

Cinema *in extremis*: notes on a strident silence in *Grizzly Man*

Marcelo Carvalho da Silva

Abstract

The environmentalist Timothy Treadwell, protagonist of the film *Grizzly Man* (2005) by Werner Herzog, joins the filmmaker's gallery of great characters. Treadwell was killed by a grizzly bear in Alaska in the fall of 2003. The only evidence of his death – a latent subject of the film – is an audio tape recorded by accident by Treadwell's video camera. The great interest of the sequence that presents this audio tape consists in how Herzog elides the sound. Such elision raises questions about the limits of image (Serge Daney and André Bazin) and Deleuze's crystal-image. How far can image go (an ethical question) and how should it be realized (an esthetic question)?

Keywords

Grizzly man. Herzog. Treadwell. Sound elision. Crystal-image.

1 Introduction

The life of U.S. environmentalist Timothy Treadwell – mainly in his last phase – had many of the characteristics found in characters of German filmmaker Werner Herzog. So much so that Herzog made Treadwell a protagonist in the film *Grizzly Man*, 2005. Treadwell camped out 13 consecutive summers in Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska to observe the grizzly bears. He and his girlfriend Amie Huguenard were killed by a bear in the fall of 2003. *Grizzly Man* is the result of a selection made by Herzog of the images recorded by Treadwell on video cameras of nature and himself, all in Katmai Park. This original material (nearly 100 recorded hours) was edited *a posteriori* by Herzog, who inserted interviews with Treadwell's friends and relatives.

One sequence is different than all of the rest of the film, a key-sequence for both *Grizzly Man*, and for a discussion about the aesthetic possibilities of the use of sound in cinema or (even more disturbingly) of the elision of a sound in cinema. In

this case, the issue is located at the ethical limit of the question of whether to present or not a given recording. It involves the moment in which Herzog himself appears on screen, the only time in the entire film, precisely to hear the audio recording of the deaths of Treadwell and his girlfriend. This is not only the most important sound in the film, but the element around which all the other elements revolve. The majesty demonstrated by Herzog in this sequence is in the way that he elides this sound. Although we do not hear the sound, it is the counterpart of all the elements of *Grizzly Man* –including Treadwell himself, the unique Herzogian personality who inspired the treatment that the German filmmaker gave to the audio of his death, and the reason for the investigation that we conduct of his personality. We turn often to Gilles Deleuze's concept of the crystal-image and to formulations of André Bazin and Serge Daney about the issue of death in cinema as an ethical limit of the image.

2 Treadwell, Herzogian personality

To go to nature and to record images of it.

Many people have already done this. But there is something particular in Treadwell: after all, what was he doing in Katmai? His work was not artistic, documentary, much less scientific. He would interfere without unabashedly in the natural

course of events by, for example, helping salmon to run upstream so that the bears could have enough food. Treadwell saw himself as a protector of the grizzly, he defended them; but from what? His response was: "from illegal hunting," but the film tells us that hunting in no way threatened the species within the preserve. He considered the location to be an untouchable Eden. He was the protector and the revenger of the natural world against a threat that only he perceived, ready to confront the park administration, the law and tourists. He was an activist, but of an in-existent cause, self-imbued with a useless mission, a conqueror without victories to celebrate.¹ Perhaps, his survival, summer after summer, could be seen as a victory (being able to live among the wild grizzly bears...), but the ending goes against this. His dairies (we learn through Herzog's account) show him to be increasingly separated from the world of men and close to the world of bears: in the film, Treadwell interprets innocent graffiti made by tourists as veiled threats to his physical integrity. Treadwell locked battle against civilization.

This sketch of Treadwell is enough for us to perceive that Herzog found a real life Herzogian personality. There is an evident similarity between the "character" created by Treadwell for himself before the camera and the "character" that Klaus

¹ In the film *The Grizzly Man Diaries* (Erik Nelson, 2006), a documentary about Herzog's film, friends of the environmentalist disagree with the image of Treadwell that emerged from the editing of *Grizzly Man*. Jewel Palovak, a partner of Treadwell in the organization that he founded to protect grizzly bears, Grizzly People, affirmed that the grizzlies in Alaska are truly threatened by illegal hunting.

Kinski created for his life and which contaminated Herzog's characters, with his encouragement. Between Herzog and Kinski there was a coming together, more than an influence,² and perhaps we can say the same was true between Herzog and Treadwell: commenting on images of Treadwell's imprecations against the park administration, Herzog - without naming him directly - tells us that he had already seen that "madness" before on a film set, clearly referring to Kinski.

According to Deleuze (1985), Herzog's work can be read from two poles. In the first, a hypertrophied personality conceives a reckless action, a mission too big to be fulfilled, with the goal of becoming equal with an equally disproportional environment "The action is not required by the situation, it is a mad endeavor, which is born in the head of someone enlightened, and who appears to be the only one capable of de se igualar ao meio inteiro" (DELEUZE, 1985, p. 228). This oversized environment is nature itself as an oppressive and omnipresent force that must be challenged, ready to collide with human desires, ready to annihilate the human company, the threatening sky (*Nosferatu, the vampyre* - 1979); the equatorial forest (*Aguirre, the Wrath of God* - 1972, *Fitzcarraldo* - 1982, *Wings of Hope* - 2006); the desert (*Fata morgana* - 1970, *Lessons in Darkness* - 1992). The Greeks had a concept that expressed this impudence that appears to affect Herzogian heroes: *hubris*, that is, "to fall into

error" by being led by excess and recklessness and go beyond your *métron*. "The greatest offense to the Gods is to 'not think humanly'", isolating oneself from *sophrosyne*, from the limits of human action, to envy the divinities: "Therefore, Man should not aspire to what is too high" (JAEGER, 2003, p. 210-211). To commit *hubris*, to become so enraged to the point of lashing out against the divine, political and natural order, affronts the very human condition. In Herzog, the divine was substituted by the order of nature, and the conflict took place between the powers triggered by nature and human will.

Treadwell is a personality of the Herzogian gallery, where strange and crazy beings are presented as undertakers of a mission, which from the start is useless, ineffective and destined to fail (the price to be paid). Certainly, this did not go unperceived to the filmmaker when he watched the tapes with the raw material made by the environmentalist at the invitation of the Grizzly People Foundation. Treadwell's past explains little of his trajectory, nothing beyond a poorly defined inclination towards the persona that he transformed himself into. He was a swimmer and tried to be an actor without much success. He committed small crimes, had a life that flirted with marginality. His friend Warren Queeney says in the film that after Treadwell nearly died of an overdose, he changed his view of life, fantasizing about himself, creating a false past in which he was an orphan born in

Australia, and began to imitate the accent of a region in the Australian outback.

Treadwell felt saved from alcoholism and marginality in his reinvented life among the bears (his statements to his own camera express this). He considered himself to be appointed and apt to work beyond the possibilities of a common person: to protect the wildlife in Katmai without any resource other than his own affection, living alongside the animals, sharing their territory of monumental beauty aware of the risks. Not seeking scientific results, or a consistent cause, he had only the joy of confronting the human world in a crusade. But it is exactly the insanity of living among the wild grizzly bears as if they could return his demonstrations of affection that makes his adventure heroic in his own eyes. He does not tire of saying how dangerous what he does is. How, from one minute to the next, he could be attacked and devoured by the bears. Treadwell had committed hubris, going beyond the limit between culture and savagery, exceeding the required distance between man and animal, a failure identified both by a Native American (who criticizes the “evil” that Treadwell had caused the animals by invading their space) and by official recommendations.

But Treadwell’s final motivation, which was precisely metaphysical, his delirium, was to protect nature. And it was not enough to defend it, but to become nature, to become part of its spirit, always in contrast to the degraded and degrading

human culture, or even rising against the greater than human (in this case, placing himself even closer to the original sense of hubris). In this light we see him making imprecations against God, questioning him about why it does not rain in the park, why he allows cannibalism among the bears, given that the salmon cannot come up the river to spawn and to serve as food for the animals.

According to Deleuze, there would be another pole for Herzog’s personalities. “They are no longer ‘conquerors of the useless,’ but beings incapable of being used. They are no longer visionaries, but weaklings and idiots. The landscapes are dwarfed or flattened, they turn sad and dismal” (DELEUZE, 2005, p. 189): the dwarfs take over the asylum in *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970); the blind and deaf of *Land of Silence and Darkness* (1971); *Kaspar Hauser* (1974) and the world of “civilized” men; the debilitated *Woyzeck* (1979); the landscape of *Nosferatu, the vampire* (1979). We can add: it is also the inverse of the joy for the communion with nature in *Grizzly Man*, when a strange impotence rises in Treadwell incarnated in the involuted behavior; the infantile voice, the way he treats the bears as if they were pets; or, in a more crushing manner, in the melancholic intuition, revealed in many moments, that he would wind up being killed by the bears. Then, the communion with the natural world would take place not as a euphoric and spiritual union with nature, but along a zigzagging line, limping among the animals, in a guessing game of which bear could kill him.

The “zigzagging” line relates to the question of the walker. Herzog knows very well the situation that Treadwell underwent. Herzog walked from Munich to Paris in 1974 to find or pay homage to the film historian Lotte Eisner, who was dead at the time.³ “The walker is defenseless because he is who is beginning to be and never finishes being small” (DELEUZE, 2005, p. 190). To walk is to cross the line that separates two worlds. Treadwell was the wanderer between the world of men and the savage world, the wanderer among the bears, who increasingly only felt truly whole when living among the animals, even if his last return – caused by a misunderstanding at the airport after a season at Katmai Park – led to his death.

3 Treadwell and the crystal

There is in the extreme behavior of Treadwell’s character a mirror-like structure, where we identify a complex relationship between actuals and virtuals that lead us to find in him indications of a Deleuzian crystal-image. Deleuze returns in his work to the Bergsonian distinction between the “actual” and the “virtual,” a true key to understanding his thought (cf. ALLIEZ, 1996; LÉVY, 1996; ZOURABICHVILI, 2004). “Thinking-Action or, through Nietzsche and Bergson finally united, ‘creation’ of thinking that proceeds by *virtualization*” (ALLIEZ, 1996, p. 12-13, emphasis by the author). But, what is an “actual” and a

“virtual” and how are they distinguished from the “real” and the “possible”? The real is that which is immediately detected, the domain where objects can be clearly defined. But to gain effective existence the real requires, from the countless possibilities of becoming: that the existence of the real, of “something real,” take place in the sphere of its own possibility. The possible exists, it is real, although, unlike the real, it is not concretized. A possible real is realized analogically, by similarity: the real “x” object becomes similar to the possibility (realized and unrealized) which precedes it, which is a pre-condition for its realization. The possible is only that which can be realized, given that the possibilities of the real object “x” contain within themselves, phantasmagoric pre-forms suitable to this real object “x.”

The virtual is not simply a possible. Both are real, but while the possible is the pre-determination of that which would come to be real and in some way its existence takes place in the act, the existence of the virtual is pure potential for actualization.⁴ Not opposing itself to the real, the virtual questions the identity of object “x,” it is becoming the other, a *devenir* of the other. The virtual is the “knot of trends or forces that accompany a situation, an event, an object or any entity, and that triggers a process of resolution: the actualization” (LÉVY, 1996, p. 16). The virtualization process brings to

³ Herzog kept a diary during this walk, transformed later into the book *Of Walking in Ice* (HERZOG, 1982).

⁴ Virtual: from the Latin “virtus”, which derived “virtualis”: strength, power (LALANDE, 1999).

the real a *quantum* of indetermination, therefore the actualization of virtuals would never be a pre-determined solution. The actualization of a virtual is a creation process. Much more than realizing what had been presented as a possibility to be concretized in a later moment according to a pre-determined context, the actualization of a virtual is “a production of new qualities, a transformation of ideas, a true *devenir* that feeds the virtual in return” (LÉVY, 1996, p. 16-17).

Deleuze identifies two distinct processes of passage between the virtual and the actual, the actualization of virtuals and the crystallization of the virtual and the actual in the same image, the crystal-image. Both processes are inscribed in a temporality. In the actualization of virtuals the distinction between them and the actual relates to the distinction between a present that does not cease to unfold, precipitating itself in the future, and a past that is conserved as pure virtuality (BERGSON, 1990). According to Deleuze (1985), we find this relationship in the cinema of the movement-image, notably in action-films: each element, character, context, object, temporality etc. is localizable according to historic-geographic and or psychological coordinates that are always actual. We know something about the character, we infer his class, country, his likes, and each psychological turn in his path is attributed to an evident conjured cause, at times buried in the past of the personality as a virtuality. The remembrance (actualization) of these causes – which will compose the web of explanations

and justifications for the actions taken – takes place precisely in a flashback, the resource par excellence for the actualization of a virtual: the memories present themselves on the screen as a “presentified past” and all the other possible memories, repressed, remain virtual, ready to be activated, deferring the effort of remembering to increasingly broader circuits.

Something of another order takes place in the crystallization process. Instead of a virtual image – a memory, for example – which upon actualizing itself, substitutes the old image, making it new again, we have an image where there is no substitution, but a cohabitation, a coalescence mirrored between the actual and the virtual in the same image. There is no longer a fixed identity of the character, or a possible representation. This indiscernibility leads this bi-facial image to an inherent undecidability (which is the actual and which is the virtual?). Actual and virtual, although they are distinct, are in a situation of constant indiscernibility that makes them constantly change roles. “There is also coalescence and cision, or more than an oscillation, a perpetual exchange between the actual object and its virtual image: the virtual image does not stop becoming actual, as in a mirror[...].” (DELEUZE, 1996, p. 53-54). There are no more psychological flashbacks, but a direct plunge into time where past and present are interlaced in an interplay of flows that undermine identities, as in *O ano passado em Marienbad* (1961, by Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet). After all, in *Marienbad*, are we in

the past with the character of the man or in the present with the woman? The effort to discover the secret key to this film is useless, because the virtual past and the actual present constantly exchange position, composing that bifacial image, the crystal-image of the image-time. The crystal-image is the lesser circuit, the interior limit between a virtual and an actual, a crystalline embryo that develops until it attains the final circuit, the universe as a crystallizable means and expansion in time.

The crystal-image has these two aspects: internal limit of all the relative circuits, but also outer-most, variable, reshapable envelope, at the edges of the world, beyond even moments of the world. The little crystalline seed and the vast crystallizable universe: everything is included in the capacity for expansion of the collection constituted by the seed and by the universe (DELEUZE, 2005, p.78).

The character Treadwell crossed between the opposing poles of Herzog's gallery of characters, composing for himself a crystal-image. On one hand, it is like the humiliation that leads to Treadwell's redemption: if his great metaphysical project fails – because of both the death of a bear, and because of the disappearance of the “only” human capable of communing with nature *at its interior*, his impotence makes him victorious. It is in the role of the involuted and weak, of the romantic and sentimental environmentalist that

cries like a child upon seeing his naive view of nature questioned by nature itself, that Treadwell can approach the sublime,⁵ attaining once again the dimension of the grandiose amid a reckless act. Echoing other films by Herzog (like *Land of Silence and Darkness*), in *Grizzly Man*, tact plays an essential factor in this sense: to get very close, to feel the animal's breath, touch his skin, or even place his hand in his still warm excrement are the supreme sensations to be achieved. To touch the animal, thus “becoming” nature, is the sensorial equivalent to visionary and mysticalecstasy, his ritual metaphysics.

[...]the weaklings[...]have such tactile relations with the world that they inflate and inspire the image itself [...]. And this liberation of tactile values does not merely inspire the image, it partially opens it to insert vast hallucinatory visions of flight, of ascent or passage (DELEUZE, 2005, p. 190).

In this coming and going, between the small and the large, between the conqueror of the useless and a mad hypertrophy that invariably leads to a celebration of the forces of nature from which he never separates, is what constitutes the first great crystal-image of *Grizzly Man*. The mirrored interplay is vertiginous to the degree to which what is presented as recklessness, passes rapidly to a dimension of frailty, from which ecstasy and the sublime are attained. The passages cannot

5 We refer to Kant, specifically the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The sublime is what concomitantly causes pleasure and pain (psychic discomfort) in a general state of disorder of the faculties by a presence that can be sensed of something reckless in its formal aspect (a mountain that crushes our spirit; the power of a storm that fascinates and destabilizes us) which would exceed both our sensorial intuition, as well as our understanding (cf. KANT, 2002).

be located, they are indiscernible dimensions and cohabit the same shot, speech and gesture, to the point where we ask: is what I see through this crystal image Treadwell the proponent of a reckless mission or one who survives under the weight of his own weakness?

4 Innocence of the first

In *Grizzly Man*, a certain sound has essential importance. The entire film revolves around a single sound shot which, however, despite its central importance, we never hear. When Treadwell and his girlfriend are attacked by the bear, the camera is turned on. We do not have the image – the camera lens is covered – but the sound of the attack was recorded (for six minutes). The film as we know it only exists because Treadwell had that death and, if the moment was registered, whatever this register would be, it should “be present” in the film in some form. But, how to include this sound? How can it be made present – if it is, *per se*, inescapable - having registered what it registered, the terrible moment of the attack? There is a need to hear the recording, because it is part of the film more than any other sound or image, but it has the mark of an evil register, of an unsupportable audition. It would be necessary to find a way to include this recording in the film “without it being” concretely present. The dilemma is aesthetic and ethical.

The problem is the repercussion of a theme that has been dealt with in depth by some of the great theoreticians and critics of cinema: is there a limit that cannot be exceeded, a region prohibited to cinema? This question acquired fundamental importance for French criticism in the second half of the 20th century through André Bazin (1990) as an essential link –, emphasizing the paradox between the reproducibility of the exhibition of a film and death as a unique fact. These authors, in one way or another, invoke death as a limit point for the image of cinema.

The infinite reproduction of that which is unique to the being that dies constitutes the extreme negation of the ethical field, defining obscenity. This is the great movement that we find in the foundations of Bazinian ethics and in the realistic stylistic normativity that it promotes (RAMOS, 2005, p. 220).

Writing about *Kapo* (1960), a film by Gillo Pontecorvo, Jacques Rivette creates an expression that became well known, “The tracking shot in *Kapo*,” which sought to determine the limit for the constitution of an image. Its argument touches on a short tracking shot in Pontecorvo’s film which is seen as abject for being “aesthetizing” when the situation – someone’s death – demands formal sobriety. The travelling shot described by Rivette shows the moment in which the prisoner of a Nazi concentration camp, Emanuele Riva, commits suicide, throwing herself against an electric-barbed wire fence. The abjection to which Rivette refers is not for showing the character’s violent death, but because Pontecorvo made the camera

movement – associated to a light *contra-plongée* – to gratuitously make the plane formally more beautiful (RIVETTE, 1961) There are, after all, certain filmic procedures that should not be used if the intention is purely formal, and should be protected in non-use in light of the death filmed.

Much later, in the 1990s, Serge Daney takes up Rivette's text, reconsidering this interdiction in his article *The Tracking Shot in Kapo*. Daney (1994, p. 28) which is different than the treatment that the Japanese filmmaker Kenji Mizoguchi gives to the death of Miyagi in *Contos da lua vaga* (1953) and Pontecorvo *The Tracking Shot in Kapo* with the death of Emanuelle Riva: "Where is the difference then? In the 'fear and trembling'. [...] Pontecorvo, neither trembles nor does he feel fear: the concentration camps revolt him purely on an ideological level. This is why he can make his presence felt in the scene, with an extra pretty tracking shot."⁶ The theme returns at other moments in Daney, directly or indirectly (DANEY, 2004, 2007). The problem of the formal treatment reveals that the knot to be faced is that of the actualization of death as a cinematographic act.

It is in reality the presence of death in the cinema that is in question, certifying once again the affiliation, despite the shifts and ruptures, from Daney to Bazin. Death as the event par excellence that problematizes and re-dimensions the limits of filming (Daney)

and of editing (Bazin) and what can qualify a tracking shot as a moral question, as Rivette and Godard also defend. The cinema, according to Daney, can teach a simple lesson at first sight: the world exists and becomes moral to the degree in which it should not be shown at any cost, an idea that approaches the Bazinian notion of prohibited editing (LINS; FRANÇA, 1999, p. 181-182).

Daney is a post Nazi concentration camp critic: "the" ignominy, or the overcoming of the ignominy (both for him, and for the entire generation of critics), is strongly associated to the issue of images that refer to the camps – how is it possible to continue to produce images after the horror, in what way can cinema continue to be made? The response to that "unsustainable" present came with modern cinema. Two films stand out by opposition in Daney's analysis (1994, p. 23, translation by the author): *Kapo* (the reference from Daney to this film is Rivette's article) and *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*, 1955), by Alain Resnais, at that time, the film par excellence about the theme because of the sobriety with which it treats the issue. "Could it have been another way?" Daney asks. "Was there, before the concentration camps, another possible justness that is not that of the anti-spectacle of *Night and Fog*?"⁷ To respond to his own question citing another film, *Nazi concentration camps* (1945), a documentary made by filmmaker George Stevens, who was

⁶ "Où est la différence, alors ? Dans 'la crainte et le tremblement', justement. [...] Pontecorvo, lui, ne tremble ni ne craint : les camps ne le révoltent qu'idéologiquement. C'est pourquoi il s'inscrit 'en rab' dans la scène sous les espèces gougnafières d'un travelling joli".

⁷ "Pouvait-il en être autrement ?" [...] "Y avait-il, face aux camps, une autre justesse possible que celle de l'anti-spectacle de *Nuit et brouillard* ?"

accompanying the U.S. troops during the advance on Germany.

What I understand today is that the beauty of Stevens' movie is due less to the justness of the distance than to the *innocence* of the gaze. Justness is the burden of the one who comes "after"; innocence is the terrible grace granted to the first arrived, to the first one who simply makes the gestures of cinema. (DANEY, 2004.).⁸

He who conquered the right to have come first and who carries the burden of having arrived later... It is curious to surprise Herzog returning to this issue – precisely Herzog, who has often been criticized for his lack of limits in achieving an image. Treadwell came first, and his innocent look and hearing of nature, his quixotic traits, the freedom from judgment about his images and the sound of his own death, and even the fact that his video camera certainly (the same camera that so many times before captured Treadwell in performances suitable to a TV program) was accidentally turned on at the fatal moment. It is Herzog, who came later with the perspective of observer-outside assembler of the scene, who must ask himself about the justness of including or not the sound with Treadwell's and his girlfriend's fatal moment. Herzog must decide "how" this should look and mainly, if this innocent listening should be part of the film. It

is Herzog who must ask about the "impossibility to tell a story," as Daney says (2004,) referring to *Night and fog*: "[...]had the honesty to acknowledge an impossibility to tell a story, a stopping point in the course of history, when storytelling is stilled or runs in neutral."⁹

The issue in *Grizzly Man* is not the inclusion of an aestheticizing adornment, but an unsupportable revelation: how to edit this audio in the film and, at the same time, how to not improperly and violently place the spectator in a place where he should not be? In the film *Grizzly Man Diaries*, Herzog himself says that it became clear to him, after hearing the audio of the recording, that this should not materially be part of the film for a reason of dignity and privacy ("only over my dead body would this tape be included"), that the moment of someone's death must be respected, "your death, mine and that of Treadwell and Huguenard." And we return to the question, which is not that of death itself, but of death in the images produced, of death exposed on photographic paper, *frame* or film: how to treat it, how to give that image a different mark than the mark that the living commonly imprint on the images, a mark "of silence" as if it were an official "minute of silence"? How, when making images, is it possible to be decent to the people who died in the image that is produced? The question

⁸ "Ce que je comprends aujourd'hui, c'est que la beauté du film de Stevens est moins le fait de la justesse de la distance trouvée que de l'innocence du regard porté. La justesse est le fardeau de celui qui vient 'après' ; l'*innocence*, la grâce terrible accordée au premier venu. Au premier qui exécute simplement les gestes du cinéma".

⁹ "[...] l'honnêteté de prendre acte d'une même impossibilité de raconter, d'un même cran d'arrêt dans le déroulé de l'Histoire, quand le récit se fige ou s'emballa à vide".

runs through the history of images produced in the 20th century: from Bazin to Rivette and Daney; from the photograph *Death of a Loyalist*, by Robert Capa, to the polemic about how the holocaust of the Jews in the Nazi concentration camps should be treated, a polemic captured in the film *Shoah* (1985), by Claude Lanzmann, as an example of the ideal treatment of the theme (one among others) by not making use of the film images of the camps – a film considered “unretouchable”, because it did not touch these images. Herzog demonstrates that he raised similar problems in *Grizzly Man*. The solution found, of an aesthetic-ethical character, takes place through two simultaneous elisions of images and sound.

The key-sequence, which has a quite simple formal construction, is located nearly in the middle of the film, as if to divide it into proportional parts. We see Herzog framed from the back; his face does not appear (visual elision), only the nape of his neck and part of his right shoulder are in the left corner of the screen; he is wearing earphones, his head is down. In the background, occupying the right part of the frame, we see Treadwell's friend and former girlfriend, Jewel Palovak, facing Herzog, sitting with the environmentalist's camera on her lap. They are in a room, a soft sound of waves crashing is heard. The camera zooms in on the image, seeking to frame Jewel. Only Herzog hears the recording (audio elision: the sound of Treadwell and Huguenard's death) and hesitatingly comments while Jewel's face in the background is motionless, expressing perplexity.

The camera makes a short pan, leaving Jewel and once again reframing the back of Herzog's neck, he raises his hands to his eyes apparently in a state of shock (his body appears to shake) – this framing (which continues the previous visual elision) takes a few seconds. After a cut, the new shot returns to the initial frame of the past plane; Herzog asks Jewel to turn off the camera. New silence; only Jewel, who begins to cry, can see the director's face. The camera makes a slight zoom-in (which remains during the entire shot and Herzog asks her to never listen to the recording, or to see the photos of the bodies. She agrees. Herzog appears to be deeply shocked. New cut, the two are holding hands, as if in mutual support and Jewel says that now she knows why no one can listen to this recording. Herzog, finally, returns the tape, asking her to destroy it. She agrees. The sequence ends with a fade-out, the only one of the entire film except for one that ends the film and a fade-in that begins the projection. The entire sequence (which lasts exactly one minute and 52 seconds) is raw, sober. There is no vestige of “The Tracking Shot of Kapo.”

5 Conclusion

Someone needed to hear the elided recording and Herzog spares the spectator by “sacrificing” himself. This sound is what is closest to the image that is missing in the film, the non-recorded image of Treadwell's fatal encounter with the bear: his solitary audition, with his back turned, tries to portray for us not only the sound that we do not

hear, but also the images that were not registered, by means of an elegiac visual substitution. The material registered appears to be insupportable in such a way that we need an image that allows us to bear the very image of Herzog listening to the audio of the attack. We then see Jewel's face in the background trying to bear what she presumes that Herzog is feeling upon hearing the recording: Jewel's face simultaneously elides and reflects the horror that is probably stamped on Herzog's face so that we can bear what is unbearable. There is a triangulation in this sequence that viscerally involves sound and image: only Herzog hears the horror; Jewel watches his hearing and is moved imagining what he hears; we see her cry and she cries for us, in our place, because she had a more intimate relation with Treadwell, she had a greater right to lament what happened. On the other hand, the formal treatment given to the sequence relieves us sensorially, because we feel inserted in the interior of the central question of the film – the violent death of Treadwell and Huguenard – by a dual reverberation (from Herzog to Jewel, and from her to the viewer) through which we understand the unsupportable burden that the tape carries (“never listen to this”; “you shouldn't save it, you should destroy it,” Herzog says to Jewel). Nevertheless, the image continues portraying the sound elided. *We see* the horror that the sound could cause in us, *we see* the sound in its mirrored interplay with the image that exists (Herzog hears the tape with Jewel's

expression in the background) and with that which does not exist (of the couple's death by the bear). If a sensorial-motor scheme, specific to the movement-image (DELEUZE, 1985),¹⁰ would appear to neutralize the potency of this recording or to substitute it by the image of Herzog and Jewel, the mirrored interplay established in the image does not let us forget how terrible it is. The audio elision, even if it allows Herzog to place a moral limit on his cinema, winds up affirming the power of this sound in its virtual dimension, but one that is completely real.

This is because the elided sound, which is virtualized, materially absent, is made present in a devastating way, to the point that is no longer possible to distinguish between its absence or presence. As we see, it is when a mirrored effect of reflections between the action and the virtual – both distinct, but indiscernible – reach us in a constant interplay of exchange of roles is that a crystal-image arises, an image of a bifacial nature (DELEUZE, 1990, p. 87-120). The actual and the virtual constantly reverberate in the crystal image: where is the horror? In the virtual audio that we do not hear? Or in its actualization – present in the film like no other element – in the image, in the successive reverberations between sound and image? The reactions (actualization) that we see in Jewel's face belong to whom? To herself? Or does it involve a reflex of the reactions irradiated virtually by Herzog's face, a face that

10 In the movement-image, as absurd as the violence in question may be, it is “justified” and neutralized by a sensorial-motor grouping placed in practice by film and which is identified by Deleuze in the image-action of image-movement.

only Jewel sees, with Herzog the only one to hear the recording? If the formal construction of the reverberations winds up evoking a sensorial-motor scheme of attenuation of violence, as previously mentioned, the immaterial presence of this sound - as an indiscernible instance of virtuality/actuality (in the interplay between the sound elided, the image of Herzog who hears the tape and Jewel's face in the background) - gives us the second great crystal-image in the coalescence between image and sound, in the indiscernibility between actual-virtual mentioned.

The crystal-image composed by the saga of Treadwell's character, oscillating between humiliation and recklessness, at the imprecise limit between the actual and the virtual, is the film's *leitmotiv*, a gap to the cruelty of the natural world, its images, its sounds, its strident silence contained on a video tape. But it is in the sequence of sound elided that we find the narrower actual-virtual circuit that formally mirrors the oscillation of the character himself. Certainly, the formal treatment given to this sequence reflects a moral choice made by Herzog. A choice that (and this is conjecture) he may have made differently in his youth, and that belongs solely to the relationship between Herzog and (the death of) Treadwell. This formal construction, the aesthetic care demonstrated by Herzog in the elaboration of the elision of the sound of Treadwell's and Huguenard's deaths, results in the clear exhibition of Herzog's own limits. Beyond affirming a generalized moral interdiction, it is

up to recognize that there are limits that define what is and what is not supportable in images in general. But they limits that shift with the conjuncture, with history – despite our possible horror when we are confronted by parameters that disturb us, whether they come from the public or the filmmaker.

References

- ALLIEZ, Éric. **Deleuze filosofia virtual**. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. 34, 1996.
- BAZIN, André. **O cinema**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1990.
- BERGSON, Henri. **Matéria e memória**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1990.
- DANEY, Serge. **A rampa – Cahiers du Cinéma, 1970-1982**. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2007.
- _____. **Cine, arte del presente**. Buenos Aires: Santiago Arcos editor, 2004.
- _____. Le travelling de Kapo. In: _____. **Persévérance: Entretien avec Serge Toubiana**. Paris: Éditions P.O.L., 1994.
- DELEUZE, Gilles. **A imagem-movimento**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985.
- _____. **A imagem-tempo**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1990.
- _____. O atual e o virtual. In: ALLIEZ, Eric. **Deleuze filosofia virtual**. Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34, 1996.
- DÍÁRIO do homem urso (The grizzly man diaries). Direção: Erik Nelson. Produção: Jason Carey, Erik Nelson e Jewel Palovak. Elenco: Timothy Treadwell, Amie Huguenard, Werner Herzog, Jewel Palovak e Warren Queeney. EUA: [S.n.], 2008. Emissão televisiva, cor.
- HERZOG, Werner. **Caminhando no gelo**. Rio de

Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1982.

O **HOMEM** urso (Grizzly man). Direção e roteiro: Werner Herzog. Produção executiva: Kevin Beggs. Elenco: Timothy Treadwell, Amie Huguenard, Werner Herzog, Jewel Palovak e Warren Queeney. Música original: Richard Thompson. EUA, Alemanha: [S.n.], 2005. (94min.), cor.

JAEGER, Werner. **Paidéia: a formação do homem grego**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003.

KANT, Immanuel. **Crítica da faculdade do juízo**. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2002.

KAPO. Direção: Gillo Pontecorvo. Roteiro: Gillo Pontecorvo e Franco Solinas. Produção: Fanco Cristaldi e Moris Ergas. Elenco: Susan Strasberg, Laurent Terzieff e Emmanuelle Riva. Música original: Carlo Rustichelli. Itália: [S.n.], 1960. (116 min.), widescreen.

LALANDE, André. **Vocabulário técnico e crítico da filosofia**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1999.

LINS, Consuelo; GERVEISAU, Henri; FRANÇA, Andrea. O cinema como abertura para o mundo: introdução ao pensamento de Serge Daney. **Revista Cinemais**, n. 15, p. 171, jan./fev. 1999.

LÉVY, Pierre. **O que é o virtual?** São Paulo: Editora 34, 1996.

NAZI concentration camps. Direção: George Stevens. EUA: [S.n.], 1945.(59min.)

NOITE e neblina (Nuit et brouillard). Direção: Alain Resnais. Produção: Anatole Dauman, Samy Halfon e Philippe Lifchitz. Roteiro: Jean Cayrol (com edição de texto de Chris Marker). Narração: Michel Bouquet. Música original: Hanns Eisler. França: [S.n.], 1955. (32min.), cor.

RAMOS, Fernão Pessoa. A cicatriz da tomada: documentário, ética e imagem-intensa. In: **Teoria Contemporânea do Cinema: documentário e narrativa ficcional**. São Paulo: Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2005. v. II.

RIVETTE, Jacques. De l'abjection. **Cahiers du Cinéma**, n.120, p. 54-55, jun. 1961.

ZOURABICHVILI, François. **Una filosofia del acontecimiento**. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 2004.

Cinema *in extremis*: notas sobre um silêncio estridente em *O homem urso*

Resumo

O ambientalista Timothy Treadwell, protagonista do filme *O homem urso* (*Grizzly man*, 2005) de Werner Herzog, filia-se à galeria dos grandes personagens herzogianos. Treadwell foi morto por um urso pardo no Alasca, no outono de 2003. O único vestígio dessa morte – tema latente do filme – é uma gravação em áudio realizada por acaso pela própria câmera de vídeo de Treadwell. O grande interesse da sequência onde esse áudio está inserido reside na maneira como Herzog o elide. Tal elisão suscita questões sobre os limites da imagem (Serge Daney e André Bazin) e a imagem-cristal deleuziana. Afinal, até onde uma imagem pode ir (questão ética) e como deve ser realizada (questão estética)?

Palavras-chave

O homem urso. Herzog. Treadwell. Elisão sonora. Imagem-cristal.

Cine *in extremis*: notas sobre un silencio estridente en *El hombre oso*

Resumen

El ambientalista Timothy Treadwell, protagonista de la película *El hombre oso* (*Grizzly man*, 2005) de Werner Herzog, se junta a la galería de los grandes personajes herzogianos. Treadwell fue víctima de un oso pardo en Alaska, en el otoño de 2003. El único vestigio de esa muerte – tema latente de la película – es una grabación en audio hecha por casualidad por la propia cámara de video de Treadwell. El gran interés de la secuencia donde ese audio está inserido reside en la manera como Herzog lo elide. Tal elisión suscita cuestiones sobre los límites de la imagen (Serge Daney y André Bazin) y la imagen-cristal deleuziana. Al final, ¿hasta qué punto puede ir una imagen (cuestión ética) y cómo debe llevarse a cabo (cuestión estética)?

Palabras claves

El hombre oso. Herzog. Treadwell. Elisión sonora. Imagen-cristal.

Expediente

A revista E-Compós é a publicação científica em formato eletrônico da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação (Compós). Lançada em 2004, tem como principal finalidade difundir a produção acadêmica de pesquisadores da área de Comunicação, inseridos em instituições do Brasil e do exterior.

E-COMPÓS | www.e-compos.org.br | E-ISSN 1808-2599

Revista da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação.
E-compós, Brasília, v.15, n.3, set./dez. 2012.
A identificação das edições, a partir de 2008, passa a ser volume anual com três números.

CONSELHO EDITORIAL

Afonso Albuquerque, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
Alberto Carlos Augusto Klein, Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Brasil
Álvaro Larangeira, Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná, Brasil
André Luiz Martins Lemos, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brasil
Ângela Freire Prysthon, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
Angela Cristina Salgueiro Marques, Faculdade Cásper Líbero (São Paulo), Brasil
Antonio Roberto Chiacchiri Filho, Faculdade Cásper Líbero, Brasil
Arthur Autran Franco de Sá Neto, Universidade Federal de São Carlos, Brasil
Benjamin Picado, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
César Geraldo Guimarães, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brasil
Cristiane Freitas Gutfreind, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Denilson Lopes, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Eduardo Peñuela Cañizal, Universidade Paulista, Brasil
Eduardo Vicente, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Eneus Trindade, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Erick Felinto de Oliveira, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Florence Dravet, Universidade Católica de Brasília, Brasil
Gelson Santana, Universidade Anhembi/Morumbi, Brasil
Gislene da Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brasil
Guillermo Orozco Gómez, Universidad de Guadalajara
Gustavo Daudt Fischer, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
Hector Ospina, Universidad de Manizales, Colômbia
Herom Vargas, Universidade Municipal de São Caetano do Sul, Brasil
Inês Vitorino, Universidade Federal do Ceará, Brasil
Jay David Bolter, Georgia Institute of Technology
Jeder Silveira Janotti Junior, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
John DH Downing, University of Texas at Austin, Estados Unidos
José Afonso da Silva Junior, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
José Carlos Rodrigues, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
José Luiz Aidar Prado, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brasil
Kelly Cristina de Souza Prudêncio, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brasil.

Laan Mendes Barros, Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, Brasil
Lance Strate, Fordham University, USA, Estados Unidos
Lorraine Leu, University of Bristol, Grã-Bretanha
Lucia Leão, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brasil
Malena Segura Contrera, Universidade Paulista, Brasil
Márcio de Vasconcellos Serelle, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brasil
Maria Aparecida Baccega, Universidade de São Paulo e Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Brasil
Maria Ataíde Malcher, Universidade Federal do Pará, Brasil
Maria das Graças Pinto Coelho, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil
Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Maria Luiza Martins de Mendonça, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Brasil
Mauro de Souza Ventura, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brasil
Mauro Pereira Porto, Tulane University, Estados Unidos
Mirna Feitoza Pereira, Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Brasil
Nilda Aparecida Jacks, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Osvando J. de Moraes, Universidade de Sorocaba, Brasil
Potiguara Mendes Silveira Jr, Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Brasil
Renato Cordeiro Gomes, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Robert K Logan, University of Toronto, Canadá
Ronaldo George Helal, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Rose Melo Rocha, Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Brasil
Rossana Reguillo, Instituto de Estudios Superiores del Occidente, Mexico
Rousiley Celi Moreira Maia, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brasil
Sebastião Guilherme Albano da Costa, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil
Simone Maria Andrade Pereira de Sá, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
Tiago Quiroga Fausto Neto, Universidade de Brasília, Brasil
Suzete Venturelli, Universidade de Brasília, Brasil
Valerio Fuenzalida Fernández, Puc-Chile, Chile
Veneza Mayora Ronsini, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brasil
Vera Regina Veiga França, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brasil

COMISSÃO EDITORIAL

Adriana Braga | Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Felipe Costa Trotta | Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil

CONSULTORES AD HOC

Ana Carolina Escosteguy, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Bruno Campanella, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
Edison Gastaldo, Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Elizabeth Duarte, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brasil
Roseli Figaro, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil

EDIÇÃO DE TEXTO E RESUMOS | Susane Barros

SECRETÁRIA EXECUTIVA | **Juliana Depiné**

EDITORIAÇÃO ELETRÔNICA | **Roka Estúdio**

TRADUÇÃO | **Sieni Campos e Markus Hediger**

COMPÓS | www.compos.org.br

Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação

Presidente

Julio Pinto

Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brasil
julio.pinto@pucminas.br

Vice-presidente

Itania Maria Mota Gomes

Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brasil
itania@ufba.br

Secretária-Geral

Inês Vitorino

Universidade Federal do Ceará, Brasil
inesvict@gmail.com