

The demon of Béla Tarr: between cinema, literature, and education^{1 2}

O demônio de Béla Tarr: entre cinema, literatura e educação³

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Abstract:

This research discusses the experience of thought from a philosophical perspective, guided by the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, aiming to question representational modes of thought constitutive of the present time, in order to pursue their philosophical ramifications in the field of education. To do so, the article analyzes an experience of thought based on the encounter of cinema and literature. In a more circumscribed way, the work of the filmmaker Béla Tarr is chosen as a fruitful example of the articulation between a certain mode of filmic construction and the literary work. Exploring the singularities of this creation, the article proposes this filmic construction configures what can be called a Tarrian procedure. In conclusion, the encounter with the sensitivity of the Tarrian images incites the audience to come in contact with the sensitivity of thought itself, a place where education can forge its powers.

Keywords: Béla Tarr, cinema, Deleuze-Guattari, literature, thought

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Resumo:

Na presente investigação, buscamos discutir a experiência de pensamento a partir de uma perspectiva filosófica orientada pelos escritos de Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari. Intentamos problematizar modos representacionais de pensamento constitutivos da atualidade, a fim de perscrutar seus desdobramentos filosóficos no campo da educação. Para tal, analisamos filosoficamente uma experiência de pensamento talhada a partir do encontro entre cinema e literatura. De forma mais circunscrita, elegemos o trabalho do cineasta Béla Tarr como ocasião profícua de articulação entre certo modo de construção da obra cinematográfica em condição de encontro com a obra literária, explorando as singularidades dessa criação para configurar aquilo que denominamos aqui como um procedimento tarriano. Assim, o artigo conclui que o encontro com a sensibilidade das imagens tarrianas nos incita a tocar a sensibilidade do próprio pensamento, esse lugar no qual a educação pode forjar suas potências.

Palavras-chave: Béla Tarr, cinema, Deleuze-Guattari, literatura, pensamento

Virginia Woolf struggles all her life against the demon that protects her; finally she triumphs over it.
Maurice Blanchot (2003, p. 97)

Themes related to knowledge and thought from the perspective of education appear to encompass an instigating dispersive power. The questions which rise from these topics are not bound to the limiting borders of the classic fields of educational investigation. Thus, queries regarding knowledge and thought escape the disciplinary lines and boldly cross didactics, teaching methodologies, curricular and evaluative policies, psychologies, sociologies, educational philosophies, etc. Such problematization also breaches socially emerging and urgent frontiers devised by discussions over childhood and youth, gender, sexuality, work, inequalities, diversity and difference, ethnic-racial relationships, subjectivation processes, social movements, etc.

Because they spread throughout the various contexts above, knowledge and thought are, in this article, regarded as educational experiences that turn this dispersion into a strength precisely by placing *sub judice* a prerogative of the circumstances, either of a disciplinary or a thematic nature.

Considering this perspective, we aim to discuss the experience of thought in education based on a singular effort of refraction facing the known form of territoriality which configures the field of education.

Hence, we follow two axes: the first, discussing a movement of the filmic thought of the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr; the second, articulating a movement of the philosophical thought of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

This encounter beckons the question: can there be a time which, due to its incorporeal, or virtual, condition, instead of providing human beings with the progressive accumulation of knowledge, conducts them, through dissonant intensities, to a deregulation of its overly prudent view—such as the effects deriving from the view and the camera of the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr?

This question opens an investigative horizon which makes us enter an enigmatic zone because it envisages, as its research matter, the excess of a time surpassing our own thought. Therefore, the search we pursue is that of a dynamism of demonic forces, whose essential characteristic is precisely that of scrambling horizons, or even of tearing images apart. Thus, our guiding question can be summarized as such: how can this demon activate a set of displacements in Béla Tarr's oeuvre and what traces can we collect from there?

The incursion into Béla Tarr's films is strategic, as it allows for the exploration of questions concerning the experience of thought, problematizing the current constitutive representational modes, aiming to investigate the philosophical repercussions of this discussion in the field of education.

More specifically, we have chosen Béla Tarr's oeuvre because it singularly manifests a mode of producing film as it encounters literature, which configures something we denominate the *Tarrian* procedure.

Exploring this mode of creation in play with some Deleuzian and Guattarian provocations provides us with an interesting perspective on the discussion about the experience of thought in the field of education based on other modes of interpellation.

Hence, our argumentation is developed based on four incursions. In the first, we point out that a certain degree of overlap between literature and cinema enables the creation of a singular experience of time, which stands as a privileged presence in the *Tarrian* procedure. The

second argumentative movement seeks to detail how the presence of literature shapes this process of filmic creation. In the third argumentative movement, the radicality of the encounter with the literary experience produces, based on a singular experience of time, the thought condition belonging to the filmic image, which allow us to highlight this condition for the creation of an experience of thought. Lastly, in a fourth argumentative movement, we explore the ramifications of the effects of these discussions in the field of education, focusing this dimension of the experiences of thought.

A persisting presence: time

Before we proceed, it is necessary to present two analytical prerogatives of our incursion. The first regards how we understand the place of literature in play with Béla Tarr's filmic oeuvre. In our analysis, we focus on the interweaving of William Shakespeare and Fyodor Dostoevsky in the works of the Hungarian filmmaker. However, such writers are not taken as inspiration or influence sources for Tarr's creations; on the contrary, they constitute effective exteriorities derived from an incessant time which uninterruptedly casts not only the filmmaker, but the films' characters and the camera itself in an entanglement of deviant networks. It is, therefore, in the context of these deviant networks that we can place the Tarrian procedure, i.e., the play of effects created from the need of a properly filmic time situated in a circuit which resides always before or beyond any autonomy from the director.

To perform this winding investigation about a time which escapes form⁴ we cannot simply look at Béla Tarr's films based on the premise that cinema, as an art of time, would be the privileged activity to represent, in the passage of time, the images and the movement which take place in literature, in a determined world, or, even, in the mind of a rational being—the director.

It is precisely by refusing such premises that our investigation enables the questioning of the connective marks between what takes place in the films and the singularity of a procedure

⁴ Understanding time as the problematic sign of life whose images, linearity, simultaneity, and diachrony always seem lacking in comparison to the time belonging to the aesthetic experience, we adopt here the notion of decentralized time, or, as Peter Pál Pelbart (2010) posits in his study on the images of time in Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, of the mode of a time which is not uniform nor homogenous, a time which is not defined by the concept, is not submitted to the categories of the understanding, is not "represented", not serialized, not connected, not centered on the present, not bent, etc., in a spatial and temporal dramatization.

which implies, as a creative experience, the collision with the exteriority of literature. It constitutes, hence, a network of time able to envelop the filmmaker, the characters, the spectator, the camera, etc. In the midst of it, a filmic singularity takes place, i.e., a procedure which continuously exceeds the objectives of the director and the objects of the image.

A second prerogative becomes clear: we are not looking for Béla Tarr as an author, but for Béla Tarr as a proper noun, herein understood as the effect of this filmic struggle which implies a permanent differentiation of encounters—certainly, but not exclusively, with literature. Thereby, we comprehend the procedure as an act which rises from the crux of a series of struggles constituting the relationship of internal ideas and external forces, thus characterizing a cinema of unpredictable ramifications.

With this in mind, our study questions how the Tarrian procedure could create a set of audiovisual variations stemming from time, understood as a displacement zone of the horizons of thought. Hence, taking this as the true machination zone of the director's works, we can affirm that it is time that simultaneously disturbs and produces the coordinates of Tarr's creations.

Consequently, this is a research focused on the experimentation of a creative process constituted by multiple struggling forces. Nonetheless, for the scope of this discussion, we privilege, among the possible vectoral forces, the presence of the time forged by the imbrication between literature and cinema. We are interested in articulating the literature-effect in Béla Tarr's trajectory aiming to question how time, motionless, while moving with intensity, moves the experience of thought and the multiplicity of the procedure.

From the decentralization of man to the arrival of literature

In his first feature film, *Family nest* (Családi Tűzfészek, 1977), we can notice the strange subtleties of a filmic look that seems to prefer that which happens at the back of people or, yet, that which allows people to fly through the air.

The film opens with the image of an empty lot and, from this beginning, it is possible to feel that the eye longs to remain adrift, sliding through the place where the chicken in the city make their territory. This longing gains another dimension when the camera shifts to the living room of a family's apartment, a place described by Jacques Rancière (2013, p. 22) as a true nest of vipers where one suffocates. It is an environment defined by the excess of desire for truth and command, in a suffocating situation, since it is completely controlled by the vigilance of this family's men, who, shouting watchwords, guide and obey the order of words.

In this scene, by observing how the camera participates in the situation, we verify one of the aspects which are part of the Tarrian procedure. It is a form of searching for a look which singles out bodies and sensations, allowing them to escape an overly human situation or an exhausted situation.

As we can notice, the camera—even if it apparently operates, at first sight, as a simple external look, as an observer—slowly reveals itself to be a differentiating eye. By producing a subtle displacement in its way of seeing, its look stops being neutral and becomes provocative of sensible differentiation in the situation it takes part. Progressively conducting itself as an unquiet eye, jumping from face to face, the camera draws, from this overly human core, a filmic landscape where men, their faces, gestures, and words, are exposed in an irreducible, torn apart manner.

Nonetheless, by being observant of the singular camera perspective, we steadily realize that the apartment as a whole has become a territory of saturation, where the relationship itself between the vipers, as Rancière (2013) calls them, walks the line of its own exhaustion. That is why the family network, bound to this territory which constitutes it, because of this look that differentiates in intensity everything it observes, transmutes this experience into something more than filmic: vital. Hence, we distance ourselves from Rancière (2013), that is, we distance ourselves from a film analysis, to reach the Tarrian procedure itself in that which reaches us back, the excess with which it falls upon thought.

Well, we must ask ourselves then: how can the camera produce this other type of fabric able to create a look that pierces the command network constitutive of the viper's nest? One of these breaches is noticeable in how the camera guides its look in a game of cards, finding there a kind of lost time which provides a respite from the current state of the viper's nest. This look, apparently focused on the men who play the game, reveals, in small movements, the possibility of dedicating itself to other bodies, or objects, with no function for that context. This opens, at this moment, albeit relatively, new trajectories which escape that situation.

Similarly, there are other moments in which the camera detaches itself from men and focuses on other possibilities. The opening of the film provides a significant clue. *Family nest* begins with the camera focused on a group of chicken in an empty lot; then, this view is interrupted by the image of a woman, Irén, crossing the distance between the camera and the animals. It is at this moment that an event reveals itself to the camera, which stops focusing on the chicken and starts following Irén. It is the first moment in which the camera demonstrates an absolute need to distance itself from a place and throw itself at another which was given to it, unexpectedly, by time. Hence, the camera, enthralled by Irén's walking, surrenders itself to this different view, in a slow zoom-out which allows it to follow the woman who hurriedly distances herself from that empty lot which serves her only as a background.

We find, therefore, in these scenes, two small inversions signaling the presence of a rotativity in the Tarrian look. Inversions, or deviations, happening thanks to this time which begins, still relationally, to configure the disturbing force of a procedure, giving visibility sometimes to the ruptures, sometimes to the need for deviating.

Because of these little inversions we can perceive in what sense Béla Tarr's proper noun is, first and foremost, his procedure, since the images in his films exist through a complex relationship with the world. Thus there is a shift in Béla Tarr's perspectives and ideas, which are characterized by the permanent interaction with what arrives from the exteriority of the world and, particularly, from literature, transmuting into points of view and making the author—who supposedly owns clear ideas and consciously conducts his artistic truth—disappears.

Therefore, we can affirm that the Tarrian procedure is, since *Family nest*, characterized by the decentralization of Tarr's own knowledge—at times due to the search for ruptures, at other times, due to the appearance of something which intercepts it. We must now indicate how literature can draw new landscapes in this thinking cinema, conferring new perspectives to its ideas.

Literature surfaces echoing the necessity to break away from a certain relationship which still existed between the camera and the forces, but, more than that, it is literature that will produce the complete relinquishment of a certain spatial view of movement marked by a time taken as a chronological linearity. This problem of the space-time relationship was, in turn, what sustained the unbearable familial situation described above in *Family nest*. In the film, if the State could promise those people a new home and, because of this, reconstitute and reconduct them to the viper's nest without an exit, this was due to the functioning of a teleological time (the past that was—and I recognize it; the present that is—and I know it; the future that will be—and I foresee it). This time can indebt the present with the belief that the things that are now lacking will be fulfilled or made present in the future. This way, those men and women gain the face of a frozen horizon made of hopes and despairs while they wait for another possibility, cast in a promised future.

There is yet a second question tied to this first one, related to time as linearity, which reaches directly the Tarrian procedure: the truthful narrative. We have been conducted to think of the narrative dimension as a revelation process or a search for truth, i.e., truthful narrative has imposed itself as the first need of cinema. By realizing that time cannot be reduced to linearity, since we cannot recognize or predict the movements of this time anymore, narrative inevitably cannot remain locked to a simple revelation process.

Thus, literature, by crossing the Tarrian procedure, ultimately disrupts both of these premises which still stood in Tarr's first films.

Even if the explicit appearance of literature as the intersection for a new idea of cinema is only made concrete in *Macbeth* (Tarr, 1982a), it is important to notice how the effective intercessors of the Tarrian procedure compose a series of questionings of time as a condition for another type of image and thought experimentation. Writers such as William Shakespeare and Fyodor Dostoevsky expose the real condition of this demonic time, since their appearances truly supersede the teleological concept of time.

If the images of the devil come to be so important for Tarr it is because they bring something of the enigmatic, a condition more related to time than to the narrative. This unique aspect, present since *The damnation* (Kárhozat, 1987), becomes the center of Tarr's problematic cinema, reaching its most radical point in *The Turin Horse* (A torinói Ló, 2011). In this film, the devil cannot be represented or narrated as a figure any longer, but he appears as a time block tearing apart man's identity, narrative coherence, and progressive or apocalyptic truth. A devil, therefore, who constantly deviates all extensive movement of the image due to his intensity. This effect diminishes the narrative down to its bare minimum. It is this excess, atomized and manifold, which will progressively interest Tarr's cinema, until it becomes the creative drive of this procedure, the characteristics of which refer to a Dionysian experience of time. Dionysus is the one who establishes "the synthetic relation of the moment to itself as present, past and future grounds its relation to other moments" (Deleuze, 2002, p. 48). A Dionysian time of intense fulguration which always flows through the exteriority of thought, transmuting that which from the perspective of the teleological time was the inescapable movement with no exit, the perverse destiny, in the ineffable happening of life, of creation, and of thought.

It is, thus, this devil of thought who decisively reaches Béla Tarr through literature. We can perceive this turn towards literature—which culminates in the cooperation with writer László Krasznahorkai, of books *Satantango* (Sátántangó, 1985) and *The Melancholy of Resistance* (Az ellenállás melankóliája, 1989)—is inseparable from an open struggle with the encounters, making this the condition itself of the Tarrian procedure: the experimentation from the crossings. In other words, if literature rises, it is because there is a need for the emergence of new ideas within this director's own filmmaking process. Observing this process, we can apprehend the genesis of another intensive aspect of Tarr's cinema, the limits of which we can devise, albeit its full size, nebulous, remains indominable.

This is because the Tarrian procedure becomes a Dionysian machine, radicalizing itself with the advent of these forces from the literary exteriority. We can affirm that it is due to the effect of literature that Tarr starts operating, even if slowly, a progressively more thinking cinema, marked by a sensitive force of differentiation.

With this in mind, we must go beyond, since entering this combat zone demands more than simply abandoning the primacy of time as a linear succession and, consequently, of truthful narrative—it implicates a sensitive thought, since it happens within a perceptive experience taking place in the act of thought itself. In other words, it is through the battle and the ruptures in the mode of operation of thought that the exteriority confers the act of thought with a heterogenesis of unwavering ideas to the cumulative box of imaginary and real facts.

In order to approach the problem, we can affirm that the homogeneous modes of operation of thought are only possible because they are supported by these concepts of time as linearity and of narrative as a truthful process, constituting, thus, a thought which is hostage to the causes and effects which are ordered and accumulated according to ends exterior to the immanent condition of the encounters. In this sense, ordinating life requires the present not to exist, only its truth, which should rule over the other dimensions of time, impeding what is diverse—and, ultimately, what is unthinkable—to become reality. What is at stake, when we consider the Tarrian process as a problem of thought, is, at once, a political and a vital question: what is put in check is precisely the primacy of an image of the world as a space where a succession of immovable truths which happened in the past are preserved and, thus, where the causality regarding the future is located beforehand.

This possibility of exploring time beyond its chronological condition is, in Tarr's films, inseparable from a series of encounters with literature, introducing—in fragments of books, witches' riddles, and shards of intermediate times—spaces for the intensive forces of matter to operate transmutations, exceeding the everyday experience of linear time. Such movement does not seek to provide matter with transcendence, but to give images the singular power of their respite and acceleration.

This singular immobility and acceleration condition is what constitutes a new experience of image in the Tarrian procedure, suspending the overly human condition of thought, long based on a linear and cumulative dynamics. Hence, it is necessary not to reduce the presence of literature in Tarr's oeuvre to the category of mere influence, but, on the contrary, we must take it as a powerful intercessor.

So far, we have discussed the apprehension of how this successive time reaches its limit, subverting its own operation in *Family nest*. Now, we must discuss a completely different operation, both in terms of the experience of the character Kirillov from Dostoevsky's *Demons* (2013), as well as in the riddles cast by the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (2009).

Kirillov, as Blanchot (2002) has demonstrated, is Dostoevsky's character who tries to reach the higher ambition in the truthful narrative: to completely dominate the future. However, for this to happen, the character must create a limit-situation: commit suicide so he can get rid of the mystery of death which he understands as the ultimate imposition of God over men. This man claims to possess the capacity to know and control all of the human process, rationalizing every fact, thus making death, by excellence, the last fact which man can rule over. Having this as his final objective, he strategically defies or colludes with those who sell promises or prophesy disgraces around him. It is through these alliances and contrapositions that Kirillov can take part in duels regarding what to do to make his predictions happen. However, if Kirillov occupies a place of radicalization in this Dostoevskian universe, this is due to something happening to him in a sub-representational level, i.e., at the speed of a time situated sometimes before, sometimes beyond his capacity to reason. Going deeper in this time which is too fast for thought to think it, Kirillov lives surrendered to a radically intensive experience of thought, which implodes the present due to this desire to dominate time, in the eagerness of his narrowing, in an empirical succession of past and forthcoming facts.

It is a rupture stemming from a situation which evidences the reasons for his suicide, i.e., which is situated outside any of the imperatives of the sense able to convert this man's death in the product of his supposed absolute freedom from reason. Confronting such imperatives, he affirms: "I kill myself to show my insubordination and my new fearsome freedom" (Dostoevsky, 2006, p. 619)—and these are his final words.

The folding—not very perceptible, although extremely intense—which mobilizes this situation is, paradoxically, one from a field of forces able to disorient the predictability of its own movements. These movements, in turn, end up putting another type of death in play, not an organic one, but one as the limit of thought, i.e., death as an unthinkable battle for life, which overpasses Kirillov’s reason, instituting, against his will, a force which impedes him from remaining in the same position and, thus, making his body a force which constantly throws him to his own limit.

We can see in this displacement how death itself stops being a fact and imposes itself as a multiplicity of forces interacting with and battling others. Hence, we cannot continue understanding death—specifically this death which arrives at Tarr’s thoughts from Dostoevsky’s novel—as a subjective matter to man; it is, first of all, a problem of forces and, in this condition, an experience of time.

If, from the beginning of our digressions, we have established a conversation with thinker Gilles Deleuze, it is because his work builds a thought about the demonic or aberrant appearance of this truly unthinkable force. The presence of this force is affirmed in Deleuze’s emblematic passage regarding the Foucauldian concept of thought: at every new power relation imposing a new line of life and death, something “is always folding and unfolding, tracing out the very limit of thought” (Deleuze, 1995, p.91). Kirillov finds himself precisely in this limit in which an anomalous force comes into circulation establishing a new relationship between the forces at play, i.e., introducing in life itself a new experience of time.

However, it is from the witches of *Macbeth* that Tarr appears to have taken his most radical folding, or better, his biggest subversion of time, dissolving the primacy of narrative to confer a time to the image with its decentralizing power. In Shakespeare’s play, the three witches unexpectedly appear in the woods and present a riddle to Macbeth. The man will then struggle to find the riddle’s subjacent truth, whose answer only the witches possess. It is, as we discover throughout the play, a question worth more for the radicality of what it produces than for its thematic contents. Thus, the more Macbeth tries to predict a solution for this enigmatic question, the more he surrenders himself to the spider web which will lead him to his miserable death.

As in Dostoevsky, time surfaces as a riddle without an answer and, conversely, as a drive for another type of life experience. However, in this case, differently from the previous one, it is revealed that rising up to a riddle is not equivalent to being able to quickly or adequately answering it. In both cases there a trap, but this one, as Deleuze (1997, p. 190) alerts, is more than a simple path to Macbeth's ruin; it is, actually, a matter of bringing about a time "which goes infinitely beyond any objective or objectifiable situation", i.e., of introducing, to the image, an unfathomable time, therefore without any adequate (re)action.

An avid reader of Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, Tarr—struggling himself with questions imposed by the filmic time—seems to have found in literature the power of a time which flows against the (re)actions of Macbeth and Kirillov. There is, in both cases, an affirmation of time as an unmeasurable intensity and, thus, as a vital force.

We have approached these provocations as triggers for a turnaround in the Tarrian procedure. Moreover, as we have seen, it is not exactly the influence of these great literature characters which is at play here, but the encounter with a time whose latency we identify in these characters. Such procedure frees the classic time of narrative, now affirming it as a set of forces which are before and beyond the mere condition of the passage from an intelligible moment to the other.

In 1981, Tarr produces his first filming of *Macbeth*, releasing a definitive version in 1982 as a medium-length film with the same title, then ordered as a television movie. In 1984, the director includes as an introduction to his film *Almanac of Fall* (Öszi Almanach, 1984) the first stanza of the Alexander Pushkin's poem which Dostoevsky had used in the epigraph of *Demons*⁵. In this moment, these encounters with literature are explicitly manifested, but the radicality of this experimentation will only definitively take over Tarr's image in 1987, with his film *The damnation* (Kárhozat, 1987).

It is, therefore, possible to trace a creation line between Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and Tarr, but outside of a field of representative relationships. In other words, a line which happens mostly in the interruptions of enigmatic times, when thought loses its axes, since life is evoked by forces which exceed the limits of thought.

⁵ "Upon my life, the tracks have vanished, / We've lost our way, what shall we do? / It must be a demon's leading us / This way and that around the fields." (Dostoevsky, 2006, p. 3)

The conquest of time by the image

As we have indicated, 1987 is the year when the Tarrian procedure feels the effect of the encounter between Tarr and writer László Krasznahorkai. By focusing on *The damnation*—the first work in this partnership which lasted until 2011—we can observe how a new sensitive dimension composes the images, crisscrossed by forces which incessantly throw us into mysteries, forming blocks which astonish our understandings, breaking the primacy of truthful narrative.

So far, we have discussed how Tarr, since his early work, has contended with the question of men's centrality, looking for random objects which might allow him to trace a deviation in relation to overly human needs. We have also indicated, by discussing Tarr's camera's modes of deviation, how the problem of truthful narrative was present in *Family nest* in the struggle between men who wanted to impose orders and truths to exact revenge on the world surrounding them. But now it is the filmic narrative itself which is displaced. *The damnation* brings the mark of a construction regarding how the thought of the filmic image is able to convert the narrative which constitutes it into a secondary constructive element in relation to the thinking sensation which the filmic image can produce.

In his incursions in literature, Tarr seems to have discovered the splendor of the shards. In other words, it is through the experience of a literary narrative shard, passing or decisive, that time escapes its linearity and that the filmmaker can apprehend another filmic horizon. It is the rupture, we may say, which impedes the sequence of the functioning of an action adequate to a knowledge which wants to continue on its path.

The damnation opens with the image of a vast marsh, deeply affected by rain and over which the only visible thing is a cable car. As the car moves in its cables, we can hear a pulsating sound giving rhythm to this absolutely contemplative scene; the sound fills the deserted marsh while the camera slowly zooms out until it enters a window. Karrer is found sitting in front of this window, looking at the landscape. However, this mysterious figure will only be characterized later; in this moment, Karrer, the cable cars, the mountain, the rain, and the marsh are only a series of contemplative bodies.

In this surface between the horizon and the camera's zoom out, Karrer is bound to what he sees, composing, with the suspended cable cars, the audiovisual rhythm which fills the image, thus creating the plenitude of the landscape. It might be possible to say that Karrer, before becoming a character, is simply an any-man, detached from himself, or yet, a pure time in the rhythm dissipated in the image.

We can affirm that a block of sensations constitutes the genesis of *The damnation*; not exactly narrative materiality, but this temporality of an image outside⁶ of time.

It is as and in the effect of this contemplative experience that the Tarrian procedure creates its first character. Karrer himself talks about this other type of image experience, of these not very habitable ambiances of little importance to the narrative, where time is not the ballast which orders life, because it has been converted into a power condensing and astonishing thought:

For years and years, I have sat there, and something has always told me I would lose my mind. But I didn't lose my mind, and I am not afraid of losing my mind, because fear of madness could mean I would have to attach to something. But I don't attach to anything, things attach to me, making me keep my eyes at the instability of things. (Tarr, 1987)

This is another form of experimentation of thought which Tarr seems to be concerned with performing, an experimentation of image marked by a disturbing visibility of the world, turning the Tarrian procedure into a radicalization of the experience of temporality. As Karrer says it, the loss of the temporal reference is inseparable from something which captures him from outside, forcing him to the limits of his ability to think, to the edge of where madness resides. It is a hiatus of temporarily which lasted, perhaps, for years and years.

The hiatus is, therefore, the very impossibility to measure this time which happens in the pure absence of time, while, paradoxically, the immovable eye thinks, for it has been captured by the instability of things. We are facing an image which is not concerned with the functioning of a perception able to guide an action, giving continuity to the flux of a narrative.

⁶ The concept of outside, or the thought of *exteriority*, central in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, is anchored in the literary studies of thinker Blanchot and in their appropriation and reinvention by Michel Foucault. Nonetheless, the displacement performed by Deleuze when he rescales this concept based on the image of the *pliegue*, i.e., of the encounter between the inside and the outside producing, through a discording-accord between Blanchot and Gilbert Simondon (among others), a pragmatics which is expanded to the uses of this concept.

Time itself turned over to the side of the instability of things, i.e., it became the most notorious source of a thought of the filmic image.

The demon who constantly pressed the Tarrian procedure to move, now reveals himself to be the time which imposes the impossibility of the filmic image to follow the flux of its narrative. And here this filmic image completely ceases to be the mediator of a world and becomes a thinking image.

Hence, time itself binds Karrer to an adventure, dissolving him in the landscape. This rupture, however, does not take place in a determined moment in the narrative, as if the audiovisual image—as measurability of the world and as representation of existence—came first and, afterwards, due to a special situation, it was necessary to review it. What the Tarrian procedure allows us to see is precisely the opposite: the pure contemplation of the instability of things, which precedes narrative itself.

Therefore, we are no longer in the realm of the representative triangle—the perception of a movement in/of the world, the reason to determine this movement, and, lastly, the general sense of this movement. This logical functioning does not belong to the thought horizon of the Tarrian procedure anymore.

By radically abandoning this mode of conceiving the audiovisual experience, the Tarrian procedure, crisscrossed by literature, conquers this other type of cinema which gains shape after *The damnation*. In this art, the central question is not of the order of men's knowledge, nor of what this knowledge concerns to men: it is about giving room to the experience of time⁷ and about questioning what this experience is able to do.

Since *Family nest* we can perceive the presence of a demon incessantly displacing the horizon of the Tarrian procedure, i.e., stopping it from making a self-enclosed narrative, supposedly able of being aware of a whole. We can take as an example the anxieties at the end of *The prefab people* (Panelkapcsolat, 1982b). Rubi, Judit's husband, declares he is tired of the familial daily life, takes his things, and leaves the house where he lives with his wife. The situation gains complexity in the next scene, when, despite everything pointing out to the narrative following its course according to the predictions we can foresee, a disruption takes place. Judit

⁷ In a series of interviews, Tarr (2002) insists on the importance of time for his cinema; in one of them he even considers it one of his main characters, when he affirms that “making cinema is essentially a matter of time” (p.55, our translation).

appears in front of the camera and begins a long monologue, breaking with the linearity of the narrative. There is yet another cut, and the future expected by the logical succession of facts is not effectuated. In its place, what we see is the image of a return to the beginning of the film, with Judit and Rubi together. The relationship between these images breaks the flow of what is thinkable and of the game of predictabilities. There is no possible totality anymore. No narrative is closed. Every narrative turn leads to the rupture of narrative with itself. The film ends here and there is no explanation for this event. As Rancière (2013, p. 7) aptly affirms in relation to *The prefab people*, this temporal model no longer regulates the narrative and, we can add, it no longer regulates the filmic image itself.

In this sense, we can agree with András Bálint Kovács (2013), who asserts that *The damnation* is not, among Tarr's films, the one which first supersedes narrative continuity. Nonetheless, from our analysis, we can add that if narrative continuity had been broken before, it is certainly in *The damnation* that discontinuity conquers the world as a sensitive perception, making each hiatus an image of pure shifting contemplation.

From this point on there is a radical shift in the creative power of the Tarrian procedure, through which the dignity of the image no longer requires a narrative. Tarr could not be referring to another thing when he declares he has always occupied himself with making the same film, albeit differently⁸.

Admitting there is a discontinuity inside a filmic oeuvre which declares having always produced the same film cannot mean a rupture with a past production for the beginning of a new filmography; it is, indeed, realizing that something happens between the before and the after as a sensation of time. It is to this end that literature can implicate a transfiguration of the Tarrian procedure, not only because the filmic image gains a new consistency, but because the very demon who protects this procedure from the beginning has changed his features. Thus, it is not a matter of thinking about this folding of the Tarrian procedure which begins at *The damnation* as the end of a creative mode, nor as the point when Tarr has materialized his filmic intention. The crucial here is to notice how cinema reaches the limit of what it can see in an of the world, where the demon who protects it does not stop driving it, disturbing it, forcing it to transmute. How could things happen otherwise, if time itself does not cease to make the Tarrian procedure happen in its ongoing differentiation, without a clear goal and permanently producing

⁸ Cf. interview with Eric Schlosser (Tarr, 2000).

a dark and distinct image? As Karrer suggests in *The damnation*, the immobility of image itself, as landscape, can be permanently in distinction: “For years and years, I have sat there” attentively looking at the instability of things. We must notice that it is the things that attach to him, pushing him from outside, displacing his thought.

This discontinuity in the filmmaker’s oeuvre, as we have indicated, is inseparable from the encounter with László Krasznahorkai⁹, who already had a long trajectory in his literary life which allowed the Tarrian procedure to go deeper in the mysterious folds between literature and cinema. If this encounter is the decisive force of the Tarrian procedure, it is not surprising that the film *Werckmeister harmonies* is marked by radical encounters, the unchecked intensity of which tends to displace its characters’ thoughts and, more than their experiences, the perception of the camera itself.

Valuska’s encounter with the giant whale trapped inside a container in the middle of a public square testifies to this type of event in which time activates a thought in its pure state. Valuska, the postman or the small village’s idiot—as Rancière (2013) posits—, when seeing the unfathomable immensity of that whale, starts feeling and thinking in a completely different manner. It is an unprecedented encounter which captures the character and throws him in another world.

At the beginning of the film, Valuska already seemed like a being in search for the splendor of the cosmos, longing to connect the bodies of the earth to the harmonies of the stars. What we perceive as surprising in his encounter with the whale is the discovery of the earth itself as a force of the cosmos. It is no longer, therefore, a matter of searching for a harmony between bodies and stars, but of entering a dissonance which happens in life itself, in the very thought that dives into a cosmos of pure sensation.

⁹ It is worth noticing that the first partnership between Tarr (who had already read the writer’s works) and Krasznahorkai took place with the objective of filming the medium-length film *The last boat* (1989); however, the participation of the writer in the filmmaker’s oeuvre began before, with the script of *The damnation*.

It is in this type of event that thought finds the disharmony of the cosmos and establishes with it a dissonant accord. The gongs of time escape their axes and the event gives the present the dimension of a new sensibility, which the word does not yet inhabit, while thought connects to an immeasurable body—a landscape providing thought with the chaoticity¹⁰ of its genesis.

This is the presence of nature, Tarr tells us. We believe we are not distancing ourselves from the filmmaker by declaring that this nature is that of the Dionysian time, or yet, of that demon who follows, disturbs, and protects the Tarrian procedure:

we just wanted to show you something about the power of nature. Since *The damnation*, I've always thought about the questions: what is the power of humanity, what is the power of nature, and where we are, because we are a part of nature. (Tarr, 2012, p. 1)

The situation of Valuska's uncle, Mr. Eszter, at the end of *Werckmeister harmonies*, seems to echo the experience lived by his nephew in the encounter with the whale; however, we must point out the importance of the aphasia in this scene. It introduces a variable which is unique, since the encounter between Mr. Eszter and the whale, and especially with the animal's gigantic eye, holds the whole intensity of the silence of words, which was previously simply outlined. Now the silence of the words refers to the village, quiet when facing the several revolts which have conducted it to exhaustion. But it is within this very condition of exhaustion that the encounter seems able to do even more, since the aphasia of Mr. Eszter is not that of the silence of mourning; on the contrary, it reveals the encounter with the time of the world, where words and men can only falter.

The blocks of sensation presented in this study highlight the presence of voids, at the same time inhospitable and absolutely singular, which make Tarr's filmic image the possible outline of every new displacement of thought. Was it not precisely this singular mode of filmic experience, articulated to the power of literature and to the urgency of the world, which gave consistency to the Tarrian procedure?

¹⁰ Chaos, or chaotic, must not be understood as what opposes order, as if it depended on order to exist. On the contrary, it must be understood here as that which precedes all the order of words and time, that which breaks them and is, simultaneously, the condition for their creation. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 42) affirm “chaos is characterized less by the absence of determinations than by the infinite speed with which they take shape and vanish. This is not a movement from one determination to the other but, on the contrary, the impossibility of a connection between them, since one does not appear without the other having already disappeared, and one appears as disappearance when the other disappears as outline”.

The overflow of demons: implications in the field of education

In one of his interviews regarding the film *The Turin horse*, a crucial question emerges bringing to light a reflection about the limits of thought:

‘Why are your films so pessimistic?’ Tarr’s answer was a question:

‘Tell me if after the film you felt stronger or weaker?’

‘I felt stronger’ was the answer.

‘Thank you. You answered your own question.’ (Kovács, 2013, p. 165)

Tarr insists in a vital displacement: the refusal of the imperative of the narrative order in favor of the extensive quality of images. He produces, then, not a cinema of knowledge, or of representation, but a cinema of the intensities, of the forces, of the time, of the looks, of the cosmos in each vision coming from outside.

Reluctant of the comfortable image of a world coded by the grading between past, present, and future, this mode of thought bets on the power of the fissures, on that which without thinking tends to destabilize the order of the world. According to Pelbart (2010, p. 153), it is a matter of outlining the production of the New from any day, from any instant.

It is not surprising, then, that after *The Turin horse*, his last film, Tarr has insisted he would not direct another work because he has nothing else to say. More than Béla Tarr, it is the Tarrian procedure which has triumphed, making the demon jump out from the movie screen, capturing the thinking eye of the spectator.

The forces of exteriority, the incitation of the outside, affirm themselves as conditions of power of an experience of thought. When the literary exteriority—this privileged power for the encounter with the limit of thought—meets the excess of the world, from the thinking look of the filmmaker, another experience of thought emerges. Tarr expresses this event, for example, when he declares:

There are everyday tidbits that are very important. For instance, in *Damnation*, we leave the story and look at a close-up of beer mugs. But for me, that's also an important story. This is what I mean when I say that I'm trying to look at things from a cosmic dimension. (Tarr, 1994)

History, or this other time of an image, its power, or yet, the dignity of that which it permits us to see, is not, therefore, the narrative of the film, but these cosmic points where time itself is broken by an intensely moving matter which is exterior to it. This is the most demonic type of encounter, the one forcing our eyes to learn an instant of the world—when, as Tarr¹¹ insists, we are not sure if it is the matter that speaks to us, or a demon who moves us. In the experience of thought forged therein, narrative goes on and seems to need to go on, but it has lost the duty of its coherence; it has become secondary in relation to the anomalous forces which reach it from outside.

We shall now collect the sparks which flicker in this experience of thought produced by the Tarrian procedure, whose mark was left by the ever-presence of a demon. We will highlight, thus, some of the effects of the overflow of demons in the education field.

The first crucial aspect refers to how we can articulate an experience of creation from the art field with the education field. The creation work developed in the Tarrian procedure allows us to notice how it is possible to injunct two fields of creation— in this case literature and cinema—in a non-linear, non-representational manner. In other words, in the Tarrian procedure, literature does not offer itself as content or substance for a cinema which would represent it in another, audiovisual language. On the contrary, the Tarrian experience of thought forged in the encounter of literature and cinema is produced precisely by a refusal of the logic of representation and, at the same time, by a need to affirm that which is exterior both to the literary knowledge and to the filmic knowledge.

This way of proceeding, this Tarrian procedure, entices us to think about and question our own experiences in the education field. Hence, in a self-criticism exercise, we ask ourselves: to what degree have we insisted in functioning based on linear relationships of representation between knowledges? In other words: to what degree does the education field use the knowledge from the art fields—cinema, literature, theater, visual arts, dance, etc.—as mere representational languages of certain thought contents?

¹¹ Cf. interview with Gary Pollard (Tarr, 2011).

Our strategic encounter with the Tarrian thought and with the Deleuzian-Guattarian thought in the present study allows us to question this representational procedure between knowledges which seeks only to reiterate certain modes of thinking and knowing.

Refusing the representational relation between knowledges enables us to apprehend the experience of thought as something which exceeds a mere knowledge experience, because it evidences the creation which takes place when we evoke an experience of the exteriority and make it the condition of thought.

This discussion allows us to observe the matter of the experience of thought in education from a non-representational perspective, leaving behind a classic educational logic, inheritor of a modern tradition in which thought is confused with cognition and knowledge is conceived as this exercise of knowledge recognition.

We need to take the experience of thought not as representation nor as recognition, but as creation: this is the effect of the overflow of the so-called demons in the education field. In the condition of acting professionals in the education field, this demonic effect in thought imposes an urgent ethical-political task to us: to necessarily take the experience of thought as a force and not as mere cognitive ability of operational, instrumental nature.

The overflow of demons in the education field also makes us confront another question: the way we experience a limit condition of thought and its overcoming strategies.

Our incursion through the Tarrian procedure allows us to discuss, in the education field, another mode of apprehending the limit of thought. From the encounter with Béla Tarr, we have experienced that a limit does not refer to a border line established by a thought which is ulterior and exterior to experience. A limit refers to the power of a limit-encounter, in which what is surmised is the intensity of the effect which there emerges, a condition which, from the limit, unfolds the limitless. It is at this point that knowledge reaches the excess of thought, the extreme of that which it can do: there, where life “is deployed and deploys all its power” as a “monster which combines all the demons” as Deleuze (1994, p. 37) affirms.

Thus, the limit is not the distinction mark between knowing and not knowing, but the extreme condition of a pulsing in which knowledge itself is found in a virtual state of connection with its exterior—this is what we refer to as an experience of thought.

Hence, we defend that the activation of the encounter between distinct fields—in the sense proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1994)—allows us to experience the potentialities of the dialogue between education, arts, and philosophy from a non-representational perspective. The incursion through the Tarrian procedure constitutes, in the present study, a fruitful analytical front to glimpse how an experience of thought is slowly created to the exact degree that a language encounter (cinema and literature) is intensified—such encounter, by refusing the classical representation functions, seeks, in the plenitude of its immanence, to potentialize its exteriorities.

We defend that this encounter with an exteriority—deriving from the Deleuzian, Deleuzian-Guattarian, and Tarrian thoughts—allows the education field to activate its own demons, enticing what is outside this field and turning this very act into an experience of thought of a radically critical nature.

These games of thought disruption, played in the creation of specific artistic procedures, produce an astonishing effect in the more open horizon of culture, since they become uncapturable by the web of what is thinkable.

Therefore, an ethical-political questioning of the experiences of thought—in the sense of qualifying another type of criticism to a mode of thinking captured by recognition—imposes itself as a contemporary need, be it in the wider context of cultural practices, be it in the more located domain of educational experiences. It is a repositioning of education, understanding it as an experience of thought and not as a mere strategy of knowledge.

Putting certain modes of thinking of culture in check based on the singular activation of the educational experiences of thought can be another modality of critical action, focused not on the contents of what is thinkable, but on a radical interpellation of the modes through which what is thinkable imposes itself as thinkable and reiterates itself in the educational technologies. The analytical path herein presented indicates that the encounter with the sensibility of the Tarrian images incites us to touch the sensibility of the experience of thought in the education field—this event in which thought refuses to surrender to the recognition operations and transforms the exterior into its condition of educational power.

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