

El papel de las revistas

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No podía ver más abajo de su nariz y más arriba de sus pestañas. Sentía su cuerpo atravesado por infinidad de planos de papel duro y satinado. Era incapaz de coordinar el inmenso número de rodajas en que se había convertido su cuerpo aunque seguía percibiendo las sensaciones que sufrían cualquiera de ellas. Sus pies se movían entre programas de ordenador, revestimientos de fachadas y mallazos, les costaba andar entre tanto desorden. Las manos sentían palabras de tinta en varios idiomas, ese lenguaje abstracto no lo entendía aunque lo conocía. Sus ojos sólo se podían mover horizontalmente, las imágenes planas se proyectaban arriba y abajo. La visión, por lo tanto, era exclusivamente tangencial. Mientras su memoria lo situaba en un jardín su imaginación le sugería un bodegón. La cultura mientras, reconocía los detalles con ansiedad. Eran volúmenes diferentes situados en un claro del bosque y encerrados en una fotografía. No podía separar sus ojos de esto, pegados igual que al reloj de pulsera cuando madrugaba. Las imágenes cambiaban a la misma velocidad que las manecillas de su reloj, estaba ahora ante una puerta y, también al mismo tiempo sobre una chimenea. Coordinaba su visión pero no el "tempo" de esta, a la vez, veía cosas desde lejos y cosas desde cerca. Se encontró viviendo inmerso dentro de un enorme collage mutante.

Algo se movió fuera de aquel espacio y sintió como era trasladado violentamente a través de superficies bidimensionales. Intento memorizar lo que veía, era imposible por la velocidad de su caída. Podía percibir que la calidad y cantidad de los planos variaba según el nombre que figuraba allí.

Por fin la caída paró y se encontró sumido en una nube densa, sentía picazón en los ojos, el FOG lo invadía todo. Una atmósfera difusa le mecía suavemente en un mar de dudas, estaba dentro de un pez que lo hipnotizaba con su luz naranja. Se tropezó con algo y al incorporarse sus ojos entraron en otro mundo. El movimiento había cambiado, ahora era circular, peristáltico se dijo. Marrón y verde era el color que veía mientras ruidos de hojas aplastadas entraban en sus oídos. Sintió terror infantil al descubrir dos puntos que fría e inexorablemente se acercaban sin piedad. Quiso moverse, huir con todo su cuerpo, pero su pie derecho se encontraba aprisionado dentro de un inodoro. Las manos las tenía esposadas entre plantas y alzados. Se encogió instintivamente para escapar de la serpiente cuando el movimiento exterior comenzó de nuevo.

Atravesó planos, planeo sobre textos y se fundió entre hojas de publicidad hasta que sintió que la densidad de los planos variaba, experimentando al salir de ellos como si de un parto se tratara. Cruzó otros mundos similares con las mismas imágenes y planos anteriores. Cada nuevo mundo que cruzaba, más cosas reconocía como repetidas. La pesadilla ya no era la experiencia de unos hechos sino la repetición de estos.

Mientras abandonaba el espacio cargado de papel, resbalándose entre el lino de una pierna, despertó.

Se desperezaba retrepándose en su butaca. A sus pies se encontraban las revistas que un instante antes había tenido en sus manos... Siempre le habían animado a publicar en las revistas de arquitectura, era el camino para acceder al poder y a la notoriedad, al respeto y la aceptación. Había comprado seis publicaciones y todas presentaban los mismos proyectos, iguales entrevistas y textos similares. Ahora comprendía su anterior sueño. No debía de existir suficiente arquitectura cuando esta se repetía sistemáticamente en los números coetáneos de diferentes revistas. Ahora que se lo ofrecían sentía desconfianza, en las revistas se canibalizan proyectos y obras disfrazadas de arquitectura. El era arquitecto y quería publicar, pero en una revista de arquitectura, no de pasamanos, picaportes, dibujos incomprensibles o fotos al atardecer. Tampoco le interesaba el packing, ni la justificación de lo injustificable. La arquitectura era otra cosa, era el desarrollo de una idea.

Se levantó, el sueño le había hecho sudar y le tenía entumecido. Necesitaría una ducha antes de salir. Recogió las revistas del suelo. Lo tenía decidido, no iba a publicar nada, al menos por ahora. No necesitaba publicar para sentirse arquitecto.

Cuando llegó a la portería, tiró las revistas a la papelería y salió por la puerta de servicio, no quería que Derrida, el perro del portero, le ladrara confundiendo con Michael Graves.

The Role of Journals

Translated by Deborah Gorman

He could not see below his nose and above his eyelashes. He felt his body run through by an infinity of planes of stiff and glossy paper. He was unable to coordinate the huge number of sheets his body had turned into, although he still perceived the sensations that any of them suffered. His feet moved among computer programs, façade coverings, and meshes, they found it difficult to walk among so much disorder. His hands felt ink words in several languages, that abstract language he did not understand although he knew it. His eyes could only move horizontally, the flat images projected above and below. His vision, therefore, was exclusively tangential. While his memory placed him in a garden his imagination suggested a still life. Culture, meanwhile, recognized the details anxiously. They were different volumes located in a clearing in the woods and locked up in a photograph. He could not take his eyes off of this, they were stuck just as they were to his watch when he got up early. The images changed at the same speed as the hands of his watch, now he was before a door and, at the same time, on top of a chimney. He coordinated his vision but not its "tempo", at the same time he saw things from a distance and things up close. He found himself living immersed in an enormous mutating collage.

Something moved outside that space and he felt as if he were violently moved through two-dimensional surfaces. He tried to memorize what he saw, it was impossible because of the speed of his fall. He could perceive that the quality and quantity of the planes varied according to the name that appeared there.

Finally the fall stopped and he was swallowed up in a dense cloud, he felt a stinging in his eyes, FOG** invaded everything. A diffuse atmosphere softly rocked him in a sea of doubts, he was inside a fish that hypnotized him with its orange light. He tripped over something and upon getting up his eyes entered another world. The movement had changed, now it was circular, peristaltic he told himself. Brown and green were the colors he saw while the sounds of crushed leaves entered his ears. He felt a childish terror on discovering two points that coldly and inexorably approached without pity. He wanted to move, to flee with his whole body, but his right foot was imprisoned within a toilet. His hands were handcuffed between plans and elevations. He cringed instinctively to escape from the snake when the outside movement began anew.

He crossed through planes, he glided over texts, and he melted between pages of advertising until he felt that the density of the planes varied, feeling upon getting out of them as if it were a birth. He crossed other similar worlds with the same images and previous planes. With each new world that he had crossed, he recognized more things as repeated. The nightmare was no longer the experience of some events but the repetition of them.

While he abandoned the space filled with paper, slipping between the linen of one leg, he woke up. He stretched, leaning back in his armchair. At his feet he found the journals that an instant before he had in his hands... He had always been encouraged to publish in architectural journals, it was the road to power and fame, to respect and acceptance. He had bought six publications, and all of them presented the same projects, identical interviews, and similar texts. Now he understood his earlier dream. There must not be enough architecture when it repeated itself systematically in the contemporary issues of different journals. Now that he had the chance he felt mistrust; in the journals projects and works disguised as architecture were cannibalized. He was an architect and he wanted to publish, but in an architectural journal, not in one about railings, latches, incomprehensible drawings, or photos at dusk. Neither was he interested in "packing" nor the justification of the unjustifiable. Architecture was something else, it was the development of an idea.

He got up, the dream had made him sweat and left him numb. He would need a shower before going out. He gathered the journals from the floor. He had decided, he was not going to publish anything, at least for now. He didn't need to publish to feel like an architect.

When he arrived at the superintendent's office, he threw the magazines in the wastebasket and left by the service door; he didn't want Derrida, the superintendent's dog, to bark at him, confusing him with Michael Graves.

*In the original Spanish title, "El papel de las revistas", there is an untranslatable pun based on two possible meanings for the word "papel": either "role" or "paper". Hence, the title can be understood, to Spanish readers, as either "The Role of Journals" or "Journal Paper".

** FOG appears in English in the original.