Bubbles, globes, wrappings, and plektopoi: minimal notes to rethink metaphysics from the standpoint of the social sciences

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Abstract. This essay aims to offer a critical development of some of the implications that the ideas of Peter Sloterdijk give rise to, in order to explore and rethink the microclimatic and self-immunological dimensions of the old metaphysical schools in particular and of metaphysics in general. Nevertheless, in order to achieve this task it is necessary to free Sloterdijk’s thought from certain phantasms that beset and undermine the most promising of his categories. The first part of the paper consists of an exposition of some of the basic ideas regarding bubbles and globes (thus, following the first two volumes of the trilogy Sphären); and contends that it is not possible to pass from the first (Blasen/bubbles) to the second (Globen/globes) without losing the most critical and subversive elements concerning the task of rethinking the social sciences in their micro-anthropological dimensions. In the second part, against the account of Western metaphysics espoused by Sloterdijk but taking on board some of his most suggestive insights, a radically different materialist perspective is put to the test. Finally, the third part offers a summary of our differences.

Sloterdijk (like so many other thinkers since the 1980s) attempts to think beyond the autonomous and self-sufficient subject of modernity; beyond the Kantian subject and its instrumental and Faustian temporality. Sloterdijk reminds us that, as human beings, we live and have always lived within shared spaces, within, at the very least, dyadic spheres: placenta/foetus, mother/child, couple of lovers, best friends and allies, soul/God or soul/demon, the good demons (daemons or guardian angels) that have accompanied individuals since premodern epochs.

This, indeed, is the essential condition of our being-in-the-world, to paraphrase Heidegger (1977), always so present in his thinking: we always inhabit an intimate social space, a shared intimacy. These are the dual or polar bubbles that he employs against the autistic monad, a veritable fetishistic reverie of modern subjectivity. The dyadic, triadic, and multipolar bubbles are the exterior of the interior and the interior of the exterior, the ecstatic intertwining of the subjects in the common interior space where those that really live together are mutually nurtured.

In order to convince us (and convince himself) of the latter, Sloterdijk undertakes a daring (and often kitschy) poetic archaeology of intimacy: of nurturing spaces that shelter and interweave the subtle fabric of the human soul. This fabric that allows for the attachment to others and the soul’s self-response. Sloterdijk employs the full force of his arguments against the substantialist phantasms of the individual, the fragile and ethereal panels of the globules in which we nest: a new and brilliant anthropological imagery of an always-already shared space. In order to communicate his message, he resorts to a whole range of rhetorical devices, fully aware that human beings also dwell in the ways of rhetoric; inventing a language that sits between high-minded philosophical discourse, pitiless satire, a certain piquant mordacity, and a savage poetics of the uterine (without disdaining viscous placenta jargons in search always...
of that which philosophy had apparently abolished: the space in which we inhabit and which inhabits us.

“My book [he is referring to the first tome of Sphären: Blasen] deals with tonal situations [tonalen Zuständen] or the total microclimatic relations in which human beings ‘live, intertwine and are’ [mikroklimatischen Ganzverhältnissen, in denen die Menschen ‘leben, weben und sind’], in which they are dissolved and submerged in such a natural way that, in general, they often do not appear as an explicit topic for discussion” (Sloterdijk and Heinrichs, 2001, page 142).

Sloterdijk’s metaphors, intentionally provocative, rescue time and again that dimension which Modernity has cancelled, to wit: the enveloping, the mental climatology, the spiritual atmospheric, the emotional and desiring meteors that, in short, plot, weave, contrive, and protect the socially shared intimacy of human beings. Sloterdijk’s primordial dyad—discounting the literality of mother/child (Sloterdijk, 1998, pages 275–295), sphere of lovers, intimate friends—is nothing less than the evidence that the process of hominization (in its phylogenesis/ontogenesis) implies that the deepest level of oneself (the object of desires and emotions) belongs to a radical sphere of participation with/by others. This is something that Hegel, after his own manner, had already reenacted in the dialectic of recognition (the master–slave dialectic) described in the Phenomenology of Spirit (1971, B IV A- 2-3), and was later to be further befuddled by the hermetic doctor Lacan: our desire is always the desire of the Other.

Regardless of his provocative stance, Sloterdijk appears to be expressing a platitude that has been systematically ignored by the enlightened modernity which gave rise to the human sciences: human beings have never lived nor can they live (isolated like the Kantian monad) in the subjective time of the project, of production, of development and progress. Instead (and much prior to these), they have needed (and continue to need) to create and recreate shared spaces, without which human culture ceases to exist and human life depends and is spent.

As Sloterdijk suggests, we have always lived (and continue to do so, regardless of appearances) in shared bubbles that include (we venture to add) material places transmuted by an imaginary placenta, interwoven by discourses, forms, and social visions, in which we became (dis)oriented, in which our desires, pleasures, fantasies, memories, and hopes are folded and unfolded, in the context of complex (ever-changing) power games.

The music of the spheres
In his interpretation of the mosaic of Torre Annunziata, at the beginning of Sphären II: Globen (Sloterdijk, 1999a, pages 13–45), Sloterdijk reads, with ironic Heideggerianism (Intensive Idyll), the birth of Western metaphysics in the positing of the relations between Being and Time. It consists of a Pentecostal space surrounding seven philosophers who, turning their backs to a sundial-time, are fascinated by a sphaira that absorbs them into its hospitable and divine space. Metaphysics is born as a passion for the divine sphere in which human beings dwell. Sphären II is concerned with, among other things, the attempt to think about this fascination of Western metaphysics with the sphere, from Plato to Nicolas de Cusa, Copernicus, Newton, and Leibniz.

Nevertheless, it is not merely a theological or geometric passion intended for geographers or mathematicians. Instead, as Sphären I (Sloterdijk, 1998) already clarified, the true meaning of this globe talisman that bewitches the seven wise men points towards the mantic energies of a divine and self-immunological roundness that, supposedly, constitutes the true dwelling of the Western imaginary until the onset of Modernity. Throughout the second volume of his magnum opus, there is an
almost nostalgic celebration of the power of these metaphysical spheres as dwellings and hothouses of Being that would offer high performance qualities regarding animation, protection, and *climate-conditioning* not only to thinkers but also to people in general. Departing from texts of Parmenides and Plato, the argument attempts to convince us that such hospitable qualities are drawn from the selfsame virtues of that cosmic and divine sphere—nourishing and welcoming—and that, with the scientific revolution, national statehood, capitalist globalization, and industrial and democratic Modernity would have become obsolete, imploding into millions of *foams* in the contemporary modern world.

It is well known that, for Nietzsche, all this celestial metaphysics and music of the spheres, which Sloterdijk celebrates, was finally nothing more than a nihilistic delirium of the *afterworldsmen* (Nietzsche, 1969, page 50). Similarly, for Heidegger, this idyllic scene represented in the Napolitan mosaic of Torre Annunziata could have been, as Sloterdijk is happy to suggest, that inaugural moment in which the West, by means of Platonism, begins to turn its back to the radical experience of Time—the time of human finitude with its radical contingency and historicity—inventing the *Forgetfulness of Being* and the whole historical drift that prepares the transformation of thinking for the administration of entities, domination and control of nature, instrumental reason, calculus, and technoscience.

Naturally, Sloterdijk, deep down, agrees wholeheartedly with many of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's criticisms regarding this metaphysics of the spheres. Nevertheless, for hundreds of pages, he seems to act as if the essential point of Western ontology were this initiatory bewitching in the form of a globular dwelling in which the West would have decided to find its abode for 2000 years. It is as if, in the end, nihilism and/or the `forgetfulness of Being' were collateral effects of the supposedly narcotic and intoxicating power of the spheres, and the great metaphysicians of the West had merely succumbed to its opiate vapors. No mention is made, either, of the alliances and power frameworks (analyzed by historians and sociologists) that link such spherical fantasies with slavery, despotism, phalocentrism, and all the other forms of barbarism that have characterized the ancient and medieval worlds.

It is this apparent paradox that carries all the contrived ambiguity which pervades the writing of *Sphaeren II*. The powerful and thought-provoking bio-psycho-*antropo*-socio-*logy* of *Sphaeren I* had taught us that human beings are animals that live in dyadic *bubbles*, producing an *interior space* which is essential for their survival. For better or for worse, it constitutes a human condition way beyond the domain of value judgments. It is simply that human beings *produce* in their inhabitation with other human beings their own self-immunological and self-acclimatized spaces: from the relationship between mother and child, to loving couples and best friends. Is it so strange, then, that metaphysicians would also *wrap themselves* in cosmic—divine spheres? That villages are enclosed within city-fortresses and empires in great solar capitals (Sloterdijk, 1999a, pages 251 – 325)? Suddenly, it seems as if, almost by magic, we pass from a promising bio-psycho-*logical* vision of the psychoacoustic fetal bubbles, together with those others that aureole and intertwine lovers, to the ethereal metaphysical spheres of Platonic—Christian tenor.

In chapter IV, “The ontological argument of the sphere”, Sloterdijk narrates the Platonic creation of the Celestial Sphere as a solution for the plague and the military

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(1) “Thus I speak to the afterworldsmen. It was suffering and impotence—that created all the afterworlds; and that brief madness of happiness that only the greatest sufferer experiences” (Nietzsche, 1969, page 50).
defeat suffered by Athens (Sloterdijk, 1999a, pages 359f). Philosophy would, at this juncture, have decided to take refuge in a world safe from miasmas. The truth is that this narrative is permeated by idealism and ambiguity. Although Epicurus is mentioned, nothing is said about his deep-seated differences with Plato. Moreover, even though mention is likewise made of Hadot (1981) and his indispensable studies regarding the *spiritual exercises* of the philosophical schools of antiquity, nothing is said about the true (decisive) role of those mysterious scholastic arts in terms of the creation and recreation of habitable climates. Following Hegel, the whole onus is placed on the supposed power per se of the pure imaginary iconic repertoires that *(auto)suggest, hypnotize, house, and pacify* mankind.

“The history of the success of Ptolomaic-Aristotelianism leads to the deduction that images of world cosmographies, precisely when they appear as scientifically consolidated dogmas, are in the first resort systems of autosuggestive persuasion *[in erster Linie autosuggestive Überzeugungssysteme sind]*, which only find a wide resonance when they prove their efficacy in the imaginative ecosystem *[im imaginativen Ökosystem]* of their societies. From this point of view, the persuasion regarding the coverings of the old Europeans is shown to be one of the most successful cognitive autohypnoses *[der erfolgreichsten kognitiven Autohypnosen]* in the history of theory and culture. Throughout a whole era the ontological icons of the circle and the sphere kept the empirical investigation of the sky piously frozen” (Sloterdijk, 1999a, page 416).

Reading this chapter—carefully distanced from any mention of the political, economic, and social realities of classic antiquity—it would appear that the men of this epoch had inhabited exclusively in the *spherical* phantasms of their imagination. The insistence on the iconological contents of the *spheres and globes* of metaphysics connects Sloterdijk with the Heidegger who, similarly, identified the unfolding of metaphysical categories with the true plot and *format* of the whole of Western history. For both authors, the true substrate of historical development is none other than the representational and/or categorical *musculature* of the metaphysical imaginaries:

“I interpret, thus, classical metaphysics as a kind of library of effective assertions regarding the totality of the world as an immunity system *[al eine Bibliothek von wirksamen Aussagen über das Welt ganze als Immunsystem]*. From this it follows that ontology is first immunology, never something irrelevant … . The world is round, therefore, in the end everything is going well: this was the philosophical gospel of Antiquity” (Sloterdijk and Heinrichs, 2001, pages 180–181).

The difference between modern men and those of classical and medieval antiquity lies in the fact that the former: *“the men who drive the production of foams *[die Schaumproduktion betreiben]* are not capable of forming ideal pairs *[ideale Paare]* nor of saving themselves in the hyperglobes of a unique cosmos *[Hyperkugel des Einen Kosmos]* or a unique God. The centrum securitatis, this is how metaphysics named its God, has become for them something unreachable *[ist für sie unerreicht zu werden]*” (Sloterdijk and Heinrichs, 2001, page 182).

Thus, leaving aside the macrophenomena of peoples and empires, I believe that by no means can the attempt to inflate the *bubbles* until they turn into metaphysical globes be deduced from the characterization of the *bubbles* undertaken in the first volume of *Sphären*. That is to say, it is not possible to pass from *Sphären I* to *Sphären II* by means of a pure transference and a simple increase and widening of dimensions. Worse still, by falling into this grave error, Sloterdijk is throwing overboard a whole arsenal of metaphors and *bubbling* (materialist) concepts which are capable of illuminating some
topics of the social sciences in general and of the origins and meaning of metaphysics in particular.

Part II
Up till this point I have dealt with bubbles, Sloterdijk’s most promising concept, and with metaphysical globes, a notion which requires, in my opinion, a radical reworking. In this second part I shall introduce two of my own concepts that mediate between the aforementioned endowing social space–time with a huge, variegated, unpredictable complexity. These are wrappings (A) and social space–time (B) folds. Let us consider the former: in the same way that passionate love mediates decisively human sexual instinct and the dyadic bubbles follow suit with alleged bourgeois (autistic) individualism, polyadic wrappings, interwoven in the heart of small groups of believers, determine in a very subtle way (often, however, ephemeral) social morphologies, not only in the field of religion and politics but also—at least in the West, for 2500 years—in the context of small schools and communities of a philosophical persuasion. Sloterdijk appears incapable of noting and valuing the specificity of this formidable psychobiological capacity, characteristic of the Homo suadens, to wrap himself, nest, and interweave with the Lógos (and its diverse local types of the modus suadens). Such a capacity is essential in order to explain the origin and maintenance not only of the first metaphysical communities of the classical world, but also of those others—in general terms, less regularized, of the modern Hegelian and neo-Hegelian, Marxist, Nietzschean, Freud–Lacanian, Heideggerian, or Deluzian tribes. Nevertheless—and I now pass to the second concept that will develop in section B—these wrappings are not solely of a proper philosophical type (almost exclusive to the West, India, and China) but, instead, pertain, above all else, to religion, tribalism, politics, and aesthetics. Wrappings that are the cause/effect of the curvatures of the social space–time and their variegated, vertiginous, fluctuating nano-ontologies, irreducible both to the illusions of the standard model of the social sciences and to Western metaphysical thought.

A
Bubbles and metaphysical wrappings: the Socratic invention
What do Sloterdijk’s globes have in common with Plato’s metaphysics of the spheres? Little or nothing. In my opinion, the setting in motion of school metaphysics by Plato (Castro et al., 2008) allows us to think in terms of wrappings (3) or ‘plikas’, those relations between the Lógos and scholastic processes of subjectification

(2) From the Latin suadeo: to assess. Suadens individuals are Assessor ones. According to Castro and Toro (2004), cultural transmission in our species works most of the time as a cumulative inheritance system allowing members of a group to incorporate behavioral features not only with a positive biological value but sometimes also with a neutral, or even negative, biological value. Most models of dual inheritance theory and gene–culture coevolution suggest that an increase, either qualitative or quantitative, in the efficiency of imitation is the key factor in explaining the transformation of primate social learning in a cumulative cultural system of inheritance as it happens during hominization. Castro and Toro contend that more efficient imitation is necessary but not enough for this transformation to occur, and that the key factor enabling such a transformation is that some Assessor hominids developed the capacity to approve or disapprove of their offspring’s learned behavior. This capacity to approve or disapprove of offspring’s behavior makes learning both less costly and more accurate, and it transformed the hominid culture into a system of cumulative cultural inheritance similar to that of humans, although the system was still prelinguistic in nature.

(3) I borrow this term from García Selgas (2007, pages 164f), endowing it with a radically different sociological use.
that are characteristic of metaphysics. More so than the old religions, metaphysics appears to us as a privileged form of atmopoiesis in whose context a group of ‘sinneontes’(4) exchange their entrails, breathing the air that they produce, condition, and acclimatize.

According to Nehamas (2000), although Socrates has no end of extraordinary philosophical ideas, each requiring serious study, his main preoccupation, as eventually Plato came to admit, is how to live (Republic 352d6). And his principal achievement is that he established a new way of living, a new art of living.

Nehamas alludes to the incontrovertible fact that Greco-Roman philosophy linked theoretical considerations with the accomplishment of happiness in day-to-day life (the art of living), something that would be lost in Modernity when philosophy (supposedly) turns into pure theory. Without a doubt, Socrates, despite his ironic detachment from the great cosmological questions, was the first to erect a greenhouse or metaphysical wrapping. A space saturated with affectivity, in which the essential point is not so much the content of his thinking—often incapable of showing a rational foundation—nor the proof of the accuracy or justice of his norms and actions, not even the novelty of his strange desires, emotions, and pleasures. Instead, it is the fascinating promise of their mutual rational synergy in the spatial form of sophisticated textures and dialectical entrails. This is the reason why all Socratic schools (from Isocrates to Plato, from Antisthenes and Aristippus to Euclid of Megara, and precisely due to their differences!) can claim to be indebted to the master.

In his monumental The Sociology of Philosophies, Collins (1998)—employing a sophisticated and suggestive methodology of networks—researched the origin and sociological functioning of the diverse philosophical traditions in Greece, China, and Japan. In all of these civilizations, human beings were also capable of entangling, interweaving, and involving themselves in diverse local modalities of reason without needing to invoke divine geometries, spheres, or circles. The key to all of those other wrappings (those pertaining to Taoism, Hinduism, or Japanese Zen Buddhism) is located without a doubt in another place: in the day-to-day bio-psycho-social functioning of these variants of amniotic communes (as Sloterdijk would say) that were (and still are) the networks of philosophical interactions. Finding inspiration in the rituals charged with emotional energy of the Durkheim of Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse (Elemental forms of religious life) (Durkheim, 1968), Collins rediscovers, in his own way, this new involving and interweaving of human beings with each other in the context of ideas and texts, the new holy objects of philosophy.

According to Collins, the intellectual world is made up of the totality of interaction rituals which take place periodically across the landscape and of the flow of sacred objects (ideas and texts) which result from them. To conceive of the intellectual world in this manner entails a deliberate challenge to our most usual conception of the intellectual life, whether contemporary or historical. Some of these ideas would glow brightly, charged with emotional significance, elevated by the interaction rituals to the status of sacred object. What someone thinks about is determined by the intensity of recent experience in interaction rituals, and by the interaction which one anticipates most immediately in the future. Thinking is governed by the emotional loadings of symbols, charged by the dynamics of the markets for social membership. An individual’s emotional energy at any given moment selects the symbols which give him or her an

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(4) My neologism from the Greek verb pneo (to breath): sinneosis [action and effect of (self-)breathing one another]; sinneontes [those that together produce, acclimatize, and condition the atmos (in which) they breathe (one another)].
optimal sense of group membership. Thinking is playing inside one’s own mind, in the manner of fantasy, games of social membership.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, Collins fails to appreciate wholly that which is distinctive about metaphysical wrappings: he merely confines himself to analyzing the networks of great categorical debates without distinguishing with enough clarity between those that are properly speaking metaphysical, mystical—religious, or scientific—literary. For this very reason, he fails to grasp sufficiently the essence of the metaphysical atmopoiesis and of what I call ‘cultural contentments’.

Platonism is the first, grand style, atmopoiesis of Western metaphysics in which a whole objective and subjective (perceived, felt, imagined, awaited, rejoiced) atmo-ontology is produced, collectively orchestrated, ending up—like a greenhouse effect—intoxicating to its own creators. Classical metaphysics consists in the illusion that ideas—in and by themselves—together with their dialectical staging, constitute a shared territory in which one may depart to live collectively. The metaphysical illusion, whose heroic epitome is a Socrates who—as Nietzsche points out—celebrates with rare fervor his own death, is completed when its cultural transmission (the properly philosophical paideia) manages to produce an improbable genus of disciples (Plato, 1973) for whom the day-to-day dealings with logoi, ideas, theories, texts, and the rituals of confrontations and dialectical tournaments end up being so intimate, familiar, and dearly loved (in the sense of removing the entrails when they enter in flux with such entities and practices) as the natives imagined by Wittgenstein (1979) felt in regard to their gods, ceremonies, and fetishes. This is the meaning of cultural contentments in terms of metaphysics, of the properly philosophical illusion. It is a question, in summary, of disciples who end up feeling as a part of their own nature (as the most intimate part of their own intimacy) the arts, games, desires, emotions, and pleasures dispensed by the atmopoietic fluxes (and that withstand) the various (seductive, voluptuous) games and pranks of the concept.

For this reason, since its Greek origins, the only method (road) to metaphysics has consisted in forgetting as something accessory, viatical, and instrumental its own taming. That is, by erasing any minimal trace between the philosophical—political domestication and its result:

“With this project, Plato testifies to an intellectual upheaval in the Human Zoo [eine intellektuelle Unruhe im Menschenpark] that will henceforth never be completely quietened. From the point that the Politikos, the Politeia, are discourses that, in the world, bespeak about the human community as if it were both a zoological and a theme park [die von der Menschengemeinschaft sprechen wie von einem zoologischen Park, der zugleich ein Themen-park ist], the conduct of humans in parks or cities will have to appear, henceforward, as a zoo-political problem [zoo-politische Aufgabe]. What is presented as a political reflection is in reality a fundamental reflection about the rules of management of a Human Zoo [über Regeln für den Betrieb von Menschenparks]” (Sloterdijk, 1999b, page ...).

The metaphysical sinneonte, regardless of his or her creed, who does not apply the modus tollens when his or her beliefs are under threat is committing a logical fallacy, but, above all else, he or she is (like any other human being) protecting the territory by which he or she is enveloped: the atmopoietic wrapping in which he or she inhabits and which he or she shares with those that are emotionally close to him or her. Human reason (as Nietzsche already observed) is in the service of survival: a territorialized reason. A literally speaking edifying reason that constructs, protects, maintains, and repairs dwellings and shared abodes.
Little has been researched about the way in which the different epistetos (shared sentient reasons that operate in the manner of Darwinian algorithms, as part of the density of flux that lubricates the wrappings in which human beings inhabit),(5) systematically distort the logical laws of Aristotelian logic, merely in order to construct, protect, and repair the aforementioned wrappings (Castro Nogueira et al, 2005).

The epistetos (Socratic, Epicurean, Stoic) contravene certain empirical modalities of the modus tollens, making up modus ponens to the greater glory of the prejudices, interests, and daydreams of the group; negotiating without consideration for any boundaries the logical operators of identity, noncontradiction, and excluded middle. Nevertheless, strictly speaking, there is nothing false in them: because that which is protected by such Darwinian algorithms is not (pace the very believers) the (supposed) truth or (logical–semantic) objectivity of certain beliefs and representations but, instead, the quality and density of the flux of their wrappings: human memory and hope made up of that fine fabric and warp of desiring and emotional associations that give meaning to his small world; and, truthfully, no modus tollens exists which is capable of eliminating or destroying such fluxes.

Nevertheless, the essential algorithm that guarantees the quality and density of the flux of the metaphysical wrappings is the modus suadens (derived from latin suadeo: advise, evaluate, counsel, approve). It can be briefly formulated in the following way:

If I put into practice $p$—a philosophical doctrine that I believe to be good in the ethical–political context—receiving the approval and recognition of my reference group;

If I desire, became emotional with, and feel pleasure leading a life according to $p$, that I believe to be valuable and beautiful;

If I believe, finally, that it is the truth of $p$ that determines my happiness ...

Then, $p$.

$p$ being any theoretical corpus such as Platonism or Stoicism. But, alas, also (virtually) the thinking of Lacan or Deleuze: without a doubt the actual Lacanian and Deluzian tribes are capable of dispensing sineontical performance qualities compared with which the (Socratic) hothouses of Being pale into insignificance.

The metaphysical illusion consists in ignoring that it is the selfsame functioning of reason (Platonic or Deluzian reason, Epicurian, or Freud–Lacanian reason: a local, epistetic, and magmatic, viscous, deep, atmopoietic, and endearing reason), which warps plots, and weaves the delicate fibers in which human beings envelop themselves in order to live and feel close to each other.

### B Curvature (plektopoi) of social space – time

In *La risa del espacio* (Castro Nogueira, 1997, pages 32f), I resorted to what I metaphorically called ‘curvature tensors’ in order to describe the genealogy and ontology of locations and spaces. These tensors constitute, bend, and unite virtually social space–time both at the local level (gravitational fields of certain institutional bodies) and at the spatial–temporal global level of a historical epoch or a particular culture.

(5) Against the modern enlightenment (Kant) that has brutally separated pure reason from practical reason and aesthetic reason, I propose this neologism (from episteme: science and ethos: moral character) in order to describe the properly human mode of rationality (on this side of the Kantian and Weberian classification) in whose ambit the epistemic, evaluative, and sensible components regain their inseparability: ethos/aisthetos, a sensible and visible ethos that enters from the eyes (aesthetic), an ethos that fascinates, that interweaves humans with one another, affecting our entrails or interlinings. For this reason, the epistetos (the epistetic rationality) unfolds always in the bosom of amnioaesthetic wrappings, from which it is inseparable.
In accordance with this, I argued that all social space–time is constituted and rescaled externally as cause and effect (among other variables) of their constructive material practices of a technical, ethical, and political order, their discursive games and visual codes. And, internally, in the first instance, as cause and effect of individual practices; in the second instance in relation to the human faculties (desire, memory, imagination/reason). Finally, in the third instance, in relation to the different power strategies. Thus, every epoch is at once cause/effect of the curvature of its space–time at both the local and the global level. Nevertheless, every epoch—and this is crucial—dreams itself and posits itself, imaginarily, as zero curvature: pure normal plane of coexistence; zero-level spatial–temporal coexistence, with a kind of self-evident in-itself, of its own and irreducible, spatial–temporality.

By finding inspiration and modifying the diagrams of Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1992), I distinguished between the following dimensions of the spatial–temporal imaginary that give meanings to the places in which as humans we dwell:

A. External Curvature of social space–time, with three types of tensorial coefficients which operate in a complex manner in a synergy unyielding to any model of linear thinking.

1. Physical and material production (technical–political) of social space–time. As landmark examples we could appeal to the Greek polity and the Baroque Eternal City (Rome). In our epoch, the whole geopolitical and technical–financial problematic presents itself: the spatial–temporal deterritorialization of capital and the old (territorialized/territorializing) national states, the space of the fluxes (Castells), and what I call ‘space fluxes’.

2. Production/reproduction of discourses about social space–time: scientific, mythological, magical, and theological tensors that constitute and plot the legein (the symbolic normality) of the spatial in all of its dimensions and complexity: maps, plans, topographies, cartographies, geopolitical theories; but also geometric, topological, and philosophical representations, along with symbolic–aesthetic systems of spatial representations. Thus, to continue with the same examples, the social space–time of the archaic polity is based on the pair Hestia (the home, the telluric, the feminine, the immobile) and Hermes (the public, the agora, the domain of the masculine and the social rhythm). And the Rome of Sixtus V (with its obelisks and hermetic public squares) exhibits an urbanistic writing plotted by the mantic-psycho-tropic virtues of spatial infinitude. In modernity, the instrumental reduction of the ontological and urbanistic space to the whirlpool of the temporal, of progress, the market, and the state is inscribed in the boulevards, the Parisian arcades that so fascinated Walter Benjamin, the (almost lost) workers’ enclaves, and the actual (dense) media-telematic constellations.

3. Production/reproduction of the social visuality (and sensibility) peculiar to an epoch: material and utopian visual forms; heterotopics, imaginaries, and social control; learning of visual codes and other orders of perception. The imaginary of the polity (temples, markets, stadiums, walls, public squares, statutes, paintings, and decoration) presents all the political, religious, familial values. Moreover, the visuality of the Baroque (trompe l’oeils, illusory domes, and vertiginous perspectives) finds admirable expression in those mirages of delusion/disillusion that pervade the perceptual habits of the characters of El Criticón. In our time, the iconosphere, the global village, the society of the spectacle, the play of simulacra, and virtual reality are decisive ingredients of the political ontology of postmodern visuality, or however one may call it.

B. Internal curvature of social space–time that constitutes the habitus and the (unpredictable, unstable) subjectification processes. This internal curvature can be broken down into three interdependent levels. Moreover, the latter are related in a
complex, nonlinear, and often discordant manner with the external curvature of social space—time.

1. Cognitive cartography and spatial—temporal practices. **(Dis)orientation of the subject in space.** (In)capacity of the subject to position and imagine itself within the virtual entirety of social space—time. The citizen of Pericles's Athens is a good example of a certain particular (happy and ephemeral) integration of spatial practices and **cognitive mapping.** His dimensions as a human being seem to overlap with those of the **politiès** in a political ontology in which everything appears **localized:** as **despotès** and master of the house; as democrat in the assembly; as believer in the temple; as body and desire in the gymnasion; and as civilized being in the limits of the Attica that set the boundaries between its territory and the **barbarians.** In the Baroque, however, two cognitive cartographies coexist side by side: one counterreformist linked to the aforementioned trompe l’oeils and mirages of the world, and another, dioptic and Cartesian, linked to the new science and the **mathesis universalis.** In our epoch, amongst other phenomena, the new problematic of the sublime postmodern appears as the (im)possibility of a **cognitive mapping** (Jameson, 1991, pages 51–52), the infographic and media hyperspaces, the not merely economic **offshoring** and the **nonplaces** (Augé, 1992).

2. Psycho-epistemological and ontological functions of social space—time in relation to the body, desire, memory, imagination, reason, and knowledge. The configurations of personal identity in the different cultures and historical epochs. For example, the crucial relevance of Mnemosyne (memory, recurrence, and repetition) for the Greek ideal of action determines, without a doubt, the limited or utter incapacity regarding the imagining or managing (in political, economical, technical, or philosophical terms) of the future in a modern sense. And, as is well known, the baroque interiority is expressed, in general, as a soul constituted by a certain imaginary spatial infinitude of the cosmos: a monad that reflects specularly the infinitude of the cosmos and in which there is still no **space** for biographical singularity and the irreversibility of time. Modernity, nonetheless, conceives human interiority as time—in all of its variants: revolutionary collective project (Saint-Simon, Comte, Marx), personal memory (Proust, Freud), and irredicably personal subjective originality (artistic avant-garde).

3. Power and modalities of subjective experience. Reproduction of the interior of the exterior as an operation of the external over the internal curvature and vice versa. For example, the symbolic density that articulates the Greek household (Vernant, 1988) or the **edifying** power of the baroque imaginary over the individual’s psyche (Gómez de Liaño, 1992). And, in our time, to employ only a few examples: the normalizing power of the Foucaultian disciplines; the infographic eideosphere, the alienation of the society of the spectacle, the schizophrenic effects induced by the postmodern hyperspace, the media, and the commercialization of **lifestyles.**

In this way, to reiterate, the spatial—temporal experience of a human being is constituted by the complex and often discordant intersection between both, external and internal, curvatures. All social space—time is inextricably intertwined, plotted, and warped by a whole series of tensorial coefficients or imaginary forces (as real and material). The polity, the medieval burg, or a Taiwanese sweatshop are, in this sense, **plektopoi:** clusters of space—time (at once material and imaginary, social, and rabidly personal) folded by **n** dimensions that intertwine and conjoin in a way that is as unyielding as it is unpredictable and enigmatic.

It would, therefore, be appropriate, I argue, to avoid the deterministic outlooks that place the whole emphasis on external decisive factors (the venerable **productive forces** insofar as decisive shapers **in the last instance** of social space—time or the no less sacrosanct structuralist discursive **epistemes** that proudly regard themselves
uncontaminated by any material processes), reducing dialectically—structurally—the internal curvature of space–time (subjective experience with all of its vertiginous, changing, and polymorphic historical registers) to a mere ideological product or a more or less superficial effect of the episteme in question. Secondly, and in parallel fashion, we should resist, also, the temptation to obviate the weight and the density of those external tensorial coefficients, thus incurring any type of subjectivist register (here the bête noire would be any philosophy of the subject from Kant to Bergson, from the first Heidegger to Sartre) that turns social space–time into an imaginary virtual creation, of a more or less epic tenor, of the autistic and transcendental powers of human consciousness.

The external curvature preexists (and conditions) individual experience but always insofar as it turns into changeable, hazardous, unpredictable subjectification processes, and, whilst it is replicated, is distorted and recreated topologically, according to the different positions, experiences, and cognitive biases of the subject in social space–time.

Socius, corpus, animus, habitus/fluxus: an infinitely complex biocultural cybersystem

Now then, should we continue to regard personal experience, in all of its vertiginous and polymorphic variety, as a simple internalization of social structures, collective consciousness, ideologies, imaginaries, or fields in a manner of Bourdieu? Do we know already the true social space–time of a subject (the space of its changing personal experience) when we explore the collective spatial–temporal imaginary? In order to think with utmost radicalism and historicity of emotions (of what we could call ‘emotional devices’ that mediate and determine any experience of social space–time) it would be useful to address the question of that which has up till now impeded this kind of thinking. For this reason, we have no option but to dismantle and deconstruct the fetishism of bourgeoisie subjectivity (in all of its variants) by way of a radical approach, uncommon in the social sciences.

I am now in a position to outline, after this long detour, a model that can begin to integrate to a certain extent the most salient ontological features: plektopoi, habitus, and fluxes of mutual seduction, empathy, and shared fascination. Moreover, I understand that the best way of doing this is by means of a brief reflection regarding the subjectification processes.

In such processes (of individuals or subjects) I shall distinguish between three historical–cultural and two psychobiological elements that traverse (as revitalizing supports) the former. I shall name the first of these socius, corpus, and animus and the second (constituting that dimension of human nature that the social sciences cannot continue to ignore) habitus and fluxus. Let us, briefly, say something about them and their mutual interactions.

Socius (companion, in Latin). It is the dimension of social and affective fellowship (inseparable) from any process of subjectification. It refers to (and depends on) the social structures prior to the individuals. The socius implies a radial historicity of social uses, practices, and involvements, even in those societies in which there is no, properly speaking, history. The socius concerns social practices and relations (including power relations, although it cannot be reduced to them) and, especially, the emphatic syntonies that constitute the bubbles and wrappings (many and diverse, responsible for illusions, deliria, and happiness) in which humans truly dwell. The socius is conditioned by the social structures but does not dissolve in them. The socius does not exist without corpus and animus.

Corpus (body, in Latin). It is the driven, instinctive, and organic dimension, inseparable, also, from the emotional devices object of cultural learning [an absolutely
essential dimension upheld by Elias (1993) and Foucault (1984)]. The corpus implies a
radical historicity of the emotional devices and of the affective complexes. It does not
exist without socius or animus.

Animus (soul, in Latin). It is the imaginary dimension (encompassing the so-called
social rationalities and imaginaries) at both the collective and individual level. The
animus implies, also, the radical historicity of the imaginaries. It does not exist without
corpus or socius.

Habitus (habit, in Latin). It is the psychobiological dimension—introduced by
Bourdieu (1981)—that explains certain entropic aspects of social reproduction.

Fluxus (flux, in Latin). It is the psychobiological dimension (introduced by me,
drawing inspiration from Sloterdijk’s bubbles) responsible for shared empathy and
fascination, the amnioaesthetic drifts and individual and cultural creativity/spontaneity.

Deconstructing the standard model of the social sciences
The problem, in the end, of the standard model of the social sciences (from Durkheim’s
collective consciousness to Marx’s ideology), but also of the imaginaries of Castoradis,
and the panopticism of Foucault, is that the only approach that is allowed regarding
the notion of socialization is derived from the axis (an exclusively sociological axis
more or less platonizing and cloning) of the habitus understood as individualized
absorption and internalization in the manner of the selfsame values, prejudices, and
somatic and perceptual schemata of a structure, institution, symbolic universe, field,
or social space–time. Nevertheless, in order to begin to understand something of
the social complexity, of its extremely rich spatial–temporal ontology, and of the
decisive questions of agency (the problematic of the subject) it is necessary to link
this first axis with that other one, no less fundamental, even if more hazardous and
unpredictable (an irreducible axis of a bio-psycho-social order), responsible for the
processes of subjectification and creator of bubbles, wrappings, and autogenous
microclimates. In this way, and without any loss of the virtual powers of subject
that the social structures (families, prisons, barracks, schools, factories, universities,
or bureaucracies) have over the individuals, these (the subjects) experiment with them
and refract them in vertiginously diverse ways when they wrap, nest, and interwine
amongst themselves (in the form of dyads or Sloterdijkian couples, friends, lovers,
associates, and/or groups of sinneontes) in the context of variegated and mixed textures,
curvatures, multiplicities, and plektological folds of the social space–time, thus
giving rise to all kinds of fragile, unpredictable, changing, and often ephemeral
wrappings, dwellings, foams, and seethings.

Naturally, this second axis, so hypersensitive to initial conditions, introduces cha-
opootics, autopoietics (in the sense of chaos theory) that confer an enormous vitality
and unpredictable plastic complexity to social space–time, to its plots and to the whole
of its dazzling, undeterminable, nano-ontology (Perec, 2004). This is something that,
anyway and since the beginning, has been grasped by the majority of human beings
and been explored by artists, playwrights, filmmakers, and novelists. Nevertheless, it is
also something that social scientists, so often perfectly wrapped (this time yes!) in their
own tautological, edifying, and academic ivory towers, have refused to contemplate.

The reintegration of humankind’s spatial–temporal nature in the social sciences
The social sciences operate by first constructing imaginatively the subjects and indi-
viduals, the social, the structures, and the systems and only afterwards do they
explain them. This is what Durkheim does with the primitives (arousing Malinowski’s
apt objections), Marx and Lukács with class consciousness, Freud with the neurotics
and sexuality, the marginalist economists with the sovereign consumer (at least Keynes
showed that the issue was more to do with a politics of state intervention than with

homeostatic market systems), Parsons and Luhmann with the social system, and Foucault and Deleuze with the mentally ill in general and schizophrenics in particular. Once the subjects are theorized, great theory works in such a way that the subjects shape themselves according to the theory’s own parameters. The surprising thing is that it is often successful!

If sociological theory does not admit the unpredictable and irreducible power of these amnioaesthetic drifts (responsible, by the way, for a great deal of our school blunders and irrationalities), it will be forced to admonish, threaten, and scold once again the subjects for not having sufficient class consciousness (Lukács), being insufficiently primitive (Durkheim), possessing a half-baked habitus (Bourdieu), or deluding themselves as autopoietic subjects outside of the unique and true systemic autopoiesis (Luhmann).

Part III

In this part of the essay, I offer a criticism of Sphären II: Globen/Globes (Sloterdijk, 1999a) regarding its account of the origins and the meaning of Western metaphysics. Finally, in the antipodes of the thinking of the spheres, I argue for the need of a radical revising of all the ancient social–spatial metaphysical problematics—not merely those pertaining to the ancient Greek schools—from the folds and microwrappings of the social space–time: lone possibility of locating, superseding, abandoning, and saying a definite farewell to some of the monsters engendered by Reason.

As I have already suggested in my exposition, Sloterdijk appears to incur at least three mutually reinforcing fallacies in his equivocal explication of the transition from the micro bubbling to the macro globular. The first of these consists in the acceptance, in line with the neo-Hegelian metaphysical matrix and the standard model of the social sciences, that there is a macro-ontology of the social tout court (an ontology of the cultural—of the metaphysical globes to use his terminology) as self-sufficient and independent from the concrete individual as Durkheim’s collective consciousness, Marx’s ideology, Hegel’s Geist, or Heideger’s sendings (Ge-schick) of Being. The second explains the formation of the sociocultural by inverting the classic socialization model (departing this time from the dyadic bubbles and proceeding to the globes) but is finally entrapped and bewitched by the holistic spells of the standard model, both metaphysical and sociological. And the third fallacy identifies the sources of creation of microspaces of collective animation exclusively with pairings, families, and hordes.

Concerning, again, the first of these fallacies, Sloterdijk at no point seems to notice that the really existing ontology of cities, nations, and empires—together with their inevitable spiritual supernumeraries in the way of national spirits, imperial imaginaries, or metaphysical spheres—is inextricably linked, mediated, and determined decisively by all those infinitesimal local processes of subjectification that bubble, enwrap, enfold, distort, curve, and refract in a thousand different ways the social space–time.

In respect to the second fallacy, it is as well to point out immediately that all those atmoipoietic processes of enlargement and transference from the micro to the macro in no instance imply neither the canceling nor deactivation of the plektopoi that weave and plot the social space–time, endowing it with an irreducible complexity.

According to Sloterdijk, if human beings can coexist in ‘society’ it is only because they are already elsewhere linked and consigned to one another. ‘Societies’ are multiplicities composed of owned spatialities, in which human beings are capable of participating only thanks to their psycho-typical difference, which they always carry with them (Sloterdijk, 2004).
Sloterdijk is right, but the amplified social etnopoietic (from the Greek polity to the Europe of the cathedrals) always continues to exist not merely sub specie bullae (bubble), but also in the manner of plektopoi and atmopoietic wrappings and plikas, notwithstanding their, so often, ephemeral character.

Now then, without a doubt Sloterdijk incurs such a fallacy because on no occasion (practicing variants of the political ontological model of Hegel, Nietzsche, Spengler, and Heidegger) does he consider the analysis of the intricate plektopological morphology of the social space–time and its vertiginous curvatures unyielding to the progress of the concept, nihilism, and cultural species, the authenticity of collective da-sein, or the globular dwellings. The bubbles and wrappings set only in the variegated and fluctuating context of a previous multiplicity of spatial–temporal glocal folds that endow with a labyrinthine complexity the bio-psycho-topo-logical textures of the spatial temporality of human worlds.

Briefly put, whilst Sloterdijk brilliantly manages to introduce in the first tome of Sphären an indispensable bio-psycho-social dimension (no less than a bubbling human nature!) to substantially enrich (and rethink) the social sciences, not only does he nevertheless lack a proper sociological and historical theory of the social space–time but this deficiency seems to follow from the forgetting—veritable foreclosure in progress from Sphären I to Sphären II and Sphären III—of all those ontological and epistemological subversive promises that rested on his seductive and transgressing bubbles.

Finally, with respect to the third fallacy, Sloterdijk also lacks a perspective capable of understanding the functioning of the thousandfold ways of creation of emotional resonance and fellowships which are often as intense (and sometimes more decisive than) the proper bubbling. I am referring to the ambit of all those rabidly affective ties in which the groups of sinneontes (religious or metaphysical, political or artistic) intertwine and enwrap with each other, united by the desire of being recognized (envied, admired, and/or desired) by those others with whom they are close. This is something characteristic of the phylogenesis (inseparably bio-psycho-social) of Homo suadens (Castro and Toro, 1998; 2002; 2004; Castro et al, 2003, pages 183f) and all the dynamics of what I have denominated ‘cultural contentments’.

Nor does Sloterdijk’s brilliant, parodical, rewriting of Sein und Zeit—the nine dimensional anthropotopos (Sloterdijk, 2004; see Heidegger, 1977)—full as always with felicitous findings and suggestions, achieve sufficiently the integration of the provocative world of the bubbles with the plektopoi and the wrappings. Again, his undoing is perhaps the macroperspective of the Nietzschean cultural physician.

Sloterdijk seems incapable of dispensing with the trap in which all the metaphysicians and social scientists have up till now been entangled. That trap of an excessive autonomy of the sociocultural that has darkened all the nano-ontology of microwrappings linked to processes of subjectification in whose ambit so often the individuals are light years away from the great social meanings.

For this very reason, he is not ready at any time to abandon grand style metaphysics. His equivocal references to the Splengerian cultural morphologies are another example of the peculiar idealism embedded in his speculations regarding the globular dwellings.

And, for all this to be possible—to continue being a dazzling (post)metaphysical metaphysician in the enthralling manner of Nietzsche and Heidegger—he has to grant an unparalleled importance to the pure iconic contents of the metaphysical globes as if such contents were the essential aspect of Western culture when, in reality, they are no more than a residual logocentrism of the selfsame metaphysics reflecting and speculating upon itself. He has to forget in this waybill not only all the
other metaphysical schools of the ancient world (Stoics, Epicureans) but also those pertaining to modernity (from the neo-Hegelians, Marxists, existentialists, and Freud–Lacanians) whose iconographies have nothing to do with spheres and, nevertheless, are capable of protecting, relieving, animating, housing, and sheltering to an equal extent as or superior extent than the others. To say nothing about the imaginary containers of Chinese, Hindu, or Buddhist metaphysics.

The peculiar Platonic mania that concedes the citizens a mere role of pieces to the greater glory of the political and cosmic cell is reproduced in Sloterdijk’s grand narrative as he considers the metaphysics of the spheres as the key to the West and to the true day-to-day experience of millions of individuals:

“Precisely for the profane public [Laienöffentlichkeit], that did not have to worry about the salvation of the phenomena, the idea of a universe composed only by spheres concentrically fitted to one another, with the earth in the center, appeared irresistibly plausible [unwiderstehlich plausible], and to a certain extent, even, psychologically attractive [psychologisch attraktiv]. It allowed the human being from the late classical Antiquity to the early modern age to reach the indispensable degree of native acclimatizing [an heimatlicher Eingewöhnung] in a universe whose dimensions, nevertheless, appeared already to be distended to the level of the gigantic-distressing” (Sloterdijk, 1999a, page 414).

Like Derrida and other great critics of metaphysics, Sloterdijk exaggerates, finally, the power of the great philosophical imaginaries as if they were the authentic ontological musculatures that fold the tents, creases, and wrappings of the day-to-day life of millions of individuals in the context of which the same, divine, tragicomedy would have been played out for 2000 years. Something by all accounts, in itself, once again metaphysical.

Neither the ordinary Greeks nor the medieval farmers were fascinated by/with the cosmic globes. Nor do we, the citizens of the 21st century, feel at present any terror confronted by black holes, the relatively of space – time, and/or the vertiginous immensity of an expanding cosmos.

In opposition to the psychoanalysts who everywhere saw great foundational injuries of Oedipal ilk (castration, incest, parricide), Sloterdijk finds himself installed in a no less imaginary and comfortable epiphany by forcing himself to perceive—from the great discourses of metaphysics and theology, mathematics, and science, to the architecture of cities, states, and empires—the promise of hospitable, maternal, bubbles, globes, and spheres, seemingly incapable of discerning the complexity of the social: of that which we have denominated processes of subjectification linked to plektopoi, wrappings, atmopoiesis, and entranced sinneontes. At no point does he go beyond philosophical texts in order to analyze the bio-psycho-social dynamic (the feedback and the synergies) of that music (metaphysical) of globes and spheres that he has conjured for us.

Finally, beyond the modern implosion of the old globes and the soul of the world, it does not occur to him to raise the question of how a truly postmetaphysical thinking would be. Hence, he also does not understand that if we discount the crisis of the spheres of the 16th century, the metaphysics of modernity in all of its vertiginous variety experimented with a brutal explosion, creating new delirious habitational solutions foreign to globes and spheres, but with performance qualities at the very least as effective, stimulating, heady, and comfortable as the Platonic ones were.
Beyond metaphysics

“It is as important for the deconstructors as for the realists to think that metaphysics—that genre of literature which attempted to create unique, total, closed vocabularies—is very important. Neither can afford to admit that, like the epic, it is a genre which had a distinguished career and an important historical function but which now survives largely in the form of self-parody.”

Rorty (1991, page 105)

It is time to practice upon the discourses of metaphysics an operation that, to a certain extent, brings to mind those perplexities with which Kuhn confronted the old Popperian methodologists, believers in the opposition context of discovery/context of justification. Indeed, Kuhn (1962) revealed the illusory separation of both contexts in really existing science as it has been actually practiced by the historical scientific communities, and I, in a similar fashion, demonstrate the impossibility of a purely epistemological vision of the discourses of the old metaphysical schools apart from their warps and moral, aesthetic, ethical—political, and praxeological resonances. Well then, in the same way that the so-called Popperian falsifiability was inseparable from its local rabidly imaginary and historical context, the regimes of truth that govern the old discourses of metaphysics were and are (to an infinitely and incomparably greater degree) indiscernible from their atmopoietic and sinneontical wrappings: beyond them the athletes of the Lógos and of the épimeleia simply stop breathing.

For this very reason, up till now, all the criticisms of/aimed at metaphysics have been similarly metaphysical and logocentric, absolutely incapable of perceiving its nature as spatial wrapping (Castro, 2008) from Hume to Kant and the early Wittgenstein, Carnap and Popper, on one hand, and from Heidegger to Derrida, on the other, the critique has always centered on the illusion of the presence, objectivity, and immediacy of certain conceptual and/or empirical contents. In the case of the former, in order to demand a knowledge based on sensible experience, and, in the case of the latter, to negate the very possibility of an access to those pretended (illusory) final constituents of the real.

Modus suadens and metaphysics

From Hume (2000) to Smith (1976), Hegel (1971), or Girard (1965), the human sciences have always sensed that the human desire is a learned desire, the desire of the Other, the desire to possess and exhibit that which arouses the desire and the recognition of the Others. They have all thought desire from the aura that envelops/dissolves the desired object, from that which constitutes it as desirable object: sympathy (Hume and A Smith), the dialectic of self-consciousness (Hegel), or the mimetic rivalry (Girard). Nevertheless, perhaps the essential aspect of man is his condition as Homo suadens (Castro et al, 2003, pages 197f). Some current studies about evolutionary psychology and cultural transmission insist that the true key for hominization has not been the emergence of reason and language but, instead, far earlier, the powerful, endearing, vertiginous, and blind sensations of pleasure that charge or invest certain conducts, the object of social learning, when they are the object of group approval.

The development of reason and language was possible only, perhaps, as an evolutionary by-product of that first mutant hominid capable of approving/reproving the conduct of the Others, and, above all else, of intoxicating himself with enjoyment/suffering in response to the approbation/reprobation of the Others. Since then, human beings, being incapable of understanding, metabolizing, and managing that happiness which invades, inhabits, thinks, makes, and unmake us, live (in love, in friendship, and in the city) in a dream world of shared bubbles and wrappings, linked by the desire for the desire of the Others.
For this very reason, metaphysics has not been able to think, without dissolving itself, the true blind spot of desire: that which at once makes and unmake man and that turns out to be the very own space opened up by his peculiar writing, the atmoipoietic and sineoentic space that constitutes the characteristic cultural contentment of all Western metaphysics. The constitutive blindness of metaphysics, of the imaginary unconscious that is embedded in the discourses which attempt to give meaning to human existence, originates not only from its instrumental delirium with presence (with the one, the idea of the good) but also, and very particularly, from the incapacity to think itself in terms of discursive spaces of subjectification, psychotropic spaces of pleasure, wrappings of the desire of the desire of the Others, to which one may retire to live.

What metaphysics has never been able to think is that the beduin tents for nomadic schizoids offered by Deleuze are, as devices and atmoipoietic dwellings or habitational solutions, only slightly (if at all) different from the Apollonian crystalline mansions of Plato or that the performance qualities of the sumptuous baroque palaces of Lacan (1979, pages 114f)—even when they appear to dramatize the agony of the subject—serve to house, comfort, alleviate, and protect to a greater degree than those little blues, little whites, little browns with which the painter Paul Cézanne chose to enwrap and cover himself until the last of his days.

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