

# How to ditch the method class in three steps.

## Or de-methodologizing decolonial epistemologies.

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Abstract:

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Descartes' Discourse on Method (which continues to be taught from basic education on as the universal basis of scientific thought), not only imposes a standardized procedure for the analysis of objects of study (dividing it and arbitrarily ordering it from what is considered most simple to most complex, etc.), but also and above all builds a subject with a particular subjectivity, which considers itself and its gaze as neutral, objective, and even superior to ordinary people who are contaminated by their opinions and experiences. This paper studies forms of making evident, assuming, subverting and escaping the invisible ("objective") subjectivity that Cartesian scientific thought produces.

Key words:

Descartes, method, methodologies, epistemologies, decolonization, subjectivity, ditching class, double dildo

# How to ditch the method class in three steps.

## Or de-methodologizing decolonial epistemologies.

### 1. Universality



“ ‘I was sure to use my reason in everything’ (Descartes, 2006, p.19),” Mr. Madera read on the little book that all the students had on their desk, whose cover featured a portrait of the author. That image was the only thing that had aroused some empathy for the class in Daniel. At the beginning, each time the teacher asked them to take out the book, Daniel sang, ‘I just want to walk out of this world’ (Ramones, 1992), and the teacher shouted “Silence, Sir,

### 1. Universality

In Descartes’ (2006) *Discourse on Method*, he writes “the aim of my whole plan was to reach certainty and reject shifting ground in the search for rock and clay” (p.25). And in his ‘*Meditations*’, Descartes (2008) managed to deceive himself, in order to free himself of his own prejudices and getting on a neutral basis, thereby not deviating from the ‘straight path’<sup>1</sup>, thus “no evil custom can any longer twist my judgement away from the correct perception of things” (p.16). However, even if I sink into the shifting ground, I will allow myself to start this side of the text by deviation. “I am now here, sitting by the fire, wrapped in a warm winter gown, handling this paper (...)” (p.13), this could be a sentence uttered by Hug Hefner,



<https://www.popsugar.com/home/Hugh-Hefner-Selling-Playboy-Mansion-39752172>

silence”, “uum um um , um um (Ramones, 1992)”, Daniel continued to sing with tightly closed lips to provoke Madera, who looked violently at him and at the cover of his copy of the Discourse on Method: with a simple cut and a good amount of glue, Daniel had turned René into Rene Ramone, which is why Madera had already sanctioned him (upon the third they would call his parents), “ ‘if not perfectly, then at least to the best of my ability; moreover, I believed that, in practising it, my mind was gradually getting used to conceiving of its objects more clearly and distinctly, and that not having set it to work on any particular matter, I was able to set myself the task of applying it just as usefully to the problems of other branches of knowledge’ (Descartes, 2006, p.19).”

z

“He wanted to apply it to everything as if it were Vaseline” Daniel whispered, and exaggerated a reluctant sigh.

“And precisely that is the most important part of the Method, the fact that it can be used for any form of scientific research” Madera said, looking to Daniel to answer his distaste. “Descartes founds a way of building knowledge that works here and anywhere, because based on rationality, it manages to be universal. Reason differentiates us from the rest of the animals. Reason is universal. Hence the importance of this class ...”

“A whole year of lessons on that little book?” Daniel interrupted.

“Sir” Mr. Madera said, checking the list of students, moving his BIC between his fingers, looking for the name of his interlocutor, either to remember it, or to qualify the question he was about to answer by a threatening gesture, “Sir, Sir Perez, Londoño, Daniel, Fernando: the sciences have been done executed for almost four centuries following the

yet it is a quote by Descartes from his ‘Meditations’ from 1641. Both scenes feature a white man, wearing a gown, in the solitude of his room, with a paper in his hands. Hefner’s identity is one that is staged and visible, that is itself an important part of his company, of the production machine of a new masculine subjectivity, which occupies the domestic space that was heretofore conceived as feminine. That subjectivity produces a new economic and productive relation with sexuality, that will correspond to an economic model of post-Fordist capitalism, where the boundaries between pleasure, leisure and work, and between the private and the public are blurred (Preciado, 2010). The interiority of Hefner’s world, both in the architecture of his company and his mansion, as well as his own inner self, is acted out, is made public. That inside-outside, is the new model of masculinity, since “the playboy is situated at the threshold of femininity, masculinizing practices (consumption and domesticity) hitherto underestimated in the production economy that characterizes the male” (Preciado, 2010, p.43, my translation). But, in order to be a hegemonic model of masculinity, it will require, in spite of the breaks it is producing, certain essential norms to remain and become evident: “Hence the importance of the visual and discursive association between the domestic interior and naked girls: heterosexual eroticism ensured that Playboy was not simply a feminine or homosexual magazine” (Preciado, 2010, p.43, my translation).

Hefner’s scene depicts a model of subjectivation and male sexuality, in which interiority, physical needs and desires are made public and manifest, and in this way can become a masculine pattern to follow. Despite the similarity, in his scene Descartes aims to depict a man who erases his subjectivity to build an objectivity with which he will reach truth and reason. Subjectivity is the focus of the scene, even if it is meant to be suppressed.

In the ‘Discourse on Method’, in which he starts with his meditations that are “so metaphysical and recondite” (2006, p.28), Descartes is in Germany, where he is stuck due to a war, that like everything else around him, does not seem to worry him or affect his thoughts:

I was halted by the onset of winter in quarters where, having no diverting company and fortunately also no cares or emotional turmoil to trouble me, I spent the whole day shut up in a small room heated by a stove, in which I could converse with my own thoughts at leisure. (Descartes, 2006, p.12)

Thus, being in the isolation he considers necessary for reasoning, one of his first thoughts is that the greatest perfection of human, is achieved when they are made by a single person, which are, according to him, always better than those made by several. Therefore, he introduces an example with which he illustrates his idea: “is the case with buildings which a single architect has planned and completed, that are usually more beautiful and better designed than those that several architects have tried to patch together, using old walls that had been constructed for other purposes” (p.12). The architect, as an individual, has the rational capacity to design a better building, than someone, who has to let herself be contaminated by the design and thought of

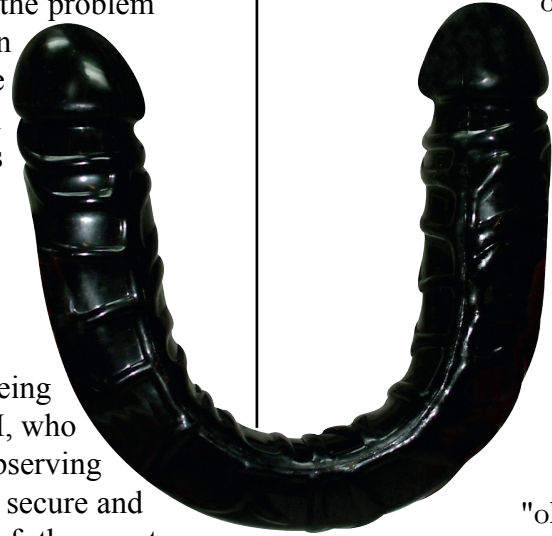
Discourse on Method. I do not understand what the problem is in following that, which you call a little book in a tiny one-year class. The Method must be studied here in Bogotá, in Kuala Lumpur, in Patagonia or in Cochinchina: the reason is universal and irrefutable.”

## 2. Right! Flesh/Reason

“ ‘(...) while I was trying to think of all things being false in this way, it was necessarily the case that I, who was thinking them, had to be something; and observing this truth: I am thinking therefore I exist, was so secure and certain that it could not be shaken by any of the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics, I judged that I could accept it without scruple, as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking’ (Descartes, 2006, p.28).” Mr. Madera read.

“We already think, now let us exist.” mumbled Luis, confabulating with Daniel, four rows of desks away from him.

“As you already know, Descartes could reach this conclusion, because after traveling for a long time seeking to know, he discovered that in solitude one reaches truth, reason. It is not surprising that you guys, who can not be alone, who never stop being connected, are the way you are.” Madera said, looking at Luis. “ ‘Among the first of these was the realization that things made up of different elements and produced by the hands of several master craftsmen are often less perfect than those on which only one person has worked (Descartes, 2006, p.12).’ Then, Descartes, in a cold winter, locked himself in to think, and there is where he deduced the four rules of his method to find the truth.”



others. However, this example not only privileges the individual as a rational entity, it also creates a metaphor for the point Descartes seeks to reach: get rid of layers of opinions and beliefs to arrive at pure thought. Santiago Castro-Gómez (2005) has called that initial place, which Descartes seeks and believes to have built himself, the hybris of the point zero. He uses the Greek concept hybris, which is “the worst of sins, because it involves the illusion of being able to go beyond the limits of the mortal condition and become like the gods”(p.19 my translation). Because from this point one is supposedly able to observe *everything*, from a universal place, supposedly free of prejudice, the zero point:

In the first of his *Metaphysical Meditations*, Descartes states that certainty in scientific knowledge is only possible if the observer previously discards all opinions anchored in common sense. It is necessary to eliminate all possible sources of uncertainty, since the main cause of errors in science comes from the excessive familiarity that the observer has with his social and cultural environment. Consequently, Descartes recommends that the "old and ordinary" opinions of daily life should be suspended, in order to find a solid point of departure from which it is possible to construct again the whole building of knowledge (Descartes, 1984: 115). This absolute point of departure, in which the observer cleans the slate from all previously learned knowledge, is what in this work we will call the hybris of the zero point. (Castro-Gómez, 2005, p.25 my translation)

Both in the *Discourse on Method* and in the *Meditations*, the concretion of that rational self, is achieved in the writing itself, as Judith Butler (2015) points out in her essay on *Meditations*:

Although Descartes’s meditative method is an introspective one in which he seeks in an unmediated fashion to know himself, it is also one that is written and that is apparently performed in the very temporality of writing. Significantly, he does not report in language the various introspective acts that he has performed prior to the writing: the writing appears as contemporaneous with this introspection, implying, contrary to his explicit claims, that meditation is not an unmediated relation at all, but one that must and does take place through language. (p.23)

In this way, writing is the technique with which that ‘I’, that self, is composed, which inhabits, or is itself the zero point. This is why these Cartesian writings (along with his meditative practices) could be understood as *technologies of the self*, which Foucault (1988) defined as those technologies

(...) which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (p.18)

Madera stood up from his padded leather chair -which emphasized along with his white gown embroidered with Mr. Madera his position in the classroom- uncorked one of his erasable markers, immediately flooding the room with its special aroma of alcohol, which made Luis wonder, “Do I smell, therefor I exist?”. Mr. Madera wrote on the board copying from his little book:

1. ‘Never to accept anything as true that I did not incontrovertibly know to be so; that is to say, carefully to avoid both prejudice and premature conclusions.’
2. ‘Divide all the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as many as were required to solve them in the best way.’
3. ‘Conduct my thoughts in a given order, beginning with the simplest and most easily understood objects, and gradually ascending, as it were step by step, to the knowledge of the most complex; and positing an order even on those which do not have a natural order of precedence.’
4. ‘Undertake such complete enumerations and such general surveys that I would be sure to have left nothing out.’ (Descartes, 2006, p.17)

“Could we say that the Discourse on Method is like a self-help book of the time?” Luis asked, suppressing the urge to laugh in a tense facial expression that revealed the tone of his question. Professor Madera waved his BIC as a gesture of warning and call to order.

“Silence” answered Madera in an irrevocable tone, and continued reading, “ ‘(...) whereas, if I had merely ceased

The writing of the Method and the Meditations, would work as a technology that produces a particular I, from the self-knowledge<sup>2</sup>, that will renounce, or pretend to renounce, to himself, to produce a subject defined by the purity of its thought.

That Cartesian subject became a model of scientific subjectivation, that would go on producing a subjectivity that consider itself objective, observing and describing reality, creating the illusion of not altering it, or that reality in turn would affect this subjectivity. It is a subjectivity unaffected and that believes that does not affect. And due to that objectivity that disaffection provides, it is enunciated as universal. Such objectivity is constituted on the one hand by individualization; that is to say, the scientist does not allow his pure thought to be contaminated with that of others, with the irrationality of popular knowledge; and on the other hand, invisibilizing his role in the construction of the truth that his observation will produce. Donna Haraway (1997) has defined this «objective» subjectivity as a modest witness, which erases its traces of the scene to make its footprint invisible:

This self-invisibility is the specifically modern, European, masculine, scientific form of the virtue of modesty. This is the form of modesty that pays off its practitioners in the coin of epistemological and social power. This kind of modesty is one of the founding virtues of what we call modernity. This is the virtue that guarantees that the modes witness is the legitimate and authorized ventriloquist for the object world, adding nothing from his mere opinions, from his biasing embodiment. And so he is endowed with the remarkable power to establish the facts. He bear witness: he is objetive; he guarantees the clarity and purity of objects. His subjectivity is his objectivity. His narratives have a magical power—they lose al trace of their history as stories, as products of partisans projects, as contestable representations, or as constructed documents in their capacity to define the facts. (P.24)

This subjectivity of *the modest witness*, which begins with Descartes and will continue in modern scientific thought, will be, as Castro-Gómez (2005) notes, fundamental for the emergence of the sciences of man and Enlightenment thought, which understands human history like a *telos*, a straight path with a last point of arrival, and that point of arrival will be the one that lives the present of European modernity<sup>3</sup>. Therefore for this thought, the moment lived by the colonized peoples is not simultaneous with the European, but is in the past of Europe. Consequently, colonialism is understood as a way to bring progress, a way to move forward in the history of those peoples. The secularization of the omnipresent gaze of the Christian god that implies Cartesian subjectivity, will not only give science *reasons* for colonialism, but will also create a subject, that embody this gaze of god, giving him the power to build the truth about the world and *others*. It is a subject, which by means of the erasure of its subjectivity, the elimination of its beliefs and opinions, poses itself as without a position, and at the same time in a position superior to ordinary people. Descartes' *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations* are production technologies of that subjectivity, that even though they are enunciated as methods to <<find the truth>>, that is to say, to produce knowledge, are first of all practices of self-knowledge, of introspection and production of a particular *self*. The Cartesian legacy in sciences, makes

thinking, I would have no reason to believe that I existed, even if everything else I had ever imagined had been true. I thereby concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature resides only in thinking, and which, in order to exist, has no need of place and is not dependent on any material thing. Accordingly this ‘I’, that is to say, the Soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and is even easier to know than the body; and would not stop being everything it is, even if the body were not to exist’ (Descartes, 2006, p.29) ”. - Mr Madera erased the entire board, then drew a line that split it in half, in the first part he wrote Flesh and in the second Reason.

Luis thought about his desk which he felt to be melting with his buttocks, becoming part of his body as he was sitting there for so many hours, but then again this chair-shaped wood, which made my buttocks and legs and arms and head numb, would not think ergo would not not exist... Descartes discarded, he crossed the name of the philosopher in the air. If it seemed to him that thought does not depend on any material thing, he must not have had to think sitting in one of these, furthermore, would I think as much and they came back and diagnosed me with ADHD again, he looked at the clock that had been placed on top of the board, they might see how slow time could go by. He pointed it out to Daniel so that he could also see the time. Daniel touched Felipe's shoulder and with a movement of his head and a small gesture of his mouth reminded him to also look at the time on the classroom's clock.

“Mr. Madera, it's half past eleven,” Felipe said, “we have to go and take the data from the weather station.”

“The queers found a method to ditch class”, said a voice from one of the students, to which Madera responded with a chuckle of approval.

the different disciplines of knowledge produce a particular subjectivation of the scientific *subject, that is studying an object*, which from that point of supposed neutrality, has had strong implications in processes of colonialism and internal colonialism, which as Castro-Gómez (2005) argues (particularly in New Granada, today Colombia) have been strongly related to processes of racialization, in which *whiteness*, which is constructed as a superior racial position, is closely linked to a superiority of knowledge:

A distinction that not only raised the superiority of some men over others, but also *the superiority of some forms of knowledge over others*. For this reason, the illustrated discourse of the Creole elite, with its emphasis on the objectivity of knowledge, does not contradict but rather reinforce the ethnic imaginary of whiteness. (p.59, my translation)

Reading the Descartes texts quoted here as ‘technologies of the self’<sup>4</sup> (which must be understood in conjunction with other practices that he performs or writes, such as meditations or writing letters to his friends about what he writes), which have been inherited in Western epistemologies, and which continue to be studied in schools (and particularly in the former colony that is Colombia, as it happens on the other side of the text), as basis for scientific and rational thinking, I think it is essential to demethodize and to demethodologize epistemologies as part of a process of decolonization of thought. The methods and methodologies, as a way of proceeding, which should be repeatable and therefore standardized, are largely in that zero point of subjectivity that has been discussed, since considering that a particular way of doing could be applied in any context, therefor must be considered neutral, without a trace of its own ideology and political-economic interests, such that it would not affect the object of study, nor be affected by it. In this sense, the tradition of feminist epistemologies has presented critical forms of knowledge production, in which the objectivity with which the sciences are produced is questioned.<sup>5</sup> On this deviated path, the demethodologization that emerges, rather than to dispense of methodologies, or to question them, will be labor on the subjectification of the subjects that produce knowledge, in which the subjectivity production of the different academic disciplines can be made aware of.

“I know you have permission from the principal to go up to the weather station”, Madera said, “remember that it does not make sense if you do not do it methodically and rationally, and remember that minimal moral precepts are necessary”. He smiled.

### 3. Ditching the method class.

The love or pleasure station, as they called it, had been a plan of the three of them, that the principal accepted thanks to her obsession with climate change (one day she decided to separate the garbage in two and turn the idea of an Eco school into a slogan, or green school, something like that) and to the sweet voice of Felipe who had proposed it. It was a wooden box lined with contact paper, a thermometer, a piece of a plastic bottle with some measurements drawn on top as a rain gauge and an anemometer made by Luis using a youtube tutorial (which was more of a weather vane that didn't even turn). They put it in a place on the roof where they would not be seen from below. The data was taken in less than a minute, but they stayed there the rest of the class, sometimes hours. That roof made them invisible, it was the only place where the three could be without being seen. In one of those sessions, in which they even stood after the bell had sounded, a classmate went up to see what they were doing. As he discovered them he clung tightly to the ladder and shouted:

this is abhorrent

you are abhorrent

disgusting

### 2. Flesh-Reason

In her essay, *‘How Can I Deny That These Hands and This Body Are Mine?’*, Judith Butler (2015) questions the way in which Descartes and certain forms of constructivism deny the body. Butler begins her text by expressing her concern about the fact that her works could be understood as denying the body, giving prevalence to a linguistic construction of the same (she makes an implicit reference to *‘Gender Trouble’*, in which she puts forth her theory of gender performativity). To position her in this regard, she exposes the complex <<chiasmic relation>> that according to her is between language and body: the body can not be understood outside of language, but “although the body depends on language to be known, the body also exceeds every possible linguistic effort of capture”, thus she concludes “that this means that the body exists outside of language, that it has an ontology separable from any linguistic one, and that we might be able to describe this separable ontology”. But that operation in which the body and language are separated, would be given in language itself, “the chiasm reappears”, the “body escapes its linguistic grasp, but so, too, does it escape the subsequent effort to determine ontologically that very escape” (Butler, 2015, p.21).

In his effort to get rid of his (hi)story and reach the zero point, Descartes denies his body, which he points out (both in the ‘Method’ and in the ‘Meditations’) as a producer of passions and desires, from which he wants to get away to achieve objectivity, in this way he separates two substances of the human, one thinking (*res cogitans*) and another corporal (*res extensa*)<sup>6</sup>. This dualistic separation that comes from Christianity will be the basis of Cartesian thought. However, in this attempt to deny the body, the complex relationship between language and body is evidenced. Butler (2015) argues that “in the course of Descartes’s fabulous trajectory of doubt is that the very language through which he calls the body into question ends by reasserting the body as a condition of his own writing ” (p.22). Thereby the denial of the corporeal in language necessarily includes the body, completing the chiasmus between body and language:

Language itself cannot proceed without positing the body, and when it tries to proceed as if the body were not essential to its own operation, figures of the body reappear in spectral and partial form within the very language that seeks to perform their denial (Butler, 2015, p.22).

In a recently published essay, its author, Isabel Gamero (2017), transposes <<the critique>> that Butler applies to Descartes, to Haraway’s *Cyborg Manifesto* and Preciado’s *Testo Junkie*. For Gamero in these two <<constructivist>> texts, there is a negation of the body similar to that of the *‘Meditations’*. In my view, the similarities that may exist between Haraway’s and Preciado’s texts and those of Descartes’, are among the contradictions that emerge in the ‘Meditations’, such as the constant use of the imagination, the fiction of the

queens

faggots

sick

little women

homos

queers,

I knew, we all already knew

# QUEERS

Felipe's whole body began to shake and tears dropped as Luis consoled him calmly (the medication had tamed his reactions) telling him to be calm, that he was not going to tell the teachers. He reminded him that in the male school they were in, it was almost worse to be a snitch than a faggot. We also knew! Daniel answered, flipping the bird. And they knew it so much that they themselves had given it several names:

First they called it **feather**, then

self and speculation, which contrasts with the rational purposes he is looking for; but in the case of the 'Cyborg Manifesto' and 'Testo Junkie', those characteristics are used in a conscientious way and that is made clear to the readers. I will set out to explain some of the points made by Gamero (2017) about these texts, and the different way in which I read them, since I consider them, particularly Preciado's book, an alternative to the zero point subjectification that occurs in Descartes.

According to Gamero (2017), both Haraway's cyborg and Descartes' thinking subject, pose a rupture between world and mind, giving a "strengthening of the subjective and mental pole over the objective and material" (p.154, my translation) producing in this way, an individuation of people, in which "they can distance themselves and operate at their free will on the world", in this manner

(...) it is also an example of voluntarism that understands some subjects (Descartes or the cyborg) as free, separated and completely independent. That is, these authors maintain the fantasy of a subject that has lost (or taken away) the links with the outside, with other human beings and the world, without taking into account the limitations and restrictions of reality, of the bodies or the laws of physics, one might say. (Gamero, 2017, p.154, my translation)

Following this argument, Haraway's cyborg would also seek that Cartesian zero point, free of his past and his opinions, which could put her in a position of power based on knowledge about the world, that gives her a place of impartial observation. In my opinion this is an erroneous *application* of the critique that Butler made to Descartes, because it ignores that the figure of the cyborg is not disconnected from the world, since Haraway poses it (the cyborg) as a new subject of feminism, which therefore has a close connection with the genealogy of the feminist movements, in this way it does not erase its history. The cyborgs have precise origins that are constantly evidenced:

The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential. (Haraway, 1991, p.151)

But also cyborgs are ultra-connected, not merely with others of the same species. Under the cyborg perspective "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (Haraway, 1991, p.154). Haraway's cyborg is a subject that emerges from science fiction and dismantles the Cartesian paradigms of knowledge production. The knowledge of the cyborg is a 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1991), in which the subjectivity and partiality of the subject or the multiple subjects (that can even be joined by prosthesis that bond their bodies) that produce such knowledge, are evident.



# ghost, screw and fruit

They invented those magical words, eroticizing them just by thinking of them. After being discovered, nothing happened, nothing more than the rest of the classmates starting to call them faggots and queers.

“Just what Madera did on the board is what has got us fucked,” Daniel said when they were already on the roof “to divide everything in two, the soul and the body, the man and the woman...”

“Fags also divide everything into two, bottoms and tops.” interrupted Felipe.

“In a town in the Andes, whose name I do not wish to recall” said Luis looking at the mountain in front of the school full of brick houses. The other two laughed.

“Your rational truth, it's not quite true dear Felipa, you can still do something, look at our new toy” said Daniel, kissed Felipe and showed him a picture on his cell phone. “With this chao Christian dualism.”

Later in her essay, Gamero (2017) brings again the scene up in which Descartes narrates in first person ‘*sitting by the fire*’... Gamero will not compare the scene with Hefner's, but with one in which Preciado -precisely the author with which I presented Hefner- is writing his *Testo Jonkie*. For Gamero both, Preciado and Descartes are denying their bodies, that, as Butler points out, even if it is denied it emerges in the writing:

Descartes and Preciado are writing, with their own hands on a paper or on the computer and, at the same time, they try to argue that their own bodies, hands or eyes are not real or they are not as we thought they were. The argument is blocked to itself, because for the skeptical doubt or the constructivism to succeed, these authors should stop arguing, or even have to disappear, become something scanty intuitive as a thinking body without a body or a prosthetic technobody, affected by hormones and interconnected. (Gamero, 2017, p.160, my translation)

Apparently, for Gamero a being without body, or a prosthetic technobody, affected by hormones and interconnected, produces the same denial of the corporal. For her in both cases

the author who writes (Descartes or Preciado) doubles and differs from the idea he has of himself, approaching more fictitious than real conceptions of identity, such as the disembodied thinking substance of Descartes or the “technobody” or low-tech transgender “identity made of dildos, texts and moving images” in which Preciado believes himself to become (...). [T]he language becomes difficult to understand, it is not clear who is speaking and strange, almost unintelligible phrases are produced, where double negatives proliferate (for example: “You can never make me not be, as long as I think that I am something”, Descartes) and new terms not for everyday use appear (such as “pharmacopornographic”) that need a lot of explanation and contextualization to be understood. (Gamero, 2017, p.161, my translation)

In my opinion there are clear differences between Preciado's and Descartes' text, even moreso under the reading of Butler's criticism of the latter. Perhaps those differences have become clearer from my perspective (of this me, faggot, immigrant, who reads these texts in the queues of the migration offices and who feels affinity for the way of proceeding that is presented in ‘*Testo Jonkie*’). Although there may be similarities in the first person of both texts, it is important to see the differences<sup>7</sup>. The I of Preciado, first Beatriz, and then Paul (as a note at the beginning of the Spanish edition of *Testo Yonqui* shows with which I am working), unlike Rene Descartes' I, is not a subject that seeks to erase his history, nor his subjectivity, nor his relation to the world. It is an absolutely situated I, that tells us the date, the place and the socio-political context of his birth in the Francoist Burgos of 1970, and more specifically his family context, the car garage of his father, who cries for his daughter who is growing as a tomboy (Preciado, 2015, p.28). It is a crossed I, affected by its context, and those forces that cross it and compose it are evidenced. Preciado would not understand sexuality and gender (nor the body itself) as one of those buildings built by a ‘*single architect*’. On the contrary, the sexuality that he



modifies, which is reconstituted with testosterone, involves quoting material forms of masculinity, that is to say, corporal forms that produce testosterone, which have been attributed from the language as masculine (and if we wanted to separate them from language, the chiasm of which I have spoken following Butler, would appear). In that sense, neither the self, nor the body that Preciado is composing, could be understood as a new building, it would be one of those mentioned by Descartes in his metaphor, in which the walls of the old buildings are used. The self-administration of testosterone that Preciado narrates can not imply a denial of the body, since it is a transformation in the materiality of the body itself, which occurs from the taking of the hormone molecule, which has a huge discursive gender burden, so that transformation will, of course, also produce a change in terms of language.

According to Butler (2015) there is a spectralization of the body in Descartes' text, which shows the relations between body and language: "If the body is what inaugurates the process of its own spectralization through writing, then it is and is not determined by the discourse it produces" (p.35). Could such a spectrality also be found in Preciado's text? Somehow all writing presents in a spectral way the body of its authors (Butler), but I think that particularly in Preciado's *Testo Junkie*, such a spectrum transcends its phantasmagorical level, working as a performance-text that performs and exposes the body of its author. His writing, records, but also composes the experiences that narrate his 'auto-guinea pig principle' experiments, which transform his subjectivity and his body. The *Testo Junkie* writing does not deny a corporeality that emerges afterwards as a spectral form, but it exposes his body, raises it into textuality, so that together with the writing and other linguistic and corporal procedures transforms it. In my view, the book of Preciado works as a form (one of many that would have to be tried out and experimented) of demethodologization that I posed before, in which in the production of knowledge, a technology of the self is set in motion, with which a particular subjectivity is composed, that displaces the place of the zero point of the scientific perspective, which produces a self, connected with a *we* (which in the case of Preciado is that of the transfeminist and queer movements) that faces Descartes' self, and that is willing to learn from popular and community knowledge that has been disdained and eliminated from Cartesian thinking.

"Doble punta y doble color." Felipe sang, remembering the jingle of the color pencil's brand he used as a child.

"Bye bye, Cartesian binarism," Luis said excitedly "go outside of us."

"A double dildo and we are all bottom".

When the scandalous school bell sounded (it was also on the roof) they went down, passed through the class room to pick up their backpacks and looked again at the board split in two by Mr. Madera. Daniel took one of the markers, opened it and gave it to Felipe, who drew the double dildo breaking the dividing line on the board.

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## Notes

1In the Spanish translation of the Meditations I am working with, there is a constant reference to a 'straight path' (camino recto) that is not present in the English version, in this paper I will make some references to that methodic straight path, which in my perspective is linked to a heteronormative or 'straight' subjectivation of Cartesian driven thought.

2Foucault (1988) argues that the technologies of the self are given by self-care and self-knowledge, and that the self-care will take the leading role in << Western society >> for two main reasons, the first is that we "inherit the tradition of Christian morality which makes self-renunciation the condition for salvation. To know oneself was paradoxically the way to self-renunciation" (p.22). And the "second reason is that, in theoretical philosophy from Descartes to Husserl, knowledge of the self (the thinking subject) takes on an ever-increasing importance as the first step in the theory of knowledge"(p.22).

3Castro-Gómez (2005) writes the following about it: "Locke's comparative observation establishes that between contemporary European and American societies, there is a relation of non-simultaneity. While European societies have managed to develop a subsistence mode based on the specialized division of labor and the capitalist market, American societies are anchored in an economy belonging to the <<past of humanity>>. The relationship that exists between a day laborer in England and an indigenous pastor in New Granada is one of temporary asymmetry. Both live in the seventeenth century, but belong to different stages of the development of humanity". (My translation, P.35)

4Foucault (1997), in his text 'Self Writing' identifies three types of writing of self (in reference to ascetic life), the diaries, the hypomnemata and the letters. The diaries and the letters, work writing the thoughts and actions that are carried out daily to find aspects of the behavior to which they must resign. I find similarities between these Descartes texts and the characteristics of the self writing. See more in Foucault's Self Writing, in Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.

5See concepts such as <<the situated knowledge>> of Donna Haraway (1991) or the <<strong objectivity>> of Sandra Harding (2008). See also Linda Tuhiwai's Decolonizing Methodologies (2012): that "is concerned not so much with the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context

in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities” (p.IX).

6Butler (2015) exposes how in some moments Descartes’ thinking substance seems to become the extended substance (which is how he names corporeal substance, making reference to the volume of the body), particularly at the moment in which Descartes writes about an engraving that god performs in memory: “His memory becomes the object in which God engraves a resolution, as if Descartes’s memory were a page, a surface, an extended substance. But this is clearly a problem, since the mind is supposed to be, as we know, *res cogitans*, rather than *res extensa*, whereas it is figured here precisely as an extended surface and substance” (p.32).

7Gamero's argument ignores even the criticisms that Preciado has made to constructivism. Preciado (2011) writes about it: "the essentialist position and the constructivist position have the same metaphysical foundation. The two models depend on a modern basis: the belief that the body involves a zero degree or ultimate truth, a biological matter (the genetic code, the sexual organs, the reproductive functions) <<given>>. This belief is found even in the most radical constructivist positions "(p.146).

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