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The Melancholy of Residual Anti-stories

Abstract: The following text examines the relationship between the “banal” and melancholy as it appears in the films of three contemporary film directors: Tsai Ming-Liang, Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. The questions raised address the means through which the visual discourse paints the portrait of melancholy as a rest inside the psychological longing for the absolute. Distances between individuals, images and stories are created by means of the unrepresentable and the unnamed. The “banal” and the quotidian are the faces of this anti-stories which describe the journey of the always missed encounters with the Real and with significance. Melancholy arises as the silent effect of the distance between the imaginary and the denuded world.

Keywords: melancholy, banal, significance, anti-story, unrepresentable.

In our contemporary modes of subjectivity production, the banal is still an irrecoverable rest in the economy of the narratives of history and practices of remembering. The banal does not have the force of inscribing collective memory or the power of writing the borders of individuality, but it does have the neutrality necessary in order to be used as a political strategy. That is why we will analyse some of the visual means of putting the banal, the ordinary and the misplaced into visual discourse and we will try to see whether these dimensions create “vacuoles of silence” (Peter Pal Pelbart) from which new echoes of re-signification can emerge or not. Is the banal a means of creating new ways of silences to counteract the excesses of language, information and significance that rumble over

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our modes of existence? The condition of “bare life”, Giorgio Agamben talks about, has the power to refuse the subjectivities imposed by our contemporary world or is it another political tool of dis-investing the capacity of naming life outside its social frames? Starting from Michel Foucault’s text *La Vie des Hommes Infâmes*, where he addresses the question of the new “right to history” of mediocrity in the 16-17th centuries by means of the attention given to the small faults of private life, we can talk about the production of the self from behind this voice of the banal, endowed with the new power to confess about itself and its mistakes. The interest for the common ordinary life enters the historical scene by means of the “juridical” preoccupation for the acts of everyday life guilt. Mediocrity has a new chance at being redeemed from public oblivion by means of the abominable. The duty of testing whether we can talk about a memory of the banal or not has passed into the hands of literature and film, where visual discourses of confession interfere with visual voices of silence that reflect the non-resounding space of the unheard. Here is where the melancholy of anti-stories intervenes underlying the preoccupation for the interior experience which is, as Georges Bataille points, impossible to be transmitted to the other, because it is like *a voyage au bout du possible de l’homme*. (Bataille 1943, 19) This *inconnu* which denudes us is the experience of God or the experience of the *poétique*. We can say that melancholy has these figures of the unshared and the unknown interwoven in the cinematic visual discourse and they can be the surfactants of a deeper psychology of non-recognitions and distances.

How does film explore the fields of understanding pioneered by the New Materialism theories, which integrate gestures, ways of seeing, perceptions, affects, emotions or social acts as widened possibilities opened up by the material, dynamic structure of the world? The films of Taiwanese film director Tsai Ming-Liang investigate the materiality of micro-experiences and visually constructs the ontologies of the Real as disintegrated “remarks” of a contingent gaze. His eccentric cinematographic style is easily recognizable not due to the fact that he always blends the same themes and stars the same actors (including the indispensable Lee Kang-sheng), but because he constructs an experimental type of cinema, where the world and the self are the manifestations of an insistent corporeality that refuses to accept the gaze. This physicalness is not engaged only as lyrical visuality, but it also testifies to the material ways in which we belong to ourselves and even misrecognize ourselves in the absence of the Other’s mirroring gaze. In trying to answer the question about what does the act of observation mean inside Tsai’s cinematography, we will turn towards three of his feature films: *Vive l’Amour* (1994), *What Time Is It There* (2001), *Stray Dogs* (2013).

The intimacy of an impossible self-portrait

The image of life puts the imaginary at a distance

(Nancy 1998, 27)

The films of Ming-Liang construct a different type of absence from the world that does not concern itself with the loss of a manifested human agency, but with the oblivion of a potential exterior gaze. In this case the question should paradoxically be: How does the world look like when we do not presuppose an observer? The absence of an integrated viewer manages to make the world present in a different way, by affirming not only its autonomy as we previously saw, but also its visual excess and its residual melancholy. The films of Tsai manage to formulate the image of man alone with himself in the intimacy of an impossible self-portrait. This is Tsai's hunting attempt to create a visual expression of the world beyond representation or self-representation. We are dealing with an image that precisely captures the inscription left on the body and the act of the Subject by the absence of the other's inherent gaze. The urinating scenes from indoors or outdoors in Tsai's films, the scenes that portray the eating rituals of the characters, the six minutes unmotivated cry in *Vive l'Amour*, the scene where the boy dresses like a woman, the watermelon scene in *Vive l'Amour* and the cabbage scene in *Stray Dogs*. These are all scenes that make the viewer observe a person that does not experience itself as an object of visibility. There is a division between the Subject and the visual space which constitutes the Subject and this division is shot as an asymmetric dimension of the communal reality. These are not just images of life, because they do not record or depict anything. They build the coordinates for the internalisation of the impossibility of a self-portrait and also for the structural absorption of the condition of not being seen.

The entanglement of the invisible and the *unspeakable*

*Life is experienced as inhuman because it is all too human,
obscene because it lives on mindlessly.*

(Braidotti 2010, 208)

The films of Ming Liang are asphyxiating, funny, depressing, mutilating and profoundly sad, because they deal with loneliness and absurdity, but what is impressive is the anti-dramatic key that transfigures all the adjectives mentioned above. The anti-dramatic dimension of visual melancholy is particularly at play in *Vive l'Amour*, a film which lingers on the crowded city of Taipei, following a woman that advertises empty flats for rental or selling. Somebody steals the key of one of the apartments not rented and moves in. After various uncanny encounters sealed by these empty living places, the film ends with the six minutes unmotivated crying

scene of the protagonist. We can argue that the anti-dramatic essence of the film gives birth to *the unspeakable* that is the non-narrative and anti-discursive manifestation of life. Dealing with ordinary lives and ordinary events, the films of Tsai explore a certain power of the visual to frame and circumscribe *the unspeakable*. There is little dialogue in Tsai's films because the acts, gestures and movements of the characters are constructed as being profoundly departed from their linguistic expression. Space and time become unspeakable as they manifest themselves only as the precession forces of certain material modes of belonging. There is no history, no discourse and no story, just a gestural accordance with the indeterminations of every-day life. Although the visual and the Real are not discursively anchored and the unspeakable is the ultimate presence of a confessional, inhuman invisible, these characters still belong to themselves. The paradox is that even when our lives are unspeakable and there is no integrative narration we still belong to ourselves inside an opaque closure that places us at the centre of a melancholic residual anti-story. Tsai's films capture this paradox of belonging to ourselves even when we are not able to inject a small personal history inside the infinite possibilities of reality and its anamorphic images.

The unspeakable and the invisible can become intimate by reconfiguring the individual gesture as a split inside the private image. In Tsai's films, the image of the private is what shapes the residual externalization of an uncontained dimension of the human being. The image of the private marks the separation between the Subject and its own viscosity that cannot be interiorly contained. The individual gesture that dislocates the image of the private actually manages to conjugate the Subject with its own experiential unspeakable and its structural invisible. Even when the unspeakable and the invisible can be joined with being, the Subject is still emptied by the lack of history and discourse. Why is the anti-dramatic cinema unable to formulate a "saturated" Subject? Why does it essentially exhibit emptiness and lack of substance? Tsai's long takes and minimalist techniques do not answer to these questions, but they reinvest the concept of lower class empty life in relation to the techniques of anti-dramatic cinema. Thus, the empty life is not the non-narrative and unsocial dimension of visual existence, but it is the uncaptured, unintegrated life of the human gesture itself. The empty life is made of repetitive or singular gestures that are not oriented towards the outside, but they turn back to themselves. When they comb their hair, when they sit on the toilet, when they lay on the bed, or even when they walk the streets, Tsai's characters turn human gestures into the visual surfaces of emptiness.

In *Vive l'Amour* even the act of inhabiting a certain space is constructed as an invisible occupancy that is a physical concealment. The characters are hiding inside those empty apartments as if they were taking refuge from the urban and social affirmation of presence. The mattresses without sheets, the shelves without objects, the aseptic atmosphere and the materially marked non-presence make this sterile place the container of a refused habitation, which cannot express human extension

in the object next to you. This impossible habitation is characteristic for that type of Subject that makes hiding its only possible dwelling. The invisible sojourn of the Subject turns its traces into disincarnated micro-moments of the concealed gestures.

What sound is it there? The evidence of invisibility

"What does the world look like?"[...]
 "It doesn't look 'like' anything at all"

(*Dancer in the Dark*, 2000)

Nancy argues that *evidence* eludes meaning and does not manifest itself as a sign, but encapsulates a blind spot *within its very obviousness*.

Evidence is what presents itself at the right distance, or else, that in front of which one finds the right distance, the proximity that lets the relation take place and that opens to continuity. (Nancy 1998, 44)

We will argue that *What Time Is It There* is a film about evidences, connections, blind spots and correspondences. A boy deals with the recent death of his father, he repeatedly urinates in a plastic bottle in his room, because he is afraid to go to the bathroom; his mother is obsessed with his father's ghost and cooks for him; the boy sells his watch to a girl that is going to Paris and there are certain parallels between their experiences. Actually it is a film that draws on the change caused by an impossible moving on and on the impossibility of coming to terms with time and, thus, the compulsion to reset all the clocks and blend time with the world again. Because of the *evidence* of certain objects, you actually feel looked at by them, especially by the clocks, the aquarium fish and the dead father's photography. They generate a concentric vibe of the gaze which cannot cross or capture them, because they manifest themselves as impenetrable surfaces of evidence. There is no significance in these evidences or in their looks, but only connections across distances, which give the image its "dual-time" dimension (Taipei and Paris). The blind-spots in this film are constructed as unseen intersections between the spatio-temporal coordinates of individual experiences. In *What Time Is It There*, the world looks like a staged obviousness and that is why the invisible and the projected presences manifest themselves as visually inferred necessities. There has to be more to visibility than obviousness and the evidence of the invisible becomes the new testimony of a confronted gaze. Tsai's films explore not only the limits of cinema, but also the limits of a visually constructed Real.

Another interesting aspect of *What Time Is It There* is the construction of sound. It beautifully explores our experience with the unpremeditated cracklings, the crawl of the shoes, the neighbour's splash or the creak of the door. These sounds are much more present in our lives than music or the pleasant voice of a friend and the way Tsai constructs them makes these noises the short materialisations of an absent corporeality. Carry Wolf points to the distinction between sound and voice when he

discusses Trier's *Dancer in the Dark*. The idea is that the voice is the one which orients meaning, reaffirms language and it is tied to the Subject, while the sound comes from inside the world and it is directed towards the Subject. Thus, in Tsai's movies the sound is the absence of a certain voice that would normally stabilise corporeality. The sound inserts in the Real a material, but bodiless presence, affirming the world through its essentially composite wave lengths and indefinite expressions. In this case the invisible becomes the lost origin of a meaningless sound, pointing towards the evidence of an always incorporated blind spot. The visual finds a new kind of depth, outside the image and outside the audience gaze, inside the infinite relational possibilities opened up by fractured evidences. The act of observation is then again the search for a union between the "noisy" world beyond representation and the soundless world before the moment of reflection.

Rethinking the visual has to do with the need to reconfigure the operational certainties of an immediately present and manifested visual universe. Cinema can create a new phenomenology of non-presence, blind-spots, non-discursive reality, material interactions beyond signification, unbridged correspondences and distances in-between a layered Real. This is exactly what Tsai's type of cinema is doing, concerning itself with the different possibilities of envisioning the enacted intimate human gestures. This generates a new politics of the constructed social and private visibility and new poetics of corporeality.

Ennui

In *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture*, George Steiner talks about *ennui* as the defining feeling of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. *Ennui* as a state of personal and historical consciousness facing the replacement of intellectual and revolutionary ideals with the bourgeois and industrial values of life. Is this *ennui* (expressed both by Baudelaire and T. S. Elliot) prolonged in this era as a particular way of living time and its connection with a historical lack of content? We will look for possible insights to the highly acclaimed film of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, *Uzak* (2002), which manages to offer a cinematographic expression for the interstices of the quotidian similarly to those of Tsai Ming Liang. We will try to define an unsymbolical dimension of melancholy that arises out of the distances and disconnections between ways of seeing and disjointed realities.

What Tsai Ming Liang's characters have in common with the characters of Ceylan is the same sense of indeterminate that dominates their lives. They seem to live in a sort of suspension of time, cut from society and unable to say "I" in response to any constructed event that surrounds them. In *Uzak*, a poor unemployed villager comes to visit his cousin in the city in hope of finding a job and earning a living. The two of them start living together but the space they share separates them more and more. They seem to live second lives by means of the traces and unwanted signs they live behind them in the other's eyes. The whole film develops around these disjointed

signs that make solitude and nostalgia their place of dwelling. The same theory of unfounded and floating acts and gestures can be seen in the films of Ceylan as in those of Tsai Ming Liang, although they come from different traditions (East and West). Indeterminacy is the major feature of these rumbling characters that cannot find a basis for their own shared world. Out of this indeterminacy rises the melancholy as the longing desire for an *absolute* that would redeem the insignificant and the second lives lived in hiding from the other's eyes. As Frédéric Rambeau observes, following Gilles Deleuze, the cuts and the discontinuities matter much more than the associations because the movement of significations is inscribed inside and by these cuts (Rambeau 2014, 14). The chasms we talk about in relation to these movies constitute type of alienated subjectivities that cannot exist in confrontation with the gaze of the other because there is always an impossible inscription which hides in the back of the other's observation. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty points the private world is not only the property of the self, but the instrument of another system that embroiders a generalized life over the self. (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 27) Merleau-Ponty admits that the private worlds communicate, but in that moment we become the witnesses of one same world. This does not happen in the case of our characters who live their private lives in disjoint and lacunae. In Merleau-Ponty's terms they would be the witnesses of a visible world which generates multiple viewpoints and not the witnesses of an invisible truth that would suggest an intelligible world (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 30). The universes of these films cannot be sustained upon what is visible, because there is always a second world opening out behind the visible one. The hiatus between these apparitions that do not adhere one to the other represent the space of that *ennui* that we have mentioned in relation to the 20th century's general atmosphere. *La prose du monde* comprises all that prepares itself for this disjunction made by language itself: the spoken and the unspoken, the voices and the silence, etc. Merleau-Ponty talks about the necessity of drawing out *la parole* from history to create that language that is before language. (Merleau-Ponty 1963, 10) The inner language emerges as distinct from the public language and we can see in Ceylan films that the major silence of his characters are just mirrors of this inner language that conjugates itself with the setting or picture depicted.

This brings us to the need of defining what interior experience means and how film explores it in its ins and outs of representation. As we saw, for George Bataille the experience is the *voyage au bout du possible de l'homme*. This means that experience cannot be shared or communicated but by means of embarrassments, silences or distances. If Merleau-Ponty and also Bataille talk about the confrontation with the non-speakable, with the *inconnu* as faces of true experience which ask for an exceeding of language or even a destruction of it, this means that maybe the means of cinematography can partially sink experience into its new waters. But what kind of experience, because it is clearly that we are not speaking about an immersible one? Not the experience of a Turkish boy coming to the city to live with his cousin and

the distance between them but the realism of the film which becomes “unreal” as the two of them draw the distance between them larger and larger. *La nuit du non-savoir* is present with the use of little dialogue and the key moments of the film are those in which characters look far away in the distance. It is in those moments that the spectator feels that there is a melancholy drawn from a nostalgia for the absolute. Even the construction of space is marked by this nostalgia for the absolute which is the specter of each redundant gesture and exposure to the things that “do not matter.”

According to Zygmund Bauman we live inside a “liquid modernity” which being different from the other cultural views cannot accommodate the infinite and, thus, leaves everything to this “specter of redundancy” (Bauman 2004, 97). The characters in Ceylan and Tsai Ming Liang’ films are living inside a postmodern structure in which meaning is never constructed in relation to the exercise of the infinite. They eat, walk, cry or sleep in the voids created by the redundant cinematographic power of images and stories that do not last. Objects and frames are constructed as witnesses to this thirst for the absolute in the face of their redundant separated quotidian. These are not cinematic compliments to mortal life but visual acclimatisation to gestures of the insignificant that best mirror modern life. As Zygmund Bauman puts it:

It was at the dawn of modernity that Deus was found absconditus. And it was at the dawn of modernity that culture was discovered and found to have been hiding behind the speaking God. In was now up to the culture made by and being made by humans to turn over the task of linking mortal life with the world’s eternity and to distil (as Baudelaire would put it) crumbs of solidity and duration out of the impetuous flow of transient human accomplishments. (Bauman 2004, 104)

From our point of view the banal and the quotidian and their insertion into the temporal measurements of life are the main subjects of the films discussed. They seek to uncover the meaning of human gestures that can no longer belong to the subjects themselves or to the world they live in. This is not just because of their peculiarity but mostly because of their incapacity to erode time, remaining somewhere above it, in a sort of temporality where *distances* become the only places to hide. Nobody seems to find its place inside the floating quotidian and film becomes a visual and narrative exploration of the depersonalization of these characters and their realities. The de-realization of the world is expressed also by means of the few accounts we are given about the characters but mostly through the silences created by the films of Ceylan. There is a desire between the characters in *Uzak* that the other would disappear just because the traces left by their habits are unbearable. There is little dialogue between them but Ceylan manages to create that *oratio interior* by means of visibility. This *oratio interior* creates a space where the subject can confound itself with the city or the apartment he dwells in. The *ennui* becomes both an interior and an exterior presence when the cities and the apartments reflect back insurmountable distances and de-realizations of the self.

Like Gerges Sebbag observes in *Microdurées*, the history we write and the time we experience has changed because of the replacement of the social or political model with the individual one. (Sebbag 2016, 11) Each individual has to be taken separately, divided into micro-durations that insert him into a time without end. Our culture does not work for the space anymore, but for the creation of duration and its modes of separation, differentiation and suppression. Cinema is one of the major creator of micro-durations, understood as pieces of the Real and as mixed sequences of memory-perception that go against the principle of reality because of their artificiality. The micro-duration is a temporal condensation of both intensity and brevity which functions as a sort of miniature of time. (Sebbag 2016, 21) The model of progress or becoming has been replaced by that of a fragmented time which fantasies over its own brevity and immortality. Cinema explores this type of temporality and even invents this condensations of time. Let us turn our attention to the subjects we have been exploring. What about the quotidian? Are this micro-durations developing a time in which the gestures, the movements and all the registered human micro-events bring forth their atomic structure in order to create types of duration that abandon the line of time in favor of the interval? This surrender of time to interval infuses duration with melancholy, the melancholy of the interval or, in other words, that of the separations created by the atomized time defined by Sebbag.

Melancholic underdevelopment

The last film we will be talking about is *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), the film of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, inspired by the novel of Edmundo Desnoes, and which tells the story of a man who decides to stay in Cuba after the Cuban Revolution, during the '60s when many flew to North America, even his wife. The film is a mixture of documentary footage and fiction (the first side showing faces of people, scene from the fight, the *missile crises*, Fidel Castro or Marilyn Monroe and the other side following his short memories with his wife and the new wondering through Cuba which becomes a space which retains him but can no longer contain him or his memories). *Memories of Underdevelopment* is a mixture of documentary and Italian Neorealism scenes. The melancholic over voices talks also about an unregistered memory of Latin America which has been dispersed by reality: *Hasta los sentimientos de los cubanos son subdesarrollados: sus sufrimientos son primitivos y directos, no han sido trabajados y endados por la cultura or aqui todo madura y se descompone con facilidad* ("Even the feelings of the Cubans are underdeveloped: their sufferings are primitive and direct, they weren't mediated and woven by culture" or "here everything matures and decomposes in an easy way"). In Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's conception cinema has to operate critically over reality and thus bring the spectator in front of himself by making him face a problem that has no resolution or is irreducible to a certain defined meaning. That is why his film is neither propagandist nor heroic, creating an affect of melancholic anti-story and anti-memory. The film could have been the testimony

of a moment of fight that was not yet over, although the victory of the revolution brought peace again, but our main character, Sergio, is caught between separated times and distant spaces. History seems to be no longer able to contain and insert his quotidian, his gestures, his searches. That is why the film creates such a contrast between historical footage and his apparently ego-centric wanderings through the city. The impossibility of creating a relation between the historic and daily life is seen in terms of the voice over as one of the signs of underdevelopment: *Esa es una de las señales del subdesarrollo: incapacidad para relacionar las cosas, para acumular experiencia y desarrollarse* ("This is one of the signs of underdevelopment: the incapacity to relate things, to accumulate the experience and develop.") The voice over works as an inner voice but the visual seems to always go against this inner voice, rectifying it, overwriting the half-life of a man caught in-between the past and the present. The experience of history does not repeat itself inside the personal and the quotidian because of the discontinuity created by the suspension of individual life. The memory that keeps repeating itself inside the movie is that of him recording one of the "bare life" discourses of his wife without her knowing. When he tells her he has recorded everything she said she becomes hysterical and throws herself on the bed saying that she will leave the country, she will go to the North. This memory is a key for the entire film because in trying to record the quotidian the subject feels denuded and the need to reinsert itself in history turns into the desire to leave. Sergio, the aspiring writer, remains, looking at Cuba as through an impenetrable window glass where moments of adaptation and in-adaptation become interlaced melancholic states. The residual state he is in plays between memory and forgetting, observing how a teared country is unable to inscribe its lacunae into the immediate and necessary sense of self. These lacunae are like floating images into the scenery of the historically conscious subject and they become more and more alienating for Sergio. That is why *subdesarrollo* could also be translated as *ripping off*, the tearing of consciousness between residual anti-stories and anti-histories. The fragmentation of self is constructed by the film also by the irreconcilable dimensions of here and there, of registered and unregistered, of story and anti-story. When Roland Barthes writes his *Mourning Diary* he distinguishes between these two states of melancholy which can be applied not only to the inner state of our character, but to the post-revolutionary atmosphere of the entire nation:

There is a time when death is an event, an ad-venture, and as such, mobilizes interests, activates, tetanizes. And then one day it is no longer an event, it is another duration, compressed, insignificant, not narrated, grim, without recourse: true mourning not susceptible to any narrative dialectic. (Barthes 2009, November 15)

Barthes writes his *Mourning Diary* by assuming responsibility for the banal, by claiming that "in taking these notes, I'm trusting myself to the banality that is in me." (Barthes 2009, October 29) Is Barthes referring to the banality of mourning or to that of keeping a diary? As we can also see from our analyzed film melancholy has been

usually associated in representation with the poetics of banality. The rumblings of characters, the pictures of their houses, close-up with their faces, simple reflected gestures, long takes, etc. It is by quoting Barthes again that we find the answer to why melancholy has usually been usually associated at the level of its representation with the poetics of the banal:

Virtually no signs of an internalized mourning. This is the fulfillment of absolute internalization. All judicious societies, however, have prescribed and codified the externalization of mourning. Uneasiness of ours insofar as it denies mourning.
(Barthes 2009, June 24, 1978)

Thus, Barthes is saying that only when no sign of mourning is visible or even sensible, there starts the real mourning, which has an invisible language and a silent voice. Although there are rituals and externalization of mourning and a public image of melancholy, its true nature is mostly divorced from complete representation. The banal has the power to evoke the inner mourning self and that is why its marks are usually the aesthetics of cinematic melancholy. *Memorias del desarrollo* tries to be a witness to the melancholy of a country reflected in the banal history of an individual, dispersing reality in-between these states of action and inaction. Taking Maurice Merleau-Ponty's term, the "prose of the world" develops itself inside the captivity of the significant. According to Merleau-Ponty, having a finite number of signs to express an infinite series of thoughts or objects means being inside the "prose of the world." Cinema also has a limited means of expressing an infinite number of emotions, affects and histories and this tension gives it its power and authenticity. There is a certain melancholy of the image as a finite sign that tries to witness the diffusion of reality through itself. That is why the documentary images that Tomás Gutiérrez Alea uses are so powerful and they sometimes redirect the whole scenery to begin another "prose."

Conclusion

As we have seen melancholy is part of a complex visual structure in which the longing for the absolute is always missed and it decomposes itself into fragmentary and disintegrated subjects. The cinematic image renders them as solitary wanderers of an estranged world. The gaze that follows them on multiple levels can both lose and recuperate them. This poetics of the residual generates a sense of melancholy which captures the effects of distances, silences and non-declinations. The language of the banal opens up the non-narrative dimension of melancholy and joins visibility with both the power to compose and decompose, to veil or unveil the lost traces of significance. Melancholy is no longer the goddess of poets, but the blank sentence of the banal, emptying out images of discontinuous solitudes.

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