Impossible cartographies: approaching Raúl Ruiz's cinema[1]

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Abstract: Raúl Ruiz (1931-2011), while considered one of the world's most significant filmmakers by several film critics, is yet to be the subject of any thorough academic engagement with his work in English. My book Impossible Cartographies sets out on this task by mapping, as fully as possible, Ruiz's cinematic trajectory across more than five decades of prolific work ranging from his earliest work in Chile to high budget 'European' costume dramas culminating in the recent Mysteries of Lisbon (2010). It does this by treating Ruiz's work, with its surrealist, magic realist, popular cultural and neo-Baroque sources, as a type of 'impossible' cinematic cartography, mapping real, imaginary and virtual spaces, and crossing between different cultural contexts, aesthetic strategies, and technical media. In argues that across the different phases of Ruiz's work identified, there are key continuities such as the invention of singular cinematic images and the interrogation of their possible and impossible combinations. This article will present some of the key themes of Ruiz's cinema and use ideas of virtual cartography, tableaux vivants and the neo-baroque to illuminate a range of Ruiz's films from the Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting (1978) to Mysteries of Lisbon, his last major project.

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1 A Virtual cartographer?

Raul Ruiz presented something of an enigma in relation to contemporary cinema, seeming at once like an unfashionably auteurist film-maker out of sync with the more commercially orientated present, while at the same time open to all kinds of projects that crossed media (film, writing, video installation) as well as film forms (as well as features, short films, 'art' documentaries, films dealing with politics and intellectual projects). This article will argue that rather than simply being an anachronistic, 'European', auteur, Ruiz used this role as a way of conducting research into images and their combinations that is highly resonant with

the emergence of the new media sphere that we inhabit today. As such, Ruiz's highly heterogeneous work can best be understood as a type of cartography, a mapping of emergent perceptions and spaces. Since this cartography is not a representation of already existing spaces or cinematic forms but is rather oriented towards the new, it could be described as a cartography of the virtual; as Ruiz's work made a point of departing from the normative rules of cinematic construction as a first principle, Ruiz's cartography of images is also a cartography of the impossible. While most of Ruiz's work was conducted as 'film', these films have tended to problematise traditional cinematic forms such as the conflict driven narrative, and experimented with new ways of combining images in line with Ruiz's formula, for 250 shots, 250 films.

The most obvious break in Ruiz's career was that between his work produced in Chile up until 1973 during the Allende era, and that produced subsequently when Ruiz was based in France. Even his first name underwent a transformation, so that he is known in France as Raoul rather than Raúl. For Ruiz this was not, however, an obvious change in his work from political to art cinema, for example, as some critics have seen it. In fact it is possible to see many of Ruiz's later aesthetic strategies and preoccupations already in his work in Chile and conversely, many of his films made in France have a political dimension, sometimes directly or indirectly related to Latin American politics. However it is certainly true that whereas Ruiz's Chilean films were produced in relation to a collectivity, the films made afterwards express the relative distance and isolation of diaspora.

While this might be the clearest break in Ruiz's career, it is by no means the only one; while it is impossible to pinpoint any absolute break between the two periods there are definitely considerable differences between Ruiz's more experimental works of the 1980s, frequently associated with the sea and made in a variety of European locations and the cycle of relatively mainstream films that began in the 1990s with *3 Lives and Only One Death* (1996), featuring well known stars such as Catherine Deneuve, Marcello Mastroianni and John Malkovich and which appear to be close to the aesthetics of the French art movie. To insist too much on a break would be to occlude the considerable continuities between films made in these periods as well as to ignore a number of exceptions, films which don't

quite fit into the period in which they were produced. Despite these problems, however, it is still valuable to consider Ruiz's work as constituting a number of phases, characterised by different ways of working, styles of mise-en-scene and aesthetic strategies. In this talk, we will therefore take a journey through several of Ruiz's films form different periods, to examine how this impossible cartography was carried out in different ways in the films *Zig Zag* (1980), *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting* (1978), *Three Crowns for a Sailor* (1982), *City of Pirates* (1984), and *Time Regained* (1999).

2 Virtual cartography in Zig Zag

As an entry point into the extremely profuse and complex world of Ruiz's cinema, it is worth beginning with one of Ruiz's short films, namely *Le Jeu de L'Oie: La Cartographie/Zig-Zag* (1980) which can be considered as an allegory that condenses and emblematises not only themes from Ruiz's work as a whole but also key dimensions of his film-making practice. The dimension especially apparent in this film is that of film as a form of impossible cartography. While the cartographic exploration of impossible spaces is evident throughout Ruiz's work, it particularly clearly demonstrated in this film.

The first striking thing about this film is the title sequence, whose multiple forms show the difficulty of reducing it to a simple or single conventional phrase. In the film itself it appears as a first title *of Zig-Zag, followed by a second one of Le jeu de l'oie (une fiction didactique à propos de la cartographie)/ Snakes and Ladders, a didactic fiction about cartography. Zig-Zag* shows a man H, played by the french film critic and collaborator with Ruiz on many projects, Pascal Bonitzer, who we are told during the credit sequence has woken up at the wheel of his car, on a deserted road, without any wounds or other indications of an accident. He encounters two men playing a kind of board game and who seem to be expecting him, while at the same time showing a complete indifference to his predicament or his need to be at a certain *rendez-vous*. It soon becomes clear that the game they are playing is an unusual one in that the players themselves must move through space

according to the successive dice throws. It soon appears that the main character is caught up in the game himself, which he describes as a nightmare of the worst kind; a didactic nightmare. What follows is series of *rendez-vous* with the same other players, in which the seemingly random movements of H are revealed to be the moves of an ever-shifting game. We are given a clue as to these transformations by a montage of different games that then shows a map of Europe and then several other maps, indicating that in a sense the board games were really a red herring and the true focus of the game and the film is cartography itself, or more precisely the unstable relations between cartography and the territory it is supposed to be a representation of. In the film, this gets played out by means of a series of levels, from the neighbourhood, to Paris, to Europe to the earth and ultimately the cosmos, which the protagonist navigates by a variety of means from walking to travelling by car, train and plane. As the film progresses more and more cartographic images appear, until, at the end, it becomes apparent that this film is in part a pretext for presenting an exhibition of maps which the final credits indicate is taking place at the Pompidou Centre: *Cartes et Figures de la Terre/ Maps and Figures of the Earth*. Rather than simply present this exhibition though, the film incorporates cartography gradually into its highly idiosyncratic narrative structure in which a game played on a variety of levels, that is suggestive of a limbo space between life and death and in which cartography itself is both interrogated and pushed to a cosmic level of an impossible cartography.

The film not only engages with actual maps but also with cartographic theories, articulated by a second, female narrator and which become increasingly delirious. Near the beginning, for example, we are presented with a tripartite proposition that the discrepancy between the map and the territory is because the territory has departed from the original map, that the territory is yet to conform to the superior logic of the map and thirdly that the city destroyed by some cataclysm is being recreated according to the map, thus combining the previous two options. These speculations lead quickly into Borgesian ones about the perfect map, which would have to be on a scale of one to one with the territory, or else would be the superimposition or else subtraction of all existing maps. There is also exploration of the domain of false maps of non-existent or imaginary territories, such as the non-

existent mountain ranges 17th Century cartographers added to their maps to give them more harmonious boundaries. All of this cartographic delirium is related in the film to a series of interwoven dreams or nightmares, further emphasising the delirium of the cartographic project. For example, when H is on a real plane traversing an apparently real territory, he falls asleep and sees himself with his interlocutor on a ludicrous model plane traversing a series of maps from different cultural origins and historical periods (presumably from the exhibition), so that he journeys as much in time as in space.

While there are many fascinating aspects to this short film, what it reveals as an emblem of Ruiz's film-making practice is a strong critique of representation coupled with an association between cinema, dreams and cartographic exploration. In the place of a character caught up in any kind of narrative conflict, we have a dreamer negotiating a series of levels both cartographic and oneiric via a series of encounters and according to a logic of a highly enigmatic and shifting game. Similarly, instead of a straight-forward exposition of the materials of the exhibition, they are also caught up in the game-like logic of this didactic nightmare, rendering them far more enigmatic and enticing than any more conventional presentation. However, what is really interesting in the film is the association of cinema with this project of cartography, as the mapping of a series of spaces on different levels, rather than as merely using space as a backdrop for a story.

3 Ruiz and the advantages of diaspora

As already stated, the clearest break in Ruiz's work is between the cinema, which he qualifies as "anti-illusionist" made in Chile up until the Pinochet *coup d'etat* in 1973, and his subsequent work as a diasporic film-maker based in Paris, but making films all over Europe and at times outside its limits. This break is, however, not as obvious as it seems and certainly doesn't fit neatly into any schematic contrast between political and art cinema corresponding to these two periods. One can see not only the continuation of political thematics in Ruiz's diasporic work and

especially the development of a politics of cinematic construction, but one can also see in these earlier works a playful exploration of both political and aesthetic stereotypes, that continues up until his latest works. Ruiz himself characterised the difference between the two periods not in terms of politics and aesthetics but instead in terms of a much greater solitude in his later work, the difference between work emerging as part of a living collectivity and that developed at a great distance from any such community. Indeed Ruiz's first film in France, *Dialogue of Exiles* (1974)*,* which observes the gestures and rhetorics of the community of exiles of which he himself was a part, was bound to severe any sense of belonging to a community-in-exile, united by the tragedy of the fall of the Allende government and the brutality of the Pinochet coup. Ruiz's observation that the ranges of attitudes of the defeated chilean left bore a great resemblance to medieval theological disputes that took place within the Catholic Church that would be the subject of his following film, *The Suspended Vocation* (1977)*,* based on the novel by Pierre Klossowski, certainly created a wedge between Ruiz and any orthodox notion of militant cinema, even if his cinema continued to be haunted in its own way by these political events and the subsequent experience of exile.

While in a certain sense the Pinochet coup marked the end and impossibility of any collective ethico-political project, on the level of Ruiz's development as a cinematic auteur, this breaking up of the collective experience of Allende's Chile and his experience of diaspora was also a liberating one. Not because Ruiz preferred the stereotyped nostalgic utopia of the militant in exile to the messy realities of actual political transformations, but because these transformations were themselves submitted to various utopias which also imposed limits, whether directly or indirectly on artistic creation. The experience of exile in Ruiz's work was not expressed in terms of loss or melancholy but rather as a productive opportunity to multiply cultural references and to further develop the destabilising of the stereotypes of political and subjective identity that he had already begun in his work in Chile. Nevertheless, in Ruiz's second film inspired by th work of Klossowski, *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting,* any direct reference to either militancy or Latin America, seems to have definitively vanished.

4 Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting

Ruiz's *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting* (1978) is an intriguing exploration of the relations between art and life, and between both pictorial and cinematic images and thought. The film was originally planned as a collaborative documentary on Pierre Klossowski's ideas and aesthetic practices, that would take place in Ruiz's words "[...] in a situation that was befitting to him [...]" (RUIZ, 1992, p. 2) through the cinematic creation of *tableau vivants*. These *tableau vivants*, a practice which pervades Klossowski's theoretical and fictional work were, in the film, attributed to the fictitious 19th century painter Tonnerre, whose paintings are obsessively collected by Octave, the central, clearly autobiographical character from Klossowski's novel, *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (1969). A tableau vivant is the reconstitution of a famous painting using human bodies with the maximum of attention paid to recreating the detail of the original in order to duplicate or intensify its effects. This activity of the 19th century salon can be understood as a highly perverse reproductive technique that instead of making an original more exchangeable through the multiplication of copies, would render it absolutely singular through its corporeal actualization in "living material"[2]. Given Klossowski's obsessive interests in art, perversion and mysticism, it is not hard to understand the occult "aura" that such a practice would exercise on his imagination. So the original idea, which would have required Klossowski to play both himself and his fictional character in order to narrate a series of recreated fictitious paintings attributed to a non-existent painter, and in fact based on obsessive themes from his own work, already had a dizzying blend of truth and fiction, documentation and simulation.

Things were, however, complicated by the fact that Klossowski left suddenly for Italy, leaving Ruiz with a collection of false paintings, some extras and no script. He was left with no option but to improvise a fiction, in which his "[...] special kind of Spanish suitable for translation into French [...]" (1992, p. 2) became a parody of Klossowski's own archaic, bourgeois style, a free translation of his aesthetic theories

into the idiom of the art film, in every possible sense of the expression. Perhaps provoked by Klossowski's disappearance, Ruiz organised the film around a constitutive absence, namely the idea of the "stolen painting." The novelistic paintings attributed to the fictional painter Tonnerre from Klossowski's novel would be examined as a series whose true significance could only be grasped in the relations between them rather than in the "thematics" of the individual paintings. This turned the project into a strange kind of detective film about art, featuring a single protagonist, "the collector" as the investigator, and a series of paintings re-constituted as *tableau vivants* as the suspects. However, just as the collector warns the narrator and the audience about the numerous traps set by the paintings, it would be a mistake to think that this was a film solely, or even primarily about art. Instead, it should be understood as an examination of the creation of theories and theoretical systems that artistic and other phenomena can provoke, about the theoretical monomania that Klossowski is such an exemplary case of.

By cinematically constructing a series of fictitious paintings as *tableaux vivants*, whose inter-relationships are based around the ritual of the Baphomet, Ruiz was not so much making a film about Klossowski's theories as directly enacting them. Certainly a cinematic *tableau vivant* does not produce the same effect as a live one, but in its ambiguous intermediate status between a pictorial and a cinematic image, as an image that is in apparent stasis, and yet breathes and pulsates, it enacts a similar type of suspension of life as the practice of *tableaux vivants* itself. In addition to this, in its ability to provoke theoretical activity through being part of a series, the use of *tableaux vivants* in *Hypothesis* is clearly allegorical of the power of both pictorial and cinematic images to provoke thought, to generate complex levels of interpretation. Furthermore, in its aporetic structure it is an attempt to examine the void at the centre of all systems whether philosophical or aesthetic, the point at which they open out onto an unspecifiable, chaotic outside. This is in accordance with Ruiz's own approach to cinema, which is to view films not as self-enclosed entities but as open systems that constantly evoke other films and images to infinity. In this sense cinematic images can function in a similar manner to *tableaux vivants*: rather than the unambiguous representation of a particular time and place, they are potentially nothing more than suspended poses and scenes opening out onto infinite

relations with other images. In the original practice of *tableaux vivants* a suspension of time was enacted through the relationship set up between the original models who posed for the artist and the re-constitution of the same poses in the present. The cinema, like the practice of *tableaux vivants*, is an art of demonic repetition, of simulation, but it extends the powers of repetition from a simple doubling into a wild proliferation of images. It is this cinematic power of simulacral repetition, and the sense that what is repeated is other to what the images appear to represent, that is developed in *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting* through the cinematic exploration of its precursor, the tableau vivant.

5 Ruiz's cinema of piracy

During the 1980's, Ruiz made a series of films based around sea voyages or piracy, which explicitly incorporated in some way the Magic Realist interest in the fantastic, ambiguous states between life, death, spirits and other paranormal phenomena. However, these films by Ruiz do not fit easily into any of the usual categories used to describe the cinema of the fantastic. While some critics have related Ruiz's work to the Latin American literary genre of Magic Realism, others, such as Michael Richardson have seen it rather as a continuation of Surrealism (RICHARDSON, 2006); while both these types of film-making and images are certainly present in Ruiz's works, Ruiz's own statements and indeed his films themselves demonstrate clearly that these styles are merely a source of images or systems of images that he makes use of, in the same way that he makes use of images and narratives from popular culture such as the melodramatic feuilleton. In fact, Ruiz has said that what interests him in Surrealism are its kitsch shock effects rather than its idealist utopian aspirations, and he has also referred to Magic Realism in terms of kitsch. Consider, for example, the opening sequence from *City of Pirates.* Rather than the beginning of any story, the scene presents an array of initially disconnected elements that only gradually come into relation with one another. However, in this process the film tends to become more rather than less bizarre and works to open up a mysterious cinematic space out of apparently banal

and simple elements: a kitchen, a terrace, some knives, a bouncing ball, a couple and a maid. After opening shots of the sea with highly artificial coloured filters in which the tide seems to be moving in two directions at once, a visual refrain that punctuates the film, there is a complex sequence shot containing a number of elements that seem to exist in separate spaces to each other. There is a radio switched on at the beginning of the sequence by the maid, Isidore, to which no-one is listening. Meanwhile the maid is recounting the sorrows of her broken heart in a series of clichés and in the terms of popular melodrama. Simultaneously, a woman of about the same age is pacing in the kitchen also reciting banal statements but of a more bourgeois variety. Following this sequence shot, there is an abrupt cut to a shot in which depth of field is used to present the woman in the foreground, obsessively washing a glass and entreating Isidore in the background to 'forget him' while the latter clearly remains inconsolable.

The scene then shifts to the terrace and the mobile close up of a tray of coffee and breakfast that Isidore is bringing to the couple we presume to be her employers. However, this initially banal scene is rendered through an alternation of shots that become increasingly bizarre, and use depth of field to present extremely magnified objects in the foreground of the image, completely distorting any type of natural perception. These include an extreme close-up of the woman's hand with cigarette in a long holder with Isidore in the background facing the sea, a shot of a drinking glass with an iced drink, in front of an image of the woman, a shot of a plate of potatoes in extreme close up in front of a white bouncing ball in the middle ground with the man in the background, a shot form under the glass table via some fruit to the head of the man and so on. The visual culmination of this sequence of increasingly absurd and improbable point of view shots is an entirely impossible shot from inside the male character's mouth beyond whose teeth the woman's face can be seen.

During this visually remarkable sequence the conversation has consisted of apparent non sequiturs and poetic statements such as 'how sad it is, the coffee of exile' while a key figure in the scene is the bouncing ball which is not only self-moving but seen by the couple in a matter of fact way as being their lost son. They also discuss both having to move house and the man's toothache, which

provides a type of justification for the impossible shot referred to above. This description which only very partially does justice to this opening sequence can give some idea of Ruiz's way of working in this film in which one is following a series of associations between the visual and sonic components constituted by the objects, characters, décors, and the cinematic shots and movements themselves, whose meaning, if there is any, is yet to be determined. To complicate things still further, key elements of the story, such as it is, are deliberately suppressed. For example, while we assume that these characters permanently live in the house they are occupying, in fact, they are merely some type of guardians, who move from house to house, according to the rule that whenever the man gets a toothache, they have to move. With this arbitrary but nevertheless explanatory key omitted, the following scene in which the characters are seen throwing their suitcases through the open window of another house has no justification whatsoever. Nevertheless, this is precisely what Ruiz was aiming at, since for him, even suppressed, subtracted scenes play a role in the effects generated by a film and in a sense because of films being composed of the montage of multiple spatio-temporal fragments every shot has a suppressed, subtracted before and after that continues to play a role in a film despite not being perceived by the spectator.

This complex layering of different styles in Ruiz's work is a clear expression of his diasporic experience in that it combines and superimposes styles and sources associated with Latin America with European styles, creating a hybrid and complex form of cinema that defies categorisation. A more productive understanding of this cinema can be reached via the idea of the Baroque or Neo-Baroque as Christine Buci-Glucksmann suggests in her essay *The Baroque Eye of the Camera* (BUCI-GLUCKSMANN, 2004). The Baroque is a particularly slippery category in the history of art that frustrates attempts to contain it whether in a specific historical period, or geographical location, and in Latin America it continued to play an important role, well beyond the period of colonisation (according to Ruiz the spanish colonisation of South America was in itself a Baroque act) and arguably up until the work of modern writers like Borges and the whole style of Magical Realism. As Buci-Glucksman has also shown in her work on Walter Benjamin (1994) there is also a direct link between the Baroque and European modernity and

modernism (and one might be tempted to say even postmodernism), passing through figures like Baudelaire and Benjamin himself. In this optic, Surrealism itself, at least in some of its variants can be understood as a particular instance or return of the Baroque in relation to modernity. What characterises the Baroque most of all is an emphasis on the fragment over the whole and a resulting complexity in which there are multiple levels coexisting within the same work, which are not reducible to an overall scheme or perspective. This is the great distinction made by Benjamin between the Baroque and Romanticism; whereas Romanticism presents fragments as symbols of a totalisable whole or essence, even if this whole is absent, in the Baroque there are only allegories, which are enigmatic signs leading only to other signs and therefore ultimately to a non-totalisable infinity of irreconcilable points of view. The use of this kind of system is most clearly evident in Ruiz's *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting*. Ruiz himself distinguished the usual rational system at work in a detective story, which he qualifies as Gothic with the Baroque system of this film, in the following terms:

> As a rule, in a police film, as in any gothic system, lets say like Marxism and Psychoanalysis, in a system where there is a facade and a riddle, you enjoy finding the explanation. In a more Baroque system, as in the system of this film, you don't enjoy finding the enigma, but rather go from one level of interpretation to another, which leads to a very complex reality (RUIZ, 1992, p. 2).

However much knowledge we might bring to bear in interpreting the signs we are presented with, we will never get to the core of the mystery, as this core is itself only another enigma and besides there is always a 'missing painting' an irremediable gap in our knowledge that prevents the system of interpretation from ever reaching the unitary totalisation of a solution. However, more than just a Baroque cinema, an attribution that could be applied to a number of other modern directors such as Fellini, Buci-Glucksman refers to Ruiz's cinema as a second degree Baroque cinema, or Baroque of the Baroque in the following terms:

A Baroque look of opening up therefore, where a film is always several films, in a sort of aborescent and proliferating structure respecting no chronology, no dramatisation of the action, no Euclidean space: To cite everything, mix everything, passing through all the regimes of the image and of the visual (painting in a free state, immobilised photo or postcard, theatre open to the space of cinema, cinema theatricalised). As if in this gigantic combustion of forms, cinema could no longer be only a Baroque palimpsest, a theatre of shadows and memory. Because if the Baroque implies a cinema of seeing and no longer of acting, the cinema of Ruiz would be a sort of Baroque to the second degree (BUCI-GLUCKSMANN, 2004, p. 33).

One could say that this is a specifically postmodern from of the Baroque, a Neo-Baroque aesthetics also evident in writers such as Borges and Gombrowicz, in which the complexities of Baroque systems are explicitly played with and pushed to a point of dissolution into chaos, which is indeed what takes place at the end of *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting.* However, taking Buci-Glucksman's suggestion that what distinguishes Ruiz's cinema is the act of incorporating everything, all forms, styles and images or at least as many as possible, in a practice that goes beyond mere citation or parody and paradoxically attains the level of the real through the most artificial of processes, it seems reasonable to use the terms of a "cinema of piracy" to refer to these films form the 1980's with their obsessive focus on the sea, voyages, pirates and child-hood. This is not so much because of the content, and indeed in *3 Crowns for a Sailor* in distinction to some of Ruiz's later films, there are no pirates, but due to a method of aesthetic piracy understood as the appropriation of the most diverse and seemingly incompatible sources, genres and styles in the construction of a unique, deterritorialised and enigmatic cinematic work. The stories associated with the sea of long voyages, shipwrecks and pirates comprises, of course, a distinctively anachronistic genre, from Homer to the Nineteenth Century at which point, at the height of colonial delirium, it was a central part of the modern imaginary, before being entirely surpassed by other themes and more instantaneous modes of transportation. However, it is precisely this anachronism that renders it the perfect vehicle for Ruiz's diasporic cinema, as the immediate antecedent to the contemporary experience of unrootedness or deterritorialisation; we may no longer be taking these voyages but we are still very much "at sea", all the more so in the

wake of the failures of the various Twentieth Century utopias of which Allende's Chile was a relatively late and powerful example. Therefore rather than simply a gratuitous anachrony, Ruiz's piracy of these Nineteenth Century stories is in fact an archaeology of the present, exploring the trajectories by which we arrived at the complex 'non-places' of the contemporary world.

6 3 Crowns for a Sailor

3 Crowns for a Sailor explicitly presents itself from the beginning as a complex maze of storytelling; in a colour pre-credits sequence, to the sound of Latin American accordion music, we see a glass of red wine and a hand that is writing a first person account of a sea voyage to the West Indies. Then, during the credits we see an old-fashioned ship sailing on an impossibly purple sea (which we might assume corresponds to the already narrated voyage). However, after the credits we see instead deep focus black and white images and hear the narration of a student who has just arbitrarily murdered his professor and teacher in the art of polishing diamonds for no particular reason, an act that is confirmed by the images we see (whose deep focus evokes an atmosphere of Wellesian film noir, while the narration evokes modernist polish literature). However at a certain point the narration abruptly changes and we hear the line "Tadeusz, who referred to himself in the third person." Already we have several problems in locating any stable point of view; if we are now seeing the point of view of Tadeusz from this third person narration, what are we to make of the preceding first person narration, an uncertainty of subjective identity that is only amplified throughout the film. 'Tadeusz' now meets the sailor and after an absurdly logical exchange of dialogue, this leads to a scene of storytelling in which part of the price (the other part being the three Danish Crowns) that the student must pay for being rescued from danger (although it is already suggested that in fact Tadeusz has already himself been killed by a stray bullet), is to listen to the story recounted by the sailor, which begins in the chilean port of Valparaiso.

The rest of the film involves a relay between these two scenes, the

first shot in black and white of the scene of story telling and the second in colour of the fantastic story that is being told. However, this doubling is complicated by the fact that characters within the narrated story tend also to narrate other stories and all these layers of narration have multiple resonances with each other, but also by the interruptions of the first scene. These interruptions have the tendency to remind the viewer that these fantastic tales are already known; the student is constantly becoming impatient with the story, whose tale of a ship of the dead, of strange rituals amongst seamen, of meeting exotic characters in picturesque ports is already a kind of cliché, a familiar genre of conventional stories that the student is impatient to get to the more interesting and original aspects of. This sets up a *mise-en-abyme* structure whereby the viewer is doubled by the student who embodies both the fascination and boredom with these kinds of stories, the credulity and incredulity they inspire, the impatience to get to the end of the tale and the experience of being caught up in the world of the story, which in the student's case is literalised by his doubling of the role of the sailor since he too has a place on the Funchalense, or the ship of the dead.

The other key aspect of this film is that through its deliberate use of clichéd genres and narratives, of the types of story that every-one has heard before (and it is worth noting that it draws on both Latin American sources and European ones such as Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," not to mention popular tales of ghost ships) it taps into a modern collective imaginary of movement and subjective dislocation, that it is then able to play with. Key to this is deployment of repetition so that narrative events never have the linear effects we are anticipating but rather tend toward effects of repetition. For example, when the narrator's friend, who refers to himself constantly as 'the other,' commits suicide in protest at the cruelties of the officers (evocation of Potemkin), the narrator I surprised to find him alive and well the next day saying that it was not he who jumped but the other. This doubling and dislocation of subjectivity reaches its apotheosis when the narrator himself becomes possessed by "the other" or an alien perspective and it is only with great difficulty that he is able to maintain any sense of subjective identity.

This spectral subjectivity is clearly an artificial consequence of the narrative cliché of the ship of the dead, which in its presentation of a limbo state

between life and death (and these spectral figures are surprisingly corporeal with their constant eating, various sores and diseases, and mysterious tattoos), allows for a complication and multiplication of problems of identity. But this limbo state is also precisely that of diaspora and exile in which one must at the very least double one's identity in relation to both one's country of origin and the new adopted cultural context. The limbo state presented in the film therefore directly inscribes the experience of diaspora, rather than representing it as a narrative content. In this regard one could view the artificial attempts of the narrator to create social bonds by inventing a hybrid family consisting of the 'virgin' prostitute who becomes his 'sweetheart,' the young old man that he adopts as his son in Singapore etc. as similarly expressing the subjective experience of diaspora not as one of melancholy or loss but one of a social creativity in movement, that is nevertheless haunted by the former experience of collectivity.

7 Ruiz's Time Regained

As a more recent example, representing Ruiz's later cinematic work, we can take his 1999 adaptation of Proust's *Time Regained* (1992)*.* The fact that this is an expensive production using relatively big stars and period costumes could lead to the impression that in this film, Ruiz has fully adopted the idiom of the European and specifically the French art film. It is certainly true that the film does conform to some of the conventions of literary adaptation. Nevertheless, I would argue that the film contains a number of Ruizian elements that at very least play with these conventions and at times challenge them. First of all, Ruiz has chose the most unadaptable part of a work, *In Search of Lost Time* that already poses considerable problems for cinematic adaptation not so much because of its length as because of its style, which is both highly literary and contains extended philosophical reflections. This tendency is amplified in *Time Regained,* which is a kind of survey or recapitulation of the work as a whole, in which there are large passages devoted to the operations of time and memory, to which the various narrative scenes presented are subordinated. Rather than other adaptations of Proust such as Barbet

Schroeder's *Swann in Love* (1984)*,* Ruiz's *Time Regained* aims not to merely represent the more narrative aspects of the work but find a cinematic equivalent for the work itself, including its most abstract and literary elements; in other words to use film to explore the experiences of involuntary memory developed in Proust's work. This meant attempting to find a cinematic equivalent for Proust's use of language in order to communicate the Proustian conception of time by cinematic means. It is certainly the case that this was not done successfully throughout the film and there are indeed parts of it that are indistinguishable form conventional literary adaptations. However, in the more innovative parts of the film such as the following sequence, there is a full realisation by means of cinematic language of Proust's work.1.

Finally we can end with what is in some ways a kind of portuguese sequel to his earlier adaptation of Proust, *Time Regained.* This is *Mysteries of Lisbon* from 2011, arguably Ruiz's last major project. As with most of the more complex Ruiz films since the 1990s, *Mysteries of Lisbon* involved multiple narratives, this time embedded in a labyrinthine neo-baroque structure. Nevertheless in *Mysteries of Lisbon* the stories revolve around several key points, represented by the key characters. Instead of a story based around a central conflict, it uses these multiple centres to narrate multiple stories which nevertheless all have a bearing, however remote, on the destiny or destinies of the main character, introduced in the beginning as the parentless João. However, even if he is the point at which all the stories converge, the film constantly emphasises that rather than being a causal agent of these stories he is rather just an accumulation of their effects, effects which ultimately overwhelm him and lead him inexorably towards an early death. Furthermore, all of these seemingly stable subjective points are revealed to be so many disguises and metamorphoses, so that the pirate/assassin 'Knife-Eater' becomes the Byronic aristocrat de Magalhaes, João becomes the lost love child of Don Pedro da Silva and Ângela de Lima, and Father Dinis does God's work by passing through disguises too numerous to mention. In a key scene, João enters the forbidden room where Father Dinis's costumes are all kept: solider, gypsy, young aristocrat and so on; tellingly as the camera completes a 360 degree pan of this eerie room seemingly only occupied by João and these empty disguises and ultimately

comes to rest on Father Dinis himself who seems to have entered the room without opening any door. This gives the impression that his identity as the philanthropic priest Father Dinis is only yet another of this series of disguises, an impression that renders his identity, along with that of other other key characters, strictly undecidable.

The film also features a typically Ruizian device, a type of puppet cut-out theatre that punctuates the rest of the film, as if all the events that transpire are the product of play with this simple representational device. This is emphasised by the fact that during a scene whose outcome João does not like – his mother leaving to visit the deathbed of the man who kept her a virtual prisoner for years – he flicks all the personages to the floor of the theatre. All the multiply interconnected tales of doomed loves, sexual exploitation, romantic obsession, betrayal and sacrifice, heroic rescues and multiple disguises would then be so many disguises called up by this impoverished visual device as a machine which, like cinema itself, generates multiple worlds, characters, events and stories. This corresponds closely with the ultimate undecidability of the film, namely, whether all the events recounted and specifically those involving Pedro da Silva's short life and ultimate death in Brazil, actually took place, or whether this was the wish fulfilment of an orphaned child, without a story, fabulating ancestors, conflicts, rivals and benefactors, and ultimately a phantasmatic if doomed identity for himself, to fill in the void of his existence. The anamorphosis coupled with the puppet theatre suggest that this question is unanswerable since history is only the product of incommensurable stories and fabulations.

Given all these typically ruizian elements of multiple stories, characters subject to metamorphoses, fabulating machineries, and stories told from the point of a delirium between life and death, not to mention the relatively unbroken use of a high art european style, it is hardly surprising that several critics saw the film as both the culmination of Ruiz's career and a disguised autobiography. Jonathan Romney, for example, in his review of the film as *Sight and Sound* film of the month had the following to say:

> While *Mysteries of Lisbon* was not in fact Ruiz's very last film, it could be seen as a valedictory *summum* of his oeuvre – his fabulously omnivorous contemplation of imagination and history. The film flickers with echoes of Ruiz's work [...] One could [also] see *Mysteries* as a disguised autobiography, 'Ruiz' almost rhyming with 'Dinis' – for the Chilean was himself a disguise artist as well as a manipulator of story, masquerading variously as a French, a Portuguese, even an American filmmaker. (ROMNEY, 2012).[3]

While such an account is plausible, it is overstating the case to see this film as summing up and embodying Ruiz's work or life as a whole. Ruiz himself preferred to describe both as a kind of pendulum, and *Mysteries of Lisbon* would only account for one swing of a pendulum that also encompassed many other styles, themes and importantly many modes of filmmaking of which high budget European costume dramas were only one variant. Certainly there is a lot of Ruiz in this film, not least in his engagement with Portugal as a type of memory bridge to Chile and Latin America, of which this *does* constitute a kind of ultimate statement, as well as being a film that will inevitably be read as a meditation on death and mortality. But many of Ruiz's concerns and stylistic tendencies escape this "summation", however vast and encompassing it might be. Nevertheless, it certainly remains a key Ruiz film and one that will continue to remind 21st century audiences of the significance of this most paradoxical of cinematic auteurs.

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Impossible cartographies: abordando o cinema de Raúl Ruiz

Resumo: Mesmo considerado por muitos críticos de cinema um dos mais significativos cineastas do mundo, Raúl Ruiz (1931-2011) ainda não recebeu a devida atenção em estudos acadêmicos na língua inglesa. Meu livro Impossible Cartographies (Cartografias Impossíveis) debruça-se sobre esta tarefa mapeando, da maneira mais abrangente possível, a trajetória de Ruiz, ao longo de mais de cinco décadas de prolífica produção cinematográfica- desde seu trabalho no Chile até os seus dramas europeus de grandes orçamentos, culminando no seu recente Mysteries of Lisbon (2010). Isto é feito considerando o trabalho de Ruiz - com suas fontes surrealistas, de cultura popular, neobarrocas e de realismo mágico - como um tipo de cartografia cinematográfica "impossível", e mapeando espaços reais, imaginários e virtuais, além de cruzamentos entre contextos culturais, estratégias estéticas, e meios técnicos. Argumenta-se que, ao longo das diferentes fases do trabalho de Ruiz, existem "continuidades-chave", tais como a invenção de imagens cinematográficas singulares e o questionamento de suas combinações possíveis. Este artigo apresentará alguns temas-chave do cinema de Ruiz, usando ideias de cartografia virtual, tableaux vivants e neobarroco para ilustrar uma série de filmes Ruiz desde Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting (1978) até Mysteries of Lisbon, seu último grande projeto.

Palavras-chave: Cinema. Raul Ruiz.

[1] As This article is based on a talk given in April 2013 at UFRGS. This talk was in turn a summary of some of the main themes of my forthcoming publication Impossible Cartographies: the cinema of Raúl Ruiz, that will be published by Wallflower Press/Columbia University Press, Sept. 2013.

[2] See Pierre Klossowski, 1997, *La Monnaie Vivante*.

[3] Electronic document