

Review / Reseña

Horne, Luz. *Futuros menores. Filosofías del tiempo y arquitecturas del mundo desde Brazil*. Santiago de Chile: Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2022. 294 pp.

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Luz Horne's book, *Futuros menores. Filosofías del tiempo y arquitecturas del mundo desde Brazil*, addresses the current concern of how to imagine possible futures while facing the devastating prospects of environmental catastrophes fueled by modernity. In this context, the debates about the relationships between temporality, culture, and science as proposed in Horne's book are crucial to critically and creatively addressing the hegemonic framework that has monopolized future-making practices, but also to reveal marginal, alternative, and multiple imaginations of the future. Focusing her analysis on a series of artistic, literary, and curatorial projects in Brazil from the 1950s to the present, Horne elaborates on what she calls "minor futures," understood as an operative concept that reveals an architecture of the world based on immanence and intermittent lights. Horne argues that these minor futures are presented as vestiges of the future of modernity: "The minor futures are opposed to the monumental, singular and progressive future, but they are not opposed as an inverted mirror, rather they show its reverse, thus exposing its remains" ("Los futuros menores se oponen al

futuro monumental, singular y del progreso, pero no se oponen como un espejo invertido, sino mostrando su revés, exponiendo sus restos”) (32).¹

These minor temporalities are marginal to scientific time and to the linear modern line of progress in neoliberal thought. Instead, drawing on João Guimarães de Rosa’s idea of “pentamentozinho” (small thought), Horne argues that these minor futures “advance neither monumentally nor apocalyptically but settle right on the unstable site of quivering and diminutive, hieroglyphic thought” (“no avanzan ni monumental ni apocalípticamente sino que se instalan justo en el sitio inestable del temblequeo y en un pensamiento diminutivo y jeroglífico”) (34). Throughout four analytical chapters, the author explores the relevance of a series of artistic projects in Brazil, which are read against the paradigm of modernity to reveal material remains (garbage and bones) that have the potential to illuminate alternative paths to the epic future projected by the grand narratives of modernity in Brazil and Latin America.

The book opens with a thought-provoking analysis of an underexplored scene from Clarise Lispector’s *La hora de la estrella*, which reveals the book’s main questions and argument. The scene consists of a liberating future imagined in an “instante ya” (instant now) by Macabea, a poor female character, and the tragic deadly future that this character actually suffered. Through this scene, Horne’s book situates the reader in the confrontation between two ways of formulating time: one linear and the other intimate, minor and unruly, and it is the latter that the book will develop and characterize. Based on this scene from Lispector, the book presents the idea of the “instant now” and the flashing light trail of fireflies as minor forms of resistance opposed to the monolithic time of modernity.

Chapter I, “Del futuro monumental al margen de alegría”, discusses the widespread idea of Brazil as having a “manifest future, triumphal, modern” (43). This image materializes in the idea of national exceptionalism, “*Brasil Grande*, país del futuro” (44), which served as scaffolding for the monumental future of progress and modernity as expressed in public works since the nineteenth century, such as the Itaipu dam, the Transamazon highway and the construction of the capital, Brasília. In particular, the book emphasizes the building of Brasília as the source of the modern utopian dream of happiness and prosperity framed in logical urban design and industrialization (46-49).

¹ Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

Horne's research delves into that golden future of happiness to find unexplored margins that she conceptualizes with a renewed reading of "As margens da alegria" by Guimarães de Rosa. The reading of this short story highlights the perspective of the infant who does not divide humans from nonhumans. The concept of "trans-bordamiento" (63) refers to a shift from an idea of pristine nature attentive to a bright future to a more porous and darker notion of nature where human-nonhuman entanglements are more attentive to intermittent, multiple, and fragmented lights. Focusing on the figure of the infant who perceives continuities with animals, and on guttural noises at the limits of human language, the book traces interruptions in the timeline of communicating language to allow us to perceive other types of semiosis outside the communicative linguistic pattern. In conjunction with these other non-human discourses that intervene in human thought, the approach to the child's apprehension of the world that Horne reads in dialogue with Deleuze reveals a continuous perception that does not distinguish between subject and object, human and animal.

The idea of "pentamentozinho" that Horne draws from Guimarães de Rosa allows her to refer to minor interventions in human language and forms of semiosis that twist monolithic language and intervene in hegemonic Portuguese. It is a "way of thinking that intervenes in and deterritorializes syntactic language and symbolic logic with a 'hieroglyphic' presence that undoes alphabetic language, transforms it into images, and evidences its materiality" ("manera de pensar que interviene y desterritorializa el lenguaje sintáctico y la lógica simbólica con una presencia 'jeroglífica' que deshace el lenguaje alfabético, lo transforma en imágenes y evidencia su materialidad") (63). By relating the infant's perceptions to the figure of fireflies inspired by Pier Paolo Pasolini's letters from the 1940s, as well as philosophical work on images by Didi Huberman, Horne builds a new framework that enables her to search in a broad cultural corpus from the 1950s onwards for ways to "volar bajo" (fly low) (60), and for examples of "pensamiento diminutivo" (diminutive thought) (61). These minor futures construct an operative platform that involves perceiving ourselves and our bodily limits with strangeness in order to explore what lies at the margins of language, our bodies, and homogeneous time. The metaphor of the firefly is revealing because it connects the dimensions of ecological destruction and the material disappearance of biodiversity with an epistemological dimension in which the firefly is figured as an immanence, "the architecture of a world" (62). Horne argues that, since the 1950s, a series of intermittent lights begin to shine with low reflection

in the arts and literatures of Brazil and illuminate an alternative pathway to the one defined by modernity: “an interstitial time that is different from that of the monumental future of Brazilian developmentalism of the fifties” (“un tiempo intersticial diferente con respecto al del futuro monumental del desarrollismo brasileño de los años cincuenta”) (35).

The book is divided into two parts attending to two types of materiality, namely garbage and bones. The first part—opening with Chapter II, “Un eructo de la historia: Lina Bo Bardi entre la imagen material y las formas de habitar el intervalo”—deals with the work of the Italian-Brazilian artist Bo Bardi at the key moment in which the city of Brasília culminated as a modern project. Bo Bardi’s artistic project marked a possible future outside the modern path that did not happen, however. Horne unearths that project as an alternative future, not to stimulate a nostalgic look at the past, but to find the traces of intermittent lights and low-flying movements that can illuminate other possible futures beyond the death drive of neoliberal capitalism.

This chapter focuses on Bo Bardi’s experience with garbage in Salvador de Bahia and later the transformation of this experience into a residual artistic practice, which elaborates conceptualizations of the image that Horne reads in dialogue with the dialectical image of Walter Benjamin and that of survival by Aby Warburg. The chapter focuses on exhibits of popular culture and the bonds between childhood and animals in Bo Bardi’s work. In this analysis, Horne identifies ways in which images are montages of heterogeneous times that open channels of connection between past and present, harboring another way of inhabiting. Horne relates Bo Bardi’s architectural and curatorial work to Guimarães Rosa’s literary concept of “trans-bordamiento” (63), as a movement beyond borders, becoming another body, another being. The chapter connects this idea of becoming other with the experience that Bo Bardi herself called “the direct popular experience” (72) (and I will return to the popular below), inspired by rural and local traditions that the artist became acquainted with in Bahia. This experience formed a nucleus that inspired the elaboration of other images projecting futures and forms of dwelling alternative to the one marked by the developmentalism of the 1950s and its monumental future. Horne rescues that alternative path by highlighting a new vocabulary taken from Bo Bardi’s experiences, such as “camino pobre” (poor path) or “indigestible” (76). This contribution allows the imagining of unassimilable traces of history that defy the monumental lines of

progress in a context parallel to African decolonization and the Cuban revolution, among others (77).

As for architecture, Horne foregrounds Bo Bardi's ideas of living as ways of thinking about a popular, vernacular architecture as seen in the 1964 MoMA exhibition "Architecture without Architects." These artistic-architectural and cultural practices are presented not only as a change of content but also as a methodological and formal transformation in relation to artmaking and culture products, opening new dimensions of time and space. The author highlights that this art of garbage and found objects collected from popular places defies aesthetic criteria insofar as they are presented as "survival" (89), i.e., anachronistic temporalities that recover substrata made invisible by culture in order to intervene in the monumental future.

Horne's reflection on the use of popular culture in Bo Bardi is very convincing, as is the political idea of making this culture a methodology with which to think about the construction of the museum, the artistic space, and the environment. However, a question that can complicate this analysis is as follows: beside the intention of inaugurating new ways of inhabiting and feeling the world, to what extent can we say that in these projects there is also an appropriation of popular culture for avant-garde purposes?

Horne emphasizes that the policies of opacity (97) with which Bo Bardi operates as a surrealist artist result from going against history, which allows a raw stone to emerge (as opposed to diamonds and jewels) as a residual part stripped of history: for instance, rags (103), the use of "easels" as opposed to traditional museum tools (116), poor architecture as opposed to comfort and finesse (130). Horne presents the idea of "entangled times" (102) as Bo Bardi's philosophical way of thinking about time, inspired by Amerindian and Afro-cultures, as well as Eastern cultures in opposition to the Western hegemony of temporal conceptions; it is "an 'entangled' time, tangled up, unruly: a temporal enmeshment that allows us to enter history from any point" ("un tiempo 'enmarañado' enredado, revuelto; un amasijo temporal que nos permite entrar a la historia desde cualquier punto") (104). Finally, the chapter addresses the concerns with the environment related to the use of waste and recycling in Bo Bardi's work. In this regard, a recurring theme in the book is first laid out in this chapter: the relation between children and animals. By analyzing the project "Entreato para Crianças", Horne notices the centrality of insects and the ludic, interactive arrangement of the exhibition. She interprets this as an attempt to bridge

the gap between science and fantasy (135), thus searching for a grey zone where limits vanish and where a collective minor future becomes a faint possibility.

In Chapter III, “La palabra como cosa y la alegría colectiva. El cine de Eduardo Coutinho como proyecto filosófico”, Horne analyzes the construction of what she calls “imagen basura” (trash-image) (167) which connects with Bo Bardi’s “poor architecture” and Glauber Rocha’s aesthetics of hunger. With an analytical focus on the documentaries *Boca de Lixo* and *Jogo de Cena*, the chapter proposes that this cinema moves away from the naturalistic image that separates subject from object. Instead, it generates links between word, image, and body in a philosophical project far removed from the spectacularization and exoticization of marginal bodies. In the analysis of *Boca de Lixo*, Horne points out the search for a “camino pobre” (143) that Coutinho finds in popular culture and shapes as a model for the cinematic image that links it, according to Horne, to Glauberian cinema and Cinema Novo (144). The chapter’s focus on waste and the dump as constitutive methods links to the metaphor of the failure of industrial and extractive capitalism. The force of this cinema lies in its potential to disquiet through revulsion: “an overdetermination of the image at the sensory level that allows an approach to these same problems from a non-representational point of view” (“una sobredeterminación de la imagen a nivel sensorial que permite abordar esos mismos problemas desde un punto de vista ajeno a lo representacional”) (151). Departing from an analysis of *Jogo de cena* (2007), Horne identifies an image that juxtaposes rather than illustrates two stories that destabilize the narrative status—and hence, the dichotomy between reality and fiction—to open affective and material meanings of the image. Horne identifies how the artistic work uses slow temporalities and cuts faces in close-ups, uttering their names to the camera to produce a disjunction between the visual and the verbal registers, the image and the sound, which creates “a constant misalignment in the representation” (“un constante desfasaje de la representación”) (171). The chapter concludes that in this cinematic practice, cinema becomes a philosophical project where the image either becomes waste or a specter indicating a failure in modernity’s discourse. The analysis that this chapter presents opens new paths to think about the image, and to conceptualize the relationship between image, textuality, temporality, and non-human semiosis in cinema.

The second part, “Los huesos del mundo”, extends the focus on remains to include bones as active material that defies the living-dead, intimate-extimate division.

Chapter IV, “Detrás del lenguaje: la experiencia amazónica de Flávio de Carvalho y la inmanencia de la selva”, centers on a series of literary texts as “theoretical fictions” (37) that experiment with animism, and the vitalism of matter derived from Carvalho’s experience in the jungle. This focus on the relationship with the primitive re-conceptualizes this notion not as prior, old, or forgotten, but as active rest and survival. Connecting Carvalho’s work with Oswald de Andrade and “el grupo antropófago”, the author traces a path from “the living and the surviving [...] from the bones to the jungle” (“lo viviente y lo superviviente [...] desde los huesos hasta la selva”) (179). This analysis examines Carvalho’s unconventional cinema in order to establish how this artistic project proposed a program for the future by shifting the temporal sign of the image. By delving into the artist’s surrealist experimentation with bones, Horne exposes how this practice mobilizes new senses of this type of discarded matter as past vestiges that challenge the chronological order and modern epistemic reason that divides death from life. By engaging with a variety of works by Carvalho, this chapter revolves around Carvalho’s experience with and in the jungle and how it influenced his artistic practice. The emphasis on Carvalho’s search for a non-time beyond the time of modernity and progress is highlighted through his “psychoethnographic” work (199) developed during his jungle experience, mainly in 1958. Horne proposes that the jungle in Carvalho’s work is figured as a neural site that serves as an aesthetic and philosophical basis for Carvalho’s later project. The expeditions where he met the indigenous groups Waimiri and Xirianã inspired his heterogenous writing. Horne reads his mix of observations and diary entries as an attempt to recover other forms of connection between humans and nature in a different chronology that related to the jungle’s temporalities (213). The reconceptualization Horne proposes of the jungle as an “immanence” (218) refers to the blurring of limits of what a jungle is, thereby defying the Western anthropocentric understanding of the jungle as a primitive place in relation to the city. This chapter does propose the question: is this philosophical elaboration of Carvalho’s work in the jungle not alienating to its more material dimensions? And a question to continue thinking through is: how do the material (jungle as leaves, insects, water, humidity) and the immanent levels (jungle as “a living skeleton, a life” / “esqueleto de vida, una vida” (218)) actually connect in Carvalho’s image-making practice?

Chapter V, “El future como *déjà vu*. La continuidad de la Guerra y los sobrevivientes del fin del mundo”, takes up the debate around the conception of temporality by science and philosophy that the author raised in the introduction.

Starting with an analytical journey through the work of South African artist William Kentridge, who considers Africa and Brazil to be part of the Global South, Horne proposes that there is a continuity between colonial and modern times that responds to a necropolitics, a term taken from Achille Mbembe. This chapter delves into the meaning of the temporalities of the “Global South,” connecting Brazil with Africa through the analysis of works by William Kentridge such as the operas “Give us Back our Sun” and “The Refusal of Time.” Horne identifies in these works a centrality of the body as a performative tool to reclaim time and the scenification of metronomes, which produce a confusion of temporal lines that suspends modern time and monumental post-war time (222). The last analysis of the book is dedicated to the docu-fiction film *Serras da Desordem* (2006) by Andrea Tonacci and the novel *Dentes negros* (2011) by André de Leones. In this post-apocalyptic material, Horne concentrates on the figure of the survivor as a tool that locates the future as *déjà vu*. *Serras da Desordem* is a film featuring a real man, Carapiru, as an actor playing a survivor of a 1977 massacre in Maranhão. In it, Horne highlights the film’s confusion of documentary with fiction and its use of montage and abrupt cuts, all of which expose the film’s procedures and enable the perception of a continuity in extermination politics between the colonial massacres and the contemporary ones, which Carapiru experiences firsthand. The analysis of *Dentes negros*, a film situated in a near-future where a devastating epidemic has decimated large populations, centers on the whereabouts of two survivors whose migration exposes how power has built deserts. Horne reads the two surviving figures in this cinematic work as expressions of resistance, where a new form of inhabiting, “a minor inhabiting” (“un sitio menor para habitar”) (255), can emerge. The way the analysis centers on the human figure as survivor is very interesting, as is how human resistance lies neither in the posthuman future nor with the subject of a humanism expressing optimism (that a bright monumental future is still possible). This last chapter poses the question: could a new kind of (post)humanism, a “survival post-humanism,” be emerging from this study and the works analyzed here?

The Coda, “La tierra y el pie”, summarizes the main topics of the book, and concludes with a reflection on philosophical thinking as a bridge to forms of more-than-human semiosis and as resistance to the homogeneous time of physics and science. This interruption of linear time that also coincides with monumental time is conceptualized as “instante-ya” (259), a minor time that produces a break in linear

time that leads inevitably to catastrophe. The book finishes with the image drawn from Ailton Krenak of “an *indio* who comes down from the future in a clear instant just to tell us stories” (“un indio que baja del futuro en un claro instante solo para contarnos cuentos”) (259) as a form of resistance to the time of planned extermination that cannot conceive of the existence of alterities alien to modernity. Ultimately, the artistic, literary, and curatorial projects analyzed in this work offer a new type of conceptual, architectural, and artistic imagination that intervenes in the hegemonic temporality of modernity.

To conclude, the intermittent lights that connect Pasolini’s fireflies with Lina Bo Bardi’s poor architecture, Eduardo Coutinho’s experimentation with the cinematic image as waste and specter, the psychoethnographic project by Flávio de Carvalho, and the more-than human survival in Andrea Tonacci’s and André de Leones’ filmic and literary practices all build a minor counternarrative to the future designed by modernity and capitalism. The situated, place-based futures that Horne traces in this broad corpus of cultural projects in Brazil stretching from the 1950s to the present give an account of other forms of futurity as a multiple tempospatiality that opens pathways to other presents and possible futures beyond the monumental futures of modernity. The analytical and reflexive work with image, design and textuality in this book reveals a future with a history that has been co-opted by the hands of the clock and assimilated to the linear time of science and progress. In contrast, the investigation into the subtle ways in which art and philosophy can redirect temporality, materiality, and culture ignites new hope for glimpses of multiple, collective, and more inclusive futures.