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Edited by Vítor Moura and Connell Vaughan



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Mood in Cinema. Towards a Unified Form of Time

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ABSTRACT. Postmodern times freed themselves from the enslavement to progress that in Modern times bound society to the need to realize unrealizable utopias. Postmodern times unapologetically recovered the past and appropriated it to meld it with present reality and fiction. This new attitude showed a relaxation towards the future and all the fights it had required previously. In recent years, however, we have found that consolidation of the postmodern condition has driven our society to a lingering presentism, a historical state that seems not to move forward; as if tomorrow had been supplanted by repetitive variations on today. This apparent slow-motion evolution has increased social injustices and widened the precarity of life in society, and is threatening the continuity of life on earth. In parallel with the rise of dissatisfaction and demands for a redefinition of social development, art too is experimenting with new articulations of time. In this paper I analyse a number of audio-visual works that set out to construct a new form of time marked by great complexity. I argue that this form of temporality is intended to counter the dominant notion that the time we live in is fragmented, dismembered, 'out of joint'. In the first, shorter part of the paper I discuss the current social context, in which human temporal experience is fragmented in different planes and dimensions. In the second part I analyse three films and show how they offer answers to the problems described in the first part. Between the second and third analyses I will argue that the most important audio-visual feature that glues the different temporalities in a unity is the construction of a cinematic mood.

1. The fragmentation of temporality in Postmodernity

The Postmodern age has assumed as one of its defining postulates the fragmentation of temporalities brought about by the deepening of the contradictions of Modernity. Following

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Huyssen (1995), Postmodernity has banished the previous spontaneous and fruitful relationship with the past, converting the past into a jumble of motifs and forms that can freely be taken to decorate narcissistic representations of the present. The Postmodern temporal fragmentation also means that a genuinely different—and better—future is seen, by the present, as something unachievable, making what is-to-come, following Jameson (2003), a mere extension of our current worst nightmares.



Figure 1. Damien Hirst, 'Demon with bowl' in the atrium of Palazzo Grassi, 2017.

The fragmentation of time affects our understanding of reality and our aesthetic experience of the world in three important ways. First, narratives are of no help in gluing the present either to the past or to the future. As Lyotard already made clear in 1979, big narratives no longer explain our current situation through our history nor define a transcendental goal that could motivate common action in the present.

Second, the gap between world time and subjective time has widened. On the one hand,

world time has become increasingly uniform and synchronous due to the acceleration of physical and digital communication and the globalisation of social and political trends (Crary, 2014). On the other, subjective time verges on a form of solipsism in which the subject may have any kind of experience at any time, so long as it does not invade others' subjective bubbles. Subjective heterochrony seems to have reached its splendour (Hernández, 2016, Bal, 2016), provided it remains an idiorrhhythm.

Third, the growing disconnection between past and future, following Augé (1994), has also weakened the strength of rituals. The world has become a disenchanted place in which humans feel increasingly less at home. In this situation, ideologies of myth become relevant again. Ideologies of the end of history, and of the death of history, religion and art, speak the language of myth and in some contexts substitute for an accurate approach to reality.

All these factors tend towards a banalisation of the epistemic field, such that no experience can fulfil the need for a unitary intersubjective experience of the world. The never-ending quest for new experiences to replace the previous ones leads to a confusion between reality and fiction. In conclusion, the plurality of temporalities that seems a conquest of postmodernity over modernity has also brought a fragmentation between the subject and the world, and among subjects, that threatens the possibility of an integral experience of the world and a common project that will engage humanity.

2. New Ways to Recover Temporal Unity

In the context of the Postmodern scattering of time, we encounter certain contemporary cultural practices aimed at establishing a new unity of time. While showing a deep awareness of the plurality of times, these practices also try to gather this plurality up in an integrated experience that respects the underlying complexity. I will focus on three films—two documentaries and one rather experimental fictional film—that deal with time as their main topic. The two documentaries are Patricio Guzman's *Nostalgia for the Light* (Chile, 2010) and Mercedes Álvarez's *The Sky Turns* (Spain, 2005). The third film is *Cemetery*, by artist Carlos Casas (2019).

2.1. Voice and Narrativity in *Nostalgia for the Light*, by Patricio Guzmán

Patricio Guzmán travels through the Atacama Desert in Chile to talk to its various inhabitants and recover their particular relationships to this particular Chilean landscape. The director builds up a beautiful collage with reflections from astronomers, archaeologists, former inmates of dissident camps, relatives of detainees who were ‘disappeared’ under the Pinochet dictatorship, and others.

In this research film Guzmán builds up, from the stories and testimonies he encounters, a discourse about the Atacama Desert and about time in general. In the first two scenes the director confronts us with a temporal paradox. In the first scene, he tells us that every time he thinks back to his childhood, he remembers that he always lived in the present. In the second scene, however, we are told that humans can only live in the past. Guzmán interviews an astronomer who explains that for us humans the present does not exist: we can only perceive the past, because light takes a certain time (however short) to reach us from the objects we perceive, so we only ever perceive events after they have happened. The ‘nostalgia’ of the film’s title refers to this cosmological impossibility of being in the present.

This philosophical problem prompts Guzmán to investigate Atacama’s past. He discovers pictures painted 1,000 years ago by pre-Colombian people, a cemetery for Indian natives and another for mine workers, the ruins of a mining town that was converted into a concentration camp by the Chilean dictatorship, the remains of the camp’s prisoners still being searched for by some of their relatives, and various other astronomers.

All these episodes point to different times: cosmological temporalities linked to the star dust in our bones and the formation of old stars, and social temporalities linked to the pre-Colombian era and the more recent and tragic dictatorship years. The documentary seeks not only to give present meaning to all these past events but also to give them a unity and to interrelate their heterogeneity in a totality, albeit a complex totality.

Three elements are used to achieve this purpose: the Atacama Desert, as the location where everything takes place; the voice of Patricio Guzmán; and the conceptual narrative that discloses the hidden relations between the different things and events shown in the film.

The most explicit of these three elements is the unity of space. We know from narratology the power of space to bring unity to events happening in the same place. Following Ricoeur, a unifying space gives coherence to heteronomy.

The second element is the voice of the author. It is Guzmán’s voice that introduces all

the events and characters, relates them to one another and reflects on each one. Yet I would argue that Guzmán's voice plays an even more important role: it makes that the events described in the documentary acquire a subjective colouring. From the very beginning Guzmán places his own childhood in the foreground, as a clear manifestation of his subjectivity. In another scene he presents an old house full of objects covered in dust as if it were the one he had lived in as a child. Other biographical elements help give a narrative frame that brings a second element of unity to the overall heterogeneity.

The third element is the causal links established by the narrator between different, sometimes implausibly distant events. At one point, an astronomer relates the explosion of stars millions of years ago to the composition of our bones, which contain star dust. From there Guzmán moves on to the place in the desert where elderly wives and mothers of the victims of the Chilean dictatorship search among the stones for the bones and other remains of their loved ones.

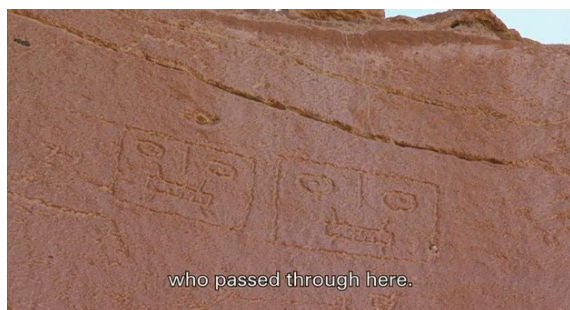


Figure 2. Stills from *Nostalgia for the Light*

In conclusion, Guzmán uses mainly narrative, yet sometimes highly poetic, elements to bring unity to the heterogeneous pasts represented in the film.

2.2. Atmospheric Temporality in *The Sky Turns*, by Mercedes Álvarez

Like Guzmán's *Nostalgia for the Light*, Mercedes Álvarez's documentary represents several time lines crossing in a specific place, in this case a small rural village, Aldealseñor, in the Castile region of Spain. The film-maker was born there, but her parents moved to a big city when she was still a baby, so she has no conscious memories of it. At the most immediate level we find a personal trigger in recovering a personal past, a family genealogy.

However, the filmmaker's return to the village of her birth, documented in the film, turns into something much more complex. Through the beautiful takes of the landscape, the charming, sometimes funny and always wise peasants and Álvarez's poetic way of narrating all that she comes across, the documentary becomes a deep and fascinating reflection on time and its passing. During the course of the film, the viewer traverses many temporal lines that cross one another in unexpected ways. The film makes reference to the time of the dinosaurs, the Roman Empire, the region's medieval Muslim inhabitants, the Spanish Civil War and the post-war years, the present, the future and other temporalities.

What is interesting about this documentary, however, is not so much the reference to any particular chapter of history but the way different times are intertwined to create a single web. In this intertwining, we as viewers are given the feeling that these distant times somehow co-exist in an extended present. Through this experience in the present, we are able to cross temporal layers and see how certain very distant events shape more recent ones. To achieve all this Mercedes Álvarez uses various cinematic strategies, which are discussed below, ending with the concept of mood.

As already mentioned, *The Sky Turns* has a narrative structure centred around the film-maker's trip to Aldealseñor. The events referred to in the documentary are therefore superficially intertwined through a place and a temporal structure.

A second narrative element helps build this relationship between distant historic times, namely, the division of the film into four parts, corresponding to the four seasons of the year. Thus, the diegetic time of the film is one year, from autumn to the end of summer the following year. This circular structure not only breaks the linearity of chronological time but also has the function of including distant events in time in the same period of the year. For instance, the presentation of a medieval castle, the first mention of the dinosaurs and the decline in the town's population due to emigration are grouped together in the autumn chapter. Each season

is marked by visual features of nature and climate, such as a particular quality of light and particular colours and textures, as well as the sounds of nature, such as the wind, the rain and certain animals. As we will see, these seasonal markers also play a significant role in building an atmosphere.



Figure 3. Stills from *The Sky Turns* (2005), 3'42''. Shot of Pepa showing the dinosaur footprints

Apart from these two narrative techniques, other visual procedures help build a close relationship between temporally distant events. The commonest and most obvious is the superposition or juxtaposition of objects through visual analogies established through similarities in shape and size, colour or movement. These analogies serve to break linear temporality and bring to light new, unforeseeable relationships between two or more events or places.

An early and particularly remarkable example is an introductory scene in which an old woman, Pepa, shows some dinosaur footprints to the camera. She explains that when she was a child, she used to play with her friends there without knowing that all these footprints were so old. She goes on to say that one day some archaeologists came and told them the footprints belonged to dinosaurs. These scientists made visible something that was already there as an implicit part of the surroundings. Then, in a remarkable scene, the old woman starts stepping on the prints and walks in the dinosaurs' footsteps, as if she were one of those ancient beasts. Through the coincidental similarity in visual form and movement, the take builds an analogy between the dinosaur's steps and those of the old woman, superimposing the two eras. The film thus brings an ancient, prehistoric age back into the present.

A fourth cinematic procedure that emphasizes time is the long take. Jean Mitry noted that showing unvarying images for a relatively long period gives the spectator an intense sensation of the passage of time. As Jaime Pena explains (Pena, 2020), when long takes of this kind are not central to the main story, they create a more dense sensation of slowness.

Finally, a very important part of the film is the voice of the filmmaker herself, who plays the role of the narrator. She has a very calm, non-professional voice, often talking in the first person and recounting personal experiences. It is easy to empathize with this voice and almost internalize it as one's own inner voice.

Looking back at these various procedures, we note that some belong to the representation of the external world, some to the filmic means and one to subjectivity. Each might be able to act separately from the others, in a heterogeneous way, to establish a relationship between different timelines in different scenes of the film. However, the film joins all these elements in a totality, harmonizing the external elements with the subjective and the filmic ones. Over the course of the film this harmonization builds up a particular atmosphere that links each temporal line not only to one other line but to all the other lines. Creating an atmosphere is what unifies all the heterogeneous elements, and the heterogeneous elements are joined in such a way as to build an atmosphere.



Figure 4. Stills from *The Sky Turns* (2005), 33'30''-36'35. Passage from autumn to winter: 'things started to change. As in winter, the first signs of change came from the north...'

The preceding discussion leads to a consideration of the concept of atmosphere. In the following sections, first I explain the concept of mood, following the notion of *Stimmung* in the Romantic tradition in painting, while also considering some newer approaches to this

concept in film theory. I argue that mood is the aesthetic element mainly responsible for our perceiving the various elements of a film as belonging to the same unity. After that, following Augustine of Hippo's reflections on time, I argue that mood is what brings all the different temporalities together in a unity.

3.1. Mood or *Stimmung* as the Unifying Feature in Painting and Cinema

Mood is a state of mind or a feeling that is felt by a person or a group of people. It can also refer to the atmosphere of a landscape or the particular tone of a place. As we can see, it has as much to do with a subjective dimension as with external reality.

As Kerstin Thomas has explained, mood was first used as an aesthetic category for Romantic painting through the German word *Stimmung* (Thomas 2004). The term *Stimmung* comes from *Stimme*, voice, which connotes expressivity. However, the word is also closely related to the German verb, *stimmen*, which means to attune or tune, in the sense of bringing two strings into accord or harmony. Two instruments can be attuned not only when they play the same sound but also when they play two different sounds that concord. It is in this very basic sense of *stimmen* that we find the twofold dimension of this phenomenon (Thomas 2004). As already stated by the old Pythagorean tradition that described the Western tonal system, the harmony between two sounds depends not only on an objective relationship between the sounds, but on their being perceived as harmonious. Harmony of sounds has a consonant or concordant effect of harmony in the listener. *Stimmung* thus refers to both a physical, external phenomenon and an internal, subjective state. This explains why in Romanticism *Stimmung* and mood referred to both an external reality, such as the atmosphere of a place, and a state of mind produced by the perception of the place.

When *Stimmung* refers to an atmosphere, it may include elements of weather and landscape, light, colour and texture, sounds and types of movements. When it refers to the emotional dimension, the associated state of mind arises through the particular duration and rhythm of the surrounding phenomena. Thomas observes that one of the most important features of *Stimmung* is that it is very difficult to identify any one element as the one that triggers the emotion. The difference between mood and ordinary emotions is that ordinary emotions are focused on specific objects or actions, whereas mood is associated more with a general state of things. That is why it is possible for discordant elements or movements in a

scene (painting or film) to disturb or even break the particular mood shaped by the whole. Thomas also notes that mood tends to be longer-lasting. Whether linked to an ephemeral, volatile atmosphere or to a more enduring state, mood is characterized by a sort of suspended temporality.

If the concept of *Stimmung* or mood has always been significant in painting theory, it has been rarely studied in film theory. One of the first to do so may have been Gregg M. Smith in a 1999 chapter on emotions in cinema. Smith argued that the cognitivist approach to emotions applied to cinema needed to be broadened. According to him, common cognitivist theories in cinema adopt the prototype model of emotion. This involves constraining emotional states to intentional dispositions that are linked to actions: 'Definitions of emotions rooted in cognitive philosophy tend to have some combination of these central characteristics of the emotion prototype: an action tendency, an orientation towards objects, and a goal orientation. Films cognitivism has inherited these assumptions' (Smith, 1999, p. 104).

Smith suggests complementing cognitivist theories with a wider approach to emotions in which other, more general affective states are also taken into account. This so-called associative model would include states that can last from several minutes to days, such as being happy or depressed. These are more than actual emotions: they are affective predispositions that sometimes frame other emotions. Being depressed can trigger emotions such as sadness or dejection but is not incompatible with shorter moments of anger or even happiness (Smith, 1999).

To attune to a film's atmosphere means to empathize with it, maintaining an emotional disposition towards the film throughout its duration. Moreover, being engaged with the film will make the beholder receptive and able to react to each scene in an emotionally appropriate way. Smith therefore argues that mood is a general affective predisposition within which other emotions, of varying intensity and valence, can take place.

Accordingly, when a film creates a mood, the mood usually lasts for the whole of the film and, while it lasts, is experienced in the present as affect, a general atmosphere surrounding the explicit actions and events.

Robert Sinnerbrink, following Smith, has analyzed some of the elements that build up a filmic atmosphere, including lighting, staging, cutting, rhythm, pace, colour, texture, gesture, action music and sound (Sinnerbrink, 2012, p. 152). For him, a mood is a type of affective response to the film that varies in emotional level but is maintained throughout the different

scenes (Sinnerbrink, 2012). It is a sort of persistent but fluctuating affective disposition. For that reason, it can only be perceived overall and is not the effect of any particular stimulus; it is also liable to become more conscious as the film draws to an end.

Mood thus refers both to elements of the images and to the affective state of the subject. The affective state of the subject mirrors two levels of elements in the film: first, a set of heterogeneous elements of an image, such as light and composition, which can be perceived synchronically; and second, a series of heterogeneous takes and scenes, which are perceived diachronically. In this last case, however, the order of the scenes is relevant, since a change of order might break the mood. A mood lasts for a relatively long time and may even continue after the film has ended. It is not a direct reaction to particular phenomena but an active predisposition of the subject. Considering these features, we can see that the concept of mood may correspond to the concept that Augustine of Hippo thought the most important element of time, that is, *affectio*.

3.2. The Concept of *affectio* as the Reverse of Time in Augustine of Hippo's Theory

In what follows I argue that the concept of mood in the arts and cinema is closely related to the concept of *affectio* in Augustine of Hippo's theory of time. I also show that *affectio* is central to Augustine's theory. First, I outline Augustine's theory of time in three basic points.

The first idea is that time is a psychological experience that depends on external phenomena. Augustine of Hippo's theory of time is a reply to the Aristotelian theory, which conceived of time as a natural category that relies only on *physis*, that is, on nature (Aristotle, 2008). Augustine's theory, in contrast, is the first complete psychological theory of time in Western philosophy. It was really original. It denies the objective existence of past, present and future (I omit the argument here, so as to not to oversimplify), which can only exist in the mind. Since the mind thinks always in the present, both the past and the future are phenomena of the present: we have a present of the past, a present of the present and a present of the future.

The second idea is that these three experiences of time are possible through the subject's adopting an active role. The subject is not passive or receptive. The subject mind's builds a temporal relationship between events using memory to recover past events through

recollection, perception to represent present phenomena, and expectation to anticipate possible future events. The mind thus measures temporal intervals between phenomena and builds a line of duration between a thing's present state and its past and future states.

The third idea is that the mind's representations of events do not reflect objective properties of the events but the effect the events have on the subject. For Augustine, what we compare in our soul in order to build up a temporal experience is the *affectio* or *the way things affect us*. Again, I must stress that 'the way things affect us' is not a passive experience but an active one, one that is only possible through the disposition to articulate memory, perception and expectation. Augustine's favourite example is a musical one. When I am about to sing a song, I have the whole song in my mind, through rhythm and tonality as cross-cutting features of the song. The properties of the song do not belong to specific elements but to the relationships among them. It is only because there is a subject that builds up the relationships among elements that it is possible for a song to be sung as a song, that is to say, in a more or less achieved unity of rhythm and tonality. When I have sung part of a song, that part is in my memory, the part I am singing is in my perception and the rest is in my expectation. But if I direct my attention to all these parts as one, taking into account the way these parts affect me, the song still forms a whole. This is what Augustine calls the act of *attention and distention*. Through attention, the mind focuses on individual elements, while through distention it attends to the structural elements that form the whole.

As we have seen, in Augustine's theory of time the concept of *affectio* is central to building the notion of time. The next step is to realize that the concept of *affectio* is closely linked to the concept of mood.

Traditionally, Augustine's *affectio* has been translated into English as 'impression'.⁷ However, there is a misunderstanding here. In English, impression refers rather to the mark or footprint left by something in a surface. Impression is also the term that classical empiricist theory of knowledge uses for the footprint that external stimuli leave in our minds. Latin has

⁷ At least, this is the case in both the translations I have consulted (as cited in the bibliography). The most important fragment is Augustine, *Confessions*, Book Eleven, Chapter XXVI, [36, which Chadwick translates as follows: 36. 'It is in you, O mind of mine, that I measure the periods of time. Do not shout me down that it exists [objectively]; do not overwhelm yourself with the turbulent flood of your impressions. In you, as I have said, I measure the periods of time. I measure as time present the impression that things make on you as they pass by and what remains after they have passed by--I do not measure the things themselves which have passed by and left their impression on you. This is what I measure when I measure periods of time. Either, then, these are the periods of time or else I do not measure time at all.'

its own word for this basic cognitive phenomenon, namely, *impressio*. According to Olivetti's *online Latin dictionary*, the Latin word *affectio* refers, first, to a 'mental condition, mood, feeling, disposition' and, second, to 'affection'. 'Affection' in English, like *affectio* in Latin, is closer to the emotional dimension than the term 'impression'.⁸

The way Augustine defines the experience of time as *affectio* confirms the analogy with 'mood'. In a well-known passage, Augustine describes *affectio* as an extension of the soul through events. It is not possible to have all the words, tones and tempos of a song present in one's mind; but it is possible to have them present in a kind of extended present, felt as a mental state. An affective disposition maintained throughout the song makes it possible to perceive the song's parts and its unfolding as a whole.

The soul achieves this by using its capacity to concentrate and to relate. Augustine talks about the mind's capacity to bring intention and distention to things. This is like narrowing and widening the focus, concentrating and expanding, *attending* and *distending*. Through the mental capacity to concentrate, one brings attention to particular parts of an event or action; through the capacity to open one's mind and detect relationships, one gathers phenomena together.

It may be surprising but it is not a coincidence that Romantic painting and film theory, on the one hand, and Augustine, on the other, should have so much in common, given that the former talk about mood and the latter about time. My claim is that these are two sides of the same coin. Mood is the mental state or emotional disposition that unifies different events; time as continuity is the form or structure which this disposition builds in order to unify events and grasp the plurality as a whole.

For us, as for Augustine, it is important to understand that this mental capacity to relate different events can apply at different scales. On the one hand, intense concentration can make all the parts of a very short phenomenon, such as a car driving past quickly, present in the mind. On the other, prolonged distention (extension of mind) can bring events occurring over a long period of time into a unity.⁹

Accordingly, Augustine ends his uchronic reflection on time with a beautiful passage in which he applies his understanding of the way the soul measures time to his own life and to the

⁸ Searched in Olivetti's Online Latin Dictionary and at *Latinitium*. <https://latinitium.com/latin-dictionaries/>. Last searched 30 November 2022.

⁹ I wonder whether this is related to what I would call global listening in music, that is, the capacity to have a whole piece of music in one's mind, not in every detail but in its structural, architectonic aspects.

whole of human history.

What is true of the poem as a whole is true equally of its individual stanzas and syllables. The same is true of the whole long performance in which this poem may be a single item. The same thing happens in the entirety of a person's life, of which all his actions are parts; and the same in the entire sweep of human history, the parts of which are individual human lives. (Augustine, 1999, *The Confessions*, Book XI, Ch. 28, 38, p. 309).

4. Sound as the Main Element for Creating Mood in Carlos Casas's *Cemetery*

I would now like to apply the previous reflections about mood and time to a film that also has many heterogeneous elements but uses sound to cement them together.

Cemetery (2019) by Carlos Casas is a fiction film that contains some documentary images. It was presented at Tate Modern in 2019. The film tells the story of the last elephant. After a natural catastrophe, the last elephant makes its way to the mythical elephants' cemetery. Before the departure, some hunters enter the area; but after a fruitless search, they succumb to the jungle. Then the elephant leads the viewer into a dark cave, where almost nothing can be seen, so that the cinematic experience becomes mainly acoustic. At the end, some landscapes suggest the possibility of a new beginning.

The film is structured in four parts related to cinema genres. The first part introduces a traditional narrative film in which a journey is prepared. It is the journey to be taken by Nga the Elephant in its last days, after a natural disaster. The elephant and its human keeper, Sanra, prepare themselves for the trip. The second part is close to an adventure film, with elements of suspense. The poachers arrive at the site and search for the elephant. The third part is much more experimental, showing a trip through the caves, with all their dark images and with visual perception obstructed for nearly ten minutes. The screen is in darkness almost the whole time, inducing a state of hypnagogia through the camera movements, the flickering shadows and, above all, the sound. In this part, the viewer's sense of hearing becomes much more acute. What we hear are jungle noises (leaves being crushed, birds) and the elephant humming, vibrations and low-frequency sounds. The last images, shot in the Atacama Desert, show still landscape views from which all life seems to have disappeared. Yet the music and the light may also indicate some kind of new beginning. It resembles a science fiction film.

The mixture of genres could give the impression of a fragmented film, a kind of collage of different narrative forms tacked together. That is not the case, however. The film evidences a great effort to create a unified experience that will drive the viewer from beginning to end, without breaks or marked changes.

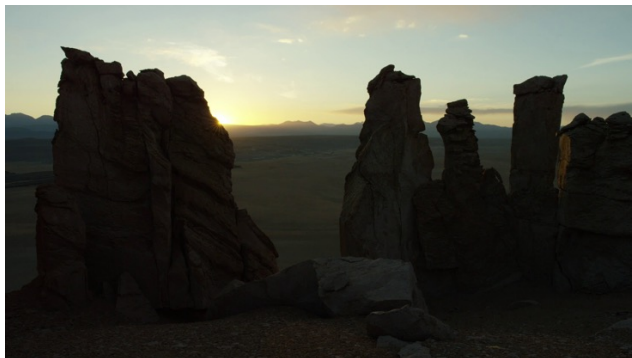
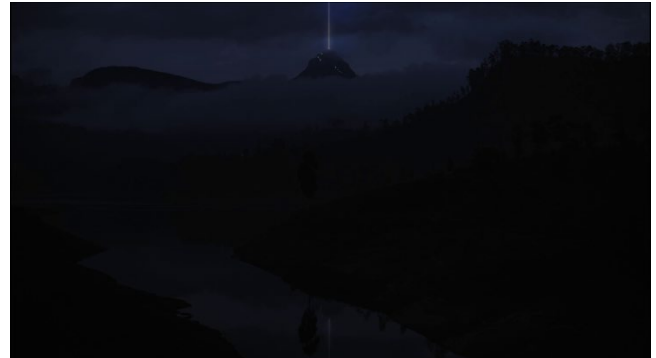


Figure 5. Stills from *Cemetery* reflecting the different filmic genres represented in Casas's film.

First, certain cinematic elements, such as the long takes with a fixed camera, Sanra's slow and repetitive movements while washing the elephant and the long views of landscapes, impose a slow pace based on a durational temporality.

Second, the film focuses constantly on weather elements such as rain, wind, water,

clouds, fog, and the changes of light throughout the day. Many of these elements, including fire, are more often heard than seen.

This brings us to the third and most important element, which is the soundtrack, especially the natural sounds of the jungle. The director does a great job using these sounds, with the help of sound artist Chris Watson. Both Casas and Watson have recorded large numbers of natural sounds from different places and animals, which they use in the film to create a sort of sound archive, or Noah's Ark, in which hundreds of species find their proper space or voice.

Sound is deeply embedded in the structure of the film, as it is the main narrative element. The film has a fully articulated sound structure that unfolds in parallel with certain processes of our circadian cycle. The circadian cycle attunes our body to times of activity and rest and regulates a corresponding cycle of activity in the brain, which can be detected through different thresholds of low-frequency brain waves. While we are awake, our brain activity produces a flow of electrical signals at around 30 Hz (Beta waves). In the evening the wave frequency drops to around 7.5 Hz (Theta waves). While we are asleep, brain activity reaches its lowest phase (Delta waves), at around 0,2-4 Hz. The film's soundtrack begins with Beta waves and unfolds to reach Delta waves in the third and darkest part, quasi inducing a state of hypnagogia in the viewer. This is the state in which we are most likely to experience spontaneous images and thoughts.

In the film's presentation at Tate Modern, sound artist Chris Watson and sound engineer Tony Myatt built a sound installation to reproduce some infrasound frequencies from the elephants, especially recorded for the film. These frequencies cannot be detected by the human ear but can be sensed by our body as vibrations. These sounds bring the film to a non-visual, non-narrative climax, in which the acoustic atmosphere surrounds the audience, eliciting a new perceptual experience.

The film's sound thus creates a mood that is not only motivated by natural elements but also follows a human psychophysiological pattern.

The printed catalogue for Carlos Casas's film includes some reflections by composer and musician David Toop on this subject. According to Toop, the low frequencies used by elephants are, for humans, associated with sadness and mourning, evoking a mood of catastrophe. However, they also expand the perceptual field, evoking a connection to the earth that goes beyond any anthropomorphic mood. 'To listen as a feeling, sensing, merging being

is to hear the ghost of that which is not quite lost. The world booms and rumbles with the vibrations of its own making and unmaking' (Toop 2020).

The main natural sources of infrasound are movements of the earth, oceans, fire and air. We do not hear these sounds with our ears but with our whole body. They awaken the feeling that our surrounding reality is moving and evolving, and that all ends bring us to a new beginning.

4. Conclusions

From the above film analyses and theoretical reflections on mood and time, we draw the following conclusions:

1. The films discussed here aim to reflect different temporal aspects of our reality (plurality of time, movement, standstill, origin, telos, etc.), while integrating them in a unitary whole. They offer a complex experience with an overall structure.
2. This complexity is more perfectly unified when the main composing element is the construction of a mood. Mood is understood always in an objective sense (atmosphere) and a subjective sense (state of mind).
3. As an aesthetic category, mood is distinct from Modern (more typically narrative) and Postmodern (typically fragmentary) strategies. It affords a Postmodern view of the heterogeneity of reality, especially the heterochrony of time, but reflects this complexity in a unitary experience. In this complex unitary experience, past, present and future can be articulated in a new, fruitful form.
4. This experience harmonizes subjectivity and objectivity through creative imagination. It brings the fields of documentary and fiction closer together without mixing them. And it fertilizes the imagination to once again conceive of the future as a contingent and productive field of experience.

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