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Ana María Leyra, *La mirada creadora – de la experiencia artística a la filosofía*, Ediciones Antígona, Madrid, 2013².

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Almost the whole artistic geography of Europe is included in the pages of this collection of essays. The artists whose works are discussed come from Italy, Russia, Sweden, Britain, France and, finally, from Spain. In a symbolic way, the whole continent is fully encircled by the contents of the book, which truly represents *la Europa de la escritura*. At the same time, there are constant references to the ancient Greek experiences, which are rightly seen as a still fundamental source for the comprehension of the artists presented here in their attempt to reveal, as well as to create, different layers of universal *mýthoi*.

The principal aim of Ana María Leyra Soriano is not to start from any rigidly preconceived theoretical position or from within any philosophical discipline in its entrenched position, guided by the logic of exclusion of different and complementary approaches, but from the very experience of the artwork. One does not find any excessive theoreticism in this book. Priority is not given to theoretical speculation or to the *a priori* methodological position at the cost of the concreteness and uniqueness of every work of art.

The book addresses mainly the works of film directors and literary writers. The focus of the essays is on the figures and counterfigures of *terribilità*. From Euripides to Pier Paolo Pasolini, we are faced with the images of „a distinct reality, which is not logical“ (p. 64). The artistic creation is defined here as an a-logical way of thinking. To produce cinematographic or literary works for Leyra Soriano means to think in images, whether verbal or non-verbal. That is a condition which cannot be overlooked by any investigator in his or her intention to conceptualize their poetic meaning.

In *Poética y Transfilosofía* (Madrid, 1995), a work related to this book, Leyra Soriano discussed the phenomena of artistic production and its effects on the formation of cultures, rather than the epistemological problem of communicability of an artwork or the transmissivity of its content. Within Soriano's standpoint, *poiēsis* from a human perspective means „a permanent creation which is at the same time a self-creation“ (p. 37). Concerning the arts, it is about an „impulsive force“, not totally verbalizable and explicable, which nonetheless redefines and redescribes reality through fiction. The results of *poiēin* in art, of this productive capacity and activity, appear to serve as a formative cultural basis that could be taken over and further elaborated as such within society in the future.

Despite the fact that the force of the creational gesture regarding the arts cannot be radically explained, perhaps the most effective way in which the essence of artistic creativity can be demonstrated is through the very act of creation. The works of discursive art such as novels are especially suitable for this intention. As Leyra Soriano writes in the essay „El ser humano y la creatividad: del arte a la filosofía“ from *Tiempo de estética* (Madrid, 1999), it is possible for a novel to become a work in which „a reflection on the creative task inside the same creative task“ takes place (p. 33). On the other hand, this logic of the novelistic institution of a new world does not necessarily convert a work into theoretical autoreflexion on the principles of literary composition.

La mirada creadora has the task to make works of art such as *Ivan the Terrible* or *The Nuptials of Herodias* „speak“ in order to manifest their meanings, to display the messages „enclosed“ in the works themselves. If we make an analogy with the problems discussed in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, to let a work distinctly speak as an inanimate object (*ápsychos*), we must metaphorically attribute the qualities of life (*empsychia*) to it (Arist. *Rhet.* 1411b). But what

can artworks, created in this way, say? To try to answer this question is to try to solve „the enigma of life“ (p. 117).

In a true artwork one finds „the infinity of lived experiences (*vivencias*) which it provokes“ (p. 94). Consequently, the multiplicity of provocations corresponds to the diversity of perspectives. The richness of the signified in a film, a novel or a poem, correlated with the divergent manners in which it is given, must deny the thesis according to which there can only be one true interpretation of an artwork. In a word, Leyra Soriano persuasively argues that it is through verbal images that the works of cinema and literature form an innovative and indispensable part of the *gran novela da la razón*.

In *La mirada creadora*, Leyra Soriano talks about the „truths of the imagination“ appearing in their ambiguity, not to the eye of passive contemplation, but to the active and creative way of looking. It is the realm „where nothing is said, but everything is suggested“ (p. 197). This specific nature of cinematographic and literary languages offers as many relevant messages and points of view as we are able to sensitively capture and comprehend.