

MULTIPLE AND MULTIPLE-LANGUAGE VERSIONS.
A RESEARCH PROJECT
III MAGIS – GRADISCA INTERNATIONAL FILM STUDIES
SPRING SCHOOL

Gradisca d'Isonzo, March 10-19, 2005

The practice of producing films from the same plot in different versions, each in a different language, sometimes with the same directors and actors, sometimes with actors and directors of different nationalities, is generally assumed to be limited to a specific historical period: the transition from the silent era to talking pictures. In actual fact it relates to a much wider period. For instance, there was something similar to multiple versions during the silent period, and the practice continued up to the 1950s and beyond. Multiple versions, as well as not being solely confined to a more or less limited historical circumstance, also bring to light a dimension of cinema that has a lot to tell us about its original theoretical statute.

Apart from the pioneering work of Herbert Holba, the contributions of Mario Quargnolo, the research and proposals of CineGraph (Hamburg) and of Il Cinema Ritrovato (Bologna), the archival investigation into the early 1930s has never been systematically pursued. The practice of producing multiple versions requires an in-depth examination and a detailed assessment, as it deals with a general period of reorganisation of the whole cinema industry internationally. The reconstruction of this peculiar stage seems all the more necessary, as it can shed a light on many features of the production and representation methods that underwent reorganisation during the 1930s.

Multiple versions are critical for the following areas of investigation:

- film philology and restoration
- sound and filming technologies
- international production and distribution policies
- national and international consuming practices
- directing and star models
- national and international narrative models
- changes of the notion of author and art-work.

The first aim of the research into multiple versions, in order to achieve a basic filmography, is to involve the greatest number of film archives, to initiate a census of the number of copies of films that have one or more versions in other languages. At the present date, the project is co-ordinated by Università degli Studi di Udine, CineGraph and Národní filmový archiv (Prague).

The second stage of the project will identify a series of films, according to the selection made by each film archive involved, which will be restored in its different versions.

The results of the restorations will be shown at the major international festivals (Il Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna; Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Sacile/Pordenone; CineGraph Congress, Hamburg).

The final stage of the project will focus on an extensive European retrospective, dedicated to multiple versions and presented in the major European capitals. A book summarising the work carried out and the results achieved will also be published. The filmography and material related to it will be made available at a specifically created website.

The project will be developed through a series of events and initiatives:

- MAGIS-Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School. The “School” of Gradisca (Gorizia), brings together every year, since 2003, professors, graduates and young researchers from a network of European universities (Paris III, Amsterdam, Bremen, Valencia, Lugano, Prague, Udine, Milano-Cattolica, Pisa) and other institutions: CineGraph (Hamburg), Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, Cineteca del Friuli (Gemona), Film Archiv Austria (Vienna), Národní Filmový Archiv (Prague) and other European archives. The ANAI-Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana (Italian National Archival Association) and the Museo Nazionale del Cinema are also involved. The subject of multiple versions is examined through a series of presentations, workshops, work groups, projections and discussions. The Gradisca “Spring School” will, in 2005 (10-19 March 2005), examine the following sub-topics: the migration of people working in the film industry, multiple versions and national identity, cinema and other media. The fourth issue of the journal *CINEMA & Cie.* published the transcripts of the presentations given at the 2003 MAGIS edition. The transcripts of the presentations given in 2004 will be published in two subsequent issues of the same magazine.

- CineGraph Conference (Hamburg). The conference held in November 2005 will be dedicated to the subject of multiple versions and will host an extensive retrospective.

- A series of books dedicated to the restoration of the single films (in their different versions).

- Publication of the filmography in a specific website.

During Il Cinema Ritrovato 2004 a meeting among film archives was held. The following archives took part in it: Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (Berlin), Cinémathèque du Luxembourg, CNC-Service des Archives du Film (Bois d'Arcy), Film Archiv Austria (Wien), Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchívum (Budapest), Münchner Filmmuseum (Munich), Murnau Stiftung (Wiesbaden), National Film and Television Archive-BFI (London), as well as the Italian major archives, as La Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, Cineteca Nazionale (Rome) and Museo Nazionale del Cinema (Turin), and the Associazione Nazionale Archivi Italiani.

The meeting decided to establish a common platform of exchange among the archives, through which materials and informations circulation and film detection could be eased. In particular, the present archives decided to implement the data con-

tained in the filmography actually edited by the MLVs Project, and to actively contribute to the detection of the single versions of MLVs present in the respective collections, in order to develop restoration programs. It was also stated that the common restorations will bring to a European retrospective, to be promoted in the single film archives movie theatres, and to publishing editions, including different versions restored on DVD and books containing documentation and materials.

Deadline for proposals:

November 15, 2004

Information at:

MAGIS – Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School

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