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THE RENAISSANCE MELANCHOLY ASSEMBLAGE, SPACE,
AND THE BAROQUE PROBLEM OF THOUGHT

A b s t r a c t. The article discusses Drew Daniel's theory of the melancholy assemblage. By juxtaposing Daniel's appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas with Manuel De Landa's discussion of the assemblage theory, it addresses the issue of space which, in spite of being one of the parameters of an assemblage, is absent from Daniel's *The Melancholy Assemblage*. Therefore, the first question asked in the present article concerns the reason behind Daniel's neglect of the spatial dimension of an assemblage. The second issue discussed in the article concerns the tension between forces of territorialization and deterritorialization in a melancholy assemblage. By approaching the issue from the vantage point of the neobaroque theory, the article argues that Daniel's Renaissance melancholy assemblages already touch upon the problematic relation between performance and essence that would find its full manifestation during the Baroque.

Key words: melancholy; space; assemblage; Deleuze and Guattari; Hamlet; neobaroque.

On a first, horizontal, axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away.

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 88

I

Andrew Solomon, the National Book Award winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist author of *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*, opens his

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2013 TED talk on depression with a poem by Emily Dickinson. The viewer is faced with an elegantly dressed man who slowly recites a work by one of the most famous recluses of the American letters. The comment that follows the declamation seems to justify the use of the poem, for Solomon explains that depression is usually explained through metaphors and visual art, words and images. To prove the second half of the point, the explanation is accompanied by Goya's *The Giant* projected on the screen behind the speaker. Having recited the poem, Solomon, with the same melancholy voice, confesses to his personal losses that most of his audience have probably encountered during their life: the death of a parent and the breakdown of a relationship. Yet, Solomon admits, those losses he was able to mourn. Only three years later did he suffer a sudden loss of interest in the outside world for which he was unable to find an explanation; only then did he find himself unable to undertake the simplest, most mundane tasks that so many people complete almost without thinking. And when he finally decided to look for help and started medication and therapy, it made him ask questions about the nature of his identity and the impact the medication might have had on it.

The first interesting aspect of Solomon's talk is its rhetorical structure. TED speakers, in order to popularize ideas among the non-expert audience, are required to deliver a performance—a requirement so well-known that at times it may even result in a metajoke made by a speaker about a necessary joke a TED talk must include. Unable to open with a humorous anecdote (after all, the subject of his speech is no laughing matter), yet aware of the performative nature of the event, Solomon begins with a quotation that he delivers in an adequately mournful voice, thus establishing the correspondence between his persona and the content of his talk. Yet, as stressed by Mieke Bal, quotation often goes beyond individual intention (14) and rhetoric is “a strategy of meaning-production in a performative relation between text and addressee” (41). Solomon's choice to quote Dickinson is not merely an ornament meant to catch the audience's attention, and his use of Goya's painting is not simply an attempt to comply with another of TED talk's requirements and provide the audience with visual stimuli. The reference to nineteenth-century artistic expressions of an ailment that has eluded a clear definition since antiquity, yet whose numerous misdiagnoses are still recognized as an important constituent of the history of Western thought creates an intertextual nod that situates Solomon's talk within the discourse on melancholy. By quoting Dickinson and Goya, Solomon establishes a link between himself, the audience, and numerous texts devoted to melancholy.

Secondly, Salomon translates the discourse on melancholy onto his own body, presenting himself as a person suffering from an unexplainable disease causing sadness. The fact that his voice does not change between the recitation of Dickinson's poem and his personal confession, but instead moves smoothly from one "text" to another, seems to suggest that such a passage is possible and the poet's description of unbearable dejection voices Solomon's distress as well. What is more, the smooth shift from the quotation to personal narrative reveals another aspect of melancholy discourse: the desire to understand juxtaposed with a failed attempt to do so. In other words, Solomon's confession is a misdirection, for neither the death of the parent nor the breakup of the relationship seem directly connected to the depression that overwhelmed him three years later. These two events become elements of an identity narrative that are unable to account for the rupture in the self; they testify to a melancholy overproduction of meaning in a futile attempt to discover the cause of sadness and, consequently, cure it.

Finally, Solomon's sadness had a direct impact on his everyday chores such as answering the phone or preparing a meal. And even though he is aware that the inability to perform these simple activities may seem ridiculous, it is the basic nature of the tasks that magnified the anxiety that followed. Yet in addition to a clinical explanation, Solomon's depression may be accessed from a very different vantage point as well. Anthony Giddens claims that the day-to-day routines bracket existential questions concerning time, space, continuity, and identity, providing an individual with a sense of ontological security. Through habitual actions one fends off the anxiety that stems from the inherent unreliability of most of the solutions to philosophical enquiries. "To live our lives, we normally take for granted issues which, as centuries of philosophical enquiry have found, wither away under the sceptical gaze," claims Giddens.

The chaos that threatens on the other side of the ordinariness of everyday conventions can be seen psychologically as *dread* in Kierkegaard's sense: the prospect of being overwhelmed by anxieties that reach to the very roots of our coherent sense of 'being in the world' (Giddens 37).

Habit, continues Giddens, prevents one from asking existential questions that may break the frame of everyday existence and result in questioning one's self-identity. Solomon's inability to perform habitual actions seems to exemplify Giddens' argument as it lays foundation for the questions he asks after starting medication and therapy. For even though his primary concern

is the impact medication might have had on his self, it seems that the ground for the existential enquiry was laid out by the rupture in the ontological security framed by habitual actions. Depression, in other words, makes one vulnerable to existential anxieties kept at bay by everyday routines; moreover, when recognized, it forces one to restructure his or her self-identity. Again, Solomon's TED talk exemplifies Giddens' definition of self-identity as "something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual" (52). Only after recognizing the illness and after looking for medical assistance was Solomon able to begin redefining his identity in a way that would account for his unbearable dejection. Antidepressant pills and visits to a therapist become reminders of the condition; new routine activities get incorporated into the everyday, thus establishing a new frame of reference for the identity narrative. The TED talk is a testimony to this new self that Solomon narrates in front of the audience, simultaneously reflexively sustaining his identity and recognizing the other as a crucial element of melancholy discourse. What is more, a false clue that points in the direction of personal losses may be read both as an attempt at creating narrative continuity and a hyperbole that emphasizes the rupture in the self caused by the onset of depression. Yet no matter which solution one deems more credible, they both attest to melancholy as a text susceptible to hermeneutics.

Andrew Solomon's TED talk, in addition to exemplifying how melancholy adapts and, although in disguise of depression, self-referentially recreates itself by applying means that melancholics have for centuries used to communicate their ailment, illustrates that melancholy is still "a living problem that permeates contemporary culture" (Bartra 5). The talk, even though devoted to depression, proves that the discourse established centuries ago still serves as a means of communication between the melancholy figure and the audience. Moreover, the contemporary melancholic has not lost the gift of insight traditionally granted to him by Aristotle and developed into the concept of heroic melancholy by Renaissance thinkers such as Marsilio Ficino and Petrarch. Melancholy may serve as a prism through which one gains insight into the condition of late modernity by entering a dialogue with more contemporary theoretical approaches that examine such issues as identity, communication, community, or space.

The purpose of this article is to investigate one of such contemporary readings of melancholy, namely Drew Daniel's *The Melancholy Assemblage*. Andrew Solomon's TED talk may serve as a perfect introduction to the following discussion, as Solomon, by positioning himself in front of the au-

dience and engaging in a performative display of his emotional state through the application of textual means that point in the direction of melancholy, establishes what Drew Daniel christened a melancholy assemblage: a spatio-temporal manifestation of an emotional state “composed out of consciousness, expression, a regime of knowledge, and at least one body” (27).

II

By tracing the evolution of the term assemblage—from early modern *assemblance*, through the eighteenth-century understanding of the term assemblage, to Deleuze and Guattari’s definition in *A Thousand Plateaus*—Daniel stresses the relational nature of a gathering of material bodies. Following Deleuze and Guattari’s insight, he accepts the premise that an assemblage is a multiplicity composed of two axes: horizontal, comprised of bodies and discourses, and vertical, responsible for change (deterritorialization) and stability (territorialization). The fact that the often-quoted definition of an assemblage, opening this article, instead of defining what an assemblage is provides a description of how it works, is significant. According to Manuel De Landa, Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of assemblages is nowadays “the main theoretical alternative to organic totalities” (*A New Philosophy of Society* 10). Instead of considering a given whole a fixed unity composed of parts whose relations (called by De Landa relations of interiority) define its identity, assemblage theory focuses on processes (becoming) which grant components a certain degree of freedom. In other words, assemblages are characterized by relations of exteriority:

a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different. ... Relations of exteriority also imply that the properties of the component parts can never explain the relations which constitute a whole (De Landa, *A New Philosophy of Society* 10).

Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblages point to the contingency of relations that form a given unity in a particular historical context. Therefore, for Daniel “[a]ssemblages describe ongoing, fragile, and reversible correlations between bodies and languages” (11). As a result, “there can be no melancholy essence because there is not a singular kind of melancholy content” (Daniel 32).

Although Daniel recognizes Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the assemblage as a nexus of two axes—the horizontal axis of materiality/expression and the vertical axis of stability/instability—as an important element of his theory of the melancholy assemblage, and even though his discussion of the passage from *A Thousand Plateaus* necessarily comments upon the spatial dimension of the assemblage whose stability is determined by the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization, the theoretical frame of *The Melancholy Assemblage* seems a rather a-spatial project. Surprisingly, in Daniel's reading the vertical axis of the assemblage, responsible for territorialization and deterritorialization, is never considered in spatial terms; in spite of its name, it never becomes responsible for delineating territory.

“Anything that reinforces the stability of an assemblage as it occupies space over time tends toward its territorialization. Anything that tends to dissolve, soften, distort, or change that stability constitutes its deterritorialization,” explains Daniel, to immediately add that “[t]he fluidity of such a formulation is both its strength and its flaw” (10). Daniel is aware of the universal applicability of Deleuze and Guattari's term that some critics find of little practical value. “[W]hat is added to any particular level by pointing out that here, too, lies an assemblage?” he asks (10). To avoid the trap of too broad a definition, Daniel decides to follow Deleuze's empiricism that dictates that “[e]ach assemblage manifests a specific, local coherence and its own consistency as a function of its coding, of territorialization” (Daniel 10). Therefore for Daniel each assemblage is formed as a result of relations between its components that become manifested in a particular (local) context. However, the fact that Daniel chooses to use the terms “territorialization” and “coding” as synonyms may be the first clue to why his theory de-spatializes melancholy. Coding, in a narrow sense of the term, seems to point toward a linguistic process of ascribing meaning, a process that sustains an assemblage by localizing recurrent textual patterns that decide about its provisional identity. However, even though De Landa stresses the linguistic aspect of coding in Deleuze and Guattari's theory by stating that it “refers to the role played by language in fixing the identity of a social whole” (*Deleuze* 13), he draws a clear distinction between coding and territorialization. While coding is responsible for stabilizing meaning, territorialization

must be first of all understood literally. Face-to-face conversations always occur in a particular place (a street-corner, a pub, a church), and once the participants have ratified one another a conversation acquires well-defined

spatial boundaries. ... processes of territorialization are processes that define or sharpen the spatial boundaries of actual territories (*A New Philosophy of Society* 13).

For De Landa, spatial and non-spatial processes that constitute the vertical axis of an assemblage play an equally important part in the acts of territorialization and deterritorialization. Daniel, contrary to De Landa, seems to neglect the spatial dimension of the vertical axis, instead focusing solely on codes and how they are expressed by bodies. Thus in Daniel's reading the horizontal axis of the melancholy assemblage, namely the correlation between bodies and discourses, gets supplemented by a vertical dimension that both limits and allows change, yet change seems restricted to the variables already set on the vertical axis: bodies and discourses. Perhaps to avoid becoming enmeshed in the application of a tool that may prove too flexible to result in an in-depth discussion of Renaissance texts, and at the same time aware of the proliferation of sixteenth-century writings concerning melancholy that would not add up to a stable definition of melancholy identity, Daniel's appropriation of assemblage theory itself becomes an act of territorialization, one which defines the parameters of the analysis to follow, thus becoming a theoretical tool intended to account for the mutability of the concept. The consequence of Daniel's definition of the assemblage as "ongoing, fragile, and reversible correlations between bodies and language" is a study of Renaissance texts composed of

a range of disparate conceptual phenomena, distinct "cases": the positioning of the body into a temporary posture which expresses melancholy affect as a conventional pictorial form; the socially extended networks of spectatorship, diagnosis, and witnessing in which melancholy bodies and minds are recognized and interpreted by others; and the syncretic texts in which melancholy is structured into a distributed body of knowledge as an assemblage of various voices, sources, stances, and authorities (Daniel 12).

The Melancholy Assemblage seems to derive its critical impetus from the theoretical assumptions expressed in the introduction: the melancholy assemblage consists of the body of a melancholic who performs the Saturnine disease in front of others; the presence of the audience and their recognition of the melancholic is equally important as the performance itself; and the performance is a conventional act linked to the multiplicity of texts on melancholy that, by the seventeenth century, had become "manuals" for Renais-

sance melancholics. Thus the horizontal axis of the melancholy assemblage accounts for two variables that are granted a particular, material manifestation in each of the discussed “cases.” The body of the melancholic becomes the site of expression, limited by the melancholy discourse it employs, yet simultaneously free to assemble an individual melancholy identity out of the overabundance of melancholy texts. Daniel clarifies this point by stating that

[t]reating melancholy as an assemblage rather than a type of substance or a type of subject breaks its conceptual unity into an extended, provisional, and modular set of relations between and across material elements, and relationships between and across individual subjects, with no particular local expression enjoying any particular ontological priority over any other (12).

In other words, Daniel perceives melancholy not as an individual expression of dejection whose roots are strictly biological, but a socially extended phenomenon. This extension, however, is best fit to analyze the type of melancholy which, following pseudo-Aristotelian insight, considers melancholy “a disease of the mind” (Daniel 19) rather than a humoral imbalance. Thus the choice of textual data analyzed by Daniel, restricted to Renaissance writings, further strengthens the parameters of his theoretical tool because “by the dawning of the seventeenth century, the primary symptom of the disease of melancholy was not ‘fear and sadness’ but the overproduction of its own interpretation” (Daniel 25). For Daniel, the proliferation of writings devoted to melancholy witnessed during the Renaissance is simultaneously an act of territorialization that “stabilize[s] the assemblage around a common effect: the hermeneutic mystery of melancholy” and the “cutting edge of deterritorialization” (32) that destabilizes any essentialist definition of the malady from within the melancholy archive.

The tension between the desire for a stable semantic level and the proliferation of texts that constantly undermine all attempts at reaching a well-grounded definition of melancholy identity is a phenomenon which, although already visible during the Renaissance, found its full manifestation during the Baroque. Interestingly, similarly to Daniel, who applies Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas to his study of Renaissance texts, scholars advocating the return of the Baroque in contemporary culture find in Deleuze and Guattari’s oeuvre numerous notions that respond to the same problems that preoccupied thinkers at the threshold of modernity. One of such notions is the structure of Baroque representation, discussed by William Egginton. Egginton, borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari’s book on Kafka and “minor litera-

tures,” notices that the Baroque operates according to two strategies: the major and the minor. The major strategy “is to assume that the coherence of the image is in a representative relation to some *thing* that, itself unknown, grounds that relation” (75), whereas the minor strategy severs the link between representation and essence by “tak[ing] the major strategy too seriously; it nestles into the representation and refuses to refer it to some other reality, but instead affirms it, albeit ironically, as its only reality” (6). To put it briefly, baroque representation attempts to establish a relation between the image and a reality hidden behind the veil of appearances, but the means it applies undermine that attempt by pushing the world of appearances to the foreground. To quote Egginton, “the Baroque makes a theater out of truth, by incessantly demonstrating that truth can only ever be an effect of the appearances from which we seek to free it” (2).

Renaissance melancholy discussed by Daniel depends on being recognized by at least one observer (including the melancholic himself), which severs the link between melancholy and its medical explanation, resulting in a strictly conventional expression of dejection that may be performed disregarding the fact whether there exist any biological reasons to justify it. In other words, a Renaissance melancholic exemplifies what Egginton believes to be “modernity’s fundamental problem of thought,” namely the fact that “the subject of knowledge can only approach the world through a veil of appearances” (2). Even though Egginton recognizes this dilemma to be a modern problem, dating approximately to the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth century and the historical period known as the Baroque, the writings discussed by Daniel, commonly believed to exemplify Renaissance sensitivity predating the Baroque, already touch upon the problematic relation between performance and essence. It is beyond the scope of the present work to investigate how much baroque is in the writings of Shakespeare or whether Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* should be considered a baroque text, but Daniel’s approach seems to support Eugenio d’Ors’ insight concerning the coexistence of two contradictory trends in the history of Western civilization: the classical and the baroque, the former responsible for stability and harmony, and the latter associated with dynamism and change (d’Ors 83). Whereas Daniel chooses Shakespeare and Burton as representatives of the English Renaissance, his analysis of melancholy-as-performance points to the destabilizing forces within the classical reason that were to overshadow the Renaissance belief in harmony and order during the Baroque. In Daniel’s analysis, a melancholy performance epitomizes the

major strategy by promising “fulfillment beyond the surface” (Egginton 3); in this case, the symptoms of melancholy testify to its underlying cause—genius that makes exceptional people especially susceptible to the Saturnine disease. Thus by staging melancholy one implies that behind the veil of appearances lies what legitimizes it—a brilliance that is manifested through its symptoms. But once the symptoms become a conventional, fashionable expression of a commonly recognized gesture, and once the pseudo-Aristotelian diagnosis of melancholy becomes an intrinsic element of the Renaissance culture, the proliferation of melancholy figures makes one question the credibility of at least some of the claims to ingenuity. When the only criterion to evaluate one’s genius is the melancholy performance, then, as claimed by Egginton, the reality of the performance becomes the only one that can be accessed. As a result, melancholy identity (one that, during the Middle Ages, befell solitary scholars and had to be cured rather than nourished) becomes a melancholy *persona*—a mask one puts on in order to “entice the participation of his fellow players as participants in his representation, to capture their commitment, their belief, and ultimately their libidinal investment” (Egginton 17).

On the one hand, Renaissance melancholy directly points to the interiority framed by the Renaissance reevaluation of “Problemata XXX.I.” During the Renaissance, melancholy becomes an asset accessible to all men familiar with the culture of the time and the more convincing one’s performance, the greater social extension of the melancholy assemblage. Therefore, the rediscovery of “Problemata XXX.I.” may be seen simultaneously as an act of territorialization that established a framework for the analysis of melancholy, and a major strategy whose successful accommodation during the Renaissance simultaneously undermined it from within by calling to question the uniqueness of that which became fashionable (thus turning into the opposite of what it was supposed to denote). Again, it is beyond the scope of the present work to address the question about the extent to which Renaissance thinkers accepted the implied genius behind the melancholy performance, but the fact that the proliferation of Ficcinian melancholy directly predates the time when an excessive display of power became a sign of the legitimacy of that power seems hardly coincidental. It may suggest that already during the late Renaissance such authors as Shakespeare or Burton had to face what Egginton calls the baroque dilemma, that is the anxiety regarding the ability of human reason to reach truth hidden behind the veil of appearance. And even if the depiction of this tension became

a dominant trend during the Baroque, the Renaissance display of melancholy points to the visible tension between d'Ors' trends or Egginton's strategies that were already at play during the Renaissance.

On the other hand, the melancholy performance may purposefully delay the unveiling of the essence suggested by the persona, which is best exemplified by Shakespeare's Hamlet. The Danish prince "works to create a desire for the articulation of a buried content whose expression he teasingly withholds" (Daniel 120). Daniel's discussion of Shakespeare's play brings to the foreground the fact that Hamlet toys with his audience by suggesting an interiority that is always out of reach. Although he places himself in front of an audience and stages a plethora of melancholy symptoms, thus suggesting the existence of its underlying cause, the audience is denied any access to the essence of the prince's sickness that remains veiled in his performance.

Hamlet's founding act is to self-anatomize his own conformity to a public and discursive framework which allows his mourning and his melancholy to be detected and recognized by others, and keeps them in a provocatively indistinguishable proximity. But this self-description, which triggers a paratactical outpouring of dependent clauses that keep limning his portrait with extra details, is also shot through with a tic of negation, a "no" that precedes each symptom as it is checked for, discovered, and then scratched off the list (Daniel 122).

Thus Shakespeare successfully established an assemblage that extends beyond the play, as neither the characters nor scholars manage to successfully unveil the mystery of Hamlet's interiority, their attempts curbed by "a tic of negation" accompanying each symptom, yet propelled by the proximity of the prince's mystery. Daniel's discussion of Hamlet's melancholy shows that by addressing the baroque dilemma, Shakespeare successfully originated an individual case of melancholy (one that, even though categorized as an example of Renaissance melancholy, is Hamlet's own) that reproduces auto-poietically by addressing the paradoxical relation between melancholy's semantic levels. Although Hamlet's ability to perform is terminated by his death, thus preventing him from adding new corporeal manifestations of his dejection and establishing a limit around the textual data susceptible to interpretation, the semantic index veiled by the performance, that is the mystery of Hamlet's interiority, remains a space of potentiality upon which, as stressed by Luhmann, all meaning is conditioned (Luhmann, *Social Systems* 65). And even though the bulk of *Hamlet's* critical reception seems to follow the Renaissance belief in a stable meaning around which the prince's melan-

choly is structured, each subsequent rereading of Hamlet's melancholy, instead of reaffirming the semantic level, undermines its stability by producing yet another interpretation incapable of invalidating all of its predecessors. What, according to Daniel, territorializes the melancholy assemblage, that is "the hermeneutic mystery of melancholy," simultaneously deterritorializes it by creating an impenetrable border between essence and appearance. The major strategy—in case of Hamlet the melancholy performance suggestive of the interiority shrouded in appearance—is undermined by the minor strategy that, by bringing to the foreground the prince's performance, in a truly baroque manner stresses "the play of appearance against the backdrop of an ostensibly inaccessible corporeal substance" (Egginton 18). Hamlet's interiority remains inaccessible for, to quote Egginton's discussion of the minor strategy,

essence is at heart corrupted by time, change, decay. In a similar way, according to the minor strategy, the truth hidden by the veil of appearance is already corrupted by the appearances, is itself nothing but appearance, but without the ultimate support of an ever-receding ground of unmitigated self-identity (27).

Daniel's assemblage territorializes melancholy by limiting the horizontal axis to the interplay of bodies and discourses. In case of Hamlet, the "cutting edge of reterritorialization" is established by an unstable semantic level that lies beyond the veil of appearance. Whereas Hamlet's body seems strictly limited by the interactions between the prince and the characters in the play, his acts and statements are constantly reterritorialized by the inaccessible essence suggested by the melancholic's performance. And although slight alterations in the prince's display of melancholy are allowed by the form of the play intended for subsequent stagings, the semantic index remains an outside of each of these theatrical realizations the same way it is beyond the reach of characters in Shakespeare's original play—one is urged to investigate what lies behind the veil of appearance, but to agree on a singular explanation of Hamlet's melancholy identity seems an impossible task.

Daniel's melancholy assemblage, as exemplified by the discussion of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, reproduces because the horizontal axis accounts only for bodies and discourses, and the Renaissance melancholy seems especially susceptible to such a process because it focuses on "the overproduction of [melancholy's] own interpretation" as its primary symptom. Thus space never becomes an integral element of a melancholy assemblage theorized by Daniel because the very texts discussed by the author of *The Melancholy Assemblage* preclude it from being incorporated into the discussion.

III

To close the frame of Daniel's melancholy assemblage, let us return to Solomon's TED talk as it demonstrates the validity of Daniel's insight in the contemporary context.

In case of Andrew Solomon's TED talk, the spatial aspect of the performance—the room in which the talk is delivered—is “contingently obligatory” (De Landa, *A New Theory of Society* 11). Solomon could give his speech in any other location, which would not change its content. If he recorded it in an empty room for Internet viewers to see, the outcome would not be very different; in fact, when watching his speech on a computer screen one is only suggested of the audience—the camera never rotates to fully capture the people present in the hall, showing only the heads of the first-row viewers. In other words, the text and the body of the melancholic seem to constitute the two main components of this particular melancholy assemblage. As long as one person recognizes Solomon as melancholy—the requirement fulfilled by Solomon himself—the presence of others extends the scope of the assemblage but does not constitute a defining element of melancholy identity. But having eliminated the necessity of a spatio-temporal link between Solomon and his audience, we may continue subtracting. A strictly textual account—a transcript of the talk—even though less expressive (or, to put it another way, gaining its expression from rhetorical means applied by the author), seems capable of delivering the intended message. After all, Robert Burton's monumental *Anatomy of Melancholy* or Walter Benjamin's unfinished *The Arcades Project* simultaneously discuss melancholy and point to the melancholy body of the author bent over a manuscript. Therefore, even though Solomon's speech seems framed by precise spatio-temporal parameters, their role in stabilizing the assemblage is contingent. Contrary to De Landa's insight, contemporary communication technology, “which blur[s] the spatial boundaries of social entities by eliminating the need for co-presence” (*A New Philosophy of Society* 13), in case of Solomon's speech is too weak a factor to reterritorialize an assemblage composed of the body, text(s), expression, and consciousness. Consequently, Solomon's TED talk coincides with Drew Daniel's definition of the melancholy assemblage which does not account for space as its integral parameter. And even though Solomon seems to stabilize the essence of his dejection by pointing to the medical condition that coincides with the Galenic tradition, the way he communicates his ailment deterritorializes his assemblage by extending its semantic level through an intertextual engagement with the tradition of the melancholy canon.

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RENEZANSOWY MELANCHOLIJNIY ASAMBLAŻ, PRZESTRZEŃ
I BAROKOWY PROBLEM MYŚLI

Streszczenie

Artykuł koncentruje się na teorii melancholijnego asamblażu autorstwa Drew Daniela. Zestawiając sposób, w jaki Daniel używa teorii Deleuze'a i Guattariego z jej odczytaniem przez Manuela De Landę, autor artykułu stawia pytanie o przyczyny zaniedbania przez Daniela przestrzennego aspektu asamblażu. Druga kwestia omawiana w artykule koncentruje się na napięciu pomiędzy siłami terytorializacji i deterytorializacji w melancholijnym asemblażu. Analizując zagadnienie przez pryzmat teorii neobaroku, autor stawia tezę, że renesansowy melancholijny asamblaż analizowany przez Daniela uwikłany jest w problematyczny związek pomiędzy reprezentacją a esencją, który stanie się jednym z głównych motywów Baroku.

Streścił Kamil Rusiłowicz

Słowa kluczowe: autor implikowany; teoria narracji; komunikacja literacka.