The Funambulist Pamphlets 11: Cinema

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The subjective point of view of the camera in Gaspard Noé’s *Enter the Void* (2010), a continuous single shot throughout the film, forces the viewer to become the main character. However, this unique cinematographic aesthetic should not make us forget the essence of the movie which can be seen as a wandering vis-à-vis a certain interpretation of death.

A few minutes before dying, the main character, Oscar, hears indeed from his friend the way Buddhists conceive death as a soul wandering as well as a look at previous lives, preceding reincarnation itself. The film constitutes Oscar’s death following such a process without any possibility for the viewer to perceive if this “soul wandering” is real or dreamed by him at the very moment of his death. As Marcel Duchamp once put it, “it is always other people who die.” I interpret this mysterious sentence as the idea that time might exponentially decrease its speed when one is dying without ever reaching the limit where life ceases completely. Of course, for external viewers, one actually dies and time continues, but the perception of an infinite time does not necessarily presuppose the cessation of time in another scale of its perception — the one we experience when we are fully alive.
In the previous chapter, I claimed that Kafka/Welles’ *Trial* was following the exact same wandering as the one introduced in *Enter the Void*. Franz Kafka’s friend Max Brod was the person who reassembled the disseminated and incomplete chapters of *The Trial* before its publication. He assumed that K.’s death was the final episode of the narrative whereas I suggest that it was in fact the first one. In this interpretation, the endless wandering of K. in the administrative labyrinth that we know is actually his infinite dream experienced while dying during the exponential decrease of the speed of his own curving time. This wandering of thoughts leaves us with one question that *Enter the Void* implicitly asks: does death really even ‘exist’?

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