

Raúl Ruiz, Poetics Of Cinema And “Intentionality”: Unworking The Soul’s Standardization Against The Government Of The Living

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Abstract

The poetics of cinema by filmmaker Raúl Ruiz, as read by Chilean philosopher Willy Thayer, can be understood as an infrapolitical critique of the biopolitics (government of the living) that is at play in the cinema-spectator relationship and its determination by the old Christian-theological apparatus of “intentionality” (soul-world relationship): a body subject to the form (law, word, image, “mask”) that turns it into a “person” and whose unity depends on the unity of the world as the order of words, things, and events—a unitary order guaranteed by a theological author and meta-reader in pure act—and the insemination of that order into the perceptive, intellectual, and practical “soul.”

Keywords: cinema, intentionality, subject, image, narrativity, perception, biopolitics, event, infrapolitics

Resumen

La poética del cine del cineasta Raúl Ruiz, leída por el filósofo chileno Willy Thayer, puede ser entendida como una crítica en clave infrapolítica de la biopolítica (gobierno del viviente) que se juega en la relación cine-espectador y su determinación del viejo aparato teológico-cristiano de la “intencionalidad” (relación alma-mundo): un cuerpo sujeto a la forma (ley, palabra, imagen, “máscara”) que lo convierte en “persona” y cuya unidad depende de la unidad del mundo como el orden de las palabras, cosas y eventos —un orden unitario garantizado por un autor teológico y meta-lector en acto puro— y de la inseminación de ese orden en el “alma” perceptiva, intelectual y práctica.

Palabras clave: cine, intencionalidad, sujeto, imagen, narratividad, percepción, biopolítica, evento, infrapolítica

(...) as for Yamamoto, he is too learned. Too much clock, not enough cloud.

Raúl Ruiz, *Todas las nubes son relojes*

New music: new listening. Not an attempt to understand something that is being said, for, if something were being said, the sounds would be given the shapes of words. Just an attention to the activity of sounds. / (...) And what is the purpose of writing music? One is, of course, not dealing with purposes but dealing with sounds. (...). This [purposeless] play, however, is an affirmation of life—not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living (...).

John Cage, “Experimental Music”

1. *Anima and Imago Mundi*

Raúl Ruiz's poetics of cinema, as interpreted by Chilean philosopher Willy Thayer, offers a critique of biopolitics—the 'government of the living'—embedded in the cinema-spectator relationship. This critique targets the Christian-theological apparatus of "intentionality," which standardizes the "soul" through forms such as law, word, image, and mask, turning it into a "person" whose unity depends on the unity of the world as the order of words, things, and events—a unitary order guaranteed by a theological author and meta-reader in pure act—and the insemination of that order into the perceptive, intellectual, and practical "soul" (Moreiras 11; Williams 107).

In the 13th century in Europe, with a focus between the Andalusian world and the Catholic reaction in the peninsula and in Paris, a metaphysical battle took place over the determination of what the "soul" is (De Libera). A hermeneutical dispute over the concept of soul in Aristotle—the invention of the "Arab Aristotle" and the "European Aristotle"—that would be decisive for the history of the "West" (the *Occident*), but not as a "central conflict", since such is the fantasy of the "West and *its* other", so that we will have to clarify, in what follows, how else we understand here the nature of this cleavage. For the moment, we can say that in the metaphysical battle of the 13th century two "enemy" ways of understanding the soul clashed: 1) according to the *falásifa* Averroes, the soul is understood as the radical potentiality of immanent *exposure* of the finite animal to the imminence of the *outside*, to the world of forms in the being in common in the midst of the event that exceeds it, in a *supernumerary* logic of being in the world and knowledge; and, in reaction to such a "doctrine," 2) according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the soul is understood as the *personal unity* and "form of the body" of the animal—a body subjected to the form (law, word, image, "mask") that turns it into a *persona*—whose unity depends on the unity of the world as the order of words and things and events—a unitary order guaranteed by a theological

author and meta-reader in *pure act*—and on the *insemination* of that order in the perceptive, intellectual and practical soul.

Ernst Bloch called the Thomistic path mentioned above the “Aristotelian right” (Bloch), and its genealogy is a fundamental piece of any genealogy of *fascism* in the West—as regards the *entelechy of the soul*, in terms of the reduction to the one (classical fascism, the soul of the individual coincides with the national soul) or the multiplication of the one (neo-fascism, flexible police subjectivation within the framework of capital), which makes it possible for the economic base to be the infrastructure of the psychic superstructure, while, in the subjective dimension, the psyche becomes the infrastructure of the economic superstructure. Remember Vladimir Lenin’s “theory of ideological reflection,” that is: that the external world is *reflected* in the constitution of the internal world, before any dynamic of transformation of the world. Or Wilhelm Reich’s theory of fascism (Reich), in its attempt to exceed the limits of both psychologism and economism: 1) against “psychologism,” he assumes that the economic base is the infrastructure of the psychic superstructure—in the material world that conditions it; and 2) against “economism,” he assumes that, in the subjective dimension, what he calls the “psyche”—that is, the “soul”—becomes the infrastructure of the economic superstructure. This paradoxical chiasmus is what, for centuries in the European canonical philosophical tradition, has outlined the concept that phenomenology will call under the medieval term of “intentionality” (*intentionalitas*, *Intentionalität*) (Husserl). Regarding the modern drift of the Aristotelian formula disputed in the 13th century—*the soul is the form of the body*—, Michel Foucault picks it up at the end of his introduction to *Discipline and Punish* (1975), where he inverts the old aphorism of Orphic roots according to which “the body is the prison of the soul”, to maintain that, in modern times, “the soul is the prison of the body”, since the soul would no longer be a substance that is born guilty and punishable, but a function of the order of power that is born from procedures

of culpability and punishment (Foucault 36).

If, in relation to the conditions of production of the soul, we shift our gaze from the disciplinary society to the society of control (Deleuze 277) and its corresponding microphysics of power, in this shift we could retain the statement of Discipline and Punish, but we would have to add, apart from those of guilt and punishment, the procedures of standardization of perception-and-narrativization and of “entertainment” to the list of technologies. Apropos of this issue—focused on the question of *government through the image*—, I would like to consider Willy Thayer’s reading of the “writing of the image” proposed to us by the work of Raúl Ruiz—work inscribed in the cinema dispositif, but not restricted to it (Ruiz also left literary and theatrical writing; orality of conferences, conversations, interviews in print, in audio and in audiovisual; painting; sculpture; living tableau, music, opera, video-installation, in short, a “transmedial journey” or “expanded cinema”). Thayer reads Ruiz’s operation as “unworking the dominant normative metaphysics in cinema,” an operation that would imply “undoing key categories of the hegemonic articulation of image, body and mediality. Above all, the category of *production* and the mosaic of categories that accompany it: author, creation, work, unity, totality, originality, efficiency, etc.” (Thayer 2019, 50-51).

2. Standardization of Perception

We will have to see how this *cleavage between operation and unworking* is understood. To do so, it is necessary to first attend to what is unworked in this singular “operation”—the *pars destruens*, because in these things that have to do with being-in-the-world, is in its unworking—if not before, in the countersense of the disaster—where the work (of the “world”) appears explicitly as such. Note this observation by Thayer: “That the ‘image’ is, here, when we read, a word instead of an image” (Thayer 2017, 5; 2019, 56). If the image is freed—since the image is reluctant to any corset—exceeding its linguistic trickery, the

corset of the word will appear or, better said—since language is also reluctant to any corset—the instrumentalized word will appear, used as a corset for the same image that holds the word in an “imaginary.” Ruiz: “From the moment we begin and as we go through life, we become burdened with automatisms, (...) many surprising things becoming trivial, (...) the film industry as we know it leads us to perceptual generalizations, it makes us burden ourselves with these automatisms and makes us blind and deafen ourselves (...). But one of the functions of cinema is to break these automatisms in order to see what is known as if for the first time” (Ruiz, cited by Thayer 2017, 4).

What are these *automatisms* and how can cinema “break” them? Thayer has observed the first elementary phenomenon: *the position of the image under the word* to articulate its meaning, “the image is resolved in the unity of the word, of the concept, the endless grammar of the cliché” (Thayer 2017, 5). This is a critical question for Raúl Ruiz, analogously to how John Cage states in our epigraph that, for him, the position of sound under the word, its cliché, was a critical question. *Automatisms would operate as standardization and redundancy in the cliché*, and would pass through perception, judgment and spatial-temporal syntheses—in the forms of *cliché of perception* (production of perceptual clichés), *cliché of narrativization* (from the Aristotelian diegesis to the Hollywood industrial one), and the consequent “entertainment” of the “objective spectator” who, in turn, is an “expected subject,” a type of subjectivity to be produced-and-reflected (Deleuze 489-490). Thayer, for his part, speaks of “highly incorporated clichés by virtue of which we know and recognize the everyday life, clichés in which we redound; clichés that exist before us, that speak through us, and that will continue to exist after us” (Thayer 2017, 7).

Images that are legible in advance, with the *eyes elided from the trick*: the question would be to *expose the trick in order to undo the fetish*. To discern and expose the grid of visibility, which determines vision, but which

in itself is not visible while operating normally. “What else would the word-image or cliché be but the diversion of the eyes towards the unity of the concept to prevent them from becoming accustomed to looking closely at the workmanship, the external debris, the montage, the paste, the clay, the soil of the image, its material mediation?” (Thayer 2017, 6). Automatism as a technology for capturing the living in “culture”—its imaginaries, public opinion, etc.—, against the entropy of bodies—of their desire as seeing and saying—and their coefficient of deviation from all standardization. Thayer points out the dimension of these automatisms as a “gigantic arsenal of imago-powers: painting, photography, cinema, rather than as fine arts, as artifacts of conquest, colonization and neocolonization, of imperial or national avant-garde propaganda, of naturalization and promotion of domination as culture” (Ibidem, 7). The concept of *imago-power* defines in Thayer the relationship between the production of automatism—standardization of the soul and its “correlative” world—and normative-governmental power: “the image as *mise en scène* of power, of the image as power, as an artifact of government and regulation of bodies” (Ibidem). According to Thayer, the *metamorphic image* of Ruiz would be against the grain of imago-power. Ruiz’s writing of the image would therefore be, against the grain of that of the *imago-power*, a writing of the *metamorphic image* as a “variation of quality without transport-of-something”, which would allow “to see through the cliché, not only its regime, but the multiplicity that said regime conceals.”

3. Standardization of Narrativization and Governmentality

I suggested earlier that automatisms operate as *standardization* and *redundancy* in *clichés*, and they would go through perception, judgment and spatial-temporal syntheses. I also pointed out that clichés did not consist only in the production of perceptual *clichés* (clichés of perception), but also in the

clichés of narrativization: from the automatism of the Aristotelian diegesis to that of modern industrial narrative, passing through Joseph Goebbels and Leni Riefenstahl to Hollywood and the Cold War (Ibidem, 21), revolutionary militant cinema in Latin America (Ibidem, 9, 38), or Netflix in our current days. For Ruiz, automatism—where *narration determines the image*—is expressed as the ultimate performance of the *imago-power* and the *narrative-industrial paradigm* that developed during the Cold War in the 20th century: the “hegemonic narrative diegesis of the Cold War as a *diegetic* war of narratives or philosophies of history,” with the image subordinated “to a slogan, to the communication of a message, a myth, a teleological scheme, a history, a philosophy of history” (Ibidem, 8).

The *imperial* nature of the narrative-industrial diegesis is played out in its *expansive naturalization*, which makes the *imago-power* a (dematerialized and global) utopian image (Ibidem, 13). The industrial *diegesis* becomes imperial, “a totalitarian space par excellence” – “more through the empathetic transference of automatisms than through repression” (Thayer 2019, 48)–, causing the proliferation of *code-images* “whose duty of transparency and clarity prohibits them from secrecy and singularity” (Thayer 2017, 37). In this sense, for example, although California must be one of the most exposed and famous places in the world by virtue of the Hollywood imaginary, for the same reason it must be, in its singularity, one of the most hidden places in the world—by virtue of its own code-image. Ruiz: “advertising demands above all images ‘that direct the gaze in a dictatorial way’” (Ruiz 9).

Why the insistence on the standardization—or total mobilization of the law of *value*—of the soul as an articulation of “intentionality” (correlation of adequacy between perceiving and what is perceived, between wanting and what is wanted, between conceiving and what is conceived, etc.) with a certain *diegesis*? The concept comes from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and we can translate it in a gloss as follows: *diegesis* is the *way in which the event is narrated more or*

less unitarily and directedly, around a central conflict. The term is composed by the prepositional prefix *dia* ('through') and *hegeomai* (in Latin *ducere*, 'to lead'), referring to a *power* of shepherding or government–*hegemonia* is, as we know, 'leading', and *hegemon*, 'the leader' or 'the leading'. But in Greek it refers not only to a power, but also to a *knowledge*: *catechesis*, to *e-ducate*, to show the way; *exegesis*, to explain the meaning, to guide seeing/ thinking; *exegetes*, interpreter (of sacred law), counselor, guide or conductor (as *docente* in Spanish, from Latin *ducere*); *exegéomai*, to direct, to guide, to govern, to order. So, the function between knowledge and power is drawn here as that of teaching-and-commanding. Thayer quotes Ruiz, apropos of the pastoral notions of *hegemony* and *institution*, unity and teleology (Providence) around a central conflict (*civitas Dei versus civitas diaboli*), illustrated in the ecclesiastical dispositive (Thayer 2017, 17-18; see Raúl Ruiz's film "La vocación suspendida", 1978, France).

If we translate the narrative-industrial principle (narrative determines image) into the language of Aristotelian poetics: narration (*diegesis*) subsumes the gaze (*opsis*), linking the eye to a spectacle. The diegetic articulation of the gaze passes through narration structured as a *unitary and teleological composition*, whose action revolves around a *central conflict*. Such is the structure of the *mise en scène*: *to-mount* (arrangement or disposition, separate form, formal entelechy) | *the-scene* (metamorphic matter converted into spectacle, a narrativized cliché-vision). The "cultural battles"—whether around the global commodity-form or national-popular aestheticization—make it clear that there is no political and/or religious hegemony without narrative-interpretive hegemony (or "cultural" hegemony as it is called today). Thayer: "To the extent that one can speak of a *diegesis* of the life of the *polis*, in each case, the living populations would seem to be aestheticized daily in narrative *software*" (Thayer 2017, 11). Of course, Thayer maintains, "Ruiz's poetics departs from the Aristotelian understanding of the work (...), it moves away by

opening the action to an image without unity or central conflict, and whose politics unworks the centered narrativity” (Ibidem, 14).

Against the grain of the *narrative-industrial paradigm*—of Aristotelian-Thomistic matrix—it would be a question of breaking down the intentional apparatus through an “unprepared potentiality” (Averroes), not teleologically organized, of imagination and image (potentiality of imagination versus the facticity of the “imaginaries” that capture it). If it is a question of a writing of the image that allows “to see through the cliché, not only its regime, but the multiplicity that said regime conceals”, then it will be the disarray of the intentional apparatus that leaves in view, at the same time, the regime of the gaze and what escapes of it. To this end, Ruiz assumes the postulate that, in his cinema or “writing of the image”, it is the image that determines the narration, at the same time it unworks the pre-given diegesis (Ibidem, 14 and 17).

The hegemonic paradigm of industrial narration (narrative determines image) stabilizes the dispositive of intentionality—the “perceptive and narrativized cliché of the soul” to which we have pointed—that is, a certain order of the world as an order of words and things inseminated in the soul as pre-organized perceptive potency (Ibidem, 21). Ruiz, against the grain, not ceasing to narrate, lets the image determine the narration, eroding the narrative *intentum* itself. If the cliché and theological narrativization “authoritatively frame the multiplicity of the image” (Ibidem, 19). Ruiz’s cinema tries to get that neither the images nor the film stabilize in a representational unity (Ibidem, 20). Here there is a key: *the “image” is always before the “dispersive material multiplicities” and the “codes” that unify and contain them, as a differential tension between them*—and not as a mold, model or formal entelechy that is only read as a dematerialized and authorizing code, in pure act like the thought of the Aristotelian god.

This whole cleavage between concepts of soul, whether inseminated

or exposed, between poetics of cinema of meta-narrative entelechies and unworking poetics of cinema, does not correspond to a conflict between different worldviews or aesthetic conceptions—as if it were a central conflict—but rather an attempt to think, in the midst of facticity (*in media res*), the place-without-place of every worldview and every technique: to think the common potentiality of testifying and imagining beyond any testimony or “imaginary,” beyond any *intentional correlation* that is supposedly “original.” In this sense, Thayer emphasizes that this cleavage can be understood as a *differential between body and technique*, or, put another way, *between body and culture*: such a differential will constitute the *styleme* or *exote image*—what Ruiz said allowed “living inside and outside of culture [grammar, logic, cliché] simultaneously, integrating and not integrating” (Ibidem, 6). Thayer points this out in relation to the more “folkloric” aspect of Ruiz’s films (Ibidem, 41–43; Thayer 2019, 11 and 17).

My hypothesis for reading Thayer as a reader of Ruiz is that, in addition to bringing into play a concept of a *metamorphic image* (variation of quality without translation-transport), Ruiz brings into play in his poetics a *multiplication of perspectives* that seeks to destabilize the intentional apparatus until the place-without-place of all of them appears, a certain profane illumination of the *cwvra* (*khôra*) that has nothing to do with the assumption of the theological meta-reader of Thomas Aquinas, nor with that of the baroque of Gottfried Leibniz (Thayer 2017, 27; 2019, 16 ff.).

In a short novel that Ruiz wrote in French but published in Italian, *Todas las nubes son relojes* (1999), he thinks about this in light of Karl Popper’s dichotomy between *regular systems* (clocks) and *highly unpredictable systems* (clouds). Ruiz: “It seems that Mr. Waga made it a rule, in all his novels and stories, to systematically omit the last chapter. That is where the murderer is revealed! I can understand it: this story is like a clock, every detail is carefully calculated. The fact of omitting the last chapter makes the whole elusive. The

clock becomes a cloud” (Ruiz 8). In Ruiz’s cinema, the destabilization of the intentional apparatus is verified in the *interruption of the chiasmus between work and spectator*: it is an *inoperative work, and without an objective spectator*. When this interruption occurs, the spectator “gets bored” (that is, he/she “is not entertained”), because without the previously inseminated narrativizing scheme she/he is left out in the open, experiencing epistemic violence, a derailment of automatism and, in this way, *a destabilization of the regime of the soul*.

This is a very different experience from that what is lived when one is settled on the intentional chiasmus: the consequent “entertainment” of the “objective spectator” who, in turn, is an “expected subject,” a type of subjectivity to be produced-and-reflected (like the circular specular relation “between Marlon Brando and the average American”). The narrative-industrial paradigm of *entertainment* is, in itself, a “regime of the soul.”

4. Immanent Exposure or Theological Entelechy?

Cinema, as a dispositive, has come to coincide in the twentieth century with the fetishistic apparatus of *intentionality*: a true economy (*oikonomía*) of the *subject* (author/spectator) and *presence* (unity and teleology of action and spectacle) (Ibidem 22). Let us recall what we began by pointing out, apropos of Lenin and Reich’s remarks, about the intentional chiasmus that makes it possible for the economic base to be the infrastructure of the psychic superstructure, while, in the subjective dimension, the “psyche” becomes the infrastructure of the economic superstructure. I reiterate my reading hypothesis: in addition to putting into play a concept of *metamorphic image* (variation of quality without translation), Ruiz puts into play in his poetics a *multiplication of perspectives* that seeks to destabilize and saturate the intentional apparatus until the place-without-place of all of those perspectives appears, a certain profane illumination of the *cwvra* (*khôra*) that has nothing to do with the

assumption of the theological meta-reader of Saint Thomas, nor with that of the baroque of Leibniz. It is an “atheological montage” (Thayer) or, to say it in his own terms, Raúl Ruiz proposes to us a “metaphysical crookedness” (*chuecura metafísica*). Thayer:

The Ruician *diegesis* is directed towards the renunciation of “any point of view”. Not only the one that articulates the landscape from above according to an aerial eye; but also the one that articulates the landscape by traversing it on foot, tactilely, in the infinitesimality of its framings, perceptions, reflections and floating virtualities that open up at every step. The Ruician *diegesis* unworks the aerial and tactile possibility of a dialectical or theological-political meta-*diegesis* that pre-articulates the landscape. It unworks not only the unity of the frame or film; also that of the character, the action, the fact, the object, the quality... in a diegetic drift that does not create unity anywhere. The Ruician *diegesis* plays with the centering principle that the spectator pre-carries or that factually pre-constitutes her/him. He plays with it and does so through a rigorously a-centered *diegesis* that suggests world, action, narration, characters, facts that do not come to be constituted (unified, totalized)” (Ibidem, 16).

In the short story *Todas las nubes son relojes*, Ruiz argues that literature and film often share the *superstition* that “there is always a sovereign point of view,” and that “the dispute between the supporters of the vision of God (Hollywood) and the vision of the man in the street (neorealism) derives from this predatory concept” (Ruiz 10). It is not about the eye of God or the sovereign individual who makes her/his own way with his/her clichés, but about the *exposure* of the finite human animal to what eventually *exceeds* any given *adequacy* between “body, soul and world,” that is, to what exceeds any *intentional correlation* already stabilized in an order of words and things. In “Raúl Ruiz. *Montaje ateológico*”, one of the essays collected in his book *Imagen*

exote, Thayer writes:

When Ruiz says that his cinema “is not a cinema for spectators,” he means that his cinema unworks the condition of the empathic dispositive of the image that subsumes production/work/exhibition/reception in a homogeneous articulation, however plastic and versatile it may be. (Which also subsumes the writer who, as the first spectator of the work in its genesis, starts by being inscribed in that dispositive). More than for spectators, his cinema is a cinema for writers, de-constructors, profaners. (...) / Ruiz’s writing consists, as far as it succeeds, in the gradual unworking and profanation, step by step, of the conditions of production that are actually emplaced. To the extent that the normal spectator is articulated by such conditions, Ruiz’s inoperative cinema turns out to be a cinema for zero spectators. Or a cinema for spectators who do not (yet) exist (Thayer 2019, 51 and 53).

Many spectators get “bored” by Ruiz’s films, since they fail to “empathize” (Ibidem 50). We are talking about the “normal spectator,” that is, the “passive consumer of possible facts” (Ruiz). This particular *boredom* is, precisely, the symptom of the *breakdown of the intentional device*. These are films that are not boring because they are a gray and inert paste of images, but because the would-be spectator—installed in the *comfortable habit* of the narrative-industrial diegesis—“does not find *the subject*” and “does not see *where it is all going*,” sometimes even “missing *what is happening*.” The intentional structures of recognition and empathy are broken—and a “dimension of strangeness” or “enigmatic corpus” breaks in, and one experiences a “high quality of boredom,” an “active distraction,” or a “constellation of signs that conspires against plain reading” (Ibidem 55).

So here lies the (*a*)*theological* problem at stake: what is put into play or into work in cinema? The adventure of an immanent exposure that is narrated and diffracted in imminence, or the settlement in a formal and transcendent imaginary-narrative entelechy? For Ruiz, as Thayer points out, “(...) narration

is nothing more than a consequence of the apparent images themselves and their direct combinations, never an apparent *datum* of the images, nor the effect of a structure that pre-understand them” (Ibidem, 57). Thayer discusses this question with Christine Buci-Glucksmann, regarding the “baroque” (Leibnizian) character of Ruiz’s cinema. Buci-Glucksmann: “A mimesis of God’s gaze, the painting “sees everything and everyone at the same time” (...), it even encompasses all the ways of seeing and feeling. Omnisensorial, seeing for him is nothing other than feeling, listening, touching, loving, speaking. Being. For Nicholas of Cusa this is the self-portrait of God, that absolute, all-creating and all-devouring gaze, that gaze of all possible gazes, that imperialism of clairvoyance, that crazy cartography of a painting–motionless and lifeless–that contemplates all singularities (...)”¹ Buci-Glucksmann’s reading hypothesis is that, by virtue of the multiplication of perspectives to the point of manifesting the supernumerary (less than one, more than one), “Ruiz’s eye is Leibniz’s eye of God,” “it sees everything from all possible points of view”–God’s eye, imperial world map (*mappemonde*, *mapamundi*). Thayer argues that, despite the plausibility of the Leibnizian filiation of Ruiz’s baroque (mosaics, constellations, *ars combinatoria*, pluriperspectivism, etc.),² it is not a total affiliation: Ruician baroque is atheological, it lacks a theological meta-reader. Thayer:

The image of Ruiz cannot be burdened with a panoptic eye-camera, dialectical as in Leibniz’s way. Even if it is as an absent principle or *ex machina*, the Leibnizian meta-reader is who finally brings together the infinitesimal *aggregatum* of impossible readings, articulating them all, all their angles, reflections and mirrorings, stabilizing them, uniting them, however relational and vibrant their unity may be. The theologization of Ruiz’s baroque returns him to the principle of representation, to the organism, to the central conflict (...). / The affiliation with Leibniz, I think, is cut off just where Buci-Glucksmann ties it theologically to the transcendent eye/camera/God who sees and brings everything together, from all sides, in a single vision (intuition)” (Thayer 2019, 66-67).

What is at stake, therefore, is not a central, unifying, hegemonic meta-reading eye, but a “sudden illumination” that, “not inscribed in any track, at a distance from several, strained by the gravitation of many, sees countless of them without closing itself in any of them.” Such *atopicism*—as also signaled by the old and elusive Greek notion of *cwvra* (*khôra*)—would be the condition of experience of Ruiz’s cinema.

Our starting point here was the evocation of an important metaphysical battle of the 13th century in which two “enemy” ways of understanding the soul clashed: 1) according to the *falásifa* Averroes, the soul as the radical potentiality of immanent exposure of the finite animal to the imminence of the *outside*, in a *supernumerary* logic of being in the world and of knowing; and, in reaction to such a “doctrine,” 2) according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the soul as a *personal unity*—a body *subjected* to the form (law, word, image, “mask”) that makes it a *persona*—whose unity depends on the unity of the world as the order of words and things and events—a unitary order guaranteed by a theological author and meta-reader in pure act—and on the *insemination* of that order into the perceptive, intellectual and practical soul.

In this light, it is clear that what Raúl Ruiz proposes to us is a “metaphysical crookedness” (*chuecura metafísica*), one which consists of disarticulating the eye of God that looks through each one of us, a meta-reader eye that, through cinema, makes our gaze.

Notes

- 1 Buci-Glucksmann, Christine, “El ojo barroco de la cámara”, in Valeria de los Ríos & Iván Pinto (eds.), *El cine de Raúl Ruiz*. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Uqbar, 2010, p. 144, cited by Thayer in “Raúl Ruiz. Montaje ateológico”, in *Imagen exote*, pp. 65-66.
- 2 See Raúl Ruiz’s film, “El juego de la oca” (France, 1979).

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