The Regenerative Cinematic Surface: Contractions, Expansions and Migrations in *The Aleph* and *Sans Soleil*

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Abstract

This paper introduces a comparative study relating the famous long sentence of The Aleph, *by Jorge Luis Borges, and the documentary film* Sans Soleil, *by Chris Marker. The processes used by both artists can be studied in parallel in order to consider the construction of a complex surface in which heterogeneous fragments belonging to dissimilar times and spaces are articulated, combined and juxtaposed, exceeding the aesthetic purity of a fixed and immobile whole. Our argument is that the capacity of this surface, or screen, to constantly dismantle and reassemble disparate sets of images and conceptual directions should be understood according to the concepts of "plane of immanence" and "ideal game", prominently developed by Gilles Deleuze in his* Logique du Sens *(1969). These concepts connect to a constellation of other terms, like event, paradox, becoming, and, notably, Chronos and Aion, through which Deleuze conceives a tension between the transitory present that* passes *and the expansion of a past that* remains. *Our approach is that all such terms and, very specially, this coexistence between a time simultaneously contracted and expanded in vast circuits, emerges as a key point to develop an in-depth comprehension of Deleuze's time-image, finding in the works of Borges and Marker two valuable and unexpected examples of analysis. As in Deleuze's theory of planes and becomings, in both Borges' and Marker's oeuvres the paradoxical space is also affected by a paradoxical time that is* infinitive, *unreservedly multiple, and conveying the possibility of reinterpreting facts and history.*

Keywords: Time, Plane(s), Deleuze, Borges, Marker.

Exuberant cartographies and effects of simultaneity in Borges' *The Aleph*

In the short story entitled *The Aleph* (1945), Jorge Luis Borges describes the mysterious aleph as a small iridescent sphere, of about an inch across, able to converge all that exists in the universe. The aleph is thus comparable to a small point that contains all other points; it presents, to each one who peers into it, the infinite universe seen from every angle, without distortions nor diminished forms. Not by chance, it is through an extremely concentrated word, namely "saw" ("vi", in the original), that Borges articulates the multiple fragments that form this single but highly complex sentence:

> Each thing (a mirror's face let us say) was infinite things, since I distinctly saw it from every angle of the universe. I saw the teeming sea; I saw daybreak and nightfall; I saw the multitudes of America; I saw a silvery cobweb in the center of a black pyramid; I saw a splintered labyrinth (it was London); I saw, close up, unending eyes watching themselves in me as in a mirror; I saw all the mirrors on earth and none of them reflected me; I saw in a backyard of Soler Street the same tiles that thirty years before I'd seen in the entrance of a house in Fray Bentos; I saw bunches of grapes, snow, tobacco, lodes of metal, steam; I saw convex equatorial deserts and each one of their grains of sand; I saw a woman in Inverness whom I shall never forget; I saw her tangled hair, her tall figure, I saw the cancer in her breast; I saw a ring of baked mud in a sidewalk, where before there had been a tree; I saw a summer house in Adrogué and a copy of the first English translation of Pliny – Philemon Holland's – and all at the same time saw each letter on each page (as a boy, I used to marvel that the letters in a closed book did not get scrambled and lost overnight); I saw a sunset in Queretaro that seemed to reflect

the colour of a rose in Bengal; I saw my empty bedroom; I saw in a closet in Alkmaar a terrestrial globe between two mirrors that multiplied it endlessly; I saw horses with flowing manes on a shore of the Caspian Sea at dawn; I saw the delicate bone structure of a hand; I saw the survivors of a battle sending out picture postcards; I saw in a showcase in Mirzapur a pack of Spanish playing cards; I saw the slanting shadows of ferns on a greenhouse floor; I saw tigers, pistons, bison, tides, and armies; I saw all the ants on the planet; I saw a Persian astrolabe; I saw in the drawer of a writing table (and the handwriting made me tremble) unbelievable, obscene, detailed letters, which Beatriz had written to Carlos Argentino; I saw a monument I worshipped in the Chacarita cemetery; I saw the rotted dust and bones that had once deliciously been Beatriz Viterbo; I saw the circulation of my own dark blood; I saw the coupling of love and the modification of death; I saw the Aleph from every point and angle, and in the Aleph I saw the earth and in the earth the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth; I saw my own face and my own bowels; I saw your face; and I felt dizzy and wept, for my eyes had seen that secret and conjectured object whose name is common to all men but which no man has looked upon – the unimaginable universe." (Borges 1945, 9).

This is, indeed, a strange and fascinating phrase composed by multiple fragments combined in a multi-serial arrangement: it connects disparate elements and places, thus allowing the vicinity between things with no apparent relation, a strategy that makes us remind other similar apparatus of Borges' writing.[1] The phrase seems to emerge from a sort of chaotic turmoil involving series of proliferated yet precise articulations between interior and exterior, the cosmic and the subterraneous, the material and the psychic, the past and the present, and gathering areas as distinct as geography, medicine, literature and art history. We may also find in the phrase of *The Aleph* an exuberant cartography devoid of fixed

spatial relations and stable borders: it combines places as dispersed as Europe (England, Scotland, Netherlands, Spain), South America (Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay), as well as South Asia, India, the Caucasus and Equatorial deserts. We are before the existence of a cartography, or a map, interconnecting different elements in a mobile constellation, which, in fact, is irreducible to the limits of spatial and metric relations.

Let us take an example from the fragment: "I saw a sunset in Queretaro that seemed to reflect the color of a rose in Bengal". As demonstrated by Daniel Balderston, it is very likely that, in this example, the geographical reference to Queretaro relates, in another level, to the historical fact of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico execution by a firing squad in the city of Queretaro, in 1867, after the withdrawal of French troops by Napoleon III. Curiously, this is an episode that would be represented by Manet in his well-known series of paintings entitled *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico*, dated 1868, where he depicts the event through different versions that problematize the empire's failed intervention and latter decline. This apparently *disconnected* reference to Manet enacts, however, a sort of secret relation requiring our inventive approach: we detect, in fact, that the tonalities and the wide-angled projection of the shadows suggest, principally in Manet's first and third versions, the growing dark of nightfall. That way, we are led to consider that Borges' reference to the sunset in Queretaro is effectively linked with the historical event of the Emperor execution, and, perhaps, with Manet artistic versions (Balderston 2012, 4).

This very brief example is perhaps sufficient to understand how Borges activates a shattered composition wherein each element constitutes a sort of independent world that, nevertheless, is able to communicate with discontinuous spaces and times constituted in a single plane. In Borges, *writing* is captured in the workings of a device that brings about the real and history as expanded instances enveloping the imagined and the fictional: each particular fact only exists, in itself, as the convergence of multiple factual and representational series actualized throughout the same surface, and even the same point. That is why Borges refers, right on the beginning of the phrase, that in the aleph "each thing" is "infinite things" (Borges 1945, 9). This acknowledgement also implies, however, the feeling of an impossibility of completely grasp that whole; at a certain point of his text, Borges

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[1] By way of example, we remember Borges' exotic enumeration of animals in "a certain Chinese encyclopedia", whose analysis was made famous by Foucault in *The Order of Things* (Foucault 1994, 14), as well as his *Atlas*, in which, as observed by George Didi-Huberman, the author combines words and images in a simultaneously chaotic and ingenuous way (Didi-Huberman 2010, 58).

asks: "How, then, can I translate into words the limitless Aleph, which my floundering mind can scarcely encompass?" (Borges 1945, 8). Borges' problem seems insoluble, since, as the narrator states, what his eyes saw in the aleph was the infinite universe, whereas the device of language is partial and sequential by nature: "What my eyes beheld was simultaneous, but what I shall now write down will be successive, because language is successive" (idem, 9).

And yet, Borges does nothing but making full use of language. A language that, nevertheless, slips over the conventional rules of grammar and syntax. It bears, more exactly, an impossible and fully creative act of *writing*, since it opens up a space of the unthinkable and of the imperceptible, aspiring to reach an effect of simultaneity through the condensation of disjunctive references forming a vast and complex surface. In Borges, writing acquires, indeed, the value of an advanced device susceptible to collect heterogeneous bodies of images and signs that are dynamically related out of creative usages of assemblage and *montage*. It thus advances towards a composition, a *phrase* acquiring the value of an apparatus irreducible to the restrictions of univocal meanings and historical truths.

To *write* history: montage and processes of thought in Marker and Borges

It is this kind of composition, – characterized by the combination of distant elements freely related through original connections, breaks and abrupt passages, – that we can find in several moments of Chris Marker's essayistic approach to documentary film. *Sans Soleil* (1983) serves, in this case, as a paradigmatic example in order to understand how in Marker's films the potentialities of filmic editing and *montage* appear as a kind of w*riting* susceptible to produce new forms of linkages between images. More than a technical procedure, *montage* appears, like in Borges, as a device promoting circulations and disseminated drifts that disrupt the idea of a single and fixed whole.

That is why *Sans Soleil*, a film that combines footage material and images recorded by a fictitious camera-man that collects images around the world, could be described, by Marker, as a film composed "[...] in the fashion of a musical composition, with recurrent themes, counterpoints and mirror-like fugues: the letters,

the comments, the images gathered, the images created, together with some images borrowed. In this way, out of these juxtaposed memories is born a fictional memory." (Chris Marker, *Letter to Theresa by Chris Marker*). Each object, image, and fragment, conceals a sort of geography composed by multiple threads already branched from the beginning. This is so, given that each archive and footage film appropriated by Marker is necessarily extracted from a lost film, a lost unity thereby subjected to the mechanisms of re-linkages and discontinuous relations, allowing him to resignify images and activate non-chronological perspectives on historical facts and reality. This goes along a progressive opacification of the image that tend towards a new sort of *depth* that should be searched at the surface of a system of continual references and disseminated linkages with another images and signs. In a passage of the film the following is said:

> Did I write you that there are emus in the Ile de France? This name – Island of France – sounds strangely on the island of Sal. My memory superimposes two towers: the one at the ruined castle of Montpilloy that served as an encampment for Joan of Arc, and the lighthouse tower at the southern tip of Sal, probably one of the last lighthouses to use oil. A lighthouse in the Sahel looks like a collage until you see the ocean at the edge of the sand and salt. (Marker 1983)

The Island of France and the island of Sal are linked by reference to "superimposed" towers. As in many other examples of *Sans Soleil*, the tower emerges as an over-determined *symbol* that depends less on metric relations, than the expanded webs of linkages and significations that make distinct layers of historical reality meet. The connection serves to launch, in fact, a communication between the legendary drift of Joan of Arc and the similar tragic drives of political leaders that played out, as stated by Marker, the disturbed recent history of "two of the most poorest and forgotten countries in Africa, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau." (Chris Marker, *Letter to Theresa by Chris Marker*). In a previous passage of *Sans Soleil*, there is also a mention to the way an ancestor of the Bijagos archipelago describes "the itinerary of the dead and how they move from island to island according to a rigorous protocol until they

come to the last beach where they wait for the ship that will take them to the other world". We are told that the Bijagos is a part of Guinea Bissau. These hints are then echoed in images of an old documentary film, in which Amilcar Cabral, a founder and leader of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) is seen waving a gesture of farewell towards the shore, in his last visit to the archipelago, before being murdered by members of his own party.

These passages clearly show us that Marker's approach permanently revolves around the problematic and complex moments of history: failed government overthrows, internal struggles, guerrilla wars against authoritarian powers, clashes and betrayals between members of the same faction. He pretends to show that history, as much as memory, is constituted by unresolved tensions, repetitions of struggles and inconclusive events which we do not master, forming a sort of chaotic and irregular thread ungraspable by rational systems of classification that envisage history as a progressive development:

> "That's how history advances", we listen in another passage, "plugging its memory as one plugs one's ears. Luis exiled to Cuba, Nino discovering in his turn plots against him, can be cited reciprocally to appear before the bar of history. She doesn't care, she understands nothing, she has only one friend, the one Brando spoke of in Apocalypse: horror. That has a name and a face."

The sudden slippage of strictly documentary passages to dream sequences and meta-references to the apparatus of recording and mediated processes of communication (popular cinema, television, advertising, etc.), aims to create a new perspective on facts, denouncing the repressions, censorships and amnesias produced and maintained by History as a cultural and ideological construction (Potter 2008). The usage of montage as a play of creative analogies and fruitful approaches that permit to re-link elements, contributes therefore to create moments of critical readings that stretch beyond the standardized discourses. In Marker, what survives is never the historical event as an objective fact, but the memory of the event, the way it is re-interpreted and re-actualized through the act of reception (Laborde 2009, 53).

To *write*, or to narrate history, therefore comprises a work of collage, montage and active reconstruction advancing towards the mapping of temporal cartographies. Like in *The Aleph*'s phrase, the past resurfaces in the present and produces the condensation of different times in a single and complex temporality made of resurgences, survivals and repetitions. For Marker, the potentialities of filmic montage certainly function as a kind of *writing* evolving through the gaps and failures of temporal continuity. In a similar fashion to what we have seen in Borges, it appears as a device promoting passages, tensions and migrations between images and words. It is, like in Borges, a question of tracing temporal cartographies, of running along the partitions, giving rise to a construction that integrates an eminently fictionalized interpretation of facts and history.[2] For all these reasons, we pretend to argue that what profoundly relates *Sans Soleil* and *The Aleph* seems to be the fact that both advance towards a creative image of thought that destabilize, on the one hand, the uniformity of historical discourses, and, on the other hand, the normalized schemes of spatio-temporal representations. Both in Marker and Borges, more than a technical procedure or an artistic process, *montage* must be considered as the most intimate and fundamental operation of thought, constituting and deconstituting networks of significations, a *system* prone to contractions, expansions and infinite movements.

We could destroy the composition, split each one of its elements, but, like in Deleuze's rhizomatic form of composition, each fragment will regenerate itself, constitute another body, with multiple entryways and connectable in all of its dimensions (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 11-12). We will see, through the deepening of Gilles Deleuze´s philosophy, that this shattered structure entails a profound transformation of the philosophical and historical concept of time, embracing the idea of a mobile and non-fixed present associated with the process of becoming.

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[2] Moreover, a particular fragment belonging to the earlier cited *Aleph*'s phrase, namely "I saw in a backyard of Soler Street the same tiles that thirty years before I'd seen in the entrance of a house in Fray Bentos", gives us a synthetically indication on how Borges considers time as being an erratic and unexpected thread of recurrences that disturb the logic of linear evolution.

The "ideal game" of history and the time of the event

We have just seen that *The Aleph*'s phrase and *Sans Soleil* compete for the consideration of a dynamic surface that, even in the case of *The Aleph*, could be perfectly characterized as a *cinematic surface*, provided we understand this term in an expanded and broader sense: a sense that refers to the transformations that occur within a mobile structure that relate multiple and disparate elements of signification. Such surface should be comprehended, more exactly, as a sort of "skin", a term we would like to borrow from Gilles Deleuze when, in *Logic of Sense*, he states that: "[...] it is necessary to understand *that the deepest is the skin*. The skin has at its disposal a vital and properly superficial potential energy. And just as events do not occupy the surface but rather frequent it, superficial energy is not *localized* at the surface, but is rather bound to its formation and reformation." (Deleuze 1990, 103-04)

This quote must be situated in the context of Deleuze's conceptualization of the "event". According to Deleuze, the event introduces a change within any stable pattern; it carries any fixed configuration to a border-line that confronts it with the possibility of variation and novelty through the contact with divergent series. This means that, for Deleuze, an event is not a completely new occurrence nor a revolutionary beginning, but an active selection in an already pre-existing structure disrupting the fixed patterns of "an ongoing and continually altering series" (Williams 2008, 2). In short, the event highlights changing relations, variable connections and shifts in emphasis, running counter cutting-edge analytical solutions. An utterance, or a discourse, or an image, is not important in terms of prescribed knowledge or correct understandings, but in the way it triggers creative associations that transform the event through processes of inventive experimentation.

This conception reveals to be inseparable from a philosophy that considers time in an entirely new way. As observed by James Williams, according to Deleuze's philosophy, an event is never at a single point, at a fixed and indivisible instant called present; on the contrary, the event is always stretching back and forward in time. There is never a single direction, a single movement or alteration, but "different degrees of intensity" re-enacting figures and replaying senses (Williams 2008, 29). These ongoing transformations are neither linear nor well-ordered in terms of mechanisms of cause and effect, rather presupposing a discontinuous organization of elements belonging to different locations and distant points in time. *Sense* is thus not limited to a fixed or normalized spatio-temporal organization; it is rather put in perspective with what it affects in terms of temporal gaps and differences between phenomena, triggering new perspectives on facts.

We therefore comprehend how history could appear, in authors such as Borges and Marker, as a kind of "ideal game" inventing its own rules and creating, as suggested by Deleuze, series of singularities and creative communications. Each move corresponds thereby to the unlimited play of singularities: each element is played through all the others with which it is related and affects, in an open and creative temporization of differences and multiplicities. For example, a scene of execution contacts with the actual perception of a sunset, and a lighthouse in the Sahel establishes an unexpected linkage with the tower of a ruined castle, – in both cases, we are confronted with an actual perception that simultaneously entails the past and its perpetual reconstitution through inventive processes of thought.

What we have seen in *The Aleph* and in *Sans Soleil* was precisely that each time we return to texts and images from the past, we are re-enacting virtual and expanded relations that are intimately connected to our present. It is therefore possible to conceive a stratigraphic time in which the past is prolonged in the present, and the present, in its turn, is transformed by the contamination of coexistent circuits of past, producing a palimpsest of thought and perception. A useful way of thinking about this is to imagine, – as observed by James Williams, who presents a very clever and precise image of the process in his study on Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* – a series of fragile paralleled planes immersed in a viscous liquid: when a plane vibrates, all the others will move not by means of actual contact but through the resonance of a virtual medium capable of animate all the planes at once (Williams, 124). This highlights one of the most important features of Deleuze's conception of the event: the fact that an event works as a frequency that resonates through different planes, allowing the communication between multiple and

discontinuous coordinates. This is how Deleuze would come to point out that in the "pure event", the element "communicate with all the others and returns to itself through all the others, and with all the others" (Deleuze 1990, 179).

It would be in order to meet this temporality that resists chronological linearity and allows considering the coexistence of multiple times, that Deleuze will advance towards the time of the "Aion". The Aion would therefore be the time of the event, continually split in two directions, and, more important, indicating a time of resonance between different historical layers, between a present that passes and a past that remains. This is the "gigantic instant" of Borges (Borges 1945, 8), as well as the "impossible memory" that stands for the vertigo of time, as claimed by Marker, summoning up a comprehension of *eternity* which, as observed by Williams, lies not in fixed identities and stabilized structures, but rather participates in a persistent variation as change and creation. We shall see that it is precisely this type of conception that presides over the category of the *time-image*, a cornerstone formulation in the context of Deleuze's philosophy of cinema.

Time-image and counter-memory

In Deleuze's philosophy of film, to think is to "think-through" the material embodiment of images, signs and concepts, illuminating the ways they are linked and interconnected. It is a matter of knowing, as observed by D.N. Rodowick, how those sets of logical relations contribute for a renewed theory of sense, as well as to understand how the possibilities of thought are reinvented in film practices (Rodowick 1997, 6-7). It is in this context, which clearly reflects the broader issues pursued along his philosophical quest, that we should comprehend Deleuze's urge to establish a difference (though gradual and certainly not grasped as a sort of historical evolution) between the regime of the "movement-image" and that of the "time-image". Briefly, Deleuze suggests that, in the former, the shots of the film tend to be linked through rational divisions that mark the end of the first shot and the beginning of the second. Time is thus subordinated to movement, measuring the continuous linkage of spatial sections submitted to the laws of linear and chronological development of the moving whole. In the latter, on the contrary, time is not restricted to a line of action based on rationally segmented movements and spatial sections. On the contrary, time is fragmented, giving rise to discontinuous and incommensurable segments articulated in terms of irrational divisions. The interval no longer links the preceding image to the following one; it becomes autonomous, disrupting the sensorimotor schema, that is, the norms for the linkage of shots through rational divisions and continuities. The irrational cut therefore promotes, as stated by Rodowick, the emergence of "a serial rather than an organic form of composition" (*idem*, 14).

Hence, whereas in the organic regime of narration, associated to the principles of the movement-image, montage is a technical procedure following pre-established norms for the linkage of segments connected to each other in extended sets, in the non-organic regime, on the contrary, montage and editing combine disparate sets of images, giving rise to the emergence of undecidable and lacunar forms of narration. As stated by Deleuze,

> […] there is no longer linkage of associated images, but only relinkages of independent images. Instead of one image after the other, there is one image *plus* another, and each shot is deframed in relation to the deframing of the following shot… [The] cinematographic image becomes a direct presentation of time, according to non-commensurable relations and irrational divisions… [This] time-image, puts thought into contact with the unthought, the unsummonable, the inexplicable, the undecidable, the incommensurable. The outside or obverse of the images has replaced the whole, at the same time as the interval [*interstice*] or the cut has replaced association (Deleuze 1989, 214, in Rodowick 1997, 14).

Deleuze's standpoint is that neorealism paradigmatically represents a decisive crisis in the organic regime sustained by the movement-image, since it presents us forms of narrativity that frequently refer to situations impossible to describe in terms of action-reaction schemes: situations of extreme pain or beauty, bliss or redemption, as well as representations of lacunar situations, leaving characters abandoned and wandering in empty-spaces. With the breakdown of the usual sensorimotor schema, image and sound no longer limit movement to a physical trajectory in space, to a

linear sequence of actions and reactions, conflicts and resolutions. Image becomes instead a space for reading, a "lectosign", or a legible image, that requires an act of decipherment and interrogation, irreducible to globalizing and more or less predictable narratives. These images also constitute "pure optical and acoustical images" (Rodowick 1997, 75) which, according to Deleuze, presumes an interruption of the anchors of designation and logical deductions that normally link images to objects, forming a circuit with a pure *virtual* image, a pure recollection.[3]

It is crucial to stress this aspect of a pure virtuality, for Bergson theory permanently distinguishes between a "recollection-memory" and a "contraction memory" (Deleuze 2004, 29). The former relates to an occurrence that is recalled from the past as a determinable situation, that is, as a past constituted "*after* it has been present" (*ibidem*), thus supporting our normalized schemes of perception through linear chains of actions and reactions, before and after. The later, on the contrary, presupposes the survival of the past in itself, independently of being preserved in our brain. This is a past that survives as the "unconscious", as the pure "virtual" (*ibidem*), which means that the past will therefore coexist with the present in a zone of indiscernibility and independent of psychological limits.[4] In Deleuze's theory, consciousness is therefore not equivalent to perception, being solely constituted in relation with memory as duration, that is, as a virtual coexistence of degrees and states of relaxation and contraction between the past and the present. Deleuze therefore states that what we see in the time-image, in its crystalline

constitution, is not the empirical progression of time, but its "constitutive dividing in two".

This is exactly what is presented in Bergson's second scheme in *Matter and Memory*. In the now-famous inverted cone structure, the point S varies constantly between the pure virtual circuits of memory (which occupy the base of the cone) and its reconstitution in the plane (intersecting the summit), through the multiple actualization in S', S'', S''', etc. Hence, the point of actualization is never fixed nor stabilized. It is caught in an uninterrupted flow between the circuits of pure memory and the undeterminable future of its reconstitution as change and creation. It implies a shattered and non-chronological time bringing together, – in a unique plane of consistency, or immanence, – multiple worlds and variations of occurrences.[5] Thus, according to Deleuze, "[...] the present must be thought as two extreme degrees coexisting in duration, the one distinguished by its state of relaxation, the other by its state of contraction. A famous metaphor tells us that at each level of the cone there is the whole of our past, but to different degrees: the present is only the most contracted degree of the past" (Deleuze 2004, 29).

This is no other thing than the time of the Aion: a split of time in two heterogeneous directions, which are never decidable, since they constantly weave back and forth around a mobile point that assures the permanent renewal of the plane. If it is possible to affirm that the time-image is an image of memory, as Rodowick does, it is because memory involves the consideration of an irrational interval comprising differences and variations of states and degrees, in short, an *interruption* apprehended as "a series of dislocations in time" (Rodowick 1997, 88).

We are consequently redirected to Deleuze's assertion that, in the context of the time-image, the association of images is replaced by the "re-linkage" of images, stressing the importance of the "interstice", or "irrational interval", that is, of what is constituted within the passages and circulations between differential elements. This explains why Deleuze

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[3] Moreover, the criterion of referentiality will be replaced by a description based on internal and undecidable relations between the objective and the subjective, real and imaginary, present and past. This consideration of a pure optical and acoustical image, referring a breakdown of the referential anchors in film, appears to be similar, in all respects, to the way Deleuze defends, earlier in *The Logic of Sense*, the irreducibility of sense to the states of affairs and logical deductions. Both result in the destabilization of institutionalized forms of discourse.

[4] This is why in *The Time-Image* Deleuze distinguishes the time-image from the flash-back and the images of dreams produced by an individual conscious, since in these cases the circuit of memory sets out the evocation of a recollection that assumes the past as an old present, that is, as a previous and dated present constituted in terms of a chronological succession. According to Deleuze, the criterion of undecidability is not, indeed, subjectively produced, but is rather the inherent condition of the direct time-images, also designated as crystal images, since they function like a crystal that shatters time and reality, relating multiple lines in terms of nuances and degrees of qualitative variation.

[5] This presumes the possibility of conceiving, on the one hand, the condensation of the past in a single point (what Deleuze would call, in *The Time-Image*, the "peaks of present"), and, on the other hand, the simultaneous surviving of the past in expansive and pure virtual circuits (known as the "sheets of past"). Cf. Deleuze's fifth chapter "Peaks of Present and Sheets of Past: Fourth Commentary on Bergson", in *Time-Image*, pp.98-125.

conceived of the cinematic screen as a structural and topological place, composed in terms of paradoxical proximities and relations. Deleuze could therefore affirm that:

> The [cinematic] screen itself is the cerebral membrane where immediate and direct confrontations take place between the past and the future, the inside and the outside, at a distance impossible to determine, independent of any fixed point… The image no longer has space and movement as its primary characteristics, but topology and time" (Deleuze 1989, 123).

This reports us, in fact, to the earlier conception of the event as constituting a sort of *skin* bound to the metaphorical formation and reformation of tissues, to the emission and circulation of micro-particles and substances, forming thereby a *virtual medium* susceptible, as we have seen, to set in motion multiple planes, *at once.* The cinematic screen is such a virtual medium that creates the resonance between dissymmetrical layers of time, highlighting the formation of a topological space, that is, of a non-quantitative space edified in terms of relations between elements and promoting the circulation of senses and images of thought that occupy the irrational interval. We tend therefore to question images and words and look for what is formed in its "obverse", meaning that we are required to occupy an enigmatic position along a surface made of velocities, emissions, and reverberations. A surface that is ultimately related with Deleuze's concept of "plane of immanence", notably when he relates it with an image of thought that: "[…] demands *only* movement that can be carried to infinity. What thought claims by right, what it selects, is infinite movement or the movement of infinite. It is this that constitutes the image of thought" (Deleuze 1994, 37).

Within the *outside* of history: horizons, planes, membranes

The previous questions are of great importance in order to comprehend what Rodowick, for example, examines as the possibility of construction of the historical image, which, in turn, is intimately connected with the issue of knowing how the present and the past can be made to communicate (Rodowick 1997, 146). We return therefore to some of the problems posed earlier by Borges'

and Marker's oeuvres. To say, from Deleuze's theory, that the circuits of the past form a pure *virtual* does not mean that the past cannot be apprehended as a real fact, but simply that it is not circumscribed in terms of an objective reality or a group of propositions capable of uncover its truth and totality. Moreover, the narrative falsifications founded in the undecidability between true and false, objective and subjective, etc., does not allow us to conclude that history cannot be grasped and comprehended. Simply, history will not be apprehended as a fact already happened and limited by a fixed knowledge, but rather as a *fact of memory* encompassing a process of search and questioning, a process that seeks to grasp historical occurrences beyond the order of causes and ends. Ultimately, as we have seen in the practical cases of Borges' *The Aleph* and Marker's *Sans Soleil*, it is a matter of reconnecting historical facts with the process of being made, the process of being actualized in the present as an act of invention and liberty. This is tantamount to conceive the work of thought as an inventive and creative process presenting the new and the becoming as fundamental forces, since it points not to an ensemble of fixed principles orienting an ordered system, but, on the contrary, to the idea that exists, in the act of thinking, something which is unthinkable and unconceivable, requiring the re-enactment and refolding of what continually escapes us.

This is why it is essential, for Deleuze, to stress the importance of the time-image as being an irrational cut. Contrary to the movement-image, wherein the interval between images is fulfilled by a spatial conjunction, the irrational interval points out the importance of the *interstice* produced between images, evoking an unbridgeable interval which, nevertheless, gives rise to new forms of linkages and narrations characterized by discontinuities, false *raccords* and contradictory descriptions enveloping distinct chronologies. The organic regime, founded in the timeless and true values of idealized worlds, gives way to a crystalline and opacified regime based on discontinuities and disjunctive series of a shattered whole, indicating new forms of thought and subjectivity. This is the privileged plane of the Aion, evoking the force of time as a cartography of variation and transformation that connects the viewer with an exteriority, an *outside* unreachable by the present image: an "always already passed and eternally yet to come" (Deleuze 1990, 165),

an encounter that has been and is yet to be formed, related with the processes of actualization taking place throughout the plane.

We could therefore conceive of the devices presented by Borges and Chris Marker as *screens*, membranes or, more exactly, cinematic surfaces encompassing history as the *outside* of the event. This is because the outside as pure virtuality constitutes, as stated by Rodowick, an absolute horizon in relation to thought. The time-image confronts the viewer with that horizon, with that frontier made of velocities, coexistences and emissions, forming a decentered space devoid of the stability of geometrical perspective. It is a plane of pure reserve, a plane of immanence traversed by the unrealized powers of the image and thought, thus connecting us with that which is simultaneously more close and distant to subjectivity (Rodowick 1997, 188). The plane of immanence must be itself envisaged as a cartography, a constructivist surface, a becoming plane promoting the coexistence of multiple circuits and ultimately assuming a type of differential montage based on non-linear relations and chronological discontinuities. Thought, as well as memory, therefore implies interpretation and evaluation, but also creation and experimentation, weaving new threads of relations to be thought as a process of becoming. In the same manner, past as pure virtuality should be considered as being endlessly forgotten and reconstituted. The survival of the past "in itself" acquires therefore an "ontological significance", resisting the normalized conception of present time, to the point at which, at every instant, the present *was*, and the past *is* (Deleuze 1991, 55-56) - the later continually escaping us, lacking a fixed position and demanding its re-actualization and *eternal return*. We could therefore comprehend that for Deleuze: "Time becomes subject because it is the folding of the outside and, as such, forces every present into forgetting, but preserves the whole of the past within memory: forgetting is the impossibility of return, and memory is the necessity of renewal" (Deleuze 1988, 107-08, in Rodowick 1997, 202). There always is an *amnesia* and forgetfulness in memory – memory is not what is recollected, but rather what returns as difference. It undermines the constitution of a final identity and a totalizing account of facts, summoning speculative associations that work with latent connections and potential patterns, apt to be expressed out of disjunctive series of elements. Thus, both memory and thinking refers us back to what remains unfinished and is expressed anew, constituting an unconscious, a pure reserve, or a regenerative membrane that, essentially, is less concerned with time or history, than with an image constituted within the process of becoming.

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