3. PART: Experimental MicroThesaurus

INTRODUCTION TO THE TWO MICROTHESAURUSES TIMES AND SPACES OF LIFE AND INVIOLABILITY OF THE BODY

1.   THE CHOICE OF THE AREAS
      [* Inviolability of the body wasn't traslated]

1.1   Times and Spaces of Life

> I once read the story of a group of people who climbed up an unknown tower. The first generation reached the fifth floor, the second the seventh, the third the tenth floor. As time went by their descendants reached the hundredth floor, but having reached this point, the stairs collapsed. The people settled down therefore at this level. As time passed they forgot that their ancestors had lived on the lower floors and forgot how they themselves had come to be on the hundredth floor. They saw the world and themselves from the perspective of the hundredth floor without being conscious of how human beings had reached that level.

[Norbert Elias, *Saggio sul tempo*, Bologna: Il mulino, 1986]

1.1.1   SPACE/TIME IN THE GLOBALIZATION ERA

The concepts of time and space are today subject to highly contradictory representations: new technologies in all sectors, from transport to internet, reduce – in work, communications, interpersonal relationships – unproductive time, shorten distances and generate frenetic rhythms. The perception of immediate and unconditioned accessibility and simplification which all this generates, creates a sense of euphoria and omnipotence: the feeling is that in the material world, as in the virtual world, you can go anywhere, meet anyone, cooperate in a boundless space in which a kind of collective intelligence is functioning; you can accumulate without running into problems of space, you can communicate immediately without running into problems of time. "Fordism" reduced the spaces and accelerated the times of production with its compartmentalisation of work, but at the same time it created in the social awareness the perception of the severe alienation of the individual, no longer responsible for the complete process of production. In contrast, the new compression comes contradictorily into being tin the guise of infinite potentiality and boundless liberty, the symbol of which is constantly indicated in the web and in the active and passive fruition of it in the name of individual initiative.

1.1.2   UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS

However, this euphoria brings with it new and old forms of uneasiness:

- ➢ could it be that we are perhaps in a phase of disordered accumulation rather than of choice?
- ➢ has the robotisation of repetitive tasks really given back to us the possession of the process of production?
- ➢ the de-specialisation which follows from new technologies has meant the achievement of a new flexibility in careers, but this often results in constant insecurity and short term contracts;
- ➢ isn't it perhaps that the shift from the real to the virtual, which renders spaces and time meaningless, actually offers new forms of emargination, non-accessibility, non usability, which pass across various forms and degrees of the digital divide? Doesn't it in fact drastically reduce the social dimension of work, thrusting the individual into a solitude which precludes any careful and critical reflection on their own condition and on any effective action to improve it?
- ➢ to what extent do speed and immediacy of access to information and tools for the communication and the dissemination of knowledge leave time for reflection, which is the quality time of intellectual production?
- ➢ to what extent do speed and immediacy in productive work leave time for pleasure and social relations, both of which are important indicators of the quality of our life? In theory these two elements should have been multiplied thanks to new technologies, but in actual fact we feel that they have been even more reduced: demands and pressure have grown in direct proportion.

Most of all, the gap is widened between production times and that part of our times and spaces which is not reducible or 'virtualisable'. Because conditioned by the rhythms of nature by the resistance of physical material, by biological rhythms and the processes of reproduction.

Pleasure is currently being separated both from work and from the actions and thoughts of everyday life. As a consequence, pleasure is being lost.

1.1.3 TIMES OF PRODUCTION VS TIMES OF REPRODUCTION AND OF CARE

For reasons non dissimilar to those that in the ancient world reserved new technologies exclusively to the sphere of architecture and stage machinery, the new 'freedom' allowed by today's technology has not meant the entire 'robotization' of all heavy or repetitive work. From the point of view of cost-effectiveness, it is much cheaper to use a widely available human work force working in sub-human conditions in either the old or very recent South of the world rather than push technology further afield and thus have to take on a fierce, demanding group of new technicians.

Neither has it meant, in the North as in the South of the world, the harmonious conciliation of the spheres of production and reproduction, the sphere of market work and the sphere of care work.
Yet again this part of times and spaces remains the damnation and the privilege of women, with society taking no responsibility for reproduction and care as a collective problem concerning the meaning and quality of life. The presence of women in the e-economy is striking due to the flexibility and the skill in interpersonal relations in which women are acknowledged to excel and which today seem indispensable, and thus women and men are equal in the high speed stressful times and spaces of production; nonetheless, it is to women that the task falls of reconciling the irreconcilable: the times and spaces of the new economy with the discordant, splendidly slow and unpredictable, yet ineluctable, times and spaces of reproduction and care.

1.1.4 INVISIBLE TIMES AND SPACES

These times and spaces represent today, and perhaps never more so than today as we undergo the global waning of the welfare state, a twilight zone, not included in the GNP and not monitored unless in terms of birth/death/active population rates, a zone hastily relegated to the margins of trade union negotiation (as for example shown in the difficulty with which care and reproduction were finally included in the standard contract for continuous collaboration contracts here in Italy) or to 'sanatorium' solutions when faced with mass phenomena (again in Italy, the recent legislation for illegal immigrant domestic and care workers). Perhaps the most notable and the most insidious protective/punitive provision is that of part-time work which sacrifices both salary and career prospects for an increasing number of "flexible' women workers, becoming work that has become devoid of all intrinsic worth.

This problem affects from different yet equivalent perspectives women executives as much as office workers, women on short-term contracts as much as housewives/homemakers, the women of 30-plus who hesitate to start their family or plan a pregnancy as much as the old age pensioner, the full-time granny as much as the Philippine or Ukrainian care assistant, the deputy mothers, deputy-daughters, deputy-sisters whether by trade or by vocation.

And all this, it is worth remembering, will affect men, when (when?) they realise that the harmonisation of these two sphere of times and spaces is a key point of the quality of life of us all.

1.1.5   SITOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Information taken from the TempiSpazi site www.comune.prato.it/tempi, up-dated fortnightly, including bibliographical references and news of conferences and seminars in Italy.

- Specialised Information centres

Prato: Tempi e Spazi, at the Lazzerini Public Library, Prato.
This is collection of articles, grey material, magazine and journal reviews, etc., as well as a centre for research and collection of informative material on times and spaces of life, with bibliographical information up-dated in the Prato City Network. Catalogue may be consulted via the Internet: http//catalogo.po-net.prato.it/tesp/campi.htm

Venice-Mestre: Archivio delle Politiche dei tempi delle città, at the Women's Centre (Centro Donna), including projects in 144 Italian cities and regions. May be consulted via the Internet: www.comune.venezia.it/c-donna/osserv.html

- Local time plans and experiences published by Italian city and local councils:

Bolzano www.comune.bolzano.it/wincity/32A9FD9D_it.html

Bologna www.provincia.bologna.it/progettopo/index.html

Bolzano www.comune.bolzano.it/wincity/32A9FD9D_it.html

Catania www.comune.catania.it/attivita/tempiorari/tempi.tm

Cremona www.rccr.cremona.it/doc_comu/tempi/piano_tempi.htm

Ferrara www.comune.ferrara.it/scuola/pro.htm

Florence http://www.comune.firenze.it/servizi_pubblici/spazi/spazi.htm

Florence Province lorenzo.provincia.fi.it/tempi/

Leghorn www.comune.livorno.it/txt/prog/tempi.html

Lucca www.comune.lucca.it/tempiorari/welcome.htm

Prato www.comune.prato.it/tempi/pratonew

Prato *Laboratorio del tempo* www.vast-lab.it/tempo

Rome www.comune.roma.it/tempora

Sesto San Giovanni www.sestosg.net/pto/

Turin www.comune.torino.it/tempiorari

Turin Province www.provincia.torino.it/tempi

2.   THE TWO MICROTHESAURUSES: Times and Spaces and Inviolability of the body

> We do not construct word objects, nor boxes, nor
> chests, nor the 'Book', rather we follow trails, moving
> all the time
>   [Hélène Cixous, "Poesia e politica", in, *Una selvaggia
>   pazienza ci ha condotto fin qui*, ed. L'Associazione
>   Lavinia Fontana, Bologna, 1991]

2.1   WHY THE FORM OF A THESAURUS WAS CHOSEN

Within the two areas of interest outlined above, we have constructed two small thesauruses, or micro-thesauruses. The choice of this type of instrument was governed by the fact that we are dealing with specialised areas, but with intended reference and terminology ranges which point to interdisciplinary links. A thesaurus is the instrument which in the field of documentation enables the semantic indexing and consequent information retrieval by means of a controlled vocabulary which is organised in such a way as to reflect the paradigmatic relationships (logical relationships: of genus-species, of part-whole, of implication) which exist among the terms in a particular conceptual field.

It is neither a simple authoritarian list, which could define its semantic files by global assignation of terms to one specific sector, nor is it a glossary, which would provide wide and articulated definitions of the terms of such a list.

A thesaurus is both more complex than a list and more dynamic than a glossary, since a thesaurus not only normalises the form of terms and controls synonyms through a selection of preferred terms (descriptors), but it also reconstructs and makes explicit the meanings of terms through the relationships which these have with one another in the semantic web. This happens by means of the construction of micro and macro classifications, micro and macro associative relationships, in a tightly interconnected network which in its entirety represents the relative conceptual field.

A thesaurus presents its terms (descriptors) in three forms, all of which are built according to a dynamic model which is inspired by the natural relationships of meanings:

a)   a structured alphabetic presentation
An alphabetical list within which each term-descriptor is given a possible note as to its meaning or use, synonyms in the form of non-preferred or non-descriptor terms [UF = used for], indications of other terms in the same thesaurus which are higher in the semantic hierarchy [BT = broad term] or lower in the semantic

hierarchical ordering [NT = narrow term. More specific] (genus/species whole/part), other terms in the thesaurus which are related associatively to this term [RT = related term], the indications of a conceptual area to which the term belongs [*area*].

example

Sexual abuse within the family
Note   Sexual violence using methods of violence and/or seduction with respect to minors on the part of adults belonging to the family environment
UF   Rape-incest
BT   Sexual abuse
            Family violence
RT   Precocious eroticisation
            Dysfunctional family
[*violated body*]

a) Systematic presentation
Each descriptor-term is placed within homogeneous groups, areas which represent sub-categories of the over-all conceptual field, of which these are significant subdivisions. The relationship with the alphabetical presentation is guaranteed both by the indication of area and by indentation.

Example

.   **[DAILY TIMES]**

    life times
➢   rites
➢   rhythm of life
➢   sacred times
➢   waiting times
➢   social times
    ▪   acceleration of time
    ▪   calendars
    ▪   holidays
    ▪   timetables
        ●   services times
        ●   working hours
        ●   part-time
        ●   full time
    ▪   city times
    ▪   school times
    ▪   work times
➢   free-time

b) Rotated alphabetical list of descriptors

The list rotates around all the significant words even of compound terms, thus allowing the easy identification of the various descriptors which a concept contains, for example, "work", independently of their position in the alphabetical list or the areas:

example

```
        access to  work
         atypical    work
             care  work
    coping with   work and daily life
     flexibility of   work
           house  work
   organization of  work
      returning to  work
short-term-contract  work
           social  work
       temporary  work
          unpaid  work
        women's  work
                   work   contracts
                   work   segregation
                   work   times
            male workers
         women  workers
                  working   conditions
                  working   hours
          home- working
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Through these forms of representation which all work on the reciprocal relationships between the terms, the thesaurus is able to make very clear – much better than any kind of glossary – the collocation of each meaning in a network of references which go together to form a world vision. It is clear that a term such as 'reproduction' provides a different meaning and a different horizon of reference if it is considered a related term of 'economy' rather than of 'biology'. It is not by chance that in this thesaurus 'body' is included in the cluster 'body/reproduction' rather than in the cluster 'health/illness'.
Certainly the definition of 'body skills' is important in a glossary, but it is even more important to find 'body skills' in the semantic group which gathers together other skills such as those belonging to the traditional disciplines of areas of knowledge. The choice of general reference conceptual fields itself may overturn conventional categorisations and thus condition the internal sub-categorisation. The 'spaces and times' which in traditional classification theory are complementary facets used to contextualise entities, processes, tools, variables, etc., here become instead first level entities themselves, innovative points of view for re-discussing entities, processes, tools, variables. With respect to the conceptual area 'Inviolability of the body', we have observed above how this determines an inversion of perspective which is therefore capable of calling into question the semantic relationships of the fields of reference.
It only needs to be added that a multi-lingual thesaurus which guarantees a term for term equivalence in the various language versions is, as a result, able to allow a wide use of such a tool in the international context, in particular with regard to indexing and for information retrieval.

2.2   THE POLITICAL OBJECTIVE

As will be obvious from what we have said above, the first objective in creating two small thesauruses dealing with the areas of TIMES AND SAPCES and INVIOLABILITY OF THE BODY both of which are areas of crucial importance in current debate not only in women's context, and consequently part of the

ABSIDE Project, was first of all a political objective rather than an exclusively functional one with respect to the undeniably important areas of documentation and information retrieval.

Our intention was to offer an organisation of terminology in these areas which, in their reference areas and the interrelated web of meanings, would reflect a vision inspired by gender awareness and the acknowledgement of sexual difference .

It was by no means an easy job, and it should by no means be considered 'definitive'.

Old and new meanings, old and new relationships co-exist and overlap in a field which is still today subject to clashes, negotiation and on-going debate. The new language of sexual difference and the new semantic relationships uncovered or developing have to take into account and challenge terminologies and categorisations which have a long historical stratification. They also have to come to terms with the variations and second thoughts within feminist thought itself, otherwise it remains a purely theoretical and basically esoteric exercise. The attempt we have made is not therefore a fully-fledged alternative terminology, even within the limits of the two areas dealt with, as much as a contribution and a bridge leading to new organisations of meaning which have been put to the test in the exploration of our themes.

2.2   THE DOCUMENTARY OBJECTIVE

The second objective was to make available a controlled, multilingual tool for use in the field of documentation, circulation and information retrieval in the two fields dealt with.

From this perspective the two microthesauruses represent above all a structured and contextualised point of reference for people using the courses on gender differences offered on the Abside e-learning platform which include specific modules concerning the two themes in consideration.

However, a wider use is possible in various fields, such as indexing of materials in libraries, archives or documentation centres dealing with women's issues, as well as library and documentation assistance for users at the stage information research.

This kind of user will also find the microthesauruses useful as an aid in the search for material in library card catalogues or OPAC or even in the search for material on the net, especially when they are at the beginning of their research and not fully cognisant with the themes and thus risk getting lost in the often confusing world opened up by search engines or other generic approaches which often can be of little real help.

In addition it is foreseen that another practical use for the microthesauruses could be for the purposes of translation or by cultural mediators, offering as they do in the multilingual aspect linguistic equivalents guaranteed by experts in this filed which is still far from linguistically consolidated.

Finally the microthesauruses can help in the construction or up-dating of thesauruses or classification systems concerning women's issues or indeed in the specific women's issues sectors of pre-existing general classification or indexing systems which will find in them valuable terminological sets which have been formally organised on specific themes.

2.3   TECHNICAL NOTES

The two microthesauruses are the end product of terminological research carried out prevalently on the sources indicated below; the terminology, all documented, was selected by combining criteria of relevance in current debate and of statistical relevance in the literature of Internet documents. We used, therefore, a bottom-up methodology which was principally inspired by criteria of documentary justification, even though certain node terms were added in order to guarantee coherence and ease of navigability to the whole.

Rules of construction were those derived from ISO 2788 and ISO 5954 Standards for the construction and up-dating of mono-lingual and multi-lingual thesauruses.

The form of presentation of the terminology is that outlined and illustrated above in Section 2.1.

The notes have been used when a more precise definition was needed of the thematic context for a little-known or ambiguous term, or for a term which has been re-defined in the specific areas dealt with by the microthesauruses.

With respect to terms of particular political importance, the reference glossary used is that contained in the **Modulo didattico trasverale sul genere**, of which the current work is an exemplified extension. In the general part an extensive bibliography is provided. For the Inviolability of the Body area there is a link with the **Guida** produced by the Milan Casa delle donne maltrattate (Women's Refuge). For the Times and Spaces area the microthesaurus will be tested on the Time and Spaces collection (containing 2000 documents) at the Lazzerini Public Library in Prato.

The non-descriptors which give a reference to the preferred descriptor are a means of widening access keys to terminology and in some cases serve also as a bridge between 'traditional' terms and terms in current use in the literature or which have been revised in the context of gender.
As may be expected, the two microthesauruses share a terminological nucleus which refers to the common context, a kind of virtual metathesaurus in which both are contained. We have been careful to keep the same form of a term and a unique meaning of it in this nucleus in both the vocabularies, even if at times a term may change the hierarchical group(s) to which it belongs, as a result of an acceptable polyhierarchy in the expression of different points of view even within the same context. In this way, for example, 'time for yourself' is included in the hierarchy   of 'time' in the TIMES AND SPACES microthesaurus, while in the other microthesaurus (INVIOLABILITY OF THE BODY) it is placed in the hierarchy of 'quality of life', in both cases keeping its meaning of time dedicated to yourself and search for a balance between ties and freedom, etc..
This organisation enables the two microthesauruses to be seen as part of a potential larger undertaking which could continue, reaching out into other semantic areas from the perspective of gender awareness. It could be possible in the future to develop a whole galaxy of controlled vocabularies around a common nucleus dealing with specific themes inspired by the same criteria of organisation.

2.4   HOW TO USE THE MICROTHESAURUSES

Whether the microthesauruses are to be navigated in the printed form or by means of an Internet browser, certain criteria for successful subject indexing and/or information retrieval remain the same:
-   use all the forms of presentation of the descriptors and make use of the web of semantic relations in order to find the most appropriate term or terms. Each presentation offers different possibilities: the systematic presentation is useful in order to have a general idea of the terminology with respect to various areas of the microthesaurus; the alphabetic presentation enables the reconstruction of the closest semantic surroundings of each term; the rotated presentation gives an immediate idea of all the terms which include a certain concept.
-   the search can be delimited or the indexing made more precise by combining more than one term belonging to the different areas of the thesaurus (for example, in the TIMES AND SPACES microthesaurus, themes concerning state intervention for working women: women workers + welfare state). Specificity of the search should be reduced later, if confronted with an insufficient response;
-   Don't give up at the apparent lack of a term: a different point of view or the combination of several terms can provide an equally satisfactory indexing or retrieval string (for example, the term 'safety in the workplace' cannot be found, but the concept can be reconstructed though the combination of 'working conditions' and 'safety').

2.5   COLLABORATION INVITED

The microthesauruses are not rigid or definitive vocabularies. They need to be put to the test and integrated, corrected and up-dated as time passes. The collaboration of those who use them will be both valuable and appreciated for this.

For implementation or suggestions: netlilith2000@tin.it

Bibliographical and sitographical references:

Thesaurusues

- *Thesaurus Linguaggio donna*, 2. ed. Milano: Fondazione Badaracco, 1996

In use in the Lilith collective data base (www.retelilith.it), with more than 34,000 documents, this was the starting point for our Thesauruses. Other Italian or other language instruments were consulted to verify lexical choices or semantic fields. In the European Community EuroVoc thesaurus the socio-judicial aspect prevails and you can find for example a cross reference from 'sexism' to 'sexual discrimination'.

- IIAV, *European Women's Thesaurus: a structured list of descriptors for indexing and retrieving information in the field of the position of women and women's studies.* Amsterdam: IIAV, 1998

Produced originally in Dutch and then translated into English

- Ruth Dickstein, Victoria A. Mills, Ellen J. Waite, *Women in LC's terms: a thesaurus of Library of Congress subject headings relating to women*. Phoenix: Oryx, 1988

- *Tesauro de historia de las mujeres*. In: *Duoda*, n. 12, 1997. Key words relating to women's history from the 9th to the 18th century

- *Thesaurus italiano di sociologia*. Project by Daniele Danesi, ed. Everardo Minardi e Pierina Buonvecchio. Firenze: Ifnet, 1999

- Marisa Trigari, *Come costruire un Thesaurus*. Modena: Panini, 1992

- ISO 2788 *Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri*, Geneva: OSO, 1986 (1st edn. 1974)

- ISO 5964 *Guidelines for the establishment and development of multilingual thesauri*, Geneva: OSO, 1985

Glossaries

The Italian language glossaries indicated in the general module were used as were the key words on time collected by Gabriella Paolucci [*Tempo: parole chiave*. Milano: Carocci, 2000]
The data base of reference was that relative to the Tempi/Spazi collection held at the Lazzerini Public Library in Prato [www.comune.prato.it/tempi]

With respect to the 'Inviolability of the Body' area, there is a wealth of English language glossaries on Domestic Violence, produced mainly in North America, a selection of which follows:

- University of Connecticut Women's Studies Program
- www.sp.uconn.edu/~mccomisk/gloss263.html

- http://www.unh.edu/womens-commission/ legal-handbook/glossary.html

- Minnesota Department of Health Glossary
- www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/ChildSupport/Glossary.htm

- Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry Counties, Pennsylvania: Glossary
- www.dvscp.org/glossary.shtml - 8k

- The National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (NCCEV), Washington
- http://www.nccev.org/resources/glossary_terms.html

- V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls
- http://www.vday.org/contents/violence/glossary

[sites visited 20[th] June 2003]