

Narrating 1968: Felipe Cazals' Canoa (1976) and Images of Massacre

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Abstract : Canoa (1976) by Felipe Cazals is a film that exposes the consequences of power that the Mexican State exercised over the 1968 student movement. The film, in this particular way, approaches the Tlatelolco Massacre from a point of view that takes into consideration the events that led up to it. Nonetheless, the reference to the political tension in Canoa remains ambiguous. Thus, the cinematographic representation refers to an event that leaves space for reflection, and as a consequence leaves evidence of an image that signals the notion of survival as Georges Didi-Huberman points out. In addition to denouncing the oppressive force by the Mexican State, the images in Canoa also emphasize what did not happen in Tlatelolco and its condensation with the student activists. To observe the images that Canoa offers in a new light, this work proposes further exploration with the following questions; How do the images in Canoa narrate? How are the images inserted in the film? In this fashion, a more profound comprehension of the objective and the essence of the images becomes feasible. As a result, it is possible to analyze the images of Canoa with the real killing at San Miguel Canoa in literature. The film visualizes a testimony of the event that once seemed unimaginable, an image that anticipates and structures the proceeding event. Therefore, this study takes a second look at how Canoa considers not only the killing at San Miguel Canoa and the Tlatelolco Massacre, but goes further on contextualize an unimaginable image.

Keywords : cinematographic representation, student movement, Tlatelolco Massacre, unimaginable image

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