

CASE STUDY: ZULUETA'S RAPTURE

Writtings from inside and outside the Academics on trial

Javier Bassas Vila

University of Barcelona / bassas@ub.edu

ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0458-2795>

Translated by Nicholas Callaway

Abstract

The present text is divided into two parts: a presentation and a paper. First, in italics, I present what could be called "Case Study: Zulueta's *Rapture*" and propose some reflections on its meaning within the framework of current university practices surrounding knowledge. Next to take the stand is the paper itself, the object of the trial, whose author proposes a political reading of the film *Rapture* (*Arrebato* in the original Spanish) by Iván Zulueta. Lastly, some conclusions are offered. I will say no more; the text has a complex structure and is best judged by reading it.

Keywords

Iván Zulueta; Rapture; Arrebato; capitalism; ideology; productivity; political cinema; essay.

Dear reader, the text you will read below has a somewhat mysterious origin and, nevertheless, a very clear objective. Like some eighteenth-century libertine novel, whose preface warns that it is an anonymous manuscript happened upon by chance, the paper entitled "A Political Rapture" appeared in the inbox of my university email account (bassas@ub.edu) from a strange no-reply e-mail (I have tried to reply several times, but always with the same result: "Mail error"). In that mysterious message, a Word document with the aforementioned paper and the following explanation was attached:

I do not know how to address you. For now, I prefer not to reveal my identity. I apologize if this bothers you, but it is a matter that concerns not only what we understand by 'knowing', 'knowledge', 'university' and 'academy', but also my own life. I cannot tell you any more than that.

The fact is that I wrote an interpretation of the film *Rapture* (*Arrebato* in the original Spanish) by Iván Zulueta, a film that is very dear to me, at the request of an editor, for an essay collection that was going to be published

by the publishing house S*****. It seems that the publishers ended up rejecting the project and the editor of the essay collection, a certain H*****, successfully proposed it to a university journal, A*****. After receiving my paper, and despite my warnings about its extra-academic character, the text was not accepted for publication —and I quote literally— because:

1. The essay-type praxis of the writing contrasts with the more formal tone of the other papers.
2. The text lacks the publisher's 'scientific' requirements (structure, abstract, keywords, etc.).

It seemed obvious to me that point 2 was not the real reason for their rejection, since adding an 'abstract' and 'keywords' would take just a few minutes. Perhaps this lack of 'structure', however, did point more deeply to the causes for its rejection; a lack of structure that corresponds to the 'essay-type' character of the text and, therefore, to its distance from the 'formal' character of the other contributions. I did not know how to respond and, therefore, I am sending the text to you now so that you can judge it with different eyes. The texts that you have translated and written in recent years have inspired this analysis of *Rapture*, which is precisely why I have dared to send it to you.

Later on, I might reveal my identity and you can tell me what you think of the text and the story I've just told you."

The message ended with a sudden "Goodbye" that left me thoughtful. How was I supposed to react? Should I read the text? Was it a joke or, worse, a fierce virus that would erase all my lessons and papers from my office computer as soon as I downloaded the attached document? And if it were a document with a virus, could it affect the entire computer system of the university? Would it delete grades, records, registration, whole databases of the university staff? After thinking about it alone —I did not tell anyone so as to avoid responsibility if there were consequences —I decided to download the file and read it.

The text struck me from the outset because of the undisciplined nature that the anonymous author explicitly assumes: eschewing any discipline, disobedient, "impertinent", as stated in the failing opinion of a peer review to which I sent the text some time ago. The pervasive confessional tone (with interpellations to the reader and parenthetical reflections as if thinking aloud), the provocative affirmations (some of them imprudent) and the decision to follow a speculative form of thought, as well as the literary turns of phrase (some of them admittedly awkward, but others employing fine

irony) are added to an approach to cinema that places this text on the fringe of what is (un)acceptable for the Academy. As I was able to confirm when sharing it with some of my colleagues, it is a text that does not leave one/us/the reader indifferent. It can be considered by some as "superficial, without expository clarity or sufficient critical bibliography", as a colleague in the History of Spanish Transition Cinema Department told me, confirming the rejection that the same anonymous author pointed out in his message. But it is also a text that others have interpreted as an experimental attempt at letting in some "fresh air", trying new ways of writing and hypotheses that travel halfway down the many paths of free, pleasant knowledge, perhaps even halfway along our own life's path.

In short, it is perhaps a text, that, with all its virtues and vices, nevertheless reaches what I like to call a "performative reading", i.e. it says more about the person who reads it than about the one who has written it. I suspect, in fact, that this is the author's objective, his trap, the reason for his sending the text anonymously, and the reason for all this montage.

Therefore, I decided to send it to a journal for publication, without the express authorization of the author. The problem, however, was not the possible copyright infringement. Rather, it was that I could not track down any journal proposing a monograph around a suitable theme. I spent months searching, waiting, and tried responding to various calls for papers, being met with visceral rejection, even starting a quarrel or two here and there (I have actually lost friends in all this process...), which encouraged me even more to keep searching and waiting for the occasion until I found it: a journal —Re-visiones— that puts its own nature at the center of the debate, which is rarely the case with scholarly publications.

I will therefore reproduce the text in question, as it came to me, having only corrected a smattering of typos, a (healthy) vice of mine, teacher and proofreader that I am.

A POLITICAL RAPTURE

Reflections on biocinema, criticism and productivity in Iván Zulueta

Author: XXX

Affiliation: XXX

E-mail: xxx@xxx.xxx

"Cinema" —just six little letters, but so many meanings. And yet, this polysemy of the word "cinema" is its strength and not, as some would have it, its weakness. "Cinema" can designate a material place (the dark room, with its psychoanalytical resonances), a fascinating form of entertainment and also an art, a show and an industry; cinema is also an ideological medium and an object of theory, and above all a means of knowledge, although its very polysemy never allows one to explain the meaning of films in absolute terms. Therefore, what I will write here is destined —also voluntarily and happily submitted— to be a series of hypotheses whose validity will always be fragmentary. I do not intend to hide behind postmodern "relativism", but necessarily to engage in plurivocality. More than in any other field, cinema is always subject to historical and subjective truth, to the rigor of thought, and not to the universality and accuracy of theory.

Reflecting the polysemy of cinema, the film *Rapture* (*Arrebato* in the original Spanish, 1979) by Iván Zulueta also has, in turn, many meanings. Of this film, many things have been said, too many things perhaps, because it is always dangerous, like a sharp syringe, to try to say something about *the* cult movie of Spanish cinema. Dangerous and, at the same time, daring: have you ever done heroin, kind reader? Have you ever loved cinema so thoroughly that you disappeared? Do you experience cinema as a "hallucination", as it is referred to in *Rapture*? Surely, the answer to these three questions will be: "No, well ... a little ... yes, but not so much". Faced with the radicalism of *Rapture*, we must confess, we are all like children, I myself first of all... So how can we approach this film, how to interpret it, how to write about it?

Perhaps an interesting way to approach *Rapture*, to interpret it and to write about it, is one that implies the very life of the author, reader and spectator, since —as with the concept of *Dasein* in Heidegger— what was at stake during the conception and filming of the movie —at least for its screenwriter and director, Iván Zulueta, and its ghostly actor Will More—

was not simply a movie, but life itself: the relationship between one's own being and images. *Rapture* would thus be a "biocinematographic" movie, as we could call films that are deeply tied up with the lives of their creators. Let's also say "biocinema". That Zulueta himself shot up while making the film is a crucial fact that underlines the "biocinematographic" side of *Rapture*; that the film shows explicit echoes of the director's way of life and thinking is even more important: the character of Pedro P., Peter Pan's Spanish code name, repeatedly states that he only wants to relate to others through images. "Cinema would be, in this sense, the exact relationship with the world", we could say, paraphrasing Bataille. Also, the gap in Zulueta's film output starting just after the filming of *Rapture*, which took place from July 4, 1979 until the end of the year —a film presented in extremis at the end of December in order to qualify for an award for quality granted by the Spanish government¹— is undoubtedly another unequivocal sign of the director and scriptwriter's vital dedication to the project. Zulueta was absolutely drained by the end of filming, as he had literally put his life into *Rapture*. Later, Zulueta himself would say that his first feature film —titled *1, 2, 3, al escondite inglés*— is a "nice" movie that he did not sign in body and soul, while *Rapture* is an "act of dedication". A keen distinction: on the one hand, "nice" works and, on the other, works of "dedication". "Ainsi, cher spectateur, je suis moi-même la matière de mon film", Zulueta would say in the manner of Montaigne.

It is clear, however, that *Rapture* is not a film-essay, although we do find certain aspects that could resemble this genre-less genre, in particular the very present subjectivity of its director, who is vitally involved in writing the film, as well as the genre-blurring nature of the film itself (drama, low-budget vampire movies, meta-cinema, etc.), as well as the explicit presence of thought about images, time and cinema itself, manifested through the broken voice-over by Pedro P. Undoubtedly, *Rapture* is heterodox, like any essay: analyses of this film do not tire of repeating its "unusual condition"². In short, we may consider it an essay because it explores the limits of genres, because it is radically incisive and biocinematographic to extremes that exceed most works of Spanish and even international cinema. Therefore, to talk about *Rapture* is certainly risky, especially since one of the vectors of force of the film is the rhythm, the rhythm of the voices and above all the rhythm of the images: "How to film at the right rhythm?" Pedro P. asks José Sirgado the first time they meet. Returning then to this question and making it our own, I would say: how to talk about *Rapture* at the right rhythm? Can it really be analyzed from the Academy? Or to put it another way: is it more appropriate to talk academically about an extra-academic film, or rather to take part in that same sensitive texture (conceptual and material) through which the film produces its meaning?

Up to now, I hope it is clear that I cannot find any other way to write and think about *Rapture* than through fragments, by looking for some instability of interpretation that involves me as a spectator and researcher, that draws the reader in with an intriguing syntax that oscillates like the narrative style of the film, with outbursts of opium-derived linguistic “high” and, above all, by trying to do textually, as Zulueta did in cinema, what nobody has done before. In fact, my aim is to speak of *Rapture* as political cinema, and this certainly constitutes, as far as I know, a hapax in the history of criticism on this film. “But it’s a delirious interpretation!” some will say. Maybe, but there is also delirium in *Rapture*, and it is not any less true because of it. “But it’s already been done!” others will say. Maybe not, I would answer, if we understand “political cinema” not in terms of the topic itself (like in Pere Portabella’s 1976 *General Report (Informe general)*), but through the subjectivity that it produces.

To consider *Rapture* as political cinema, I propose first of all to distinguish two senses of what in the film is understood as “rapture”. The character of Pedro P. offers us several definitions of what “rapture” is. Or, more precisely, because of the ungraspable nature of the sweeping experience, what Pedro P. intends is to define rapture through a series of synonyms and equivalences with other notions that allow us to understand the meaning he intends to give to that notion, to that central experience of the film that lends it its very title: rapture.

In a house in Segovia, which belonged to Spanish filmmaker Jaime Chávarri and which is the setting of the first meeting between the main characters, Pedro P. invites José S. to look at an album of trading cards that fascinated him as a child. His favorite album, *The Mines of King Solomon*, contains a series of cards that have kept José S. looking at them ever since he was a child. As Pedro P. continues to point to more cards that appear in close-up, he says:

How much time could you spend looking at this trading card? (...) Years, centuries, a whole morning ... impossible to know ... you were in full flight, ecstasy, hanging in full pause, seized. (36’05”)³

And a little earlier, talking with José S. about the “pause”, Pedro P. affirms with his hoarse voice, “the pause is the Achilles heel, it is the vanishing point, our only chance” (32’18”). This idea of the vanishing point will come back when Ana, the partner of José S., spaces out after they all shoot up on their second visit to the house in Segovia. Later, in an experience inextricably associated with that high, she similarly spaces out over a vision of Betty Boop that transports her back to childhood. For Ana, it is not an

album of trading cards, but a doll exactly the same as one from her childhood (“... this, this, this one, with this little ball that Lila sewed for me when I was five years old...”, says Ana with astonishment) that allows her to experience “the pause, the escape, the Achilles heel, the rapture, our only chance...”.

Pedro P. is reluctant to accept the inner state that has taken root in José S. and Ana, and to accept how they live their lives. Hence, in a defiant tone (and confirming his addiction to heroin) he exclaims, “Frankly, it’s plain to see on your faces, you’re not up for pauses or raptures anymore, are you? A little cracked up...” (51’16”). However, after confirming the success of his experiments on both José and Ana, each conducted on different days and by different means (an album of children’s trading cards and cocaine in one case, a doll and heroine in the other), but with equal intensity in both cases, Pedro P. affirms, “You win. Congratulations. Maybe I was wrong. And it turns out that you are historical creatures like me” (54’25”). The escape, the pause, the Achilles heel, the rapture, then, is a matter of history, of time, of the suspension of time and of one’s relationship with childhood, with a lost state.

Starting from this analysis of the “rapture” as it is defined by one of the main characters, one can derive two political readings of the film: the first takes the analyses of Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in their 1999 book *The New Spirit of Capitalism*; the second reading, which will lead us to speak of *Rapture* as “political cinema” outright, implicitly ties in with the work of Michel Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and is explicitly based on the thought of Maurizio Lazzarato and the notion of unproductivity.

The New Spirit of Capitalism (hereinafter NSC), by sociologists Boltanski and Chiapello, will please anyone seeking to understand the system in which we live and its mutations. Over the course of its 900 pages, the book will manage to open the reader’s mind as well as any drug might. Published in 1999, the NSC is a powerful analysis in which the “spirit” or “spirits” of capitalism are dissected with the help of a sociological approach based on data and on the concepts of spirit and ideology. But let’s get one thing out in the open: I am not an economist, nor a specialist in the philosophy of economics, politics or sociology, whatever that might mean. I am not even a “specialist” in cinema, but that is another story, one that has to do with the disciplinary separation between areas of knowledge and the irrelevance of this separation when it comes to talking about cinema... I will not go into detail, then, about the infinitization of the spirit of capitalism, whose power of abstraction has led today, on the one hand, to the spread of intangible production throughout the labor market and, on the other, to the

generation and accumulation of capital following a model and finances that have become detached from all regulation. Now, linking up with this description of today's economy by Boltanski and Chiapello, I am interested in pointing out the "ideological" character of capitalism on which the authors base their position.

Talking about ideology is a delicate matter, because it plunges us to complex notions such as "alienation" and "science" that are transversal to the history of communism, from Marx to Althusser. (No big deal, right?) But, apart from being a delicate matter, talking about ideology may also be anachronistic if we bear in mind that the functioning of capitalism does not currently operate by ideology, but by the production of subjectivities. (Seriously, no big deal.) That is to say, Boltanski and Chiapello maintain that the spirit of capitalism is a set of norms, representations, images (i.e. ideology) that workers adopt because of their power of seduction and that the system justifies: "the strength and the Achilles heel of capitalism is that it must *seduce* a large number of workers to function"⁴. A classic position regarding the mechanisms that a system has to impose on itself.

Now, capitalist domination is perhaps not an "ideological" issue in this sense. Epigones of critical thinking, from Foucault to Lazzarato more recently, work from another current of political philosophy to illuminate the true functioning of the capitalist system and its mechanisms of imposition and control over the social actors that we are. For these last thinkers, capitalism does not operate through the teaching of existing subjects that—already given and existing in the world—assume a certain ideology consisting of norms, representations and images, as is maintained in the *NSC*. Capitalism operates, rather, through the production of subjectivities: not as an ideology imposed on an already constituted and existing subject, but as the production of ways of life from the very beginning (schools, prisons, hospitals and factories, among other institutions of power beyond the government and the police). Or, to put it differently, there are not structural constraints and impositions on the one hand, and the spirit of each individual on the other. Likewise, we must not think of the functioning of the system on the one hand, and, on the other, of that morality. The strength of today's capitalism resides precisely in having united both poles. It is a fact that nowadays assaults us at every turn: otherwise, how are we to understand the figure of the "coach" (life and work performance coach), the current sought-after myth of the "entrepreneur" (union of vital attitude and professional success) with its management manuals (self-help books and, at the same time, economics manuals) or the terrifying syntagma of "cultural industries" (symbiosis between market law and social identity) that so happily expand and control our society?

But here I have proposed to talk about movies, biocinema, *Rapture*. What is crucial in order to understand the political power of Zulueta's film is, following this thread, that this same reflection about ideology and the production of subjectivity —as two possible ways of understanding the mechanisms of imposition and control of capitalism— can reveal, in the film, two senses of that "flight, ecstasy, pause" that constitutes the "rapture" and *Rapture* itself. In effect, if we understand that the mechanisms of imposition and control of capitalism are based on the adoption of the capitalist spirit and its ideology on the part of pre-existing subjects (social actors), then the "flight, ecstasy, pause" that constitutes the rapture and permeates the film *Rapture*, would be, precisely, the end of a certain social critique of capitalism. At the same time, the end of the "social critique" would imply the emergence of a critique based on "artistic" ways of life that by now has, in turn, been absorbed by the same system of capital via notions such as those already mentioned: coach, entrepreneur, management, cultural industry, etc. This is the hypothesis that we could posit from the position of Boltanski and Chiapello. However, if we understand that the imposition and control of capitalism operates through the production of subjectivities — following Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and Lazzarato among others— then that same "flight, ecstasy, pause" would be a door that opens onto a form of dissidence to capitalism based on a different way of life: another time, another rhythm, another vital productivity.

[A somewhat convoluted interpretation, to be sure. Still, it is relevant if certain historical and theoretical aspects of this distinction are explained. This text is an analysis arising at the intersection of different readings, a result of the necessary "indiscipline" of thought concerning cinema.]

According to the authors of *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, "social critique" is a criticism associated with the workers' struggle, which defends values such as solidarity, equality and security. It is an effective criticism against the abuses of capitalism, and cannot be absorbed by it. It is the traditional struggle embodied, for example, by some of Ken Loach's more militant films, to put it in the cinematographic terms we are concerned with here. And what happens in May '68, again according to Boltanski and Chiapello, is that this "social critique" is replaced by the "artistic critique", which is associated more with artists and bohemians who defend values such as freedom, authenticity and autonomy⁵. The artistic critique is not egalitarian, but rather creates individual authentic lives that are created and want to be unique, break with norms, and "can play quickly in favor of the particularly destructive liberalism"⁶, as is evident in the development of neoliberalism in recent decades. In fact, this artistic critique has been effectively absorbed by capitalism in the form of the "creativity" and "freedom" of the entrepreneur, and "flexibility", in the form of the inventive and "cool" dynamism of companies, cultural or not, but without real capacity for

political critique.

The failure of the French students' demands in May 1968, argue Boltanski and Chiapello, was already proof of the inefficiency of that critical and reformist position, which does not contribute more than an "aristocratic" taste for authenticity, autonomy and freedom:

Artistic criticism, we insist, is not spontaneously egalitarian; it always runs the risk of being reinterpreted in an aristocratic sense: the freedom to which the artist lays claim can be considered as a means of effecting human creativity⁷.

That Pedro P., architect and paradigmatic source of these raptures, is an aristocrat or comes from the upper class, the high and creative class, is something that is not clear in the film. However, one must certainly wonder where he gets the money to pay for his lavish parties, or to acquire and develop all that film. Where does he get those crumpled bills that he gives to the clerk at the photography shop where he delivers and collects his films? His work life is unknown, as are his financial resources; I do not recall that they are ever made explicit in the film. "That does not matter", the film seems to tell us, and this is precisely what Boltanski and Chiapello would attack as a naive conception of the functioning of society, what they would denounce as an "artistic" way of life whose critical capacity is null. In this sense, the raptures encouraged and sought by Pedro P. —that "flight, ecstasy, pause"— would then be nothing more than a search for that authentic childhood that lives on in each one of us, that singles us out and opens us up to freedom. Not equality, nor worker solidarity, nor job stability: just pure individual travel, free creativity, *halu-cinema* without a care for the economic relations that determine us.

Possible objection (to which I will respond and introduce into the body of the text like Descartes in his *responsiones*, or like a revitalizing hit to the vein): "Pedro P. does not intend to display any criticism, or hoist any anti-capitalist flag."

Answer: What interests me here is not so much what the character of Pedro P. explicitly states, since, indeed, he does not voice any political criticism from the position of an activist. Rather, what I am trying to think through here —in the form of an essay, with this biotext— is something implicit and generational that exceeds the character of Pedro P. and even the confessed intentions of the creator of *Rapture*. What interests me is to point out how the "free, authentic and autonomous" way of life —to which nineteenth-century bohemians tended and which was transmitted in May 1968 to students and young people by artists— bursts onto the scene in the Spanish State at the end of the 70s and throughout the 80s. What happens in Paris in May 1968, as interpreted by Boltanski and Chiapello, does not become widespread in these Iberian lands until ten years later. Therefore,

Rapture as a cult film —but also many of the films associated with the Movida, like Pedro Almodóvar’s early work— cannot be understood without this substitution that B. & Ch. denounce in France’s May 1968, between social critique and artistic critique, between the worker as a subject of criticism and the young student-artist as a subject of non-criticism. If the Spanish cinema of that time is NOT political, it is precisely because that way of life as “free, authentic and autonomous” that abounds in the characters of alternative films of the so-called “Transition” (with *Rapture* at the head) is precisely what capitalism itself was looking for, as the NSC points out: the abandonment of social critique in order to make of one’s life a search for freedom, authenticity, autonomy. And, from there, there is just one small step —which has already been taken— to well-known marketing slogans such as, “Your life is your start-up!”

[For further thought: along these same lines, another worthwhile conversation would be to compare the old militant rhetoric of “social” criticism, based on solidarity and equality, claimed by unions and strikers in Uñas y dientes (1978) by Paulino Viota, with the new rhetoric of authenticity and freedom in the character of Pedro P. of Rapture (1979), or with the “subversive” ways of life of the Pepis in Almodóvar’s films from those same years, neither of which are, in fact, political cinema...]

We can now approach the movie in another way. If we think that capitalism has taken advantage of the strength of the “artistic critique” of the 60s to renew itself and become not just an economic system, but a way of life; if we understand that capitalism acts beyond the separation between social criticism and artistic criticism, beyond the distinction between social rights and vital freedom, uniting structural and moral conditions; if we understand that the current strength of neoliberalism —that globalized, financialized and infinitizing manifestation of capital— is to produce our subjectivity from the beginning, to inextricably link life and capital; then this is another possible interpretation of those raptures, that “flight, ecstasy, pause” that Pedro P. encourages and seeks not only for himself, but also for José Sirgado and his partner Ana. This second interpretation would be based on the understanding of capitalism not as an economic system, as an ideology imposed on us, but as a time, rhythm and production of life itself. Therefore, this second interpretation of the “rapture” that I am proposing — with or without opioid delirium— therefore enables a criticism of capitalism through the alteration of our production, our rhythm and our time.

How much time could you spend looking at this trading card? (...) Years, centuries, a whole morning ... impossible to know ... you were in full flight, ecstasy, hanging in full pause, seized. (36’05’)

The pause of the rapture appears to us then as the pause in capitalist productivity, as the suspension of “time is money”, as the interruption of the stressful rhythm of the financial market. Thus, the experience of that other way of life that is not subject to the exhausting task and nonsensical production—for José Sirgado, for example— of pumping out horror movies like hotcakes, emerges rapturously. The rapture, the pause, the ecstasy, the flight, then rise up against the control of time, like the rejection of work, of the productive rhythm:

To reject work is to reject the standardization of the time of life as a whole, invaded from birth to death by production. The use of time is (...) the main object of capitalist control and disciplinarization. You have to take your time to the market and transform it, in exchange for wages, into the time of work. The great rejection of Duchamp [and of Pedro P. in *Rapture*] has as its target this expropriation of time⁸.

Applying the terms of this reflection, what the unproductive Pedro P. is really doing is to open up a pause in himself and in the others: to start with, in the two main characters, but also in everything that he films. He intends, for example, to find another rhythm in the clouds, the plants, the cars and the streets that so amaze him when he first arrives in Madrid. “How to film at the right rhythm?” Pedro P. asks an astonished José Sirgado... The search for that other denaturalized rhythm is Will More’s political criticism; his very way of life subverts time and capitalist production. If capitalism is a way of life, if it consists of the production of subjectivity, then we can only escape by hanging on to that other unproductive time and rhythm opened up by the rapture. Only there, in that suspension of time, in that recovered childhood, can we really rediscover equality and community without making mere social criticism: “the pause is the Achilles heel, it is the vanishing point, our only chance” (32’18”). Such is the politics of *R/rapture*.

In short, perhaps this interpretation is a delirious one, but the fact is that it jumps out at me every time I see *the* cult movie of Spanish cinema. Film subjected to an unresolvable tension: between the pervasive frivolity of the so-called “Movida Madrileña” (its non-political character) and the suspension of the capitalistic way of life (its political character); between the condemnation of its absence of “social critique” and its emancipatory vision as a way to escape from biocapitalism. The point is not to praise drugs in general, or heroin in particular, as the anti-capitalist way, but to think that, as with drugs and heroin, film offers a time and a rhythm that we should also explore in other areas of our existence.

This is the end of the paper that was emailed to me by the mysterious, anonymous sender. In light of the reactions that it is liable to elicit —due to what the author insists on calling the “essay-form” and what I have described as “undisciplined” (confessional, interpellant, speculative, literary, belonging to thought in general and not to a “disciplined” discipline), as well as its palpable deficiencies from the perspective of any academic review, and because of its poignant subject matter (can the academy contain such a “rapture”?)— it is evident that the whole text is playing with the limits of knowledge inside and outside the university and scholarly journals.

Having said that, I do not mean to claim that the undisciplined nature of this text should justify the more provocative or even unfounded statements that more than one professor is bound to detect. To affirm, for example, that May of 68 did not reach the Spanish State until the end of the 70s can be only understood as a hypothesis from the perspective of Boltanski and Chiapello, and undoubtedly deserves further development. Perhaps the author does not intend to affirm that there were no specific echoes and manifestations of May of 68 in the Spanish State at that time, but rather that in Spain the particular substitution of “social critique” with “artistic critique” occurred ten years later. Similarly, as the anonymous peer reviewers have noted, the notion that “the Spanish cinema of that time [the Transition] is NOT political” is an unfounded statement for any historian of that field, and all the more so in light of the recent revisions made of this period in Spanish history. However, the statement may be salvaged if we take into account that, on the one hand, the author seems to only consider as “political” those practices related to the production of subjectivity, and, on the other, he also evokes certain distinctions between political and militant cinema, both in the aside that follows the statement, and earlier on in the essay. I suppose that, as he himself told me in his first email, the anonymous author must have read some of the texts, books, and interviews by Rancière that I have published on these distinctions: political cinema is not a type of cinema that speaks directly about politics, but rather one that opens up another distribution of the sensible⁹.

But I will leave for the reader the pleasure of delivering a verdict on the (ir)relevance of these and other statements, their content and the writing praxis of the paper itself (is it in fact a “paper”?). However, rather than judging it as “apt for publication” or “not apt”, I insist that it is perhaps be the reader who will be judged by the text when reading it. It may be a “performative reading”, as I have already mentioned. As a professor and regular reviewer for several journals, I must confess that it is a text that leaves me ... hanging high.

* *The author would like to thank Hannah Schwadron and Marcos Ferreiro for their helpful advices and their complicity.*

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Notes

¹ For more details, see Pablo Pérez Rubio, "Escrituras para la democracia: reforma contractada vs. Radical Rupture", in Roberto Cueto (ed.), *Arrebato ... 25 years later*, Valencia, Eds. de la Filmoteca, 2005, p. 41. Also, Antonio Santamarina, "From a warm indifference to a cult movie", *ibidem*, p. 71-72.

² Regarding the relationship between essay and heterodoxy, Josep Maria Català states: "The essay form is now, therefore, necessary heterodoxy. For this reason, the essay, with its elaborate combination of autobiography, self-reflection and seductive style; with its alliance, in short, between art and science ...", *Estética del ensayo. De Montaigne a Godard*, Valencia, PUV, 2014, p. 14 (see also page 23). And, regarding the "... unusual condition of Zulueta's feature film. It has nothing to do with reactionary cinema, with the Third Ways of centrism, nor with the militant cinema of the left or the interesting 'demagogical' attempts of Eloy de la Iglesia", Javier Hernández Ruiz, "Psicotrópicos del deseo: sexo, drogas y rock 'n' roll en el cine de la transición", in Roberto Cueto (ed.), *Arrebato... 25 años después*, op. cit., p. 66.

³ I have indicated the minutes following the edition of Gran Vía Musical de Ediciones, 2004, distributed by the Spanish newspaper *El País*.

⁴ Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, "Vers a renouveau de la critique sociale", Interview with Yan M. Boutang, *Multitudes*, nº 3, 2000, p. 134 (underlining mine). See also, in more detail, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Le Nouveau esprit du capitalisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998, p. 42 et passim.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 82-83.

⁶ L. Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, "Vers a renouveau de la critique sociale", op. cit., p. 133. I continue here the reflection of M. Lazzarato in *Marcel Duchamp et le refus du travail*, Paris, ed. Les Prairies ordinaires, 2014, p. 69-70.

⁷ Ibidem p. 137. And also: "The artistic critique has often been accompanied by a contempt for the 'common', for the 'petit-bourgeois', for the 'boorish', etc. In effect, the 'people' or the 'proletariat' could appear to be outside of that contempt, because the critics harbored an idealistic and purely abstract image of them", *ibid.* p. 138.

⁸ M. Lazzarato, *Marcel Duchamp et le refus du travail*, op. cit., p. 7.

⁹ See, in this respect, Rancière, J., *Les écarts du cinéma*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2012, especially p. 111 and ss.; and also "The power of political, militant, 'leftist' cinema. Interview with Jacques Rancière", in: *Cinema Comparat/ive*, n. 2, 2013, pp. 9-17 (available online).