

PERFORMATIVE EVENTS AND PERFORMATIVE PRACTICES IN DAM AFFECTED LANDSCAPES

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Abstract

In the context of scenography and performance studies, this article focuses on performative events and performative practices as social and cultural processes of place making in the circumstances of development forced displacement. While development can be understood as a form of spatialized power that transfigures a landscape and sacrifices a social group; landscape performances, protest performances, rites of passage, performances of memory and environmental performances are to be identified and analyzed as performative events and performative practices of transformation. This article discusses how the transfiguration of the landscape in a development project involving the construction of a water dam affects the landscape itself and the people living there; how people are responding to that displacement; what kind of performative events and practices are taking place?

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Introduction

My research is inscribed in the emerging discourse on landscape, environment and performance responding to issues of ecology and sustainability. It is concerned with environmental, social and cultural processes of place making in development forced displacement where I observe the physical metamorphosis of the land and the process of a community's dislocation and relocation. As spatial practices, I propose that scenography and performance seem particularly suited in finding creative ways to express the loss of place, to cope with that traumatic experience and to re-invent a sense of belonging. In order to bridge the disciplines of scenography, performance studies and anthropology I will look at specific examples of development forced displacement where I have identified performative correspondences between the displaced community and the territory.

As a result of the landscape transfiguration, landscape performances will be observed as performative events. Investigating how residents respond to displacement, I will recognize performative practices identified so far as protest performances, rites of passage, performances of memory and environmental performances as expressive acts of transformation. Those performative practices, are either consciously designed by social workers, artists and performers or created by the displaced as spontaneous gestures of place making.

In order to clarify my proposal, I will introduce preliminary notions before concentrating on specific examples involving the construction of water dams.

I – Preliminary notions

Geographer Doreen Massey argues that communities can exist without being in the same place (Massey, 1991: p. 6). Because place happens, it can always regenerate itself. My research intends to investigate

whether performance is able to reformulate a sense of community, a sense of place, or at least establish a particular experience within and between human and non-human in the specific context of development forced displacement. Erika Fischer-Lichte has claimed that "performance induces an extraordinary state of permanently heightened attention" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: p. 168). I propose that "transforming what has been ordinary into components of aesthetic experience" is a possible way of engendering the world. In the case of development forced displacement, that process will be most certainly also responsible for the awakening of a consciousness of the sustainable.

With the extension of the discourse on development forced displacement since the late 1980's, the dialogue has shifted from a strictly ecological point of view over the impact on nature to a sustainable point of view over the impact on the social community. Anthropologist and World Bank consultant specialized in displacement Michael M. Cernea claims that resettlement is a socio-cultural and economic process that happens first to people, rather than to their physical environment (Cernea, 1988: p. 6). For anthropologists Theodore E. Downing and Carmen Downing-Garcia: "An understanding of what happens when people are involuntarily displaced begins with culture" (Downing; Downing-Garcia, 2008). Observing processes of involuntary dislocation and resettlement, they have introduced the notions of "routine culture" and "dissonant culture". Agreeing on the idea of a patterned life, they propose that individuals make tactical decisions day after day as they navigate routine culture. "The spatial and temporal organization of routines gives communities and individuals constructed predictability" (p. 228). In development forced displacement, this routine culture is traumatically disturbed and becomes dissonant. The previous routine constructs become meaningless. "Social life becomes chaotic, uncertain, and unpredictable" (p. 230). In order to restore a new routine culture, communities need to reaffirm their shared values and recreate a sense of place.

If we agree on the idea that place happens and regenerates itself. This regeneration presumes a capacity of transformation. In her aesthetic conception of performance, Erika Fischer-Lichte proposes that performance

has a transformative power capable of re-enchanting the world (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: p. 181). This does not imply that the world becomes a more beautiful place but proposes that performance has the capacity of making the world more present. By becoming more present the world is re-generated with new meaning.

The following examples will try to demonstrate how a displaced community can re-generate new meaning and re-create a sense of place through performative events and practices that have been identified so far as landscape performance, protest performance, rite of passage, performance of memory and environmental performance.

II. Examples

1. Landscape performances

The impact of an artificial construct on the elements that constitute the landscape provoke a multitude of transformations where the actors at play are mostly natural, non-human elements. To support the idea of a "landscape performance", I suggest that these visible transformations reveal a kinetic energy of the elements that can be interpreted as a visual dramaturgy. I also propose that these visible transformations establish complex spectatorship relations between the observers and the observed object.

During the construction of a dam, the soon to be displaced community is condemned to witness the gradual spectacle of destruction surrounding their everyday landscape. Because of the traumatizing effect it produces on the displaced, it is common to observe a feeling of disbelief. The writer José Raymond, recalls his last summer in the village of Tignes in 1952 and describes:

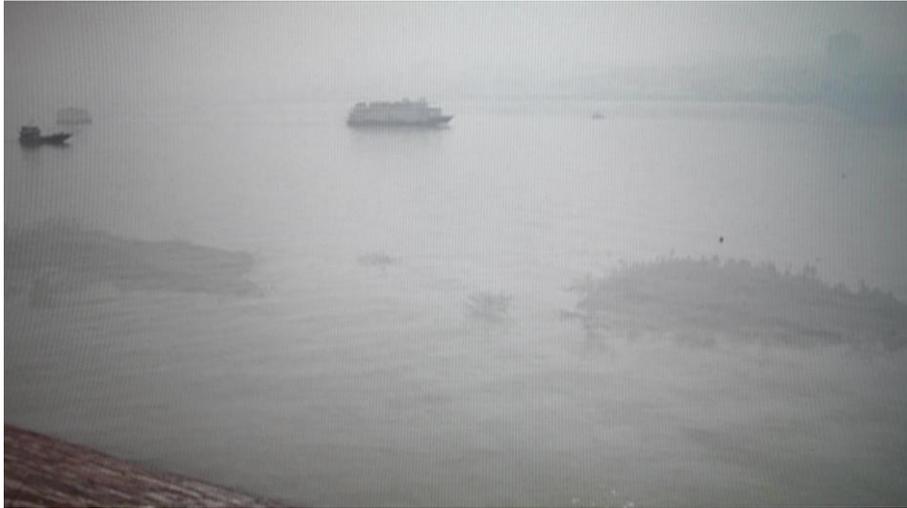
From the fields, we see the coming and going of dump trucks depositing concrete at the end of the valley. Regularly, the sound of an explosion is heard and echoed from one mountain to the other. On the val-d'Isère side, workers are undermining the limestone rock that will be used for the construction of the dam. Our sky is now lined

with cables and we can sometimes hear above our heads the creaking of trolleys crossing the valley. The mines and the bulldozer's stroking snouts mutilate the landscape of our ancestors, our days are rythmed by construction noise, and the wall rises inexorably [...] yet, we refuse to believe it, [...] following the orders of our father, we continued making the hay" (Reymond, 1992: p. 216). [tradução Carolina Santo].

For anthropologists Downing and Downing-Garcia, dissociation of consciousness is a common psycho-socio-cultural response of the displacees to the dissonant period of destruction and construction of a development project. The effect of the landscape performance is so traumatizing that the perception of reality is denied and apprehended as a fictional performance. In his documentary film *Up the Yangtze*, film director Yung Chuan expresses a similar feeling when he looks at the changing landscape of the Yangtze River bank as the construction of the three Gorges dam finalizes. As the reservoir floods the land, his camera witnesses the disappearance of a farmer's family house. The fading images of the almost imperceptible rise of the water create a ghostly atmosphere that can be assimilated to a dreamlike estate.







Water rising, Three Gorges, China. Yung Chuan, *Up the Yangtze*, DVD, 2007.

Yung Chuan also captures interesting moments of spectatorship along the river bank, where peasants stop to watch the progressive flooding of their landscape, gazing silently at the growing river. One of them comments: "Our country is really strong and prosperous now. So strong and prosperous that it can actually stop the gigantic river".



Peasant looking at the water rising in Hubei, Three Gorges, China.
Yung Chuan, *Up the Yangtze*, DVD, 2007.

These examples clearly demonstrate that the flooding of a landscape is an event that people force themselves to ignore or stop to observe as spectators. The feelings of disbelief, pride, sadness or agony indicate a flow of energy and a series of negotiations between the perceived and the perceiver suggestive of a performative event that I refer to as landscape performance.

Once the dam is built and the landscape flooded, it can happen that the water level drops during dry seasons. What also happens periodically to some reservoirs is a full drainage for the maintenance of the dam, which usually occurs every 10 years. Whether originated by drought or drainage maintenance operations, the emptying of reservoirs offer another kind of transformation where the landscape morphs back to its original shape. Most interestingly these “emptyings” result in pilgrimage trips of the formerly displaced members of the community. Those “emptying” events usually reveal desolated and doomed landscapes where the formerly displaced usually congregate. 40 year after Tignes was flooded, José Reymond steps foot again in his village during a drainage maintenance operation of the Tignes dam and describes in the first pages of his book: “The earth is grey and sad, cracked like a lunar soil [...] Nothing is yet left. Engulfed, flooded, striped off the map of France, like the rest of my village. I cannot detach my eyes from this plain of mud” (Reymond, 1992: p. 1). [tradução Carolina

Santo]. In Vilarinho das Furnas, Portugal and Mediano, Spain, the undestroyed flooded villages reappear in the dry season.



Vilarinho da Furna in the dry season.
Available at: <http://meikart.blogspot.com/2011/08/fui-ao-geres.html>
Last viewed: dec/2011.

Witnessing a drainage maintenance operation in the Dordogne Valley in France social anthropologist Armelle Faure describes: “the observers look at the progression of the water level dropping [...]. In an austere and poetic landscape propitious to meditative contemplation, they come to admire the reappearance of the monastery, emerging day after day from the waters of the lake” (Faure, 2005: p. 108). With this sentence, Faure clearly implies the existence of a relationship between an observer and the landscape. With the words “meditative contemplation”, we also understand how the reappearance of the doomed landscape as a performative event establishes a complex relationship between the spectator and the landscape generating a transformation in both the individual and the landscape. When this performative event involves the presence of a formerly displaced individual who observes the landscape morphing back to its original shape and steps foot on it again, landscape performance attains another dimension related to memory that will be observed later.

2. Protest performances

It is important to mention that ecological consciousness and resistance against the devastation of nature spread with organizations such as Greenpeace since the 1960's. Protest actions against the construction of dams conducted by NGO's such as Greenpeace or the International Rivers Organization play an important role in the defense of the affected communities and their rights. In the context of performance studies and scenography, it is here interesting to note how these NGO's often utilize performative strategies of resistance.



Greenpeace activists chained to the fence at the main entrance of the Brazilian Agency for Electric Energy (ANEEL) building in protest of the Belo Monte hydro power plant project (20/04/2010). Available at: <http://weblog.greenpeace.org/makingwaves/archives/2010/04/> Last viewed: dec/2011.



March 14th 2011 Annual International Day of Action Against Dams and For Rivers, Water and Life. International Rivers Organization. Participants performing "La Habanera Triste" in solidarity with the affected communities by the dam projects in Mularroya, Biscarrués and Yesa. Zaragoza, Spain. Available at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/internationalrivers/5532727513/>

Last viewed: dec/2011.

Anthropologist Anthony Oliver Smith asserts that displaced people must often cope with great uncertainty and a lack of information concerning their future, resulting in conditions of considerable stress, disorientation, and trauma. The disorientation generated by losing control over a situation and not understanding it, motivates resistance. In that sense, resistance is the reassertion of logic and a sense of control (Oliver-Smith, 2009). Since hydroelectric power has been declared a clean energy, dam-affected people have become the focal point of the discourse on sustainability. Encouraged by the resistance discourse of development forced displacement and resettlement since the late 1980's, displaced communities have become involved in the preservation of their landscape as a natural element that needs to be preserved, but also in the preservation of their own culture. Actions of resistance conducted by the displaced communities will be interpreted as protest performance. I propose to distinct two kinds of protest performances: the tumultuous protest and the silent protest.

2a. Tumultuous protests

If NGO's are effective in divulging their rights to the affected communities and organizing movements of solidarity, the media plays an important role for the protestors who want to make their actions seen. The press, the radio, the television and the internet are stages where the protestors become visible and audible to a distant audience in order to provoke indignation and raise other voices to join forces in the defense of their land. As any stage, the media needs to display significant images that carry a clear message. To create those significant images of resistance, protestors employ performative strategies that produce a dramaturgical effect. Some protest performances gained so much attention from the media that they were actually able to stop the construction of dams. This is the case of the Brazilian resistance against the Kararaô et Babaquara dams in the Amazon reported by geographers Nathalie Blanc and Denis Chartier (Blanc; Chartier, 2008). The first meeting of the Xingu Indians was organized in February 1989 in Altamira gathering 1000 Indians, 150 foreign journalists with peasants, environmentalists, students, people representing local organizations and some celebrities as the Brazilian actress Lucélia Santos and the international rock star Sting. Also invited to the meeting were some representatives of the federal government and the Eletronorte Company responsible for the construction of the project. The meeting gained international media attention and the construction of the dams was successfully suspended. In this specific case, the celebrities certainly encouraged the presence of the international press and helped spreading a favorable opinion across the globe, but the most effective image remaining from Altamira is a young Kayapó Indian shouting and threatening the Eletronorte president with her machete against his neck as a protest performance against the dam. (Blanc; Chartier, 2008). Because the press was there to capture this moment, this woman's spontaneous action became the symbol of a dramaturgy of resistance capable of transforming a situation.



Young Kayapó Indian threatening the Eletronorte president, Altamira, 1989.
Available at: <http://www.internationalrivers.org/latin-america/amazon-basin/tuira-kayap-altamira-gathering1989> Last viewed: dez/2011.

Today, the Amazon forest is facing another threat since the Rouseff Government approved and initiated the construction of the Belo Monte dam. The NGO *Amazon Watch* has been active in the defense of the Xingu River. They have also gained the media attention organizing events and meetings in the presence of celebrities such as James Cameron. The *Movimento Gota d'Água* has reunited the most famous actors from the Globo Television Network to participate in a campaign spot against the construction of the Belo Monte dam. Published on Youtube at the end of November 2011, the spot attained 1.245.277 views in four weeks.

Either by displaying strong images of resistance or by exposing celebrities from the performing arts industry, the media functions as a stage for protest performance against the construction of dams.

Media coverage of dam-affected communities did not always inspire sympathy in defense of the displaced. In 1945, France needs electric resources to rebuild its country and engineering masterworks to regain its modernist pride. Built between 1946 and 1952 in the Isere Valley, the Tignes Dam reflects an enthusiasm for development that was present in post Second World War Europe. At that time, protesting against the

construction of a dam was protesting against progress. Protestors are seen as enemies of the nation because they are not serving the public interest. Despite the bad reputation they must endure, some villagers from Tignes were able to contact the media and raise their voice until Paris to alert the nation about their desperate situation. As a way of expressing themselves, the protestors performed illicit actions that did not favor their cause. The author of *Tignes, Mon village englouti*, José Reymond, recalls the spring of 1946 when he and some friends decided to build up a strategy of sabotage:

One night, me and two of my friends went out to cut the power cable feeding the construction field, before meeting the rest of the team in charge of burning down the electric transformer and destroying the drilling machines and the compressors that were there (Reymond, 1992). [author's translation].

Another night, José Reymond and his friend Henri build up 3 dolls representing the 3 main agents of the French Electric Company responsible for the construction of the dam. The 3 dolls were hanged on the village main square. To be sure that they will be recognized by the villagers, José and Henri wrote the names of the agents on each doll: Jolicoeur, Lépine and Duvernoy. The following morning, the grocery keeper Josette woke up the entire village in terror screaming at the sight of the dolls. Combining strong and dramatic visual effects with symbolic signs of resistance, José Reymond and his friends' actions are clearly protest performances. But the public opinion did not approve of those impediments against progress. The attacks were considered as acts of terrorism and the local authorities employed French Riot police to guard the construction area of the dam. The desperate attempts to protest against the injustice they were facing and the illicit strategies did not serve the community's interest to save the village. With a public opinion in favor of progress above all things, the Tignes dam was proudly inaugurated with a public ceremony by the president Vincent Auriol in July 1953.

2b. The silent protests

Protest performances are not necessarily tumultuous, nor do they depend on media coverage to exist. Sometimes, they become part of the community's own narrative. It is common to hear stories of how such person refused to leave his/her house as the water level was rising or the bulldozers were destroying it. Social workers doing field investigations during relocation processes also report interesting silent protest performances. Anthropologist Fabienne Watteau followed the relocation of the Luz village in Portugal during the construction of the Alqueva Dam in 2002 (Watteau, 2008). The case of Luz is rather unique in the sense that the destroyed village was entirely rebuilt as an identical twin with improved "urban village" features 2 km away from its original location. Partly because they felt reasonably compensated, the villagers never protested openly against the construction of the Alqueva dam. Even if the protest was not open and organized in Luz, Watteau did observe isolated signs of resistance. One woman from the village was collecting every press article, object, poem, book or photography about the old village, writing pamphlets and drawing caricatures that she would pin to the café walls. As a result to her protest performances, the woman was pointed at and marginalized by the community. Although they did not approve of these resistance actions Watteau observed that most villagers were angry and expressed their protest in more subtle ways. During the relocation phase in the new village of Luz, most relocated villagers were transforming their new homogenous "urban village" style houses by adding decorative details such as tiles or arcades, tearing down walls, painting the floor or building up sheds in their backyards. By occupying the new space in their own way, and defying the authority's orders forbidding any intervention in the new houses for the following 5 years, the Luz people were showing signs of resistance. Using a symbolic language engaging a physical activity, these villagers are saying that the houses belong to them and that they are free to arrange them as they wish. "Habiter, ce nest pas simplement se loger dans des formes. [...] C'est s'empresindre d'un territoire, se l'approprier" (Watteau, 2005: p. 90). These interventions are protest performances that can also be assimilated to a rite of passage.



New houses being modified in the new village of Luz. Photo: Clara Saraiva (Saraiva, 2005).

3. Rites of passage

In the 1960's, Richard Schechner has demonstrated the relation between anthropology and performance involving social drama and aesthetic. Since then, performance and anthropology have a tradition of transdisciplinarity that is interesting to investigate in relation to development forced displacement and resettlement. One of the patterns of dissonant culture in development forced displacement is that displacees may increase the frequency of rituals in order to reaffirm their group identity (Downing; Downing-Garcia, 2005: p. 234). It is characteristic of a dam project to involve consecutive phases of destruction and construction, dislocation and relocation. These processes of transformation usually provoke the emergence of rites of passage. Considered as a transformative element in performance studies, the rite of passage has an important role in development forced displacement and resettlement, more specifically in the transitions from routine culture, to dissonant culture, to a new routine culture. The importance of ritual in transition processes provoke spontaneous rites of passage by the community or consciously planned ceremonies organized by legal authorities, religious institutions or social scientists. A good example is the displacement of cemeteries in dam-affected villages involving the difficult process of exhumation and reburial of

the bodies. Portuguese anthropologist Clara Saraiva reports the ceremonial mass organized in Luz by the church with the presence of the district bishop in memoriam of the village's deceased. Taking place in the "Our Lady of Light" church situated in the old village, the ceremony expanded into a procession from the old village into the new one situated 2 km away. A new mass was then celebrated in the replica of the old "Our Lady of Light" church, situated this time in the new village. The official character of this ceremony celebrating the dead and involving a participatory procession from one village to the other was an important rite of passage for the inhabitants of Luz.



Procession from old Luz to new Luz. Photo: Clara Saraiva (Saraiva, 2005).

Rites of passage may also emerge spontaneously, from the community's own craving. In the last day of school in the village of Tignes, José Reymond witnesses the young students coming out of the building soon to be dynamited. One of them had written on the blackboard: "last class, March 10th 1952". The sad looking students soon rejoiced by lighting

a bonfire on the public square where they burned their school notebooks singing “Hooray to holidays, no more punishments, books to the fire and EDF with it” (Reymond, 1992). [author’s translation]. In this example, we understand that the transition from sadness to joy relies on the making of a bonfire, a symbolic rite of passage invented by the students as a community reaffirmation of their identity. The fact of burning books and singing against EDF also expresses their mutiny and can be seen as a protest performance.

Moving out and moving in can also be seen as a rite of passage. Because they suppose the active participation of the body in a spatio-temporal transition, I consider the actions of packing, transporting, cleaning and unpacking as rites of passage. In some cases, moving out and moving in takes considerable proportions. During the construction of the Three Gorges dam in China, peasants destroyed their own houses in order to recycle the bricks for the construction of a new house elsewhere.



The inhabitants of Badong in Hubei China destroying their own houses to retrieve and recycle the bricks. Photo: Pierre Montalvon (Montavon; Koller, 2006: p. 66).

4. Performances of memory

The performances of memory are to be understood as creative processes that link the past to the present in order to project the future. Performances of memory will be more effective by gathering the displaced

community in a participatory activity than isolate individuals in their contemplative nostalgia.

The construction of the Alqueva dam and the rehabilitation of the territory with the reservoir including the edification of the new village of Luz were assigned to a Government enterprise named EDIA. Conscious of the socio-cultural impact of the dam, EDIA planned the creation of a museum of memory in the new village of Luz and appointed a multidisciplinary team of scientists and social workers to follow the displacement process. The result of their field investigation is an impressive body of work that can be seen at the Luz Museum where a room is especially dedicated to memory. This is where the "Conversations at the Remembrance Table" take place. As stated in the museum program, "the conversations central objective are to establish an open dialogue with the community concentrating on the themes of everyday practices and ceremonies, the adaptation to the new village, emotions, the concerns of today, the generational confrontation". I was lucky enough to attend one of those sessions about the old custom of cereal farming and the history of water mills that were part of the old village landscape. An old farmer was telling his life as a child along the disappeared Guadiana River to children who were born by the Alqueva reservoir. More than all archeological objects collected and exhibited at the museum, this conversation at the remembrance table was able to create a flux between the past, the present and the future, to solicit the participant's creativity and imagination in a collective performance of memory. Listening and reacting to what was being told, these children who grew up in the same location but not in the same place as the old man were able to recreate the old man's disappeared landscape in their imagination. Performing memory does not necessarily appeal to remembrance, it is a lively negotiation between past, present and future that involves imagination and creativity.



Conversation at the remembrance table, Luz Museum, April 2011. Photo: Carolina E. Santo.

Memory can also be rooted in places and landscapes. By revealing recognizable landmarks of a submersed and disappeared land, seasonal drought or occasional drainage maintenance operations of dams also provoke peculiar situations involving landscape performance and also performance of memory. Because they provoke “pilgrimage trips” of displaced inhabitants, Armelle Faure has claimed that the dams occasionally become “*Lieux de mémoire*” (Faure, citing Pierre Nora, 2009: p. 104). Here, the performance of memory establishes a sensory communication between the individual and the land. During those emptyings, the natural elements evolve in a kinetic scenography making the landscape seem lively. The landscape transformation solicits the individual’s awareness as a spectator in a theatre. The dropping water reveals a transformed land. The resurgence of an undestroyed submersed village does not restitute the disappeared village; it reveals a traumatized and scarred version of the disappeared village, and the spectator who is occasionally also the former inhabitant must solicit his creativity and imagination to restore what the eye is missing. In that sense, we can refer to the performance of memory. When José Reymond assists to the drainage operation of the Tignes dam revealing his disappeared village, he perfectly describes his imagination at work:

I walked again to the lake. [...] A little further, on a dry mound of mud rising above the others, I can guess what used to be the church. From memory, I slowly retrace the square of the village [...] Without hesitating; I can replace the cemetery, the sawmill, the public school, the grocery. I rebuild one by one the houses of the Chartreux, the place where I was born (Reymond, 1992: p. 1-2). [author's translation].

In Spain, the displaced community of Mediano organized an interesting event that also combines landscape performance and performance of memory. Every year at the end of the summer, the reservoir empties and reveals the church of the disappeared village. On September 26th 2009, the Mediano inhabitants have decided to install a bell to the empty tower of the church. The installation of the bell became a performance of memory when the people of Mediano gathered on the muddy land to hear the bell resonate again through the landscape.



The Mediano villagers gather to hear the sound of the bell.
Available at: <http://campaners.com/php/textos.php?text=3553>
Last viewed: dec/2011.

Here, the revival of the bell sound in the landscape symbolically reformulates a lost spatio-temporal dimension for the displaced community.

5. Environmental performances

In my travel to Luz, I have identified a certain kind of performative practice that I propose to name environmental performance. This type of performance resonates with Richard Schechner's environmental theatre in the sense that it physically engages the spectator in a new relationship with a new environment. In the theatre, Schechner experimented different configurations of space in order to stimulate and provoke the audience's awareness, imagination and participation. The construction of a dam necessarily transforms the land, compelling the displaced community to re-negotiate its trajectories and daily habits. By adapting Schechner's concept of environmental performance to the circumstances of development forced displacement and resettlement, I intend to observe the community's tactics and strategies in reinvesting their new environment through environmental performances. Because these observations rely on field investigation, my examples will concentrate on the village of Luz where I have traveled in April 2011.

During the displacement and resettlement of the village of Luz, anthropologist Fabienne Watteau has made relevant observations on movement, circulation and social performance that seem interesting to confront with the idea of environmental performance. In the old village, inhabitants had diverse properties dispersed in the village (the house, the garden, the workshop, etc.). This configuration of space resulted in a particular circulation. People would meet spontaneously because they would often walk through the village to work or cultivate their garden. Despite its dysfunctional aspect, the sociability of the community relied on that walking circulation creating an organic network of exchange. The new village was planned to be more functional and spacious. First of all, the properties belonging to one household were grouped into a single space. The villagers would not need to cross the village to reach their gardens or workshop anymore because they were now able to do everything at home. Because streets were made larger and the size of the living surface doubled, the villagers were encouraged to drive instead of walking from one place to another. For functional reasons, the organic flow of communication in the streets was destroyed. In this new configuration of space, the Luz people

need to find new strategies of sociability. The cafés became the places where people seemed to meet and socialize the most in the new village.

While I traveled to Luz, I stayed at the “Monte do Caneiro”, an old house transformed into a guesthouse situated on the outskirts of the village. Because it is situated on a hill, the house was not destroyed and is now standing close to the artificial lake. Manuel Santana who used to be a farmer, bought this house with his daughter converting the family’s activity into the tourism sector. When they transformed the house into a guesthouse, they installed a panoramic roof terrace overlooking the reservoir that modified the traditional architectural features of the “alentejan” construction. When we are a guest at the “Monte do Caneiro”, Manuel Santana sits by the breakfast room, waits until we leave the table and proposes a tour of the house and the garden. The first place he takes us is the roof terrace where he likes to sit and enjoy the view of the lake: a vision, he never suspected to have, growing up in the dry lands of Alentejo. As Manuel Santana proved that morning, the panoramic terrace is not only an original architectural feature of the house; it also engages the visitor in a physical relationship with the landscape, a new way of dealing with a new landscape. The actions of climbing, standing and looking also stimulate an awareness of the here and now. Standing on the roof terrace and echoing the transformative power of performance the reservoir seems to lose the menacing lamentation of a disappeared landscape to become a beautiful water mirror reflecting the open sky.



Roof terrace at Monte do Caneiro, April 2011. Photo: Carolina E. Santo.

The Luz Museum situated by the Alqueva reservoir is now mapping trekking paths along the coastline. By proposing new trajectories in a terrain that is still unpracticed, the Luz Museum symbolically invites the villager or the visitor to restore a new routine culture.



Trekking path along the Alqueva reservoir, April 2011.
Photo: Carolina E. Santo.

Final considerations

Involving a connection in constant negotiation between human and non-human factors, a place exists because it is lived and practiced. Echoing

the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's concept of geophilosophy¹ my research is presently aiming at defining the neologism "geoscenography" as a form of performance that is connected with the earth and the territory and that is capable of re-generating a sense of place when this one has been destroyed. "Geoscenographies"² refer to the selective performative events and practices engaged in processes of dislocation and relocation and as the consequence of involuntary displacement identified above as landscape performance, protest performance, rite of passage, performance of memory and environmental performance.

Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical thinking obeys to territorial rules of vicinity, which the philosophers illustrated with the botanical term of the "rhizome". In Deleuze and Guattari's Geophilosophy, concepts are creative rather than critical. They are open to differentiation, instability and transformation. Concepts obey to a rhizomatic scheme that is horizontal rather than vertical. They have no hierarchy, no beginning, no end. They emerge from a "milieu" (middle) and always originate from movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. In her book "Géophilosophie de Deleuze et Guattari", philosopher Manola Antonioli explains how one must step out of the familiar territory to produce creative thinking. It is the exteriority and the absolute strangeness of something or someone that forces one to think. Concepts emerge from this violent and fundamental discontinuity.

Inspired from Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophy and re-contextualized in the circumstances of development forced displacement, the neologism "geoscenography" names specific forms of performance that emanate from a movement of displacement and relocation.

¹ Geophilosophy is well defined by Doel and Clarke in their text on Deleuze: "Deleuze created an extra ordinary form of geo-philosophy that proffers events for everyone. Not only does this non-representational geophilosophy provide an innovative basis for rethinking nature of space and place, it is also fully fledged 'thinking space' in its own right: not an abstract space for thought (a space of consciousness, representation, reflection, theory, etc. that would claim to be removed from the play of the world) but a concrete space of thought (a portion, region or milieu within the play of the world) – an honest-to-goodness thinking space" (Hubbard; Kitchin; Valentine, 2004: p. 105).

² The plural is used to create a distinction with the general concept of geoscenography. Between performance and performative practices.

In accordance with Manola Antonioli's observations, those performances appear once we have stepped out of a familiar territory into the absolute strangeness.

The different experiences and actions emerging from that violent and fundamental discontinuity have been identified so far as landscape performances, protest performances, rites of passage, performances of memory and environmental performances. Those geoscenographies are meant to generate meaning, produce place and engender the world.

If Deleuze and Guattari understood deterritorialization and reterritorialization as horizontal movements provoking connections and associations³ that produced concepts; I propose that dislocation and relocation can be understood as spatial movements provoking connections and associations that produce "Geoscenographies". As concepts stand for creative thoughts, "Geoscenographies" stand for creative events or acts in order to generate meaning, produce place and engender the world.

³ For Deleuze and Guattari, creative thinking results in concepts, and concepts are territorial in the sense that they obey to the rules of vicinity. "Le concept n'a pas d'autre règle que le voisinage interne ou externe [...] Les concepts sont des aplats sans niveaux, des ordonnées sans hiérarchie" (Deleuze; Guattari, 1991: p. 87).

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