

## Editorial

### Filiation: an epistemological question and a creative act

*Einstein's space is no closer to reality than Van Gogh's sky. The glory of science is not in a truth more absolute than the truth of Bach or Tolstoy, but in the act of creation itself. The scientist's discoveries impose his own order on chaos, as the composer or painter imposes his; an order that always refers to limited aspects of reality, and is based on the observer's frame of reference, which differs from period to period as a Rembrandt nude differs from a nude by Manet.*

*Arthur Koestler, The Act of Creation, London, 1970, p. 253)*

The restitution of children, a task carried out by the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo) has generated a field of knowledge which questions the relation between genetics, law, psychology and social sciences, breaking the horizon of political certainties and available ethics. This revolution of thought is not alien to the creative process, it constantly feeds on it. Clinical singularities represented in literature, the theatre, films and paintings, are part of an indispensable scenario to gain access to the complexity of the problem. The dilemma of filiation thus constitutes an unexpected analyzer of contemporary relations between science and art.

The cinema provides a beautiful example. In *The Mask of Zorro* (Campbell, 1998), baby Elena, daughter of Don Diego de la Vega and Esperanza, is snatched from her cradle when her mother is killed and her father is 'disappeared'. She herself is kidnapped and taken to Spain by her captor, Captain Montero, who raises her as his own child, hiding from her the truth about her birth and real family. At the age of 24, Elena returns to Mexico believing she was setting foot on American soil for the first time when in fact that is where she was born. Beautiful and sensitive, she is captivated by the fragrance of a flower she finds persistently familiar. The Romalia is native to America and is not found in Europe. The people around the young woman give no credit to the 'memory', believing it to be a case of confusion. But the significant within insists and turns into an incessant question, a question without answers. This is when the film makes a crucial change\* of course. For the unaware, it was simply the cinematographic version of an old television series in which the mark of the Zorro was nothing more than an initial marked with his sword on Sargeant García's prominent belly. But in the film the mark is in truth a trail. A trail in the memory of a child.

The sign becomes significant. The tangible sign of a social cause -independence from the Spanish Crown, the fight of the oppressed in California- now adds another repressed name. But this one has nothing to do with the morals of good and ideals of justice. This sign floats in the air. It is the fragrance of a flower which, impregnated in the body of a woman, does not forget. Romalia is the name of that rose. That is why it defies the passage of time. That is why the ocean divide makes the fragrance more and more intense. And for this reason, like in all the stories of the children who have been robbed of their identity, she too amorously holds the mystery of a filiation.

In the days when there were no genetic analyses available to prove the identity of people, it is the body that remembers. To show us by means of poetry, that biology is not a fact in itself, that DNA is a point of passage, never the finishing line. As we had anticipated in another article:

*Passage that in the case of appropriated children becomes unavoidable. The military dictatorship made a point of suppressing the coordinates of filiation so that these children, today adults, could not be recovered. Their parents were 'disappeared', their mothers' were made to give birth in military hospitals, witnesses were murdered, false birth certificates were issued and identities were faked over many long years. But the erasing of marks is never a completely successful operation. When all the references seemed to have been suppressed, it is the body that remembers. The 'grandmotherhood rate', which certifies the filiation even in absence of the parents, takes on valuable significance because it is that which is found within the body that outlives the silenced story.*

(Michel Fariña & Gutiérrez, *La encrucijada de la filiación: Tecnologías reproductivas y Restitución de niños*, Lumen, 2000 – At the crossroads of filiation: Reproductive Technologies and Restitution of children.)

This issue of *Aesthetika* is dedicated to selecting some of those pearls that by means of the cinema, literature and visual arts, set us on the trail of theoretical discovery. Reciprocally, it unfolds the conceptual arguments that make of those fictions an exercise in thought. Aesthetic creation thus nourishes scientific spirit and correlatively reminds us that the investigator is also a creator, with a mind open to knowledge of reality and a heart willing to be transformed.

From the illustrations by Emiliano Bustos which open this volume, to the comments on Montecristo, the articles have been selected to vibrate on that delicate chord. Between Einstein's space and Van Gogh's sky, following Arthur Koestler's beautiful epigraph which opens this editorial.