

## Sergi Sánchez. *Hacia una imagen no-tiempo. Deleuze y el cine contemporáneo*

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Shaila García-Catalán

It has to be said: initially ‘Deleuze’ was surplus to requirements in the (sub)title of the book. At times, his presence is sometimes asserted as a sort of veil so that the author can create a work of substance without feeling pretentious. Sergi Sánchez has achieved the highly complicated task of furthering thought on the movement image –*L’image-mouvement* (1983)– and the time image –*L’image-temps* (1985)– defined by the French philosopher, who hasn’t been given due recognition or been properly understood by the Spanish academia. He assumes Gilles Deleuze’s legacy and this explains why he feels so indebted to him. However, with the non-time image, Sánchez sets out a theorization that is completely his own (which the philosopher never managed to complete). Although Deleuze died in 1995 – he threw himself from the window of his Paris apartment on the Avenue de Niel– he had already rejected television because it didn’t take advantage of its aesthetic potential over its social function. However, in spite of a certain disenchantment, Deleuze instinctively felt that the digital image would change the ontology of the image and the way he thought about it. Sergi Sánchez defines this way of thinking about images, and how images are thought of, as the non-time image.

Digital cinematography ploughs the furrow of the non-time image. The concept unearths any apocalyptic signs and uses their ridges quite happily. It is significant that throughout its 308 pages the text makes no reference to “what is

digital” in the neutral sense, but refers to “the digital” in its most direct and decisive form. The digital is taken as a field of work and not as a ghostly halo of the image. The fact is that Sergi Sánchez isn’t interested in addressing the digital image as a mere conditioning factor of the production, as a device to make special effects more sophisticated or as a means of aspiring to substitute reality through simulation. He is interested in its discursive use, in those places where it is instrumental to the story. On page 167 he warns us that: “the digital helps us show the invisible or name the unnamed”. He thus propounds the non-time image as a telescope through which we can view the impossible.

The text is meticulously interwoven with a finely honed argument, which transcends any fascination with the surface to explore in depth the theory and materiality of the filmic texts. His writing is sharp and beautiful and exudes such a love of the cinema at every stage that each reader is burning with desire to be in the audience.

The book is structured into two main sections that seem to be pervaded by a directional logic that goes through contemporary cinema: ‘from a time image’ ‘towards a non-time image’. What seems to be an unstoppable vector does not observe the principles of chronological linearity but rather an inclusive and genealogical temporality, charged with legacies and flashbacks, of pasts that return and persist from the present. While Rancière

interpreted the movement image and the time image as different shores of the same image, the non-time image is the one that snatches away its compass, preventing verbal tenses from being conjugated inside it.

The first part of the book updates the time image with films Deleuze was unable to see. By analysing numerous films, Sánchez again determines how, insofar as the time image frees the image from causality, it oozes an enigmatic poeticism and delves into dark corners through amnesiac and cyclical constants as well as interrupted and dead temporalities.

The second part looks the non-time image from the very outset. It begins with the electronic image –the televised image epitomises the time image– to look at the impact of video on the rhetorical tradition of subjectivities, between patience and distance, and on the event and oneself. The author doesn't lament the fact –as Deleuze did– that the small screen has become an information board; rather he celebrates the way the digital has brought new sensibilities to the systems and gestures of representation while allowing their games to become more perverse. He is interested in the way the digital condition of the image –while it boasts of always being clear and accurate, more vivid than real life– has been used by many filmmakers as an ambivalent

weapon that is present and absent at one and the same time –the reverse side of its reverse side– in order to poke fun at the commitment of the representation to the referent.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most decisive and characteristic thing about the non-time image is the way that it fosters a total memory. Throughout the book we note that the non-time image isn't another image that is radically different from the time image, but is a time image that can't forget and therefore doesn't age or die. This may be why Deleuze and Guattari concurred that zombies are the only modern myth.

As we have just seen, the heterodox French philosopher doesn't eschew Sergi Sánchez's way of thinking. Indeed, as we read further, the book reveals itself as a surface on which the author summons Deleuze *from among the dead*. Within Deleuze's thinking it was philosophy that summoned up cinema, whereas in this book it is cinema that summons up philosophy, and powerfully so. Sánchez reads Rita in *Mulholland Drive* (David Lynch, 2001) as that classic cinema that speaks to us from beyond the grave, and we read Sánchez as a spectre of Deleuze who also speaks to us from beyond the grave, in order to take a closer look at the cinema he couldn't see. •

*Translated from Spanish by Mark Waudby*