

I think Plato Was Ill: The Cinema and Philosophy in End-of-life Issues

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Summary

Marie de Hennezel, who introduced palliative care into France, referred to the end-of-life as a strong time; the time of final exchanges, of the last words. The words of this essay could be summarised as a warning: the writer is profane in the field of palliative care, profane in medical issues, and profane in those of the cinema. However, he is by no means profane in philosophy since he holds a PhD in philosophy and teaches it. Someone profane is he or she who “fails to show due respect for things sacred”, or “a libertine or someone acutely interested in the things of this world” and, of course, he or she who “lacks authority and knowledge of an issue”; somebody “ignorant”. *Profanus*, in Latin, is synonymous with “sinister”. All these acceptances will appear one after the other, but faced with a lack of knowledge and authority, a philosopher has the right to speak up when asked to; the right to reply. Perhaps this virtue –responsibility– is a way of understanding the attitudes of humans towards the end of their lives. “Faced with” or “before” or “in front of” is the meaning of the Latin preposition *pro* in the word “pro-fane”. *Fanum* referred to the sacred place. And probably there is nothing more sacred and incomprehensible than death (incomprehensible, unexplainable), with the exception of life itself. Faced with life and death, we are all profane; we are all spectators. The inclusion of the cinema in this text is because the cinema has improved our condition as spectators; of beings standing in front of sacred things. Also in the term “professor”, the *pro* is significant. A literal translation would run in the sense that professors “promise”: they pro-ject what they say into the future. In simpler terms, they should be aware of the consequences of what they teach and anticipate the reactions. This is *profiteor philosophiam*.

Keywords: Death, Philosophy, Profane Analysis, Cinema.

Nothing is left us now but death
Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Experience* (1884)¹

While I was preparing this essay I had at my side some recent and very admirable books, worthy of being read carefully and with respect, insomuch that, although not only for this reason, they contain the final words of the authors. Both books are posthumous and incomplete and, I would say, fascinating if I did not fear that my words might be taken as irreverent or morbid, when the tone I should unequivocally take is one of piety. Death –to introduce the topic of this text as soon as possible– interrupted the writings of Jaques Derrida and Edward W. Said. *The Work of Mourning / Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* (figure 1) is the Book of the Dead of contemporary French philosophy. It compiles the leave-takings, the goodbyes, and even the *Kadish* in some cases, that Derrida wrote for sixteen friends and philosophers, from Roland Barthes to Maurice Blanchot. (Two of them, Sarah

Kofman and Gilles Deleuze, ended their lives voluntarily, although Derrida did not use the work “suicide” or “euthanasia”, which can be interpreted as a last deference, and of course, as a sign of friendship. I shall return to philosophical friendship at the end-of-life at a later point. Instead of using those words, Derrida admits that he is in debt to Sarah Kofman “after the death of Sarah, and what a death”, and “this reaffirmation of life was hers, until the moment arrived, until the moment she wished, until the end” and he refers to the death of Gilles Deleuze as “a feared death (we know he was very ill)... that concrete death, that unimaginable image whose coming will continue to deepen, more so if possible, the painful infinity of another event”. “Conjured death”, the last text by Sarah Kofman, unfinished owing to her death, analysed *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, by Rembrandt (figure 2) and the meaning of medical diagnosis before an object: the cadaver of Abrian

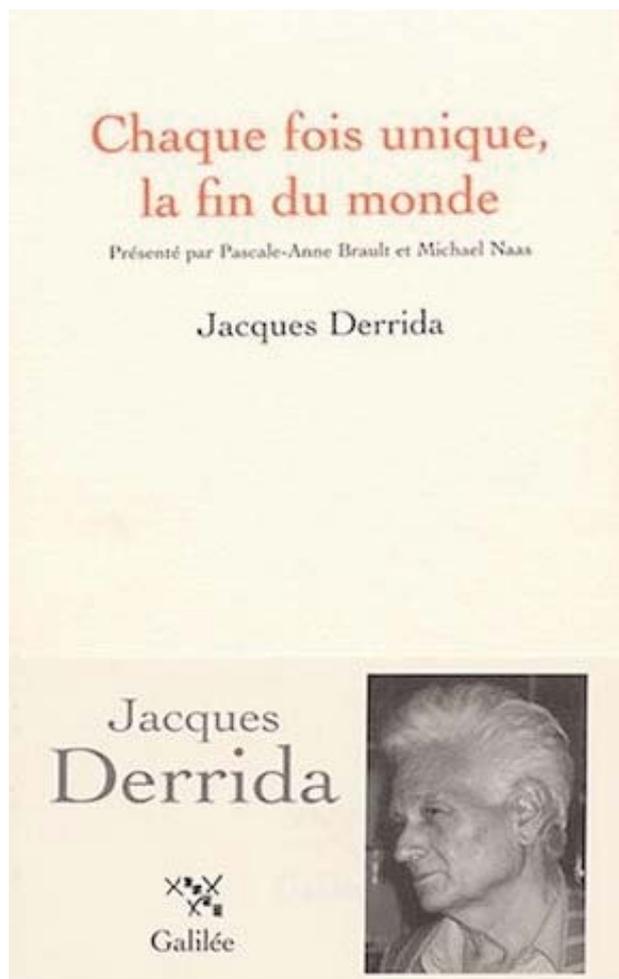


Figure 1: The front cover of the French edition of the book *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* by Jacques Derrida

Adrianez –“who did not announce any Resurrection, any Redemption, any Nobility”. At the beginning of their friendship, Kofman had asked herself whether Derrida would be a *philosophe unheimlich*, the term used by Freud for “sinister”, for the inhospitable, something I should like to retain with my gaze focused on the domestication of the idea of culture that, in my opinion, is carried out by the cinematographic medium. Derrida himself actually wrote a preface for the French edition published in 2003, two years after the first edition of the book in English, which had appeared with the title “*The Work of Mourning*” (“*El trabajo de duelo*”, or “*La labor de la aflicción*”, according to Spanish versions of the original Freudian concept, *Trauerarbeit*). The Spanish edition published in the autumn of 2005 includes as an epilogue the leave-taking that Jean-Luc Nancy wrote for Derrida’s demise, in 2004. Nancy states that for Derrida philosophy consisted of “elaborating, transforming, displacing, re-founding, unveiling, deconstructing or re-positing the very definition” of philosophy and its object, a task that I shall adopt as a guide of what I would like

to understand by philosophy. In his “Preface”, which we can now read with the extraordinary sensation of its having been written ironically, with premonition, Derrida speaks of death as the impossible experience and recognises – on referring to the fact that the book was first published in the US- that he would not have dared to propose a book such as this in *his* country and in *his* language, among and for *his* people. The “survivor condition” –the condition that weighs so heavily on all of us present, the condition of all living beings, in fact- would have seemed to him under these circumstances “insufferable, indecent and even obscene” (that death poses a “political” problem, as well as an intimate and religious one, a problem that transcends the circle of philosophical friendship and the very end-of-life and shows up what we could call the demand of the community, is another issue I shall return to). In any case, Derrida has not survived either: nobody is in a condition to do so forever. We are mortal: this is the only syllogism of what François Jacob called *la logique du vivant*. Survival therefore alludes to something that has to do with what we must do while we are still alive and something that reminds us continuously of the importance and responsibility of our life: something that affects our relations with others and not only ourselves –something we would call decency or ethics- and what is visible of ourselves for others. Something, in the long run, that can never be portrayed in a scene, as death in the Greek tragedies, but only before the eyes of others, be they friends or philosophers or not. Part of our own work in mourning –the institution of palliative care- is not allowing people to die alone or survive alone. I am sure it would not be necessary to explain what it is to accompany a person in grief, which in exactly what Derrida, and Nancy at the end of Derrida’s life, do in this book².



Figure 2: *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) by Rembrandt (1606-1669) (Mauritshuis, The Hague, the Netherlands)

Survival is also to a certain extent the underlying theme in the last book by Edward W. Said “*On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*” (Figure 3). Said distinguished between the notions of “opportunity” (*timeliness*) and “delay” (*lateness*). Being opportune, knowing how to be opportune, is a question of education and prudence and obedience; of the fact that being inopportune is one of the resources most used in comedy converts impertinence, or inopportuneness, into an aspect of human existence that we could not take seriously. If we think it through, we could not in all seriousness say that death is inopportune or impertinent; that it has arrived too soon or too late. Never this. Said is of course more interested in another meaning of delay or lateness, if indeed these words help to translate what Said distinguishes in late style: mainly a form of exile, of displacement, of the unsuitability of a place and a time in which, however, one is living or surviving. Late style, says Said, is what happens when art does not renounce its rights in favour of reality, especially the art of living, which consists of continuously bearing in mind that there is a job for the arts that is more important than art. Late

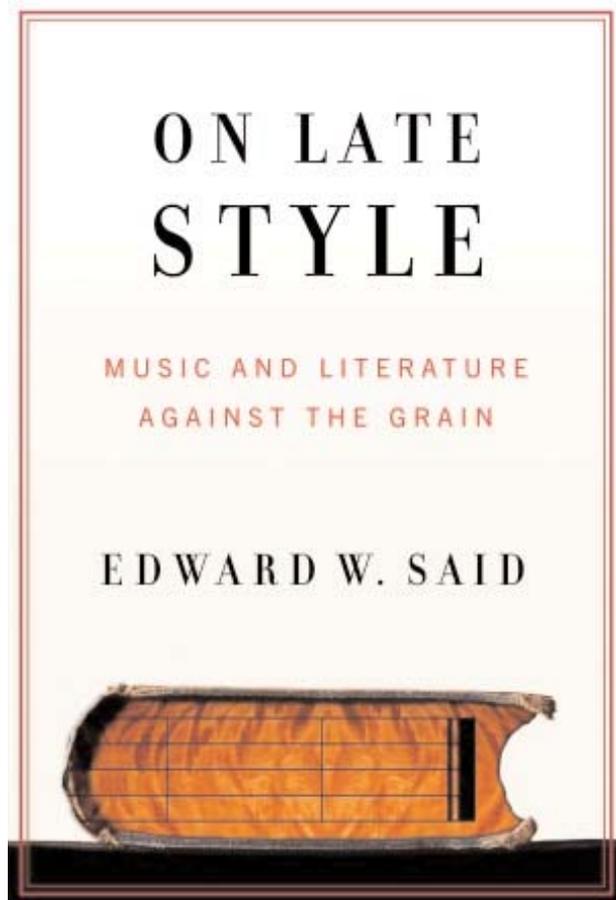


Figure 3: The front cover of the book *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* by Edward W. Said

style is an ill-timed and philosophical consideration. Said recognises his debt to this with Theodore W. Adorno (who coined the term *Spätstyle*) and with Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche: “late style and philosophy” is one of the most noble conjunctions of the book that now allows us to read it not as a treatise on aesthetics or an exercise in criticism –above all musical, but also literary and even cinematographic- but as a moving autobiographical document. Said knew as he wrote the paper, although not before he had conceived of it, that he had little time left. He was to die, with his manuscript uncompleted, in the autumn of 2003, the victim of a leukaemia diagnosed in 1991. The first chapter of the book, where he explains the terms I have mentioned, was pronounced as a lecture before an audience composed of physicians and related workers, among which his own doctor was present. At all times Said is faithful to his position: the prerogative of later style is that of offering disenchantment and pleasure at the same time, without solving the conflict between both extremes (it is undoubtedly the prerogative of some of the films I shall refer to later). The later style explored by Said in the work of Theodor W. Adorno, Richard Strauss, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jean Genet, Glen Gould, Luchino Visconti, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Antonio Gramsci, Benjamin Britten or Constantin Cavafis excludes what we could call the maturity, or the serenity, or the harmony at the end-of-life [In the movie version of *Il Gattopardo* (1963) (Figure 4), Visconti eludes the death of the prince of Salina. With this, he deprived the story of the family air that it shared with *The Death of Ivan Illich* by Leon Tolstoy, or *The Metamorphosis* of Franz Kafka. Let us recall the fate that Concetta gives to “poor Bendicò”.] The late style is, by contrast, “intransigency, difficulty and unresolved contradiction”, but by no means is it a condemnation of life. Along the book -in my opinion a superb work- we discover that in order to learn how to die, to say our last words, we must first learn how to live, to speak many words interwoven within a grammar of existence that predicts what we can say at the end. The later style corresponds to a dignified end to life. The personal preference of Said for the last phase of the western novel (by Joseph Conrad, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, or *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling) favours the possibility, at least the artistic possibility, of having with us a whole life, from beginning to end, to examine³.

That the cinema has replaced the novel as the aesthetic form that offers the best and most complex image available of ourselves is an avenue that I shall not explore here. I take this for granted and assume

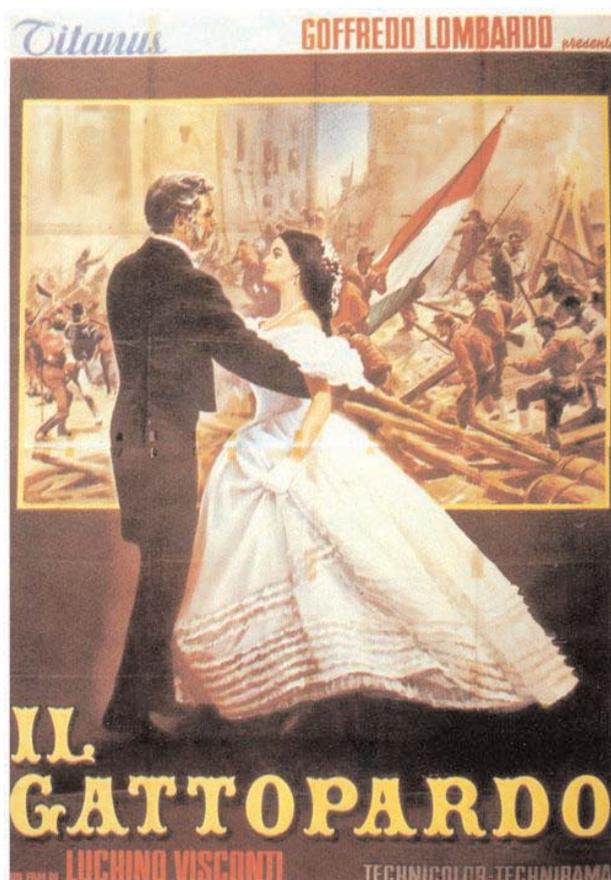


Figure 4: Italian movie poster of *The Leopard/ Il gattopardo* (1963) by Visconti

that the nostalgia that we might feel upon reading *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy or *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert is an inseparable condition of current interpretations of literature. (Perhaps not so, though, of the ethics of literature, which would have to explain why it is so difficult to read a good novel, a pure novel, in the late style of a Marcel Proust or James Joyce or Samuel Beckett).

Neither shall I enter a discussion about whether the cinema is more realistic or less artistic than the novel. The extraordinarily fertile affinity between the cinematographic medium and individual experience, in a century such as the past one, profoundly and fatally undermined by the historical categories of totality is something I cannot insist upon –and nor can I be thankful for enough. The cinema was the inheritor of the great bourgeois literature precisely at a time when such literature began to be democratized, to be almost inconceivable without the extension of the world of readers. It is not by chance that David Wark Griffith chose Charles Dickens as the basis for his first films [*The Cricket on the Hearth* (1909)]. Let us recall the beginning of *David Copperfield*: “Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own

life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.” Here, “Anybody else” refers to “someone” or “anyone”: the possibility of facing a whole life before us, from beginning to end, to explore would not only be, with its adaptation to the cinema, a question of aesthetics but eminently political. The natural (as in familiarity) aspect of the cinema has converted many more people, anybody –all human beings– into the characters of a film. This universalisation of human representation is one of the conditions of the very possibility of cinematographic understanding; from the classic cinema of Hollywood to Italian neorealism to the Japanese cinema of Yasujiro Ozu, Kenji Mizoguchi and Akira Kurosawa.

However, understood as an art of the masses, the cinema make us reappraise –when addressing films that I shall mention later on– the issue of profane analysis, an issue relatively original to psychoanalysis that is ineluctable upon conjugating the cinema, philosophy and medicine. The issue of profane analysis refers to our therapeutic competency and perhaps to our right to understand the media –including the cinema– that we have at hand to achieve an integration of mental health in processes of grief or affliction or melancholy, among other examples of alterations to the structure of our psychic personalities. *The Issue of Profane Analysis/Die Frage der Laienanalyse* is also the title of a book by Freud, published in 1926 with the subtitle of “Conversations with an impartial person”. Essentially, this is a dialogue and to a certain extent the literary nature with which psychoanalysis is presented this time established the reading mode. The insistence on the word, as Lacan would have it, is platonic. I would suggest that the pre-eminence of the Platonic text has given meaning to the psychoanalytic text. The Platonic text in question is *Phaedo*. No other dialogue of Plato (Figure 5), and perhaps no other text in the history of philosophy, has posed the issue of profane analysis, of our therapeutic competency and of our aspiration to knowledge like this dialogue, which I shall consider as Freud’s pretext. In *Phaedo*, Plato narrates the end of Socrates’ life. The narrative is indirect and deferred in several aspects: the dialogue between Execrates and Phaedo does not take place in Athens –in the city *par excellence*– but in Fliunte, an important Pythagorean centre, after the events he is telling of have happened. Phaedo describes Socrates’ last hours; he recalls what the philosopher said before dying and to those present, in a confused mood, “an unaccustomed mixture of pleasure and pain” typical, as we have seen, of the later style. “I believe that Plato –says Phaedo– was ill”

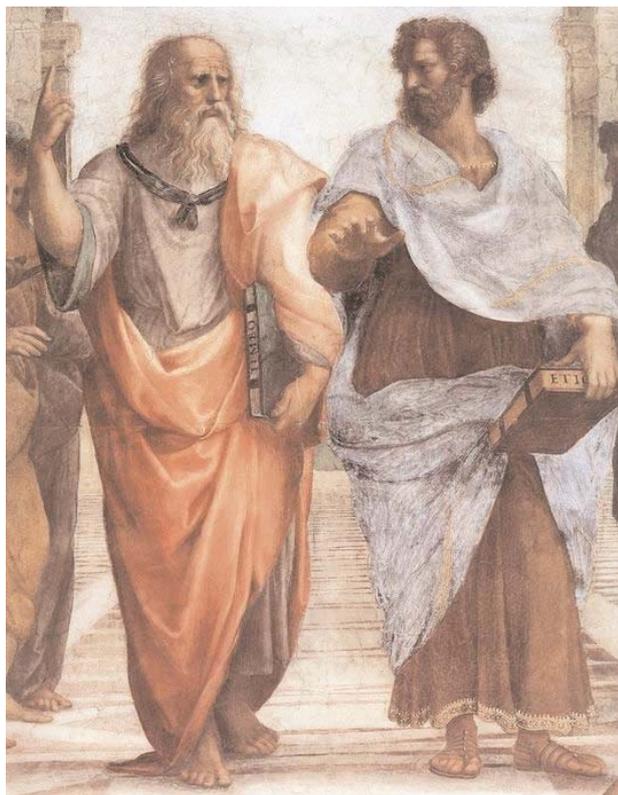


Figure 5: Plato, author of the dialogue *Phaedo*, and Aristotle. *The School of Athens*, (1511) (detail) by Raphael (1483-1520), Vatican Museums

(59b). Gregorio Luri has pointed out that to read Plato it is necessary to bear in mind the “specific abstraction” of his writing, what is absent from the text. In *Phaedo* there are two significant absences: the absence of Plato, which governs the present and the meaning of the philosophy in the dialogue (together with dreams, religious duties or music, philosophy appears as the excelsior music) and the absence of Athens, which allows Socrates to use “us” to refer exclusively to the circle of friends, from which family members and professionals (the doorman or the bearer of the hemlock) are excluded. Accordingly, on one side would be the profane and on the other the purified (68 e). These two absences or specific abstractions afford the myth open space (60 d/61 e) and make us pay attention to the many occasions when Socrates, as *Phaedo* says, alludes to philosophizing in the true sense of the word, as the argument about “migration” or the immortality of the soul, mysteries and beliefs confronts the objections of the interlocutors, mainly of Cebes and Simmias, who because they are Pythagoreans would have to corroborate what Socrates is saying, were we not dealing with a highly subtle refutation of Pythagorism (The absence of Plato can be understood as a deconstruction of the

Pythagorean philosophy and of its object in the dialogue). Socrates –as *Phaedo* says at the end– “knew how to cure us”. Socrates, and not the philosopher friend or the professionals or the profane, is who gives the palliative care, who is the true psychotherapist, but he is ironic - it is not clear “what kind of death do those who are real philosophers merit?” (64c) or what euthanasia consists of, “practising death with complacency” (81b) (Cleombrotus of Ambracia, as we receive from the classic tradition, threw himself into the sea after reading *Phaedo*). The dialogues of Plato are perhaps the first expression of the late style in philosophy. In his *Apology*, Socrates reproaches the tribunal for not waiting until nature would do, granted his age, what the city had decided to do. As is known, Socrates’ bragging has often been interpreted as a covert suicide⁴.

In *The Issue of Profane Analysis*, Freud looks at the matter again without irony “You have invited me –he says to his imaginary interlocutor- to have a conversation about the problem of whether the profane in medicine can undergo analytic treatment”. Analytic treatment, or psychotherapy, is “treatment by the spirit” (*Seelenbehandlung*, as Freud was to call it on several occasions), an “orientation of spiritual activity”. As such, it is a Socratic procedure: the analyst merely starts a dialogue with the patient, “converses with him or her and suggests something or dissuades the patient” in an “exchange of ideas”⁵. This conversation is based on the conviction that between the “Ego” and the “Id”, between the divisions of our state of mind –a mixture of disappointment and pleasure, of affliction and melancholy, of sleep and wakefulness, of reason and myth – there is no natural opposition. They are parts of the same thing and “in cases of normal health they are almost indistinguishable”. Freud assumes the great moral responsibility of the analyst: like Socrates, he is never the first to speak and often resorts to myths, which form part of the knowledge necessary for the rational exercise of analysis. Allowing patient and myth to speak attenuates the resistance, the forces that oppose the work of therapy. Like Socrates, Freud reserves the use of words and harbours moderate but firm expectations. “What I demand – as he replies to his impartial interlocutor- is that nobody should practice analysis who has not won, through a certain preparation, the right to practice that activity”. Like Socrates, Freud tries to cure and investigate at the same time. Lacan would say explicitly that psychoanalysis had allowed the Platonic aporias of

reminiscence, of the origin of our ideas to be resolved: “It is the whole structure of language that is uncovered in the unconscious with the psychoanalytic experience”. In any case, Plato and Freud would cultivate the *logos* as much as they would revise mythology⁶.

Freud wrote that the ego is the “foreground” (*Voordegrund*) of the id. Perhaps the cinema is profane analysis by antonomasia in an attempt to give it a background suitable to the existence of humankind. “What authorises the cinematographic camera to go deeper into moods? The superficiality or appearance of depth of cinematographic projection might remind us of what Emerson said in his essay “Experience” – as an expression of his grieving upon the death of his son- “It hurts me –said Emerson – that pain cannot teach me anything or take me closer to true nature”. That the cinema is only an illusion is one of the dangers run by the filmmaker, aware of the huge optical (and hypnotic) power of the cinematographic medium. To escape that danger, to redeem physical reality –as Siegfried Kracauer would define it so beautifully– and even to offer a possibility of cure for the soul is what films such as *To Live/ Ikiru* (1952) by Akira Kurosawa (Figure 6) aim to achieve on paying the world the attention it needs. The attention the world needs, and the world of life in particular, is not a specifically professional attention. Freud and Melanie Klein have insisted that grief and affliction, unlike melancholy, are not pathological states: grieving does not need a strictly medical treatment but a spiritual one. The individual who has to grieve –for example, Kurosawa’s Mr. Watanabe, who finds he has an incurable disease- will deviate considerably from his normal behaviour but “we effectively trust –Freud writes- that after a certain period of time the affliction will disappear of its own accord and we shall judge it inappropriate and even damaging to disturb it”. This trust in the passage of time and in the scrupulousness of not disturbing something that, however, must be contemplated and inevitably be accompanied to the end, is typical of the cinema and of views of Kurosawa.

With a term from Emerson, I shall call this spiritual treatment –an essentially profane analysis- the domestication of the notion of culture [In *The American Scholar* (1937)¹]. I have already said that there is work for the arts that is greater than art. Not taking this into account has led a competent filmmaker such as Nagisa Oshima to undervalue a whole phase of Japanese cinema marked deeply by historical events –defeat after the Second World War and the incorporation of Japan into the society of nations during the

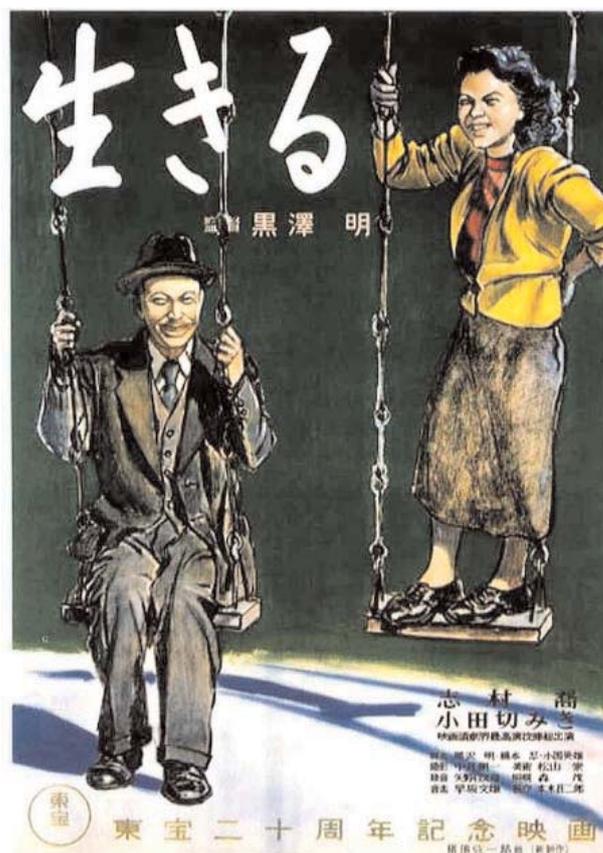


Figure 6: Japanese movie poster of *Ikiru* (1952) by Akira Kurosawa. Kanji Watanabe (Takashi Shimura), main character, is seen at the right

Cold War – and both individual and collective relationships with those events. The national films, however, of Ozu, Mizoguchi and Kurosawa, among others, were true “current considerations about war and death”, and not only a showing of the persistence or of the crisis in the traditional values of Japanese society⁷. In any case, these values had to be measured with the media available to the cinema to express them and, as in the case of Italian neorealism, the influence of the classic cinema of Hollywood was to be determinant. The classic cinema of Hollywood had also passed through the experience of war and death. One of the responses to that experience, but not the only one of course, nor one that would in the end become characteristic of American cinema in competition with television or with other communications media and entertainment technologies, was that of the filmmakers Frank Capra, George Stevens, and William Wyler in the films they directed for the independent company Liberty Films⁸. *Ikiru* by Kurosawa or *Tales of Tokio/Tokyo monogatari* (1953) by Yasujiro Ozu would be unimaginable without *It's a Wonderful Life!* (1946) By Frank Capra or *I Remember Mama* (1948) by George Stevens (Figure 7). [In this latter movie there is a scene, filled with light, that narrates the death of

Uncle Chris (Oskar Homolka). While seemingly unsociable, Uncle Chris has devoted his whole life to the palliative care of ill children. The treatment of childhood diseases merits the ancient name of piety]. These films, in their day, were a commercial failure and were bombed by critics. Today it is still difficult to elude the attributions of cloy or sentimentalism they were given then. They are not, and it is a blessed paradox that it has been the television that recovered them for the public's enjoyment. Neither is the film *Ikiru* in the "bland and sentimental" category. Quite the opposite, all these films offer an alternative to a world divided internally and externally and they attempt to rekindle trust in external objects –Japan and the United States, the whole world in the post-war period – and in many rival values, old and new, such that the spectator (initially the spectator contemporaneous with the films and later, unexpectedly, TV audiences) is reaffirmed in his or her memory of what had been lost forever and –as Melanie Klein would say about childhood psychoanalysis and Ruth Benedict would place among Japanese cultural traits –

does not fear vengeance. Mr. Watanabe (Takashi Shimura) relates his illness and the estrangement of his son with an episode from his childhood; falling into a pond and experiencing the sensation of slowly and inexorably drowning. The work of his life would be to drain an unhealthy area of the city and convert into a children's playground (This episode -or discovery, in the psychoanalytic sense- is one of the many loans from Capra: as a child George Baily (James Stewart) (figure 8)–the character in *It's a Wonderful Life!*– jumps into a pond of freezing water to save his brother, as a result of which he loses the hearing in his left ear. When the angel later gives him his wish of never having been born, George realises that he can hear perfectly well. To recover deafness would be to recover health, to be alive, to have survived; even though, or precisely because, the object of life is not perfect. According to Klein, only when we realise this will we vanquish grief).

The domestication of the idea of culture, in my opinion, improves upon much less useful concepts such as "westernization" or "globalisation". It is irrefutable –although with this Kurosawa wanted to be critical – that the city appearing in *Ikiru* is undergoing an irreversible process of "westernization" while the rituals and ceremonies of traditional Japanese life still persist (Curiously, and mistakenly, Alexandre Kojève warned about the Japanization of western existence in *Le dimanche de la vie*–Domestication of the idea of culture also improves upon the concept of "secularization". Not having understood the pre-eminence of domestication over "secularization" has been bad for the films of Capra and Stevens, for the attempt to be an idea or image of good, for feeling at home anywhere. The wish for good of Mr. Watanabe is a wish for domestication, not a religious wish. In the domestication of the idea of culture the quotidian and the necessary merge: in his infinite and persevering humility, stronger than death as long as it does not achieve its aim, Mr. Watanabe, Like George Baily or the mother in Stevens' film, wants to exclude everything not strictly necessary, to simplify existence, to assume clear responsibility without abdicating from his rights in favour of reality. Humility is the late style of Mr. Watanabe. In a key moment of *Ikiru*, Mr. Watanabe confesses to the young woman he has fallen platonically in love with (which means that he has discovered an image of good in her) that he lacks a fundamental lesson of life. There is something that Mr. Watanabe still does not know. Not knowing what this is leads George Baily to try to commit suicide and to wish he had never been born. Like George Baily, Mr.



Figure 7: American movie poster (one sheet) of *I Remember Mama* (1948) by George Stevens. Uncle Chris (Oskar Homolka) is seen at the right

Watanabe has searched before for a solution to the enigma in hell – *Heaven and Hell* or *High and Low/Tengoku to jigoku* (1963), to say it with another of Kurosawa's titles – in a voyage to the depths of the night that, both cinematographically and spiritually, is in debt to George Bailey's trip to Pottersville. In *Ikiru*, the polarity of day and night, which coincides with that of laughter and tears, with life and death, is perfectly delimited.

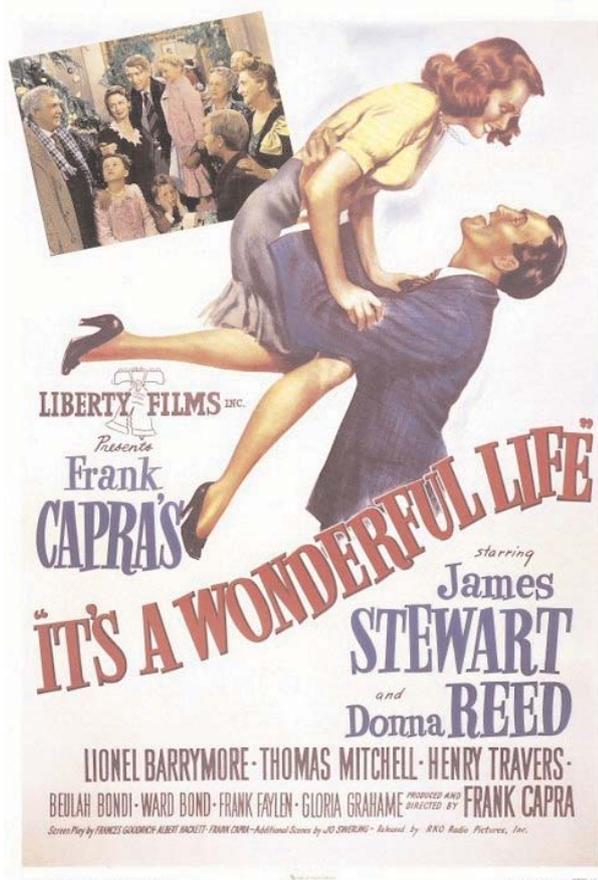


Figure 8: American movie poster (one sheet) of *It's A Wonderful Life!* (1946) by Frank Capra. George Bailey (James Stewart) singing Mary Hatch Bailey (Donna Reed up in the air)

This teaching is philosophical and political. In Phaedo, Plato was ill because philosophy and the city were the specific abstractions of the dialogue. The city, the community, or politics are not absent from *Ikiru* or *It's a Wonderful life!* This teaching is a demand of the community: Mr. Watanabe is chief of the municipal Citizens' Section. ("Democracy", a term that Ruth Benedict tells us first appears in Japanese in 1945, is a term that the citizens, actually women citizens, begin to doubt at the beginning of the film. The Citizens' Section is the transposition of the Bailey Building and Loan Company. In both cases, what is in play is the economy of life and death, the administra-

tion of existence, the institution of the immense palliative care required by an organism that is moodily fragile and continually threatened by fear, routine, or lack of understanding, despite the rigidity or rectitude of the Japanese obligations that in *Ikiru* are unfulfilled with impunity (filial respect, Mr. Watanabe's own grief). It is also a philosophical teaching: in the last part of the film, when Mr. Watanabe has died, we see grief through an intricate piece of filming – typical of the director of *Rasho-Mon/ Rashômon* (1950) – which, however, is not in the service of the cinema. It is, in essence, a *zêtesis*, an investigation and a memory. We must attempt to discover how Mr. Watanabe, at the end of his life, actually reached the idea of good. The police report that Mr. Watanabe discovers while he is singing and swinging in the children's playground that has been the culmination of his life provides the final proof. The melody has struck a chord in his heart. Philosophy is the music beyond all (let us see this scene, –which erases the previous one – in a night club– in which Mr. Watanabe has sung the same song– now more elaborate, transformed, displaced, renewed, revealed, deconstructed or re-posed for ever).

In *Self-Reliance* (1841)¹– his indestructible essay of the deconstruction of all philosophy, Emerson wrote that we use the term "intuition" to refer to the primordial knowledge of instinct or spontaneity while all late teachings are "instructions". He adds that analysis cannot go beyond the profound depths of instinct. Philosophy is always questioned when interrogated by spontaneity. He translates, by contrast, "Instructions" by *tutions*. Emerson writes "Intuition" with a capital and in singular, and "instructions" with a lower case "i" and in plural. Without attempting to be overzealous in the interpretation, I am inclined to believe that Emerson preferred those "tutions" over "Intuition, and for us, no less romantic than him, they represent what was originally meant by the word *tueor*: watch, see, consider, observe, attend to, care for someone, protect, preserve life.

It is a good fate for any instinct.

This text is dedicated to the memory of

Manuel Serra Olmos

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- 3.- Said EW, On Late Style : Music and Literature Against the Grain. New York: Pantheon Books; 2006. Introduction by Wood M.
- 4.- It is interesting to see the re-writing of platonic dialogue in the age of Enlightenment: Mendelssohn M. Phadon, or On the Immortality of the Soul. New York: Peter Lang Pub Inc; 2006.
- 5.- The term "psychotherapy" appears literally in Laches, 185 e: "It is, then, a matter of knowing which of us is sufficiently expert in the treatment due to the soul (psikhés therapeian) so as to be able to care for it well". Gregorio Luri has shown me other uses of therapeia in Plato's work, referring to care of the city, of the body or of God: Euthyphro, 13 d; Gorgias, 521 a; Republic, 443 c; Politeia, 278 e. The term that Plato normally uses for the care of, or responsibility for, something is epimeleia and its use is interesting -perhaps ironic with respect to its use in the Hippocratic corpus- in Socrates' Apology (29 d, 30 b). I am indebted to Luri's Socratic books and correspondence. (See Luri Medrano, G. El proceso de Sócrates. Madrid: Trotta; 1998, and Luri Medrano, G. Guía para no entender a Sócrates. Madrid: Trotta; 2004.)
- 6.- See: Freud S. Question of Lay Análisis. New York: W. W. Norton & Company; 1969. Freud S. Consideraciones de actualidad sobre la guerra y la muerte (Thoughts for the Times on War and Death) (1915) and La aflicción y la melancolía (1917) in El malestar en la cultura y otros ensayos. Madrid: Alianza; 1994. Lacan J. The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud. In Ecrits: A Selection. New York: W. W. Norton & Company; 2002 and Klein, M. (1940). Mourning and its relation to manic depressive states. Writings, Vol. 1, Love, Guilt and Reparation. London: Hogarth; 1975. See also: Monserrat Molas J, Roviró Alemany I. La Salut. Actes del Col·loqui de Vic, IX. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona; 2005, especially the communication by Bosch-Veciana A -to whom I am grateful for making this volume known to me-, Totes (les malalties són divines) i totes són humanes. p: 69-84] and Muñoz S, Gracia D. Médicos en el cine. Dilemas bioéticos: sentimientos, razones y deberes. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, Madrid; 2006.
- I would like to thank professor Xavier García-Raffi for informing me of the documentary Las alas de la vida by Antoni Pérez Canet, in the script of which García-Raffi himself participated, and which narrates the admirable end of the life of Dr. Carlos Cristos. Dr. Xavier Gómez-Batiste, Chairman of the Spanish Society for Palliative Care took part in the film. García-Raffi is one of the main scholars of the relations between philosophy and the cinema. See: Ferrer A, García-Raffi X, Lerma B, Polo C. Psiquiatras de celuloide. Valencia: Ediciones de la Filmoteca. Instituto Valenciano de Cinematografía Ricardo Muñoz Suay; 2006 and Ferrer A, García-Raffi X, Hernandez F, Lerma B. Primum videre, deinde philosophari. Una historia de la filosofía a través del cine. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim; 2006.
- 7.- See the documentary 100 Years of Japanese Cinema (1994) by Nagisa Oshima for the series The Century of Cinema of the British Film Institute. I would also like to refer to: Benedict R. The Japonesa Since VJ-day. In The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture. Cleveland: Mariner Books; 1989, as well as Lanzaco Salafranca F. Los valores estéticos de la cultura clásica japonesa. Madrid: Verbum; 2003.
- 8.- Lastra Meliá A. Qué bello es vivir de Frank Capra (1946). Barcelona: Octaedro Editorial; 2004.
- 9.- Kojève A. Introduction a la lecture de Hegel. 2ª ed. Paris: Gallimard; 1947. p. 436-437, see the Note "Recent interaction between Japan and the western world will not in the end lead to a re-barbarisation of the Japanese, but rather to a Japanisation of the westerners". In part, Kojève's soulless irony could be applied to Kurosawa's historical cinema -especially to his adaptations of Shakespeare or Dostoevsky- or to Japanese fantastic cinema. By "historical" and "fantastic", we can understand the avoidance of the domestic. (See: Aguilar C. La singularidad de lo diferente en el cine fantástico japonés. In: Lastra A editor. La filosofía y el cine. Madrid: Verbum; 2002, p. 15-21).