

The Cinematic Daydream as a Tool of Political Emancipation: Plus-de-Jour, Aufhebung and the Parallax

*La ensoñación cinematográfica como herramienta de
emancipación política: Plus-de-Jour, Aufhebung y el Parallax*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15366/bp2023.32.002>
Bajo Palabra. II Época. N°32. Pgs: 37-56



Recibido: 18/11/2021
Aprobado: 20/06/2022

Abstract

In this research, we will start by exposing the paradox of 'surplus enjoyment' (the Lacanian plus-de-jouir), showing that its parallax structure of lack and excess is also applicable to the phenomenon of (surplus) repression. Linking his concept with the Hegelian Aufhebung, understood as a 'failed negation' or a 'negation of negation' as failure, we will focus in detail on the central example illustrating our theoretical positions, which is Iciar Bollain's film *También la Lluvia* (Even the Rain). In analyzing its narrative structures that address the neocolonial reality, we will tend to approach indirectly, by reading the medium of cinematic narration, the 'neocolonial question.'

Keywords: Parallax; Daydreaming; Cinema; Psychoanalysis; Neocolonial; Politics.

Resumen

En esta investigación, comenzaremos por exponer la paradoja del 'goce excedente' (el plus-de-jouir lacaniano), mostrando que su estructura paralela de carencia y exceso es también aplicable al fenómeno de la represión (excedente). Vinculando su concepto con la Aufhebung hegeliana, entendida como 'negación fallida de la negación' o 'negación de la negación' como fracaso, nos centraremos en detalle en el ejemplo central que ilustra nuestras posiciones teóricas, que es la película de Iciar Bollain *También la Lluvia*. Al analizar sus estructuras narrativas que abordan la realidad neocolonial, tenderemos a acercarnos indirectamente, mediante la lectura del medio de la narración cinematográfica, a la 'cuestión neocolonial'.

Palabras clave: Parallax; Soñar despierto; Cine; Psicoanálisis; Neocolonial; Política.

Introduction

Throughout its thriving and turbulent history, the psychoanalytic theory has influenced many different strands of thought in humanities and social theories. Moreover, as Alenka Zupančič rightfully remarks: “psychoanalysis is also something that “happened” to philosophy and that philosophy cannot remain indifferent to...”¹. Therefore, psychoanalytic conceptual tools were and still are frequently used in diverse theoretical frameworks, in order to examine phenomena such as politics, ideology, society, culture, economics, etc. But maybe most importantly, and again according to Zupančič, psychoanalysis has “allowed us to rethink and maintain the notion of the subject at the very moment when contemporary philosophy was ready to discard this concept as belonging to its metaphysical past”².

Yet, the ways in which (Freudian-Lacanian) psychoanalysis have re-actualized the conception of subject, provoked very different reactions: sometimes its reception was followed by approbation and exhalation, while other times it wasn't so warmly welcomed, awakening skepticism and resentment. Moderate reactions to psychoanalytic discoveries concerning human subjectivity were much rarer, almost inexistent.

Arguably, the most ambiguous theoretical encounter that psychoanalysis had undergone with another discipline throughout its history, is the one with the post-colonial theory. The ways in which postcolonial thinkers relate to psychoanalysis still today, carry a significant load of complexity and strong affective intensities – at least inasmuch as all the love-hate relationships do. Already in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* published in 1952, one can feel the ambiguity taking place in the relationship between the two disciplines. In the first pages of his book, Fanon states that “only a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the problem” (p.12), (and further in the text uses abundantly terms like desire, narcissism, unconscious, neurosis, gaze, complex etc.). At the same time, he states that his task is rather “sociodiagnostic” and that “the black man's alienation is not an individual problem” (p.13). As Hook and Truscott (2013) observe: “In this way it is more the patholog-

¹ Alenka Zupančič, “Answers by Alenka Zupančič”, *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, (Internet: <https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/answers-by-alenka-zupancic/>)

² *Ibid.*

ical nature of society, “the neurotic structure of colonialism itself” (Fuss, 1994, p. 20) that is diagnosed [by Fanon], than an individual subject”³. It becomes clearly visible then, that the knot of Fanon’s ambivalent relation with psychoanalysis is precisely pointing to the locus of subject. In order to show that the ‘individual approach’ isn’t suitable for the analysis of colonialism, Fanon will consecrate a whole chapter to Octave Mannoni’s book *Prospero and Caliban: Psychology of Colonization*⁴, criticizing (to a large extent very rightfully, we could claim) the conception of ‘dependence complex’ of the colonized (Caliban), but simultaneously acclaiming (only in passing, though) the ‘inferiority complex’ of colonizers (Prospero)⁵. So, again, the place of the subject happens to be the place of ambiguity. Further in the book, Fanon (1985) will claim that the Oedipus complex “is far from coming into being amongst Negroes”(152), yet will keep considering (Other’s) desire as universal. Anyhow, this ambivalent stance towards the psychoanalytic conception of subjectivity will be inherited by other postcolonial thinkers.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993) for example, designated Freud as one of her “flawed heroes”, an “intimate enemy”; and while rejecting his views on “race, class and gender-specificity”, she praised his “vulnerability as a moral philosopher” (p. 18-19)⁶. The views on the subjective and the socio-political aspects of psychoanalytic theory are somehow again here in an ambivalent correlation. Another example of this ambivalence is to be found in Edward Said’s (2004) last book, entitled *Freud and the Non-European* – in which he reads closely Freud’s last book *Moses and Monotheism*. This text represents Said’s search for Freud’s “unresolved sense of identity” that casts light on something in Freud’s thought that is “actually more general in the non-European world than he [Freud] has suspected” (Said, 2004, p. 55) and that would help elucidating political phenomena such as the Israel-Palestine conflict. Again, socio-political draws on the subjective and *vice versa*, leaving the readers perplexed on the precise relation between those two categories.

With this being said, we can announce that the question that this paper addresses will not directly interfere with the already existent quarrels and debates between psychoanalysis and postcolonial theory, nevertheless keeping them in sight as the inherent metacontext of its own investigation. Our argumentation will not

³ Hook, D and Truscott, R (2013) “Fanonian ambivalence: on psychoanalysis and postcolonial critique. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 33 (3). pp. 155-169. ISSN 1068-8471.

⁴ Mannoni, O (1964) *Prospero and Caliban: Psychology of Colonization*. Westport: Paeger.

⁵ This claim, as well as the more general history of the reception of Mannoni’s book is nicely exposed in Lane, C (2002) “Psychoanalysis and Colonialism Redux: Why Mannoni’s “Prospero Complex” Still Haunts Us”, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 25(3-4), 127–150. doi:10.2307/3831859.

⁶ Chakravorty Spivak, G (1993) “Echo”, *New Literary History*, 24 (1), p. 18-19.

be driven by the intention to impose psychoanalytic theoretical method as the master's discourse for an analysis of the political and ideological specificities of postcolonialism. Rather, we will explore some aspects of the present *neocolonial* political reality, by staying on our 'proper' terrain – namely, on the crossroads between psychoanalytic theory, critical theory and German Idealism – without pretention of developing something that would be a postcolonial theory of our own.

We will thus start by exposing the paradox of 'surplus enjoyment' (the Lacanian *plus-de-jouir*), showing that its parallax structure of lack and excess is also applicable on the phenomenon of (surplus) repression. With and against Marcuse, we will show the impossibility of something such as the "non-repressive desublimation". By doing so, the paradoxical structure of repression that resumes itself in the logic of 'less is more', will be brought to light as the main strategy behind symbolic castration which keeps the dominating ideological instances in power, bribing us with the misery of some form of surplus-enjoyment. The persistence of such paradoxical logics that mediate subjectivity and social domination, will be further explained by the contemporary predominance of a specific kind of the Hegelian *Aufhebung* understood as '*failed* negation of negation' or 'negation of negation' as *failure*. From that melancholic point of view of the 'living dead' that we have thus become, we will note that the time of liberation is over, or rather, that it became impossible. In the second part of the article, we will start again with a critical reading of Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1955) where he claims that the liberation lies in the distant past, far from the constraints of contemporary civilization. In opposition to this mythical view of the past, we will propose that liberation lies in prohibition, in a kind of "compulsive freedom" or "unfree improvisation". In this context, we will claim that the right tool for understanding temporal structures of oppression, and moreover for attaining liberation – particularly in the neocolonial political situations – is the one of daydream, as Freud have conceptualized it. The central example illustrating our theoretical positions will be found in Iciar Bollain's film *También la Lluvia* (*Even the rain*). It is by analyzing its narrative structures addressing the neocolonial reality, that we will tend to approach indirectly, by reading the medium of cinematic narration, the 'neocolonial question'. The aim of that analysis will be to propose the temporality of the daydream as an emancipatory strategy, following the destiny of the main character of the film, whose behavior approaches closely to the one which Lacan (1974) used to attribute to a *saint*, who embodies "what the structure entails, namely allowing the subject, the subject of the unconscious, to take him as the cause of the subject's own desire." (p.15).

So finally, if postcolonial studies were somehow inordinately focused on "interrogating the politics of symbolic difference" as Gautam Basu Thakur (2021)

proposes, we should now move “to exploring excess, surplus or lack that linger in the wake of exercises of self-representation” (p. xiv). Without high jacking the position of postcolonial studies, we shall approach its task from our own perspective regarding neocolonial politics, showing that the subject still plays a fundamental role in neocolonial processes, and precisely because it is nothing else but a gap in the symbolic order.

The Parallax of Lack and Excess

The basic paradox of *jouissance* is that it is both impossible and unavoidable: it is never fully achieved, always missed, but, simultaneously, we never can get rid of it - every renunciation of enjoyment generates an enjoyment in renunciation, every obstacle to desire generates a desire for obstacle, etc. This reversal provides the minimal definition of the surplus-enjoyment: it involves the paradoxical “pleasure in pain”. That is to say, when Lacan uses the term *plus-de-jouir*, one has to ask a naive, but crucial question: in what does this surplus consist? Is it merely a qualitative increase of ordinary pleasure? The ambiguity of the French expression is decisive here: it can mean “surplus of enjoyment” as well as “no enjoyment” - the surplus of enjoyment over mere pleasure is generated by the presence of the very opposite of pleasure, i.e. pain; it is the part of *jouissance* which resists being contained by the homeostasis, by the pleasure principle. Or, it is the excess of pleasure produced by «repression» itself, which is why we lose it if we abolish repression. This is what Herbert Marcuse (1974), in his *Eros and Civilization*, misses when he proposes a distinction between “basic repression” (“the ‘modifications’ of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization”) and “surplus-repression” (“the restrictions necessitated by social domination”):

while any form of the reality principle demands a considerable degree and scope of repressive control over the instincts, the specific historical institutions of the reality principle and the specific interests of domination introduce additional controls over and above those indispensable for civilized human association. These additional controls arising from the specific institutions of domination are what we denote as surplus-repression (p.37)

Marcuse enumerates as examples of surplus-repression “the modifications and deflections of instinctual energy necessitated by the perpetuation of the monogamic-patriarchal family, or by a hierarchical division of labor, or by public control over the individual’s private existence.” (p.37-38) Although he concedes that basic and surplus-repression are *de facto* inextricably intertwined, one should go a

step further and render problematic their very conceptual distinction: it is the paradox of libidinal economy that surplus/excess is necessary for the very “basic” functioning – why? An ideological edifice “bribes” subjects to accept “repression”/renunciation by way of offering as surplus-enjoyment (Lacan’s plus-de-jouir), and this surplus-enjoyment is an enjoyment generated by the very “excessive” renunciation to enjoyment – surplus-enjoyment is by definition enjoyment-in-pain. (Its paradigmatic case is the Fascist call “Renounce corrupt pleasures! Sacrifice yourself for your country!”, a call which promises an obscene enjoyment brought about by this very renunciation.) One thus cannot have only “basic” repression without the surplus-repression, since it is the very enjoyment generated by the surplus-repression which renders the “basic” repression palpable to the subjects. The paradox is thus a kind of “less is more” we are dealing with here: “more” repression is less traumatic, more easily acceptable, than less. When repression is diminished, the lesser degree of repression is much more difficult to endure and provokes rebellion. (This is maybe one of the reasons why revolutions break out not when oppression is at its worst, but when it diminishes to a more “reasonable” and “rational” level⁷ – this diminishing deprives repression of the aura which makes it acceptable) (Zizek, 2013).

This is why we should also reject Marcuse’s idea of a “non-repressive desublimation” as the goal of sexual emancipation. If we follow Lacan’s precise definition of sublimation, then Marcuse’s idea of “liberated persons” who are able to experience “the non-repressive desublimation of resexualizing their polymorphously perverse bodies” is a utopian nonsense – why? For Lacan, “repressive desublimation” cannot be opposed to non-repressive desublimation because desublimation is AS SUCH repressive, which is why perversion in which the subject actualizes its dirtiest fantasies is, as Lacan pointed out, the hidden part of any oppressive power. For Lacan, sexual drive as such relies on sublimation: sublimation elevates an ordinary worldly object to the level of the impossible Thing – this is how sublimation sexualizes an ordinary object. So when Johnston claims that “Freudian sublimation is nothing other than the achievement of satisfaction in the face of aim-inhibition,” we should NOT read this in the ordinary sense of replacing a direct sexual object or act by a desexualized activity. Lacan reads sublimation in the Kantian way: what is prohibited in sublimation is not the direct object but the impossible Thing – that’s the basic paradox here: what is prohibited is already in itself impossible-to-reach. In sublimation, we shift from one to another object to catch the elusive Thing which eludes already the direct object.

⁷ the line of thought from the chapter “Parataxis” in: Zizek (2013) *Less Than Nothing*, London: Verso Books.

To get the paradoxical logic of “less is more,” it is crucial to distinguish symbolic castration from the real castration (a penis – or testicles - is actually cut off) and the imaginary castration in which the loss is just imagined (as in the case of a woman imagining she once had a penis and lost it). In the symbolic castration, nothing happens in (bodily) reality, all that happens is that phallus itself (as the moment of bodily excess) becomes a signifier of “castration,” of its lack/impotence. In this sense, social authority really is “phallic” insofar as it has the effect of symbolic castration on its bearer: if, say, I am a king, I have to accept that the ritual of investiture makes me a king, that my authority is embodied in the insignia I wear, so that my authority is in some sense external to me as a person in my miserable reality. As Lacan put it, only a psychotic is a king who thinks he is as king (or a father who is a father) by his nature, as he is, without the processes of symbolic investiture. This is why being-a-father is by definition a failure: no “empirical” father can live up to his symbolic function, to his title. How can I, if I am invested with such an authority, live with this gap without obfuscating it through psychotic direct identification of my symbolic status with my reality?

And this is why, from the strict Freudian standpoint, the human finitude (symbolic castration) and immortality (death drive) are the two sides of the same operation, i.e., it's not that the substance of life, the immortal *Jouissance-Thing*, is “castrated” by the arrival of the symbolic order. As in the case of lack and excess, the structure is that of parallax: the undead *Thing* is the remainder of castration, it is generated by castration, and vice versa, there is no “pure” castration, castration itself is sustained by the immortal excess which eludes it. Castration and excess are not two different entities, but the front and the back of one and the same entity, that is, one and the same entity inscribed onto the two surfaces of a Möbius strip. The unity of limitation and immortality can now be clearly formulated: an entity finds its peace and completion in fitting its finite contours (form), so what pushes it beyond its finite form is the very fact that it cannot achieve it, that it cannot be what it is, that it is marked by an irreducible impossibility, thwarted in its core - it is on behalf of this immanent and constitutive obstacle that a thing persists beyond its “death.” Recall Hamlet's father: Why does he return as a ghost after his natural death? Because of the gap between his natural death and his symbolic death, i.e., because he died in the flower of his sins, unable to find peace in death, to enact his symbolic death (settlement of accounts).

One of the determinations of modernity is that, in it, a specific form of the negation of negation arises⁸: far from the triumphant reversal of negativity into a

⁸ the line of thought deployed by Aaron Schuster and Alenka Zupančič (private communication).

new positivity, this “negation of negation” means that even negation (our striving to reach the bottom, the zero-point) fails. Not only are we not immortal but we are even not mortal, we fail in that endeavour to disappear, we survive in the guise of the obscene immortality of the “undead” (living dead). Not only do we fail in our pursuit of happiness, we even fail in our pursuit of unhappiness, our attempts to ruin our life produce small unexpected bits of miserable happiness, of surplus-enjoyment. In old Yugoslavia policemen were the butt of jokes as stupid and corrupted; in one of these jokes, a policeman returns home unexpectedly and finds his wife alone in bed, half-naked and aroused; he suspects a lover is hiding beneath the big bed, gets on his knees and looks beneath. After a couple of seconds, he raises up with a satisfied expression, just mumbling “Everything OK, nobody is there!”, while quickly pushing a couple of banknotes into the pocket of his trousers... This is how in our daily lives accepting failure is paid by the misery of some form of surplus-enjoyment.

In social life, not only do most of us fail to achieve social success and slide slowly towards some form of proletarianization, we even fail in this tendency towards the bottom of the social scale, to become proletarians who have nothing (to lose but their chains), and somehow maintain a minimum of social status. Perhaps, therein resides the impasse of today’s Western radical Leftists who, disappointed at the lack of “true proletariat” in their own country, desperately search for an ersatz proletariat which will mobilize itself as a revolutionary agent instead of “our” corrupted and inert working class (the most popular candidate is lately nomadic immigrants). Is this weird “downward negation of negation” really what escapes Hegel in his obsession with the forward march of the spirit? What if this “downward negation of negation” is rather the true secret of the Hegelian dialectical process? It is along these lines that one should reread Hegel backwards, from the perspective of Samuel Beckett’s late short texts and plays which all deal with the problem of how to go on when the game is over, when it has reached its end-point⁹. Hegel is not simply the thinker of closure, of the closed circle of the end of history in Absolute Knowing, but also the thinker of the terrible void of inertia when, after “the system is closed,” nothing (that we can think) happens although “the time goes on.”

But what if the choice between finitude and immortality is false? What if finitude and immortality, like lack and excess, also form a parallax couple, what if they are the same from a different point of view? What if immortality is an object that is a remainder/excess over finitude, what if finitude is an attempt to

⁹ the line of thought deployed by Mladen Dolar (private communication).

escape from the excess of immortality? What if Kierkegaard was right here, but for the wrong reason, when he also understood the claim that we, humans, are just mortal beings who disappear after their biological death as an easy way to escape the ethical responsibility that comes with the immortal soul? He was right for the wrong reason insofar as he equated immortality with the divine and ethical part of a human being—but there is another immortality. What Cantor did for infinity, we should do for immortality, and assert the multiplicity of immortalities: the Badiouian noble immortality/infinity of the deployment of an Event (as opposed to the finitude of a human animal) comes after a more basic form of immortality which resides in what Lacan calls the Sadean fundamental fantasy: the fantasy of another, ethereal body of the victim, which can be tortured indefinitely and nonetheless magically retains its beauty (recall the Sadean figure of the young girl sustaining endless humiliations and mutilations from her depraved torturer and somehow mysteriously surviving it all intact, in the same way Tom and Jerry and other cartoon heroes survive all their ridiculous ordeals intact). In this form, the comical and the disgustingly terrifying (recall different versions of the “undead”—zombies, vampires, etc.—in popular culture) are inextricably connected. (Therein resides the point of proper burial, from Antigone¹⁰ to Hamlet: to prevent the dead from returning in the guise of this obscene immortality. . .) (Zizek, 2019)

So, again, the idea of the “negation of negation” as a failure is not strange to Hegel. In one of the most famous passages in his *Phenomenology*, the dialectic of master and servant, he imagines the confrontation of the two self-consciousnesses engaged in the struggle to life and death; each side is ready to go to the end in risking its life, but if they both persists to the end, there is no winner – one dies, the other survives but without another to recognize it. The whole history of freedom and recognition – in short, the whole history tout court, the whole of human culture – can take place only with an original compromise: in the eye to eye confrontation, one side (the future servant) “averts its eyes,” is not ready to go to the end.

Perhaps the ultimate form of the self-annihilating negation of negation is a certain mode of melancholy, a melancholy which arises when, say, I am leaving my home permanently: what makes the situation melancholic is not just to see how the beloved home is disappearing from my life but the sadness of knowing that this disappearance itself will disappear: There will be a moment when I will no longer miss my home but simply stop caring about it, a moment when homesickness itself, not just home, will disappear.

¹⁰ line of thought from “Corollary 2: Circular Time” in *Sex and the Failed Absolute*, London: Bloomsbury 2019.

The Impossible Time of Freedom

The time of liberation is over, which is what still makes it possible. The time is over because the real time for liberation was in 1871, or 1917, or 1968. Yet the idea that the possibility of true rebellion lies in the past is also a myth. There was no “golden age” of freedom in belief or actions that are constrained today. Even the Greeks did not really believe in their own Gods, which also indicates the obverse, that contemporary life is not so far removed from superstition. In the words of Paul Veyne, “Daily life itself, far from being rooted in immediacy, is the crossroads of the imagination, and there people actively believe in racism and fortune-tellers.” (Veyne, 1988, p. 117). This is true not only for the daily life of the past, but also of the present. In this sense they are both same. Yet this sameness also indicates something more profound, since the crossroads of the imagination that Veyne mentions are a juxtaposition of prohibition and liberation which confronts the fantasy of freedom with its own limitation, a confrontation which is never truly understood, and yet impossible to escape.

For Marcuse (1966), true liberation is located in the past because that is when pleasure ran free, unfettered by the constraints of contemporary civilization: “the deepest and oldest layer of the mental personality, is the drive for integral gratification, which is absence of want and repression. As such it is the immediate identity of necessity and freedom¹¹.” (p. 18) Hence the role of memory, which is “to preserve promises and potentialities which are betrayed and even outlawed by the mature, civilized individual, but which had once been fulfilled in his dim past and which are never entirely forgotten¹²” (This is why “Regression assumes a progressive function. The rediscovered past yields critical standards which are tabooed by the present (Cerullo, 1979, p. 21)¹³. Marcuse indicates a fundamental change is the location of liberation. As Margaret Cerullo (1979) notes, Marcuse’s “insistence on the possibility of a new reality principle as the promise of a socialism which could no longer be understood as a change in social institutions, but had to be deepened to include a vision of change in consciousness...The role of psychoanalysis is to engage with the personal, bringing forth this past freedom, or “the memory of a time when individual and species were still one, of a prehistorical life prior to division,” (Raulet, 2004, p. 121)¹⁴ within the contemporary land of repression.

¹¹ Marcuse, op. cit. p. 18.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Margaret Cerullo, “Marcuse and Feminism,” *New German Critique*, vol. 18 (1979), p. 21

¹⁴ Raulet, G (2004) “Marcuse’s Negative Dialectics of Imagination,” in *Herbert Marcuse: A Critical Reader*, Eds. John Abromeit and W. Mark Cobb, London: Routledge, p. 121.

However, as was argued above, liberation lies in prohibition, a kind of “compulsive freedom” or “unfree improvisation,” (Brassier, 2003) not the supposed unfettered freedom of the past. This is because complete liberation is impossible to reach, which is the same thing as saying it is prohibited. In other words, if the Thing is always elusive and denied direct contact, then dealing with the denial of prohibition and the shifting identities of sublimation can be taken as a strategy for approaching freedom, rather than its negation.

This is why we can take issue with another statement of Marcuse’s from the same chapter, when he says that only certain expressions of past freedoms fit his criteria for absolute freedom: “Psychoanalytic theory removes these mental faculties from the noncommittal sphere of daydreaming and fiction and recaptures their strict truths.”¹⁵ For Marcuse, the issue is that daydreaming and fiction are in no way independent since they are deeply rooted in the same kinds of repression and sublimation that effect adult lives. Freud (1959), in his “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming,” first presented at the end of 1907, has a similar approach, but for a different reason. He begins by arguing that creativity in adults is tied to the play of children, since “we can never give anything up; we only exchange one thing for another.”¹⁶ One way creativity becomes manifest in the adult world is through daydreams, although daydreams are not unfettered spheres removed from reality. Similar to Marcuse, daydreams reflect the daydreamer’s current life and struggles. They are marked by a “date-mark”¹⁷ (*Zeitmarke*) from the moment they take place, so that the daydream of a woman about to lose her job is different than the daydream of a woman about to start college. So far it seems that Marcuse and Freud have a similar position regarding daydreams, but there is a difference. For Marcuse, daydreams are to be dismissed because they are infected by date-mark of the adult’s world. The future projections of critical theory “are not to be idle daydreams, but an imaginative programme of social construction based on an analysis of tendencies in the present society...” (Kellner, 1984, p.123). For Freud, the “freedoms” of one’s childhood inform but do not predict the adult, and the date-mark of contemporary daydreams just helps make this impossibility visible. Therefore the limitations the daydream are one way that we can access some kind of freedom. The manner this is done is through daydream temporality.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IX (1906-1908)*, Edited by James Strachey, Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1959, p. 145. For further analysis on this same subject, see Brian Willems’ review of Laurence Rickels’ three-volume *Critique of Fantasy*, Punctum Books, 2020-21, forthcoming in the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*.

¹⁷ Freud, op. cit. p. 147.

One expression of the political nature of daydream is found in Icíar Bollaín's 2010 film *Even the Rain* (*También la lluvia*), which first mirrors the parallax structure of castration and then complicates it. A Mexican director and Spanish producer go to Bolivia to film a historical production about Columbus landing in the "New World." The parallax structure of this process is shown in a number of scenes in which the line between fact and fiction, or actors and their roles, is crossed. "*Even the Rain* blends several cinematic tendencies, which at times clash to create a temporal short circuit." (Clinto, 2012, p. 245) In one such moment early in the film, the actors are in the garden of their hotel reading through their lines. "Columbus" (Karra Elejalde, who is playing the actor Antón, who is then playing Columbus) is shown proof that his long journey has paid off: the natives are wearing the gold that the Europeans have come for. Columbus and his crew are being played by actors, yet in order to perform their scene, they turn to two local employees of the hotel who are outside of the game, serving their guests food and drinks. "Columbus" approaches the female employee and, without her permission, takes her gold earring from her ear. The employee looks both amused and confused as the actor continues the scene, with him demanding ever more vehemently, "Where is the gold? You know what I'm talking about. Gold! Where is it?!" During this exchange she does not flinch, although she does look nervously over to the male employee at her side, who seems like he is about to jump in and defend her.

But this is all just a game. The actor playing Columbus eventually breaks the tension by coming out of character and being "himself," claiming, "Who gives a shit about gold?" and, "I need a fucking drink!" The actors laugh and the woman is offered an apology¹⁸. However, while at first it seems as if the contemporary film crew are making a movie to expose the colonialism of the past, they are actually perpetuating it, seen here in the actor's assumption that he can approach, touch, and treat the employee in this way. The fact that the situation is fake, just a rehearsal, means nothing. The oppression of the real Columbus is not somehow negated when the actor appears from behind his mask. In fact, this supposed negation of Columbus is itself negated by the actual harassment the actor inflicts on the employee, with "the positioning between the film-makers and the film-in-production's subjects serving as a recurrent point of reflection."¹⁹ Here the parallax structure of the film comes

¹⁸ At first glance this scene has structural similarities to the fantasy rape scene in David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990) discussed in *The Parallax View*, although the scene in Bollaín's film is not, ultimately, about "practicing the love of one's neighbor" (Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006, p. 70), but the opposite.

¹⁹ Hulme-Lippert, M. (2016) "Negotiating Human Rights in Icíar Bollaín's *También la lluvia*," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1, p. 108.

forth. The actor negates the colonialism of Columbus by coming out of character, yet the separation of actor and role is itself negated by the film crew's continual mistreatment of the Bolivian natives. Oppression takes on an undead, monstrous form in this scene, made visible when the actor is not acting, or when the hotel worker is not working, but playing a part in a scene. The truth of the moment is created when no one is fulfilling their role to perfection, when everyone misses the mark somewhat²⁰.

Yet there is another figure in the film that complicates this reading by engaging in the temporal structure of the daydream. The first scene of the film shows the filmmaking crew arriving in Bolivia, and a long line of locals waiting to be considered for roles. The filmmakers are inefficient. There is no way that they will be able to interview everyone. One man in line protests at being sent home. He says that they will all stay until they have each been seen, and he eventually gets into a fight with a security guard. This catches the eye of the film's director, and the man in line, Daniel (Juan Carlos Aduviri), is cast as Hautey, the famous Taíno chief who worked to warn other natives of the treacherous Spaniards, eventually fighting the invaders before being captured and burned alive (Barreiro, 1990) With Daniel, the relationship between actor and role is different. There is no separation to be negated. He *is* the role he is playing. For despite the fact that Daniel is a contemporary Bolivian, while Hautey was from Haiti, and killed in Cuba in 1512, Daniel *is* Hautey in the sense that they share the same character traits: Daniel is also a fighter against oppression, although in a different guise. Daniel does not need to get in and out of character as the actor playing Columbus does. Daniel *is* the character. There is something different going on here. Something else is in play.

In the summer of 1999, the World Bank and the International Development Bank made the privatization of the water supply of Bolivia's Cochabamba region a condition for receiving loans (Olivera & Lewis, 2004) The title of Bollaín's film, *Even the Rain*, is taken from Law 2029, passed by the Bolivian government to satisfy these demands. This law prohibited the traditional distribution of water to rural areas beyond official jurisdiction, as well as banning the construction of collection tanks to gather rain water the privatization of rain water. The character of Daniel is at least partially based on the real-world leader of the main opposition group *Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y de la Vida* (Coalition in Defense of Water and

²⁰ There are a number of scenes in the film where the parallax structure of castration generates the true meaning of the film. Local actors refuse to re-enact a scene of drowning their children even though the director insists that "I'm not making this up. It's what happened." And a child actor, sitting in a movie theatre and watching her performance of watching her film father having his arm chopped off because he has not fulfilled his daily quota of gold for his masters, feels empathy with the oppression of her ancestors, a feeling which is worlds away from the congratulations for a good performance given to her by the director once the scene finishes.

Life), Oscar Olivera. In the film, Daniel's work defending the local water supply repeatedly takes precedence over his acting duties. In fact, he has only taken the part in the film to obtain money to support the movement²¹.

But what is really so revolutionary about the character of Daniel? He illustrates the temporality of the daydream. For Freud, daydream temporality follows the endopsychic structure of id, ego, and superego, in that the daydream is first triggered by a contemporary event, then it reaches back to the past when a similar wish was fulfilled, before finally stretching out to the future to imagine when such a wish could be fulfilled again. In *Even the Rain*, the current event of the Water War triggers the memory of the (at least partially) fulfilled wish of Hautey's revolt in the past, which is then projected into the future wish for the film crew to change from maintaining "the existing order but with a human face" (Zizek, 2020, p. 36) to owning up to their behavior and doing something about it (which the film producer seems to do when he puts himself at risk to save the life of Daniel's daughter). Thus colonial oppression is contemporary Euro-centrism is World Bank neoliberalism. Yet the film also shows how this temporality makes the impossibility of the Thing visible. Hautey's life was cut short by being burned at the stake by the Spanish invaders. The representation of this scene in the film is supplemented by the police arriving to arrest Daniel for his role as a protestor in the Water War. Yet there is another element in play. There is an impossible moment in this scene. Daniel, playing Hautey, is shown burning at the stake, but this is not mere acting. Real fire is shown to be actually burning the actors alive.

This scene, in which "the film's intertwined temporalities are fully manifested,"²² does not make sense in the economy of the film. The fire should have been added post-production, or somehow done with special effects, while here it is being shown as actual fire, really burning the actors. Yet a moment later the police come, interrupt the shooting, arrest Daniel, and take him away, unburned and unscathed. This scene indicates the impossibility of the Thing itself in the way that the scene is impossible in terms of the structure of the film. Yet the manner that this impossibility comes forth is through the limited, repressive, disruptive time of the daydream, which is one of the few places where approaching the real becomes possible. Perhaps this is also why the last third of the film is the least successful. The European actors have supposedly "learned" their lesson of being oppressors and are

²¹ In another connection between Olivera and the film, the passage cited above for information on the Water War, when reprinted in the 2018 *Bolivia Reader*, is given the title "Even the Rain." See Oscar Olivera, "Even the Rain," *The Bolivia Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Edited by Sinclair Thomson, Rossana Barragán, Xavier Albó, Seemin Qayum, and Mark Goodale, Durham: Duke University Press, 2018, pp. 603-607.

²² Cliento, op. cit., p. 255.

now inhabiting the role they thought they actually occupied before: saviors. Yet this falls flat, since seeing themselves as saviors is the same sentiment which lead Columbus to rationalize the occupation of the “New World” with the thought of Christ rejoicing “on earth, as he rejoices in heaven, in the prospect of the salvation of the souls of so many nations hitherto lost.”²³

Conclusion

The French state-owned television network France 24 reported that some authorities in Ukraine encourage beating and tying people who are caught stealing to poles. It was reported as videos of accused looters emerge on the web which took place in various parts of Ukraine. The Russia-Ukraine conflict resulted for Ukrainians the deprivation of their basic commodities, particularly food shortages. Paradoxically, Ukrainians described the attack of Russia as evil without apathy particularly to civilians while looters who wanted to survive are tied and beaten to the poles without sympathy. While in England, Queen Elizabeth II, the British longest-serving monarch celebrates a platinum jubilee, despite its colonialist attitude, garnered tribute from world leaders and ordinary people for one of history’s great acts of constancy making the apex of British power. In contrast to their failure to redress colonial-era land grabbing in Kenya.

Other issues around the globe have something to do with what Mannoni pointed out that the colonial is not looking for profit only, he is greedy for certain other—psychological—satisfaction, and that is much more dangerous, requiring adequate attention to the peculiar dynamics of desire that characterize the colonial situation.²⁴ Truly, we live in a time of uncertainty, confusion, suffering and trouble there emerges a weird phenomenon that points us to the idea that sometimes what is needed when confronted with uncertainties is not to search for solutions but it requires to change our standpoint for one to see the false realities.²⁵ It demands a rereading, reanalysis to the hegemonic foundations of our society from the vantage of psychoanalytic theory to colonial/postcolonial issues. Benjamin pointed out that those nations are not only forged by the pens and rhetoric of the intellectuals but also by the blood and cries of the marginalized. Thus, it is an important task for

²³ Paul Leicester Ford (Ed.), *Writings of Christopher Columbus: Descriptive of The Discovery and Occupation of the New World*, New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1892, p. 50.

²⁴ Derek Hook. *Postcolonial Psychoanalysis. Theory & Psychology*. SAGE Publications. Vol. 18(2):269-283 DOI: 10.1177/0959354307087886

²⁵ Žižek. S (2018) *Like a Thief in Broad Daylight*, (New York: Seven Stories Press,, 8, 182-208.

scholars to “brush against the grains.”²⁶ In this regard, psychoanalysis plays an important role in the pursuit of Walter Benjamin’s historical-philosophical thought. The psychoanalytic tradition of Sigmund Freud and Benjamin participates in Foucault’s view on criticism, where Foucault pointed out that criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed.²⁷ In addition, Benjamin perspective participates in Freud’s concept of daydreaming which is the desire to alter the existing and often unsatisfactory or unpleasant world of reality. The past and present are projected toward the future through the medium of art just like the 2010 film of Icíar Bollaín, *Even in the Rain*. Icíar’s presentation of her daydream (Even in the Rain) publicly there arises an experience of great pleasure thus making it emancipatory. According to Freud, the essential *ars poetica* of the film is in the technique by which the feeling of repulsion is overcome, and this has certainly to do with those barriers erected between every individual being and others. Icíar bribes the viewers by the offer of purely formal, that is, aesthetic, pleasure in the presentation of her phantasies. Freud further explained by saying that increment of pleasure that is offered to us in order to release yet greater pleasure arising from deeper sources in the mind is called ‘incitement premium’ or technically, ‘fore-pleasure’ which the enjoyment of film releases tensions in our minds.²⁸ Thus, making daydream emancipatory as an emancipatory strategy and effective compared to Marcuse’s “non-repressive desublimation.”

²⁶ Walter Benjamin. *On the Concept of History* available from http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/Theses_on_History.html; 5-6.

²⁷ Freud, S (1959) *Collected Papers Vol. 4*. Translated by Joan Riviere. New York: Basic Books, Inc.173-175.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 173, 180-183.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15366/bp2023.32.002>
Bajo Palabra. II Época. N°32. Pgs: 37-56

