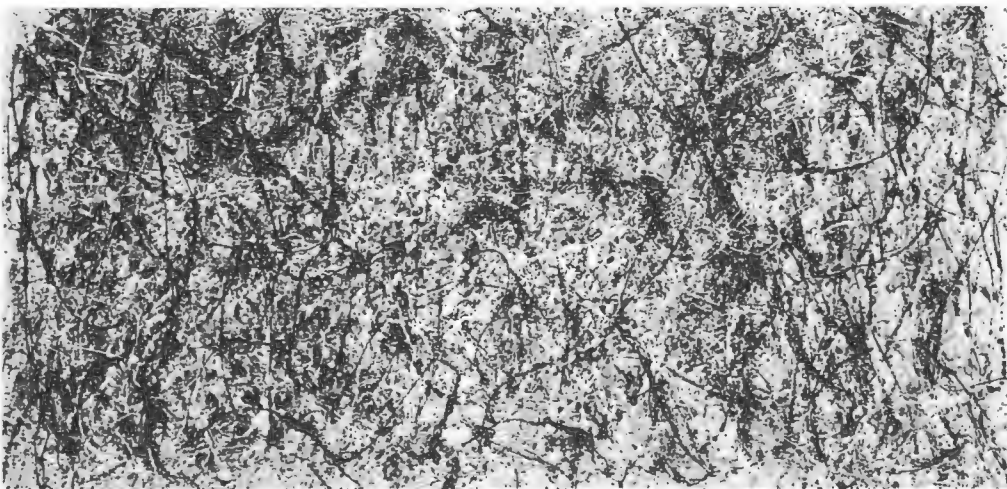


Fig. 5. Jackson Pollock, One (31), New York, Museum of Modern Art.

material (spent in order to spread it), corresponds. After all, one among the many possible ways, in order to replace a civilization of real *communication* and *information* with a civilization founded instead on the deceits of *emission*, *declaration* and *disinformation* plotted by the bio-power: “a form of power that regulates society from within, chasing it, interpreting it, absorbing it and restructuring it” (Hardt/Negri 2002, 39).

According to Giannini (2003, 23), “the Empire is the global frame that helps to interpret the new framework of management of bio-power, whose purpose is to absorb the individualities of the subjects and to affirm an international dimension now almost completely lacking mediations between the central dominant paradigm and spatially de-centralized and culturally and politically dominated subjects (...). The powerful and indispensable weapon for the immanence to function is the management of communication and information systems, structured as networks: language and forms of communication, through which the system comes about, are, therefore, key elements in the society of control”. Emission is understood as spread of (verbal or non verbal) signals of the most varied kind; declaration is understood as the vehicle for transmission of verbal messages that, afterwards, can be easily “recalled” through the, nowadays more and more widespread, practice of recantation; disinformation is understood as “a tool complementary to the control of social discourse within the bio-political regime” (Giannini 2003, 26).

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