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International Film Studies Journal

Multiple and Multiple-language Versions
Versions multiples

Edited by Nataša Ďurovičová
With the collaboration of Hans-Michael Bock

Editrice Il Castoro

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MAGIS Proceedings – I Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School

Edited by/Sous la direction de Nataša Ďurovičová
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INTRODUCTION

Nataša Ďurovičová

After hovering for decades at the very margins of the film-historical field as a mildly bizarre curiosity – the two headed pig of the classical cinema – the phenomenon of language versions (LVs), i.e. the simultaneous remaking of the same title in a variety of language versions, has in recent years begun to draw the interest of film historians at exponential speed. As an antonym to the monolithic and monolingual "Hollywood," versions have also provided a prime test case for the limits of the national cinema paradigm, which had, from the mid-1980s, begun to be put into question.[1] Even when not necessarily front and center of the argument, the LVs have repeatedly cropped up to figure as important evidence in the context of star studies, exile studies and sound studies.[2]

Repeatedly but always anecdotally. For all this attention, doing research on LVs has generally been a near-impossible task, since it depended first of all on a hands-on comparison. Beyond locating two versions of the same film (itself a challenge, given standard archiving as well as cataloging practices, as Davide Pozzi and Ivan Klimeš attest to in this volume), the effort of bringing together the two titles (which by the fiat of distribution were meant to be mutually exclusive – to see the German version of *Anna Christie* was usually meant to pre-empt seeing the American version), not to mention arranging for two flatbeds next to each other, begged to be taken on as a collective undertaking.

The MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School is among the very few places where such an undertaking was conceivable. Wedged in a three-corner space between Italy (proper), Slovenia, and Austria, Friuli is palpably polylingual. Added to this is its unique regional investment in film-historical research and scholarship of the last decade, as embodied in the Pordenone/Sacile "research festival" *Giornate del cinema muto*, the Udine International Film Studies Conference, and now in the Gradisca Spring School: all these have made Friuli a prime location for European as well as trans-Atlantic film studies. It is more than a coincidence that one of the very first monographs on the subject of LVs, Mario Quargnolo's *La parola ripudiata*, was published by the Cineteca del Friuli in 1989.

Adding a further essential dimension to the Spring School is the geographical and intellectual closeness of Bologna, where academic film studies coexist with the Cineteca del Comune di Bologna and its *L'immagine ritrovata* workshop. Their joint contribution to the versioning project has been not only through prints and technical support but also through a unique combination of restoration practice and the theoretical discourse informing it, in which the classical philological tradition of textual editing is combined with new media theories.

But neither research nor theoretical work on the LVs can be divorced from the hands-on moment of comparison which, after all, is what makes this topic so singular. And running two or three versions side-by-side is inherently (in a way almost perceptually) a collective, or at least a dialogical enterprise: at its core the Spring School was above all a workshop. It took a lot of organizational talent, energy and patience to assemble and run, in the ad-hoc space of a 17th century palazzo, a 35 mm projection booth, a multimedia lab with dozens of titles, a document and book library and, above all, a revelatory series of films screened in two to three versions. The team responsible for assembling them included Mariapia Comand, Veronica Innocenti, Francesco Pitassio, Valentina Re, Cosetta Saba and Laura Vichi, with the genial, generous and inspirational Leonardo Quaresima at its helm. To these must be added the name of Hans-Michael Bock, whose willingness to share films and documents, combined with superb organizational skills and deep knowledge of the period, honed through his long-standing involvement with the *CineGraph* project (in some respects the research precursor and natural future partner of the MAGIS project) influenced every aspect of the seminar.[3]

The core Italian group had already laid ground for the Spring School in organizing, during the preceding spring (2002) a conference in Udine entitled *Il film e suoi multipli/Film and its Multiples*, out of which the theme for the Gradisca project emerged.[4] At the Udine International Film Studies Conference language versions had appeared in the framework of all kinds of other cinematic series, and all kinds of methodological approaches to seriality, ranging from semiotic through phenomenological to historical. While the scope of papers presented in Gradisca was somewhat broader (Martin Barnier on a French and an American adaptation of *Les Misérables*, Manlio Piva on the Italian and the French release copies of Bresson's *Pickpocket*, just to name a few), the focus of attention was on language versions proper. These were loosely approached as films which solve(d) the problem of dialogue translation not by adding a narrowly linguistic supplement (dubbing and subtitling), but rather by replicating all or some portion of the footage through reenactment, in a relatively close temporal arrangement, one that would allow positing the films as "versions" (in contrast, in particular, to "remakes" with their relatively longer temporal contract).

One theoretical framework offered here up-front was François Jost's semio-pragmatic account of pertinent categories of identity and difference between two "works."[5] The point of departure is the concept of replicability: what makes a second work, in an oxymoron, a "true copy" of the first, i.e. when is it similar enough to be a facsimile (like the prints of a photographic negative) of the first, and consequently also potentially a falsificate? And when is the second work different enough so as to no longer have a relationship of identity to its presumed precedent, i.e. when does it become a "version" of some preceding work? The terms "autographic" and "allographic" (borrowed from Nelson Goodman via Gérard Genette's body of work) chart two different principles of difference: an autographic work is unique and thus possible to falsify (= be copied perfectly, such as a painting), while an allographic work (e.g. a play) exist only in each of its many possible manifestations (e.g. a variety of performances). To extrapolate from Jost's presentation, the claim for a version being strictly a communicative act of linguistic translation into another language of a "*version originale*" (its "functional equivalent") would thus emphasize its autographic characteristics, while a more expressive-

ly driven view of versions as "cultural translations" (as Joseph Garncarz would have it) would search out and dwell more on their "variant" allographic properties. Both in Genette's and Jost's use much modification of Goodman's binary set follows, but for our purposes it provided one conceptual handle on the spectrum of versioning processes.

Pierre Sorlin's historicist stock-taking of the near-endless heterogeneity of the concept of a "version," together with the critical survey of the historical writing on the versions and its methods provided by Rémy Pithon, blocked out many of the guideline questions of the coming days.[6] Together the two overviews agreed, implicitly if not explicitly, on a preamble: our definitional problems are first and foremost a function of scarce data. Until we can accurately determine the degree of planning, that is, of *intentionality* involved in the decision to substitute elements x and y but not w and z, it will remain impossible to draw a distinction between a version and a remake, a version and an adaptation, and even a version and a generic cluster, which in turn will make periodization impossible.

The search for a definition can be sought in the direction of theory ("what is the particular nature of repetition in the LVs?"), or in history ("when were versions?"). The bulk of papers presented here, and the Spring School's general tenor, were in the latter category – research papers with a historical-culturalist bent. Brought up to historiographical scrutiny, however, there are in them leads toward larger issues of history of representations from which it is but a close step to more general media-theoretical concerns.

As studied in Gradisca the LVs were assumed to be a finite series, limited to the 1929-1939 decade; though there are odd instances of LVs during and after WWII, these really are extremely rare. This periodization then begs the question of whether it is accurate, as systems-driven historiography would have it, to view the LVs as a "glitch," a historically contained moment of experimentation during the unruly period of transition to sound. On this view translation through versions was a deviation from some sort of norm (whether that norm be understood in textual or production-related terms) which at some point became reinstated. Or, should the LVs, given their large numbers and considerable pervasiveness, be viewed as a distinct, even autonomous form/at/ion brought about by the confrontation of competing or complementary media regimes of sight and sound, such as on one hand the stage, on the other for instance the recording industry and radio? This latter point was advanced in discussion especially by Thomas Elsaesser, in whose perspective the chief interest of the LVs is as one symptom of what he called "a generalized crisis of indexicality." On this view the versions' approach to the body/voice split represents simply one strategy among many for the wholesale reconfiguration, in 20th century modernity, of perception and knowledge, a process in which the newest medium of sound cinema joined its technological predecessors and competitors – photography, silent film, radio, telephony –in molding new reality-effects and new forms of subjectivity.

Some of the debates issuing from here then circled around to the question of whether dubbing (the historically privileged translation substitute for version-making) was in some sense ontologically inevitable, the "natural" functional equivalent of the LVs which was bound to put an end to this practice, or whether it needed to be checked against, and found in some respect constitutionally different from, the LVs' extreme form of duplicating in which the process of translation included cultural as well as linguistic elements.[7] If we take the LVs as more than just a transitional form, we are bound to return to the surplus of "body" – as (gendered) actor, as performance, as agency.[8]

The contributions that follow in this issue can be divided into two broad groups. One takes as its implicit assignment Sorlin's set of questions: what can be identified, historically, as the common element(s) for a cluster of films so that they can qualify as "versions" of each other? In other words, *exactly* what were the procedures and/or textual elements that could be duplicated economically and practically (and thus copied "autographically"), and which were instead the elements in need of local modification, that is, elements seen as the required signals of national difference (i.e. "allographic" elements of non-identity)?

The other set of papers extrapolates from this research to ask: what can we learn from the interaction between LVs and the historiographic category they most apparently challenge, that of the national cinema(s)? And in extension of this, is there (not) a line to be drawn between the type of seriality deployed in the Hollywood-made "foreign" versions (FLVs) and the "multilingual" versions made in Europe (MLVs)?

The answer to the former question is to be found, and was sought, in the format of close reading. The assumption underlying this approach is then that a critical mass of precise details will give us a "bottom-up" account, mapping "exactly" what could or had to be varied in order to create difference significant enough to qualify as a version.

Beyond the chronological primacy of his material, Davide Pozzi's gloss on the restorations of *Nana* and *Prix de beauté* also perfectly illustrates Sorlin's call for research on production procedures. Aiming to ascertain the exact relation between "one title... two editions [silent and sound]... and four [dubbed] versions" the restoration story as told here demonstrates that the two editions did not as stand in a hierarchical – let's say autographic – relationship, in other words that the sound version was not simply a silent version with inserted sound shots. Rather, the silent and the sound "editions" (to use the philological term favored by the Bologna scholars) are allographic, two separate "performances" of the title *Prix de beauté*. This non-identity is beautifully confirmed in the reconstruction which revealed that while the film-within-film ending of the silent version fills the frame completely, in the sound version the corresponding film-within-film shot consists of a film strip that includes an optical sound track. The two mutually exclusive variants thus carry with them a substantial allegorical baggage, as Malte Hagener's very different essay on the same film suggests later in this issue.

The four subsequent essays share the procedure of close and comparative reading. What they differ in is the choice of the materials of expression through which the national "reassignment" is accomplished: music, narrative, language/cultural idiom and spatial markers respectively.

Like Pozzi, the musicologist Roberto Calabretto tracks a two-step inter-media version switch – from Weill/Brecht's stage opera to Pabst/Weill/Mackeben's film with songs (German/original) to Pabst/Weill/Mackeben's (French/secondary) version. Generally siding with the view critical of the film's revision of the stage version, Calabretto in turn sides with the German version over the French, which he finds better corresponding to both the original stage score and to Brecht's theories in general. He notes changes in performance (Oswald's aggressive contra Florelle's lyrical tone), as well as in scoring (the German version's more complex use of recitative in the wedding sequence than that of the French version, yet its failure to deliver on Brecht's preference for "speaking against music"). Ultimately an instance of philologically-informed textual comparison, Calabretto's analysis concludes without extrapolating to a general "nationalizing" interpretation of the differences he identifies.[9]

If it was the musical structure that was the chief evidence of a two-step "degradation" for Calabretto, Francesco Bono's discussion of the opera-film *Casta Diva* and its English version *The Divine Spark* (C. Gallone,1935) locates difference squarely in the realm of narrative. Chiefly by tracking divergences in editing and framing Bono shows the difference between the longer Italian version which centers on the protagonist Bellini's Faustian deal with his musical career and is complemented by a distinctly divine vision of his muse Maddalena, and the shorter English version in which the muse's "spark" invokes a less ephemeral and more human female character counterbalancing a less "predestined" composer. This drift away from the operatic and more toward the romantic modality is then also present in Gallone's 1954 Italian "auto-remake" of *Casta Diva.*

The pair of papers by Peter Szczepanik and Petr Mareš, deliberately triangulated with Ivan Klimeš's overview of the Czechoslovak 1930s situation elsewhere in the issue, put into focus a major national cinematography otherwise largely ghettoized in its post-WWII "East" incarnation. Jointly they highlight its complex participation in the transnational film space via its special relationship to the German and the Austrian state, as well as to the larger Germanophone "imagined community." Attending to the full range of permutations in the clefts between the social space and the linguistic space of both the diegesis and the spectator, and to the versions' attempts to overcome these gaps by various ways of "stitching" spaces together, Szczepanik proposes, on the Czech example, a conceptual framework for the work of cultural translation (Garncarz' term again) amongst several variations of such an "imagined community." Mareš's essay, with its linguistic focus, proceeds in the complementary direction. Attending closely to what we might call "the shifter function" of linguistic and cultural idiom, he tracks the versioning procedures of the bilingual Czech star Vlasta Burian as a loop from his "mitteleuropean" Habsburg Empire themes in their distinctly local Czech formulation (both in terms of the characters' punning and ornate language and in terms of the films' mildly Schweikian anti-Habsburg ironies), which he then re-packaged in version format for the sensibilities of the "mitteleuropean" German-speaking audiences. As laid out by Mareš, the Burian example also demonstrated the non-linear ricochet effect of "cultural translation": a version's failure may be an index signaling that a non-negotiable and thus non-translatable border exists between national(ist) spaces.

In counterdistinction to these "bottom-up" close readings, several contributions offered a reverse top-down perspective, placing the LVs within the paradigm of national cinemas. In Joseph Garncarz' analysis of the German situation that paradigm not only remained intact right until the mid-1960s, but was in fact buttressed by the LVs in their collective effort to mobilize, satisfy and thus mirror a given set of national norms (whether linguistic, stylistic or typological). In a comparable scenario, Charles O'Brien identifies the signature effect of the French (national) cinematography of the 1930s as a direct legacy of Paramount's Joinville studio, whose "canned theatre" (i.e. direct-recording) sound model, elsewhere limited to the transition era, came to correspond particularly well to the performance-driven French mode and became adopted as its dominant stylistic norm.[10] In these two essays the LVs thus became a kind of *primus inter pares* of their "host" national cinematographies.

In contrast to the model in which a national cinema is equated with and measured through the box office records in that country, the model implied in Ivan Klimeš' study of the Czechoslovak interwar situation drives a wedge between the concept of national cinema as a market and as a discursive entity. Aiming for a basic factographic invento-

ry of versions produced in the country, and therefore concentrating on production more than on reception, Klimeš's account nonetheless offers the picture of a complex national non-identity within the state's boundaries. The Czech-language films were thus versioned (largely into German) as a strategy to help finance them, the target audiences being not just the German speakers abroad but also the country's own substantial German minority. But access to both these markets was regulated by the multi-national Czechoslovak state through a range of legal and economic tools, such as import quotas and quality subsidies. In the border areas the Czechoslovak German versions would thus compete with the imported German-language originals, the two sets thus no longer functioning as mutually exclusive "functional equivalents." Almost simultaneously this minoritarian versioning nexus also became a transitional landing point in the lines of flight along which some Jewish émigrés were moving out of the widening realm of the Nuremberg laws.

Klimeš's account lends empirical as well as conceptual resonance to Malte Hagener's schema. It is no accident that Hagener too takes up *Prix de beauté*, sometimes known as *Miss Europe*. At once famously lost, fragmented, mythical (thanks to Louise Brook's cinephiliac standing on the right side of the Atlantic), multi-national and multi-medial, caught between the allographic (via its two media versions, silent and sound) and the autographic (via dubbing) poles of duplication, the film served Pozzi as an exemplum of the restoratorial challenge to notions of single origins. It serves Hagener as a case study for, as well as allegory of what he calls the "over-in-determination," (i.e. multiple causality in uncertain hierarchy) of the transitional early sound period in a Europe at once heterogeneous and crisscrossed by an array of inter-national production networks. It is then his claim that the European MLVs, the *multi*-language versions produced in the nexii of such production networks (held together by powerful producer figures, from Joe May and Erich Pommer down through today's Claude Berri and David Puttnam) signal a different (more allographic, let's say) kind of cinematic seriality than the vulgarly mechanical the FLVs, the (let's say quasi-autographic) "*foreign* language versions" made in Hollywood.

There is room for a polemic with this account. Hollywood's several versioning strategies (generally not at the center of discussions in Gradisca) were more diversified than the contemporaries (especially the irate European guest talent, confronted with the strict routines of the American studio system) were able to judge and describe.[11] Thus MGM's mid-1930s Chevalier films such as *Folies Bergéres*/*Man from Monte Carlo* were cut and tailored with utmost care around the French star's persona, much like the UFA versions of Lilian Harvey's films, and were very successful both at home and in France. This is then to be contrasted with the same studio's completely mechanical Laurel and Hardy films in which the duo speaks a phonetically acquired Spanish, though with tongues firmly in cheeks. Here the role of parody as a kind of "preemptive anti-nationalist strategy" remains to be examined. And in extension of O'Brien's argument much can be said about Paramount-Joinville's effort to acquire a full gamut of French features, from stylistic to legal, to the point of producing some of France's best-loved national classics, such as Pagnol's *Marius* (1930).

But arguments about the various "continental" types of seriality don't subtract from (in fact probably add to) Hagener's broader methodological proposition, namely that overdetermination is the versions' *sine qua non*. For the multitude of representational transfers – linguistic, stylistic and legal – which is so thoroughly laid out in Sorlin's arti-

cle *cannot* ultimately be sorted out by "getting it right," by cumulatively adding production datum to production datum. The definitional boundaries of the version *corpus* will remain unstable, dovetailing not only with versions achieved via partial reshooting and reediting but also, for instance, with the phenomenon of remakes ongoing until today, and encountering further difficulties when new storage media such as DVDs make their own use of versions. Best understood via a multiplicity of causes arranged in uncertain hierarchies, and often formally or thematically preoccupied with their own "conditions of representability," versions in the term's broadest sense make a case for "crisis historiography" which aims precisely to acknowledge shifts in definitions, and the ongoing jurisdictional battles in the process of trying to stabilize them.[12]

A few summarizing thoughts. There is no data available that can sustain the widely accepted claim that it was some generalized "change in public taste" that led to the abandonment of versioning and to its replacement by dubbing and/or subtitling. Had that been the case, we would be able to explain how "public taste" could differ so instantly and radically between countries like (1) Sweden and the US where dubbing never became prevalent, (2) France which operated with a dual system of dubbing for provinces and *versions originales* for select urban audiences, (3) Italy and Germany which lined up thoroughly behind dubbing, etc. The format in which linguistic transfers were happening was instead determined in Europe by a wide-ranging series of top-down decisions, legally secured by the state, while in the US it was quasi-sanctioned through the state's intermittent tolerance of monopoly manifested in the film industry's vertical integration. And because of the additional factor of a massive and vast economic depression that was unfolding simultaneously with the technological transition, scarcity of films was the case more than an array of choices. Put otherwise, the linguistic air space of a given country was regulated not by what the public preferred but by a mix of national cultural policies, the strength of the exhibitors vs. the producers' organizations, the impact of patents, the standing of intellectual property rights etc. It was in this "over-in-determinate" mix (to use Hagener's term) rather than in some aesthetic free market that the versions' viability was decided.

As a phenomenon versioning participates in the generalized world-wide mobilization of cultural boundaries in the post-Crash, an era forming a dialectical hinge between the *Amerikanismus* of the 1920s and the reactive nationalisms of the 1930s. But the desire for acoustic self-recognition also on the level of speech, akin to what Benjamin calls "modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced," of which the LVs were such a radical manifestation, doesn't disappear with this format's disappearance.[13] It finds its more permanent expression instead in the 1930s (state-supported) boom in national cinemas and their specific genres. Even while the exports of Hollywood films grew again in mid-1930s, to higher levels than they have been around the crisis of the transition period, their market share (as Garncarz and O'Brien have pointed out here) remained relatively lower, certainly much lower than their near-complete penetration so common world-wide a decade earlier, as well as today.

It is this internal faultline, the built-in duck-rabbit effect of identity politics running through the versions that makes them so worthy of study. In their initial emergence, whether in the US or in Europe, the LVs represented the recognition, the acknowledgement of and the capitalizing on the continued existence of the local (or what has sometimes been referred to as "vernacular modernism") by the behemoth of global media

modernity. But from the hindsight of the developments in the 1930s the persistence of versioning may also need to be paired with its replacement technique, dubbing. For both are manifestations of a kind of visceral reaction against the threat of modernity's polylingual babble, of an acoustic battening down of hatches and closing of ranks, a wish to block out all Others' voices, that the audio-visual spheres of the various countries could accomplish. Technology invited overhearing across various boundaries; politics aimed to regulate, even block that flow. Paris, the exile capital of the *entre-deux-guerres*, the mythical home of every true western cosmopolitan, was possibly the only place where one could experience and thus compare the spectrum of sound cinema's representational possibilities on an urban *dérive*, to hear the polyphony of voices, languages and translation modalities in their widest spectrum.

Finally, the present volume – as well as the ongoing Spring School project on language versions – testifies not only to the wealth of historical and archival research yet to be done of this complex topic. It testifies as well, I think, to a fascination with the LVs for a different, a more strictly aesthetic reason. As we approach and take in the corpus of all the versions in the attentive posture of comparison, the films' palimpsest offers us the flickering specter of endless alternatives. "What if" one thinks, the colonization of the American West had indeed been achieved by Italians (*Men of the North*/*Luigi la volpe*, Fox 1930)? What if that embodiment of German *Bürgerbildtum* Dr. Rath were the humiliated victim of a chanteuse from New York rather than of a local girl (*Der blaue Engel*/*Blue Angel,* UFA 1930)? What if American jails were filled with French inmates, staff and mores (*Big House/Big House*, MGM 1930)? What if Swedish sailors felt most at home in Marseilles (*Marius/Längtan till havet*, Paramount 1930)? What if the Habsburg empire were still standing, and everyone in it still, or again, spoke only the language of their emperor (*C. a k. polní maršálek*/*K. und K. Feldmarschall*, Elekta-Film, 1930)? And conversely, what of a world in which the same prying eye of a television set could penetrate simultaneously households in thirteen different countries (*Television*, Paramount 1930, in 13 language versions)?

While each of these differentials taken alone can be dismissed as nothing else but a symptom of a flat word of ethnic stereotypes, the composite effect that arises out of collating them is that of cinema as harboring, or rather figuring, a series of parallel and alternative worlds – not exactly utopian, simply different. It is this effect that Pierre Huygue taps in his museal installation of the 3 versions of *Atlantic*.[14] Projected in loops on three large canvases hung next to one another, as if three of Monet's haystacks or cathedral facades, or like the Arles innkeeper Mme Ginoux, painted first by Van Gogh, then by Gauguin, then by van Gogh again, the three versions hum there with the ephemeral pleasure of contingency and difference, shimmering against the running strips of a world seized technologically.

1 A seminal article was Ella Shohat, Robert Stam, "The Cinema After Babel: Language, Difference, Power," *Screen*, Vol. 26, no. 3-4 (1985). Early among revisionist approaches were for instance Dudley Andrew, "Sound in France: the Origins of a Native School," in M.L. Bandy (ed.), *Rediscovering French Film* (New York: MOMA, 1983); Ginette Vincendeau, "Les Versions multiples," in Jacques Aumont, Michel Marie, André Gaudreault (eds.), *Histoire du cinéma: nouvelles approches* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne, 1989).

2 For instance Dominique Lebrun, *Paris Hollywood: les Français dans le cinéma américain* (Paris: Fernand Hazan, 1987); Heike Hurst, Heiner Gassen (eds.), *Tendres Ennemis: Cent ans de cinéma entre la France et l'Allemagne* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991); Jürgen Bretschneider (ed.), *Ewald André Dupont: Autor und Regisseur* (München : text+kritik/CineGraph, 1992); Sibylle M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgemuth (eds.), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris! Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text+kritik/CineGraph, 1996); Martin Barnier, *En route vers le parlant: Histoire d'une évolution technologique, économique et esthétique du cinéma (1926-1934)* (Liège: Editions du Céfal, 2002).

3 While the plan to have the present issue of this journal be accompanied by a DVD-Rom (to have been edited by Hans-Michael Bock) didn't materialize for practical reasons, it remains the plan of the MAGIS project on versions to eventually generate a comprehensive electronic bibliography and filmography, accompanied when possible by clips and documentation.

4 Proceedings published as Anna Antonini (ed.), *Il film e i suoi multipli/Film and Its Multiples* (Udine: Forum, 2003).

5 François Jost, "Territoires de l'oeuvre cinématographique," unpublished paper, MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School, March 2003.

6 Rémy Pithon, "Les versions multiples: composantes, limites et problèmes d'une définition," unpublished paper, MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School, March 2003, and "Les 'Versions multiples': ont-elles existé?" in A. Antonini (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 123-129.

7 On the parallel development of versions and dubbing see Nataša Ďurovičová, "Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema," in A. Antonini (a cura di), *op. cit.*, pp. 83-98.

8 A discussion of norms determining which bodies and which languages can be made "functionally equivalent" under what circumstances would benefit from a comparison with the other great systemic filmmaking paradigm, that of cinema in India. There version-making in an array of languages continues to be a common practice, even while it coexists alongside the open and artful post-synchronization of songs. For more on the general topic see Shoma A. Chatterji, "The Culture Specific Use of Sound in India Cinema," at http://www.filmsound.org/india/.

9 For a complex discussion of the film's relationship to various modes of duplication, and the attendant issues of intellectual property rights see Thomas Elsaesser, "Transparent Duplicities*: The Threepenny Opera* (1931)" in Eric Rentschler (ed.), *The Films of G.W. Pabst* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 103-115. The essay doesn't, however, take up the French version, nor the film's deployment of the musical score.

10 For a wide variety of models of influence between the American and the French cinema see Martin Barnier, Raphaëlle Moine (eds.), *France/Hollywood. Echanges cinématographiques et identités nationales* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002).

11 For a particularly emotional reaction see for instance Claude Autant-Lara, *Hollywood Cake-Walk (1930-1932)* (Paris: Veyrier, 1990) which touches on Buster Keaton's versioning work for MGM. For an exemplary documentation and assessment of seriality involved in a Hollywood FLV production see Giuliana Muscio, "Come *The Big Trail* divenne *Il grande sentiero* e *Men of the North* divenne *Luigi la volpe*" in A. Antonini (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 105-114.

12 For an outline see for instance Rick Altman, "Introduction: Sound/History," in Rick Altman (ed.), *Sound Theory /Sound Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 122-125.

13 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, edited by Harry Zorn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 232 and note no. 7.

14 The English and German versions of *Atlantic* were directed by E.A. Dupont in 1929 for BPI, the French, directed by Jean Kemm, was made in London and Paris in 1930. On the installation see Anne-Françoise Lesuisse, "Le C*inéma d'exposition*: mémoire et remake du specta-

teur" in A. Antonini (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 197-203. On Huyghe's other work with cinema, including the installation entitled "Dubbing," see for instance Christine van Asst, "Framing the Spatial," in *Premises: Invested Spaces in Visual Arts, Architecture and Design from France, 1958-1998* (New York: Guggenheim/DIA, 1999).

MULTILINGUAL FILMS, OR WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT A SEEMINGLY BRIGHT IDEA

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The multilingual films are a myth. By myth I mean something known to everybody but seldom examined. It is generally taken for granted that the introduction of sound obliged film companies to modify their marketing strategies since it raised the problem of selling pictures to publics which did not understand the language of the original version. The simultaneous making of various versions of the same scripts spoken in different languages was seen as a bright solution which would save money on film set, costume and extras and would allow producers to sell their pictures directly on European markets.

For a long time this was the common knowledge passed on by cinema histories, and it was scattered along with unchecked anecdotes. We can for instance read in books written by serious scholars that every shot was filmed with the actors of the various versions succeeding each other in a row. Such solution would have been inefficient and expensive; as far as I know it was only used at MGM, and for a very short time – but of course the story is amusing and enlivens the book which tells it. It would be unfair to mock such tradition since, for many decades, historians could do nothing but use unreliable written sources, especially with reviews published in film magazines which were not necessarily well informed. However, thanks to numerous restorations achieved during the past decades, new prospects have been opened and the Gradisca seminar has provided an unique chance to take a fresh look at the problem. Without being an expert in this field I am only intrigued by an initiative which at first looked highly promising but turned out to be rather deceptive. And since we are at the beginning of what might last many good years, I would like to raise the well known, but still useful questions: *what, who, why, what for*?

What?

Up to now we have no reliable chronology of how the multilingual films were shot and released. Neither have we solid figures. How many versions were shot? Some say one hundred fifty, others up to two hundreds. I am afraid these are hopeless statistics since there is no way of telling precisely what a multilingual film was. Of course, it was not the same as a co-production, that is to say a picture shot in one country with money coming from two or more countries, but this is the only thing we can take for granted. Beyond that point, there is no clear-cut criterion.

A multilingual film could thus be:

- A group of films made on the basis of same text, either independently or together. In 1936 Forzano shot, from a screenplay of his own, *Tredici uomini e un cannone.* This was

simultaneously a war film and a detective story, set during WWI on the Austrian frontline, in which a perfectly camouflaged canon is destroyed by the Russians. Someone has revealed its existence; is it one of the thirteen men who serve the canon? The film was not exceptional but the story was excellent so that two years later an English and a German company, wanting to use the script for two movies shot in their respective languages, came to an agreement with the Italian producer. They made their films in an Italian studio and could share the many long shots which gave the story its background. Shall we say that, based on their nationality, the films were or weren't a multilingual production?

- A series of movies shot separately from the same script. The case wasn't rare at the time. To take but an example the script of the German film *Die Privatsekretärin*, written by Franz Schultz, was bought by an Italian, a French and an English company, each of which adapted it and produced three independent pictures with independent casts. However, there were differences in the making of the three versions. Wilhelm Thiele, having directed *Die Privatsekretärin,* was later entrusted with making the French version shot in Berlin with German technicians, while the English and Italian versions were directed by two other filmmakers working in their own country. Shall we say that the French and German versions are twins, while the English and Italian ones are mere cousins?

- A film whose different versions were shot in the same studio. This seems to be a straightforward definition but it isn't as simple as it sounds because there could be significant variations depending on the origin of the technical crew and of the actors. Theoretically the same people shot and edited all the films deriving from a script but there were many exceptions, either with mixed crews or with different teams substituting each other. Some directors made all the pictures but there were also several directors or, as was the case with *Paprika* (1932), one director for the German and Italian versions, another for the French one. For linguistic reasons the cast was generally changed but some actors played in two versions and, at the end of the decade, owing to the progress of post-synchronization, some actors – but not necessarily all of them – were hired for the various versions and were then dubbed.

Since any definition would be disputable we had better spell out what it is we expect from the study of simultaneous versions before deciding what is and what isn't a multilingual film. As far as I am concerned I believe that much can be learnt about filmmaking in the 1930s, and about the evolution of cinematic expression during the transition to sound.

Who?

Who were the companies or studios which specialized in the making of multilingual versions? Again we are faced with approximate claims and unreliable reports. Often mentioned is the Paramount studio at Joinville, a suburb of Paris, organized according to a Fordian rhythm of work and representing the most advanced system of filmmaking in Europe. In fact, Paramount's attempt was short-lived, having began in August 1930 and ending after a year. But other multilingual pictures were made at Joinville before and after this deal. So, when speaking of "Joinville films" it is necessary to make a distinction between the various producing companies which hired the plant, sometimes for one film only. It would also be useful to inquire into their working procedures.

Many also stress the importance of the German UFA which, given the advantage of its sound equipment, convinced foreign companies to work in its Berlin studios. Once again, we must be very careful. Up to 1937 UFA was an independent company which rented its Babelsberg studios to other producers, notably to Bavaria, whose Munich studios had no sound equipment, or to Itala Film Berlin. Many multilingual versions were made in Babelsberg but only a few were produced by UFA.

Joinville and UFA were only two episodes in a much more complicated story whose main part took place in Hollywood where, from 1929 through 1931 all the majors produced a good many pictures in four, and at times in six languages. The attempt came to an end at about the time Paramount was leaving Joinville. In 1929-30 dubbing technology was still elementary, and the multilingual versions were likely to meet spectators' expectations better than the confusing subtitling, or post-synchronisation of poor quality. But it wasn't long before those in charge of adaptation understood that instead of translating they had to find phonetic equivalents to the English words, and before actors learned to attend to lip movements. Multilingual versions required higher investments than straight American pictures. The latter were usually paid back in their distribution on the local market so that export revenue was entirely a bonus. On the other hand each multilingual version had to be sold separately and in many cases didn't cover its expenses. After two years, the majors gave up. Only Europe, for reasons we shall try to explain, continued its production up to WWII.

Why?

There is no particular feature which would allow us to gather all multilingual films in a specific group. But there is something which distinguishes them from other pictures: they were made from a screenplay common to three or four movies. I shall argue that, far from being a negligible detail, this tells us a lot about the production of the multilingual versions. Is it not surprising to see that so much importance was granted to the script? After all, in the silent era, when scriptwriters weren't as protected against plagiarism as they are today, imitating the plot of a previous film was common. As was noted during the 2002 Udine International Film Studies Conference, Dino De Laurentiis did not hesitate in the early 1940s to imitate scripts already shot by other producers. Why is it thus that so many screenplays were bought by several film companies?

It has been pointed out that shooting several versions from one script helped to save money since the same set and the same costumes could be recycled. Should we in that case not be alert to the fact that there were two types of multilingual films? Some were expensive productions such as *Atlantic* or *Two Worlds (*both directed by E.A. Dupont), *Casta Diva,* or the five versions of *The Big Trail* (all directed by Raoul Walsh). But these were exceptions. Most films were comedies of manners borrowed from popular plays or novels. *Paprika* is a good example. A German producer commissioned an adaptation of Max Reimann's successful play *Der Sprung in die Ehe.* The story was very plain. Initial situation: a resourceful young lady meets a misogynous bachelor. Episodes: she uses her womanly wiles to seduce him. Conclusion: they become engaged to each other. Reviewing the film *Il Corriere della Sera* said that the performances were outstanding but that the plot was just one more variant of a hackneyed story. The same could be said

of *T'amerò sempre*, and indeed of most multilingual pictures. Such schemes require neither elaborate sets nor unusual costumes, there are no location shots involved. A few furnished rooms and ordinary clothes are enough.

Another motive for making multilingual versions was to reach foreign audiences not familiar with the language of the country of production. American companies met the problem early. Among their best customers were Latin America audiences so that some studios produced for this important market pictures adjusted to local customs and spoken in Spanish, which were more likely to satisfy the public than the arrangement of typically north American stories. Why then did Hollywood replace this logical solution with multilingual versions made after the same script?

I have found no explanation, and can only offer a hypothesis. From 1929 through 1931 a harsh competition prevailed between American and European producers, each attempting to monopolize the diffusion of talkies. After its agreement with the Tobis Klangfilm and the American patent holders was resolved, UFA could produce films that from a technical point of view were equal to those of the Americans. Didn't the Hollywood tycoons think that a good way of tackling UFA was to lure the best European actors away from their countries by offering them immediate contracts and to make films spoken in various European idioms? All was made in a hurry. Dozens of actors went off to Hollywood, there was no time to crank out original scripts, the studios, wanting to recoup the money paid to foreign actors, were content with shooting several versions of available screenplays. But once the so-called Paris agreement divided the world between the two embattled powers Hollywood dismissed the useless European comedians and put an end to a hopeless, expensive experiment.

The Paris agreement granted the Americas and India to Hollywood, northern and central Europe to UFA but the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Europe was still open to rivalry: Britain with her Elstree plant, Italy with Cinecittà, and Germany were all struggling to attract foreign producers. Much work has to be done to analyze the arrangements made with European companies but is it unthinkable to presume that good bargains including the script, the technical crew and extras were offered to producers in order to convince them to choose London, or Rome, or Berlin?

It would be also necessary to know the financial situation of the other contractors. *Wir brauchen kein Geld,* an Austrian film, was shot in an Italian and a French version in 1933. The original script was rewritten and adapted to an Italian context for the former while there was only a translation of the dialogues for the latter. Now the former was produced by Pittaluga, a wealthy and important Italian distributor, while the latter was produced by its director Jean-Paul Paulin. Hence another query: were there not different strategies of arrangement depending upon the assets of the producing company? Since the story of *Man braucht kein Geld* takes place in a small and anonymous town, there was no need to create a particular atmosphere typical of any given country. Was that the reason Paulin decided to shoot this particular screenplay rather than some other?

What for?

However, money doesn't account for everything. What was it that made it necessary or advantageous to adapt a screenplay to another context or, on the contrary, to not

modify anything? Why was it for instance that *Lisetta,* the Italian version of the German *Das Blumenmädchen vom Grand-Hotel,* cast by the two well-known Italian actors Elsa Merlini and Vittorio De Sica, was set in Berlin and not in an Italian city? Or why did *Batticuore,* the Italian version of the French *Battements de cœur,* take place in Paris and not in Rome? Was it because the time allotted to the shooting was so short that there was no way of building an Italian set? Or simply because the Italian producer thought that any scenery would do? Or, more likely, because the Italian producers thought that a story involving rich people had to be located in an "international" city, that is Berlin or Paris rather than in Rome?

This finally leads us to the most interesting aspect of the various comparisons: they have a lot to tell us about the strategy of production companies. There are questions we won't be able to answer by confronting only a couple of versions but the juxtaposition will help us to better define the problems we ought to tackle. How much did the use of the same establishing shots, the same scenery and the same costumes influence the shooting, and subsequently the film's reception? And what was required to make spectators feel that they were viewing a "national" movie, not a film made in another country? What were the details and cultural hints sufficient to recreate a local atmosphere? The Italian count of *T'amerò sempre* becomes a rich young man in the French version, the story shifts to Paris, the furniture is changed. Is that enough? Or are there behaviors and attitudes characteristic of one country and difficult to transfer to another? It is impossible to extrapolate general conclusions from one example but it is striking to note how neither John Longden nor Henri Garat are convincing in the part of an Austrian aristocrat in the English and French versions of *Two Worlds/Zwei Welten*: the former is too relaxed, the latter too clumsy.

But are we not indulging in stereotypes here? After all there may have been both clumsy and relaxed officers in the Austrian army. True, but fiction – be it cinematic or literary – is the realm of pre-established patterns. That is the reason why the non-American versions of *The Big Trail* appear awkward: European actors made for implausible cowboys, and westerns or melodramas like *Two Worlds* require typecast characters. Is it not possible to assume that the predominance of comedies among multilingual versions was linked to the difficulty of making good dramas? Now, comedic characters are also archetypes but they correspond to social positions rather than to ethnic prototypes: rich old men married to young ladies, clever young men and pretty saleswomen rather than *Junkers* or cowboys.

This is what makes comparisons so revealing. How were equivalent social positions represented in different countries? How did the actors amuse their spectators? Think of *Man braucht kein Geld* with Hedy Lamar and Hans Moser as confronted with *Non c'è bisogno di denaro* with Maria Denis and Luigi Almirante. How do the different actors conceive their part? How do they interact with their partners? How do they move inside the frame, how do they fill it? What sorts of clothes identify their roles? What puns are acceptable in one language but not in another? These are some of the problems we should keep in mind while looking at the movies. I have raised a few preliminary questions but I am not sure they are the relevant ones. Only a close attention to the films themselves will allow us to carry on with our investigation.

QUELLE VERSION RESTAURER? DEUX CAS CONCRETS: *NANA* ET *PRIX DE BEAUTE*

Davide Pozzi, Cineteca del Comune di Bologna

Lorsqu'on parle de restauration cinématographique, on entre forcément dans un domaine très particulier et compliqué. Aborder ce domaine n'implique pas seulement de connaître les techniques pratiques qui servent pour réparer ou nettoyer une pellicule, mais veut dire aussi parler du cinéma tout court, car la restauration suppose également une maîtrise théorique, c'est-à-dire la connaissance de l'histoire du cinéma (surtout la période muette), la conscience de la valeur artistique du film, etc. Il n'existe pas une restauration qui soit seulement pratique, elle est toujours, et avant tout, interprétation, recherche et réflexion philologique.

Dans le domaine des restaurateurs de films, qui est celui des cinémathèques et des laboratoires de restauration, nous sommes toujours confrontés aux problèmes des différentes versions et éditions d'un même film.

Depuis qu'elle a commencé la restauration à la fin des années quatre-vingt, la Cineteca del Comune di Bologna a développé ses recherches principalement sur la période du cinéma muet mais s'est récemment intéressée aux films sonores. Assez rapidement, nous avons pu constater – et par ailleurs nous le savions déjà – que dans la restauration des films sonores aussi l'existence de plusieurs éditions et/ou versions reste toujours la règle et jamais l'exception. Les restaurations de *Totò e Carolina* (M. Monicelli, 1954),[1] *Il Bidone* (F. Fellini, 1955), *Il posto* (E. Olmi, 1961), *Limelight* (Ch. Chaplin, 1952)[2] et tout dernièrement *Dolci inganni* (A. Lattuada, 1960)[3] nous ont montré à quel point il peut exister différentes éditions et/ou versions d'un film sonore, qui théoriquement devrait poser moins de problèmes. Le premier but de chaque restauration devient donc celui de définir et de déclarer quelle sera l'édition et/ou version que l'on va restaurer.[4] Deux raisons nous poussent à formuler cette déclaration: la première est d'ordre éthique (avoir l'honnêteté de rendre transparent le travail de restauration et le devoir d'informer le public sur que va-t-on voir exactement), la deuxième vise à respecter le principe selon lequel chaque travail de restauration n'empêche pas mais au contraire peut aider les futures interventions (troisième principe de la théorie de la restauration de l'œuvre d'art de Cesare Brandi: "Ogni intervento di restauro non renda impossibili anzi faciliti gli eventuali interventi futuri").[5]

Dans la suite de mon intervention, je parlerai uniquement des problèmes méthodologiques liés à la restauration des films muets et j'analyserai en particulier deux cas concrets: *Nana* (J. Renoir, 1926) et *Prix de beauté* (A. Genina, 1930).

Cependant, avant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet, il faut faire quelques remarques d'ordre général. Il y a quelques années, quand la restauration des films n'était pas encore développée sur le plan théorique et quand on passait son temps à se demander s'il fallait parler d'un *original* dans le cinéma, on disait que pour chaque film il pouvait exister plu-

sieurs versions. Suivant la classification qu'en a donnée en 1990 Eileen Bowser dans les pages de *Griffithiana*,[6] il y a cinq buts différents qu'on peut poursuivre lorsqu'on restaure un film: comment a-t-il été retrouvé, comment a-t-il été vu la première fois par le public, comment a-t-il été voulu par son auteur, dans une version qui estime de l'existence d'un public moderne et de sa différente façon de percevoir le spectacle cinématographique aujourd'hui, le film ancien pris et changé par un artiste contemporain. Or, ces différents buts reflétaient une conception de la restauration des films que nous pouvons résumer principalement en trois points qui ne sont pas sans lien entre eux: la restauration doit redonner la version voulue par son auteur, celle de la première projection publique (à ce propos Vincent Pinel disait que la version qui a été vue par les spectateurs existe comme document sociologique: "Malmenée ou non, elle est celle qui s'inscrit dans la mémoire collective"),[7] dans certains cas la restauration doit redonner la version avant qu'elle ne soit coupée, si c'était le cas bien sûr, par la censure.

Depuis le début des années quatre-vingt-dix, la déontologie liée à la restauration cinématographique, bien qu'il n'existe pas encore aujourd'hui une véritable théorie reconnue, s'est beaucoup développée. On s'est aperçu que chaque film pose toujours une série des problèmes spécifiques, beaucoup plus compliqués et complexes que ceux que nous venons de citer, liés à l'existence à l'époque et à la survivance aujourd'hui de plusieurs versions.

J'aimerais insister sur ce dernier point: l'existence à l'époque de plusieurs versions et la survivance aujourd'hui, sous forme de copies films en pellicule. Ce nœud est très important pour comprendre chaque travail de restauration. Il faut, en effet, faire une grande distinction entre les versions qui ont existé à l'époque et les éléments de ces versions qui restent aujourd'hui. Enfin, il faut savoir de quelle version proviennent les copies qui subsistent.

Le choix de la version à restaurer est lié aussi et surtout (et hélas parfois uniquement!) à cette problématique que je viens d'aborder. Du film italien *Dante nella vita e nei tempi suoi* (D. Gaido, 1922), la Cineteca del Comune di Bologna a restauré la version pour l'exploitation du film à l'étranger simplement parce que c'était la seule à avoir survécu (elle existe en deux copies). Les cas sont certainement nombreux dans toutes les cinémathèques qui restaurent les films. Il y a bien sûr aussi le cas où l'on choisit exprès de restaurer la version pour l'étranger (*La Femme et le pantin*, J. de Baroncelli, 1928).[8] Encore plus rarement, il est possible de restaurer une version pour le marché national et une autre pour l'étranger ou pour un pays en particulier (*Der letzte Mann*, F.W. Murnau, 1924).[9] C'est à mon avis un nœud très important qui démontre que le travail de restauration est strictement théorique et pratique parce que d'abord il faut rechercher dans les sources de l'époque pour savoir combien d'éditions et/ou versions ont existé, et, en même temps, faire – sur une échelle mondiale – la recherche des copies film. Finalement, il faut croiser les connaissances et les informations provenant de la recherche filmique et extra-filmique. Il y a aussi certains cas, très rares et exceptionnels, où nous pouvons reconstituer une version qui n'existe plus en copie film; tel est le cas de *Nana*.

Nana

Jusqu'à aujourd'hui, il n'était connu qu'une seule version en noir et blanc du film réalisé par Jean Renoir en 1926 (diffusé aussi en vidéo et à la télévision). Le travail de res-

tauration que Canal Plus a confié à la Cineteca del Comune di Bologna en 2002, à l'occasion de la diffusion de *Nana* soutenue par Arte, nous a donné l'occasion d'entreprendre des recherches qui ont permis de découvrir l'existence en 1926 d'une présentation et de deux éditions différentes du même film.[10] Dans ce contexte, nous nous bornerons donc à résumer les principales étapes.

Les documents conservés à la Bibliothèque du Film (Paris) dans le fonds Jean Renoir et la consultation des revues et quotidiens de l'époque[11] nous ont permis de savoir que *Nana* a été présenté le 27 avril 1926 au Moulin-Rouge. Le film n'obtient pas, malgré les bonnes critiques, le succès espéré et surtout ne trouve aucune distribution immédiate. Le 11 juin de la même année, Renoir lui-même présente le film à la censure française (2800 m., visa n. 34.848) et cinq jours après signe un contrat avec Aubert pour la distribution dans les salles parisiennes. Le film sort le 25 juin uniquement à l'Aubert Palace et il rencontre un certain succès (il sera projeté pendant tout l'été). A partir d'août 1926, Jean Renoir commence à travailler à la version pour l'étranger. On décide aussi de ressortir le film pour le reste de la France (en correspondance avec la vente à l'étranger du film), mais dans une nouvelle édition, différente de celle présentée à la censure au mois de juin 1926. Le deuxième visa de censure est daté du 4 novembre 1926 et la sortie dans les salles a lieu le 10 décembre.

L'étude des documents et la recherche dans les revues, bornés au seul territoire français et donc sans même étudier les versions pour le marché étranger, nous ont révélé l'existence, déjà en 1926, d'une présentation en avant-première et de deux éditions (celle de juin et celle de décembre). Dans le même temps, la recherche dans les cinémathèques affiliées à la Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF) a permis de localiser les copies d'époque de *Nana* qui ont survécu, précisément dans les collections de la Cinémathèque Française, de la Cinémathèque de Toulouse, de la Cinémathèque Suisse de Lausanne et de la Fondazione Cineteca Italiana de Milan. Finalement l'étude des copies nitrate, associée aux informations recueillies dans les matériaux extra-filmiques, a amené à un premier résultat: la copie positive teintée nitrate (2817 m.) conservée à la Cinémathèque Suisse correspond à l'édition de juin 1926 et le négatif nitrate (2872 m.) déposé à la Cinémathèque Française correspond à celle de décembre 1926, la seule jusqu'à aujourd'hui connue.[12] Les deux éditions de *Nana* sont très différentes entre elles par leur structure, leur montage, leurs plans, etc.[13] Aucune trace, comme il était logique, de la copie de la présentation au Moulin-Rouge en avril 1926 (qui a existé en un seul exemplaire, désormais perdu à jamais).

Grâce aux documents retrouvés dans le fonds Renoir (par exemple le découpage du film), à diverses informations repérées dans les revues de cinéma de l'époque et à l'analyse des copies nitrate du film (surtout l'étude des *erreurs*, comme par exemple pour les intertitres), il a été possible de reconstituer une restauration de la présentation du 27 avril 1926 du Moulin-Rouge.[14] Cette restauration respecte la structure générale de *Nana* selon le premier montage qu'en avait fait Jean Renoir et sur lequel il retravailla après le mois d'avril. Nous n'avons absolument pas la prétention d'affirmer que celle-ci est la meilleure version du film de Renoir mais tout simplement *une* version de *Nana*, la première. *Nana* devient donc un film qui se prête désormais à être étudié dans les différentes formes (trois) élaborées entre les mois d'avril et de décembre 1926, dont deux existent et une a été soigneusement reconstruite.

Generally speaking, we have the concrete possibility to reconstruct the overall structure of the work at the time of its first presentation to the public, the structure which Renoir con-

trolled closely, attending to even the most minute details, and which he succeeded in bringing to the screen in all its completeness and complexity (perhaps even excessively so) only for the screening at the Moulin Rouge. We can do so with a reasonable degree of precision and certainty in regard to the shots and the editing, as well as for the succession of the scenes (with the exception of those previously mentioned). We are less certain about the intertitles, at least until we are able to clarify a few issues, and above all the role played by Madame Le Blond Zola in the production of the film.[15]

Prix de beauté[16]

En 1998, la Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, la Cinémathèque Française et la Fondazione Cineteca Italiana di Milano ont restauré, au laboratoire L'Immagine Ritrovata de Bologne, *Prix de beauté*, le film de Augusto Genina avec Louise Brooks et Georges Charlia.

Quand une copie positive de l'édition muette a été retrouvée à la Fondazione Cineteca Italiana, on ne connaissait que l'édition sonore en version française de *Prix de beauté*. Suite à cette découverte, il a été décidé de restaurer l'édition muette. Ce choix était le reflet de plusieurs considérations: tout d'abord, étant la seule copie survivante de l'édition muette, il était prioritaire de la sauvegarder et de la restaurer. Ensuite parce que la restauration de cette édition pouvait au final redonner au film, conçu comme la plupart des films muets (à l'exception de quelques séquences, dont la finale), la vitesse correcte de projection de 23 photogrammes par seconde, mais surtout la juste proportion de l'image. En effet, l'ajout de la bande son avait modifié le format: du 1:1.33 on était passé au format plus "rétréci" de 1:1.19.

Cette dernière observation est importante car elle a permis de redonner aux images leur juste proportion et leur place centrale sur l'écran. De plus, le travail de restauration, comme le précisent Gian Luca Farinelli et Nicola Mazzanti, a redonné "alla versione restaurata quella densità del bianco e nero, così tipica del cinema europeo della fine degli anni venti e che nel nitrato era andata, in parte, perduta."[17]

La restauration de l'édition muette de *Prix de beauté* s'est développée sur un travail assez complet de documentation qui comprenait aussi l'étude de l'édition sonore, la seule connue. Cette édition, qui représente l'un des premiers exemples de doublage, avait été réalisée en quatre versions: française, italienne, anglaise et allemande. Nous avons donc un titre de film (*Prix de beauté*), deux éditions (une muette et une sonore) et quatre versions de l'édition sonore (française, italienne, anglaise et allemande). De *Prix de beauté* ont donc existé plusieurs éditions et versions différentes.

Tourné en 1929 et présenté en 1930, *Prix de beauté* appartient à la catégorie des films conçus et réalisés dans la double forme de film muet et de film sonore dont les plus connus sont *Lonesome* (P. Fejós, 1928)[18] et *Blackmail* (A. Hitchcock, 1929).[19] Il existe donc de ces films une édition muette et une sonore, presque toujours différentes l'une de l'autre, mais toutes deux légitimes. La consultation des revues de l'époque nous apprend que la réalisation d'un film en deux éditions était assez répandue et représentait une solution valable au problème de l'exploitation dans les salles (toutes n'étaient pas encore équipées d'installations pour la diffusion du son). En 1929, par exemple, *Show Boat* (H.A. Pollard), *Broadway* (P. Fejós) et *La Fin du monde* (A. Gance) ont été réalisés et exploités dans les doubles éditions muettes et sonores.

Cependant, il faut tout de suite réfuter la croyance que *Prix de beauté* fût tourné en tant que film muet et que seulement après on décida d'ajouter des séquences sonores et de postsynchroniser en quatre langues. Précisément, le film fut tourné avec les techniques du cinéma muet (à l'exception de très peu de scènes), mais dès le premier jour du travail (et déjà dans le projet de René Clair), il a été pensé comme une œuvre double. C'était comme s'il fallait tourner deux films différents: l'un muet et l'autre sonore. *La Cinématographie française* (n° 580) écrit à ce propos: "Ce film conçu en procédé mixte muet et parlant ne nous sera donné que vers fin mars". Cette ligne directrice a accompagné toutes les phases de la réalisation du film de Genina et les photos prises pendant le tournage et les divers articles relatifs publiés dans *La Cinématographie française* en témoignent.

> *Avant de commencer son grand film* Prix de beauté*, dont la vedette sera la séduisante Louise Brooks, René Clair est parti pour Londres avec son chef opérateur, afin d'étudier sur place le film parlant et le film sonore. Nous pouvons dire qu'il y a de très grandes chances pour que le premier grand film français tourné pour la Sofar soit un film parlant et sonore. Inutile d'ajouter cependant qu'une version silencieuse sera également prévue, afin de donner satisfaction à tous les directeurs de cinémas et tous les publics.*[20]

> *Il y aura deux versions de* Prix de beauté *que va réaliser René Clair. L'une sera silencieuse. L'autre sonore et parlante.*[21]

La découverte de l'édition muette nous a permis de nous apercevoir que des *erreurs* (au sens philologique du terme) étaient présentes dans les copies de l'édition sonore de la version française (à l'exception de celle conservée par la Cinémathèque Française). L'exemple le plus frappant est la séquence du "Luna Park" qui avait été déplacée au début du film, mais qui à l'origine avait été montée dans la dernière partie. La *storia della tradizione* de *Prix de beauté* était donc polluée et la plupart des erreurs ressortent à la période de l'occupation nazie à Paris. Pendant cette période, le film, à cause de l'origine juive du producteur Romain Pinès,[22] a été révisé par la censure nazie.

Il est sûrement intéressant dans l'espace qui nous reste de donner quelques exemples des différences fournies par l'étude comparée des éditions muette et sonore.

A la fin de la troisième séquence, il y a une scène dans laquelle Lucienne (Louise Brooks) est en train d'écouter sur le trottoir du boulevard un haut-parleur qui invite les jeunes filles à participer au concours de beauté. Dans l'édition sonore, cette scène est plus courte (elle se termine tout de suite après qu'André éloigne Lucienne du trottoir) que dans celle muette où il y a cinq plans de plus qui nous montrent le boulevard, les immeubles et la vitrine d'un restaurant. On a probablement préféré enlever ces plans dans l'édition sonore car, étant purement descriptifs et sans aucun dialogue, ils pouvaient ralentir le rythme du film.

Une deuxième différence vaut la peine d'être citée. Elle se remarque juste avant le défilé des participantes au concours de beauté pour l'élection de Miss Europa. Dans l'édition sonore, il manque le plan de Louise Brooks dans sa loge avec un maillot de bain qui nous laisse entrevoir une partie de ses seins. Les raisons de cette omission sont probablement plus d'ordre "moral" que textuel (est-ce que le soupçon d'une coupure par la censure aurait poussé Genina à l'autocensure?).

Un autre exemple est celui de la séquence 15 du film (celle du jeu des regards au dîner

de gala) qui a carrément été enlevée de l'édition sonore. Son absence, bien que ce ne soit pas une longue séquence (elle fait 1' 39"), crée une rupture dans le *tissu narratif* du film et casse l'équilibre qu'il y avait à l'origine.

L'exemple qui suit est sûrement le plus important. Il s'agit de la dernière scène de la longue séquence de la foire de Neuilly (quand le couple protagoniste du film décide de se faire prendre en photo). Les gros plans du photographe ne sont pas les mêmes dans les deux éditions. Aux plans utilisés dans l'édition muette se sont substitués des images tournées lors de la prise de son direct (au moins dans la version française), qui est aujourd'hui très abîmé. Par contre, les gros plans de Lucienne, qui ne parle pas et qui sont en alternance avec ceux du photographe, n'ont pas changés. Ce choix a permis d'avoir un niveau technique satisfaisant dans l'édition sonore (comme en témoignent certains articles parus à l'époque) pour ce qui était de la synchronisation des dialogues du photographe pris en gros plan.

Un dernier exemple nous est donné dans la séquence où nous voyons les résultats des tests que Lucienne avait fait pour rentrer dans le monde du cinéma. Sur l'écran, nous voyons une pellicule: dans l'édition muette, elle est *full frame* tandis que l'édition sonore nous montre un morceau de film où se trouve, bien visible sur la gauche des photogrammes, la piste son!

En résumé, nous pourrions affirmer que la principale raison, à notre avis, de toutes les différences entre l'édition muette et sonore de *Prix de beauté* est la recherche d'un rythme différent qui sache s'adapter aux innovations et aux exigences du cinéma sonore. Il était évident que l'édition muette devait être "remaniée" pour être exploité comme film "parlant à cent pour cent" (il ne suffisait pas de le "rendre muet" et d'enlever les intertitres).

La restauration de *Nana* et de *Prix de beauté* a impliqué en même temps un travail philologique mené sur les copies film, une recherche et une révision critique des sources extra-filmiques (de plusieurs genres). Cette phase de recherche est déjà une partie de la restauration d'un film sous un point de vue scientifique et philologique.

Nous voudrions enfin adapter au domaine de la restauration cinématographique un principe propre à la philologie littéraire qui consiste justement en l'exigence (voir l'obligation) de conduire les restaurations non seulement avec la recherche la plus complète possible des copies des films, mais aussi de développer, en même temps, grâce aux documents et aux sources extra-filmiques, l'étude et l'analyse de l'histoire, des conditions et des méthodes avec lesquelles un film a été réalisé.

1 Cf. Tatti Sanguineti (sous la dir. de), *Totò e Carolina* (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1999).

2 Cf. Cecilia Cenciarelli, Anna Fiaccarini, Peter Von Bagh (sous la dir. de), *Limelight. Luci della ribalta. Documenti e studi dagli Archivi Chaplin* (Bologna-Genova-Paris: Cineteca del Comune di Bologna/Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna/Le Mani/Association Chaplin, 2002). En ce qui concerne les problématiques liées à la restauration de films de long-métrage et de court-métrage dans le cadre du Chaplin Project, cf. Hubert Niogret, "Entretien avec Nicola Mazzanti. Au-dèla du Projet Chaplin", *Positif*, n° 504 (février 2003), p. 84.

3 Cf. Karianne Fiorini, "*Dolci inganni*, amare sorprese/*Dolci inganni*, Bitter Surprises", *Cinegrafie*, n° 16 (2003), pp. 158-171 (en italien) et pp.357-370 (en anglais).

4 A ce titre, il est peut-être utile de souligner quelles versions des films nommés nous avons restaurées. *Il bidone:* la version qui avait été présentée au Festival de Venise (qui est différente de celle sortie ensuite dans les salles). *Il posto*: la version de la première présentation publique et de la sortie dans les salles à laquelle nous avons ajouté après la fin, avec l'accord du réalisateur, une séquence montée mais qui n'avait pas été insérée dans le film. *Limelight:* c'est la version autorisée par Charles Chaplin et qui a été établie en partant du négatif du 1952 et d'un marron (*fine grain*) tiré de celui-ci. *Dolci inganni:* la version correspondante au visa de censure de la Commissione di Revisione della Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo n° 32671 (07.10.1960) qui a été tout de suite après retirée par la censure.

5 Cesare Brandi, *Teoria del restauro* (Torino: Einaudi, 1977).

6 Cf. Eileen Bowser, "Alcuni principi del restauro di un film/Some Principles of Film Restauration", *Griffithiana*, n° 38-39 (1990), pp. 170-171 (en italien) et pp. 172-173 (en anglais).

7 Vincent Pinel, "Pour une déontologie de la restauration des films", *Positif*, n° 421 (mars 1996), pp. 90-93.

8 Cf. Claudine Kaufmann, "*La Femme et le pantin* ou: pourquoi restaurer la version étrangère d'un film français?", *La Persistance des images. Tirages, sauvegardes et restaurations dans la collection film de la Cinémathèque française* (Paris: Cinémathèque française/Musée du Cinéma, 1996), pp. 90-91.

9 Cf. Luciano Berriatúa, "*Der letzte Mann"*, in *Il cinema ritrovato 2002*, a cura di Andrea Meneghelli (Bologna: Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, 2002), p. 13.

10 La restauration de *Nana* a été faite en accord avec la Cinémathèque Suisse. Pour une analyse détaillée des recherches et du travail de restauration accomplis par le laboratoire l'Immagine Ritrovata de Bologna, voir: Davide Pozzi, "La passione di *Nana*. Vita, morte e trasfigurazione di un film di Jean Renoir/The Passion of *Nana*. Life, Death and Transfiguration of a Film by Jean Renoir"; Nicola Mazzanti, "Sulle tracce di *Nana*/On the Tracks of *Nana*", Michele Canosa, "*Nana* e le tare ereditarie. Per una ricostruzione del film di Jean Renoir/*Nana* and Hereditary Taints. For a Reconstruction of Jean Renoir's film", *Cinegrafie*, n° 15 (2002), pp. 79-158 (en italien) et pp. 269-347 (en anglais).

11 Les revues consultées à la Bibliothèque du Film sont les suivantes: *La Cinématographie française*, *Cinémagazine*, *Cinéa-Ciné pour tous*, *Le Courrier cinématographique*, *Hebdo Film*, *Mon ciné*, *Le Cinéopse*, *Le Film complet*, *Ciné-miroir*, *Le Cinéma chez soi*, *La Petite Illustration*, *Cinégraphie (et photographie)*, *Photo-ciné*, *Cinéma*, *Ciné-journal*. Les quotidiens consultés à la Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Site Tolbiac) pour la période entre avril et juin 1926 ont été: *Paris-soir* (Micr D-67), *L'Intransigeant* (Micr D-68), *L'Echo de Paris* (Micr D-62), *Le Figaro* (Micr D-13), *Le Journal* (Micr D-105), *Paris-midi* (Micr D-83).

12 Pour analyser les différences entre l'état actuel du négatif et celui qui aurait du être en décembre 1926 je renvoie à : N. Mazzanti, *op. cit.*

13 Il peut être intéressant de souligner que l'important essai de Noël Burch dédié aux deux espaces de *Nana* dans *Praxis du cinéma* a été écrit à partir de la seule édition connue quand le texte a été publié; cette édition est sûrement celle de décembre 1926. Voir : Noël Burch, *Praxis du cinéma* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

14 Je renvoie encore une fois à la lecture de la section spéciale dédiée a cette restauration dans le n° 15 de *Cinegrafie* où sont expliqués les raisons, les limites, les problèmes (et aussi les doutes) de la reconstruction de *Nana*.

15 N. Mazzanti, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

16 La partie dédiée à *Prix de beauté* est un résumé de l'article paru dans *Il film e i suoi multipli Film and its multiples*, auquel nous renvoyons pour une analyse détaillée. Cf. Davide Pozzi,

"*Prix de beauté*: un titolo, due edizioni, quattro versioni", dans Anna Antonini (sous la dir. de), *Il film e i suoi multipli/Film and Its Multiples* (Udine: Forum, 2003), pp. 67-78.

17 Gian Luca Farinelli, Nicola Mazzanti, "Restaurare Louise Brooks", dans *Louise Brooks l'européenne* (Ancona: Transeuropa, 1998), p. 42.

18 Cf. Paolo Cherchi Usai, "Lonesome", *Les Cahiers du muet*, fiche n° 12 (octobre 1993).

19 Cf. Alberto Boschi, "Like raisins in a bun: le due versioni di *Blackmail*", *Cinema & Cinema*, n° 63, *La tradizione del film. Testo, filologia, restauro* (1992), pp. 79-86.

20 "René Clair est à Londres"*, La Cinématographie française*, n° 550 (18 mai 1929), p. 36.

21 "Petites nouvelles", *La Cinématographie française*, n° 551 (25 mai 1929), p. 34.

22 Cf. Eric Le Roy, "Romain Pinès ou l'itinéraire d'un producteur racé", *Archives*, n° 73 (décembre 1997), pp. 22-26.

DUE VERSIONI MUSICALI A CONFRONTO. *DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER* E *L'OPERA DE QUAT'SOUS* DI GEORG WILHELM PABST

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La trasposizione filmica di un soggetto operistico è un'operazione interessante e, allo stesso tempo, difficile, se non pericolosa. Il teatro d'opera, nelle sue multiformi accezioni, può entrare a contatto con la drammaturgia cinematografica seguendo diverse modalità e dando luogo a dei soggetti non sempre racchiudibili e circoscrivibili all'interno del sistema dei generi. Un qualsiasi momento della tradizione operistica, infatti, può essere pretesto per il seguente racconto filmico, si pensi a *Novecento* (B. Bertolucci, 1976) il cui inizio si muove sulle note del *Preludio* del *Rigoletto* verdiano con un gobbo che urla "È morto Verdi!", oppure può condizionare la struttura del racconto filmico, come accade in *Senso* (L. Visconti, 1954) che è un film articolato in quattro veri e propri atti. Un'opera può anche essere completamente, e poeticamente, "stravolta" per assecondare le esigenze del regista, così lavorava spesso Federico Fellini, oppure "sottratta" dal palcoscenico e portata nella pellicola, secondo diversi percorsi, tra cui quelli del film-opera che hanno sempre goduto di grande successo di pubblico.[1]

La trasposizione cinematografica di Pabst di *Die Dreigroschenoper* di Brecht, da questo particolare punto di vista, rappresenta un primo momento di una tradizione poi destinata a consolidarsi nel tempo, anche se risulta essere molto particolare, considerato il soggetto su cui si basa.[2] Rappresentato al Theater am Schiffbauerdamm di Berlino nel 1928, il capolavoro brechtiano aveva assunto le vesti del film tre anni dopo. È risaputo che Brecht e Weill intentarono un processo al regista, colpevole di aver largamente rimaneggiato il testo originale e di aver alterato lo spirito dell'opera dislocando le diverse canzoni nel corso del racconto in maniera fortemente arbitraria, proponendole con delle scelte molto discutibili e lontane dagli assunti con cui i due autori le avevano scritte.[3] Questo rappresentava un evidente, se non grossolano e macroscopico fraintendimento della drammaturgia brechtiana i cui assunti, molto connotati ideologicamente, avevano comportato delle particolari scelte musicali e, soprattutto, l'utilizzo di canzoni semplici e banali, tipiche della musica da consumo.[4] Canzoni, quale ulteriore particolarità, che andavano eseguite secondo ben precisi atteggiamenti interpretativi e che s'inserivano all'interno di un nuovo contesto drammaturgico dove la musica non aveva semplicemente una "funzione", ma era piuttosto parte integrante e spesso determinante dello spettacolo.[5]

Tralasciando questi problemi, interessanti ma in parte estranei al nostro percorso, preme ora rilevare le difficoltà, con i rischi di vere e proprie cadute nella banalità, che comporta la trasposizione cinematografica di una simile opera.[6] Il film di Pabst, da questo punto di vista, è purtroppo rappresentativo di un fraintendimento dell'originale brechtiano che, proprio negli aspetti musicali, diviene radicale. Nelle due versioni cinematografiche, infatti, *Die Dreigroschenoper* viene pesantemente condizionata da atmosfere operettistiche, per cui risulta essere relegata nell'universo del teatro leggero, con

tratti che l'accomunano al *Vaudeville* e al *Divertissement*. Sembra quasi che le note perplessità di Adorno, e i suoi timori per la maniera con cui i media avevano fagocitato la musica di Weill distruggendone la specificità, nel film di Pabst vengano confermate.[7]

Colpisce, sia nella versione francese che in quella tedesca del film, la negazione dello spirito con cui Weill aveva scritto le proprie canzoni.[8] Nell'apparente regressione verso il "leggero", il compositore aveva infatti svelato la natura di merce sottesa a questo genere di musica, giungendo ad una sua demistificazione per elevarla a strumento di feroce critica della società borghese.[9] Questo, invece, non accade nel film di Pabst, dove le canzoni vengono uniformate ai *clichés* della musica da consumo e, quindi, private della loro carica corrosiva, divenendo adeguata cornice, a volte vero e proprio sottofondo, alle vicende del film. Le rendono tali alcune scelte evidenti, quali gli "ammorbidimenti" dell'accompagnamento della melodia, le licenze in sede interpretativa e, soprattutto, la loro trasposizione strumentale in funzione di accompagnamento di alcune sequenze del film.

Non solo. Stupisce come il regista utilizzi gli interventi musicali in maniera profondamente arbitraria e soggettiva, per cui manomette la loro rigorosa sequenza pensata da Brecht e Weill e unifica in un tessuto narrativo compatto gli episodi musicali che, nell'originale brechtiano, erano invece "montati". Ulteriore modo, pertanto, con cui viene stravolto il senso dell'opera.[10] A livello di macrostruttura, emerge subito come Pabst si sia servito dei *Songs* maggiormente noti e "collaudati" dal gusto popolare. Questi, nel corso della narrazione filmica, si dispongono in questo modo:

Film	Musica di Weill
Titoli	*Zweites Dreigroschenfinale*, n. 15, Atto II
Cantastorie	*Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*, n. 2
Prologo	
	Boîte dansante *Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens*, n. 16, Atto III (∗)
	Ballade von angenehmen Leben, n. 13, Atto II (∗)
Notte dei furti	*Die Moritat von Mackie Messer,* n. 2
Prologo (∗)	
Matrimonio	*Hochzeits Lied*, n. 5, Atto I
	Liebeslied, n. 8, Atto I
	Barbarasong, n. 9, Atto I
	Hochzeitslied, n. 5, Atto I
Cantastorie	*Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens*, n. 16, Atto III
Addio Mackie e Polly	*Polly's Lied*, n. 11, Atto II (∗)
Bordello	*Zuhälterballade*, n. 12, Atto II (∗)
	Seeräuber-Jenny, n. 6, Atto I
Cantastorie	*Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens*, n.16, Atto III
Brindisi finale	*Kanonen-Song*, n. 7, Atto I
Finale	*Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*, n. 2
Prologo	

Gli interventi, in definitiva, sono pochi e concentrati quasi esclusivamente nella scena del matrimonio. Va infatti tenuto conto, che alcuni *Songs* – quelli contrassegnati con il simbolo "(∗)" nello schema – sono eseguiti strumentalmente e con funzioni di accompagnamento. Inoltre, quale tratto caratteristico di ambedue le versioni, troviamo la presenza del cantastorie che intona alcuni versi della *Moritat von Mackie Messer* e del *Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens* (originariamente cantato da Macheath in carcere), spezzando frequentemente il racconto e contribuendo, in tal modo, a ridurre il soggetto brecthiano a "storiella", da cantastorie appunto. Assumendo delle tipiche funzioni rapsodiche, questa figura funge da filo connettivo della storia, interrompendo a tratti l'azione per riassumerla o, addirittura, anticiparla. Basti pensare all'intervento in cui intona fugacemente una strofa sulle "virtù femminili" preparando lo spettatore al tradimento di Jenny e al successo di Polly.

In questo le due versioni cinematografiche sono pressoché identiche mentre differiscono, a volte vistosamente, nel modo con cui vengono interpretate le diverse canzoni e per sottili differenze nel corso della narrazione musicale.[11]

Seguiamo ora le due versioni ponendole a confronto con l'originale brechtiano. Risulteranno, così, le comuni diversità nell'impianto drammaturgico e quelle esecutivo-interpretative che intercorrono fra le stesse.

Le due versioni a confronto con l'originale brechtiano

1. Titoli di testa
Zweites Dreigroschenfinale, n. 15, Atto II

Appare un teatrino di marionette. Sul nero fondale si materializzano le prime immagini. Sono sei bambole, sei grandi pupazzi di cera: Macheath con Polly seguito da Jenny e, infine, dalla coppia sinistra formata dai Peachum. Il modulo prescelto è evidente: Pabst ci narrerà a modo suo la metamorfosi, il cammino illuminante o la decadenza progressiva di questi polverosi manichini abitanti un universo circoscritto, falso, datato.[12]

Una voce maschile intona la seconda strofa del *Secondo Finale* dell'opera, dove si parla con sfiducia dell'animo umano, condizionato dalla società che lo costringe a dimenticare di essere uomo. La scelta di utilizzare questa pagina per i titoli di testa non è casuale. Questa musica, infatti, ha un sapore operettistico che ben si addice alle atmosfere del film. Basti pensare all'espediente della voce fuori scena che esclama: "Denn wovon lebt der Mensch?", subito dopo ripetuto con un'intonazione canzonettistica e rallentata da Mackie sul palcoscenico, e alla chiusa finale che prevede l'ingresso del coro (Fig.1, Fig. 2).

Nel film l'antefatto brechtiano viene, comunque, ridotto allo "straziante romanticismo delle *images d'Epinal*, a pauperistico Museo delle Cere",[13] impoverendone notevolmente lo spessore.

Le due versioni hanno un accompagnamento molto ridotto e un andamento più veloce rispetto all'originale. Allo stesso tempo presentano delle differenze. Quella tedesca rispetta molto di più l'originale. La voce del solista pronuncia i versi brechtiani in maniera scandita e l'alternanza con la voce fuori campo, inesistente nella versione francese, viene mantenuta dalla diversa intonazione del solista stesso e dalla presenza del

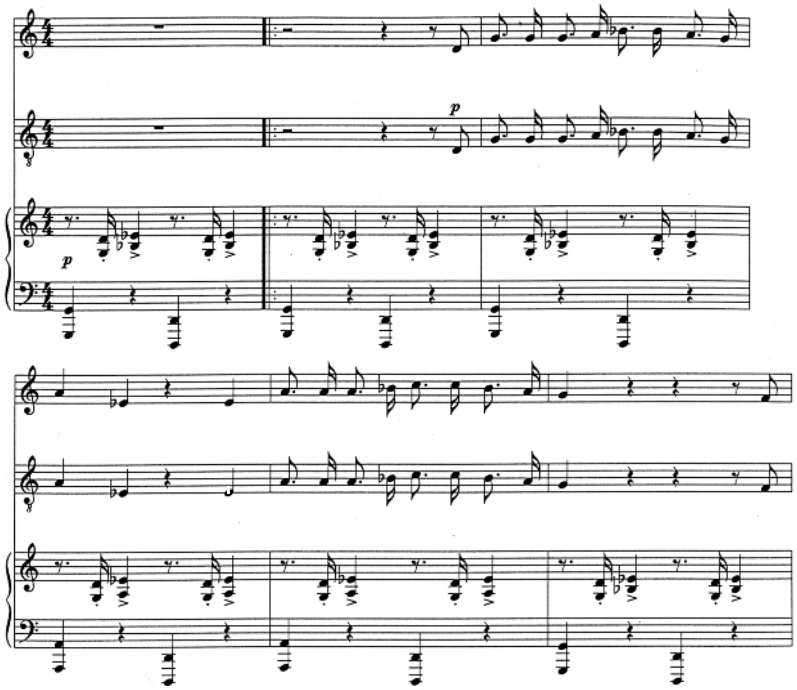

Fig. 1 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Zweites Dreigroschenfinale*, bb.1-6)

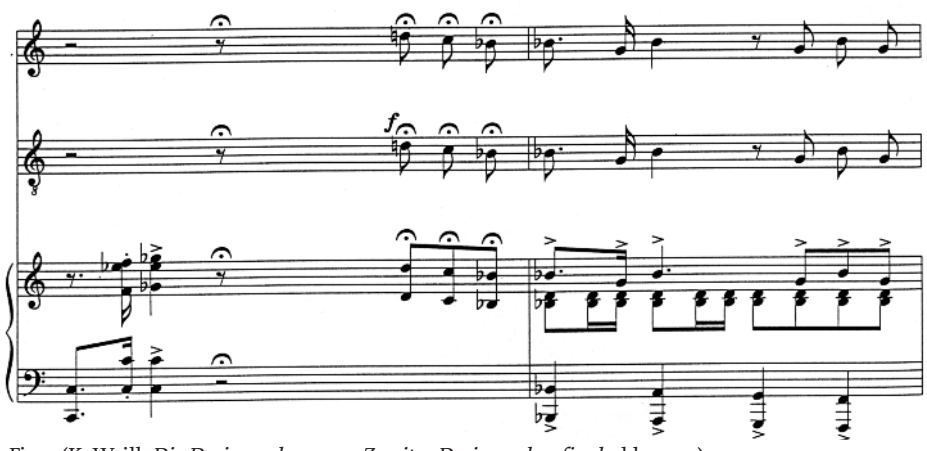

Fig. 2 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Zweites Dreigroschenfinale*, bb.23-24)

coro che però anticipa il suo ingresso, rispetto all'originale, ripetendo la domanda: "Denn wovon lebt der Mensch?". La musica poi viene inspiegabilmente bloccata alla b. 31 della partitura, alle parole: "Vergessen kann dass er ein Mensch ist".

La versione francese è molto piatta. Risulta essere monotona e presenta una leggera, e ingiustificata, accelerazione finale. Viene perso il sottile gioco del fuori campo dall'intonazione uniforme del testo da parte della voce solista. Non c'è l'intervento corale finale. A bb. 36-37 il sax declama la melodia mentre una voce intona gli ultimi versi.

2. Cantastorie
Die Moritat von Mackie Messer, n. 2, Prologo

È questo il primo degli interventi del cantastorie. Questa *Ballata*, una delle pagine maggiormente note dell'opera, presenta una struttura molto semplice: il periodo di 16 battute è dato simmetricamente da 8+8 e ben si addice ad essere intonato da un cantastorie che, nel film, è accompagnato da un organetto di Barberia.[14] Questo fa sì che la varietà dell'originale strumentazione venga notevolmente depauperata, contribuendo a conferire alla colonna sonora del film l'aspetto di un *Divertissement*.

La versione tedesca conserva l'accentuazione aggressiva e violenta[15] del testo che, invece, in quella francese diviene molto più attenuata e uniforme (Fig. 3).

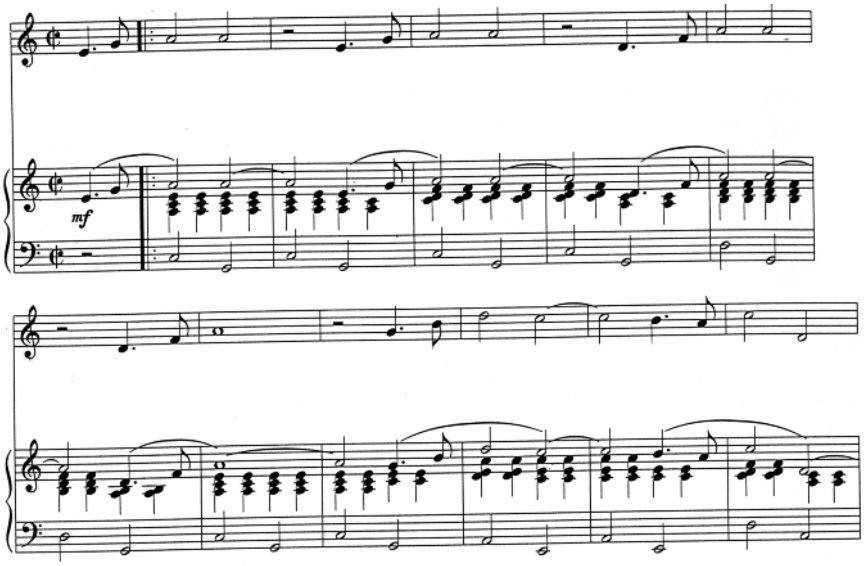

Fig. 3 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*, bb.1-11).

La musica prosegue anche nella sequenza seguente, accompagnando lo sguardo di Mackie riflesso sulla vetrina che osserva le due donne.

3. Mackie, Polly e signora Peachum nella "boîte dansante"
Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens, n.16, Atto III
Ballade von angenehmen Leben, n. 13, Atto II

Qui il fraintendimento è completo. Le due canzoni, infatti, divengono vera e propria musica di sottofondo, proposta da uno scassatissimo pianoforte da *saloon* che serve a far ballare la gente. La prima citazione si serve di una sequenza di battute (5-16) di un *Song* molto importante dell'opera. Estrapolata da tutto il contesto ed eseguita da un simile strumento, questa citazione assume delle tinte vernacolari e clownesche. La raffinatezza con cui Weill si era servito dei ritmi della musica da consumo viene completamente persa (Fig. 4).

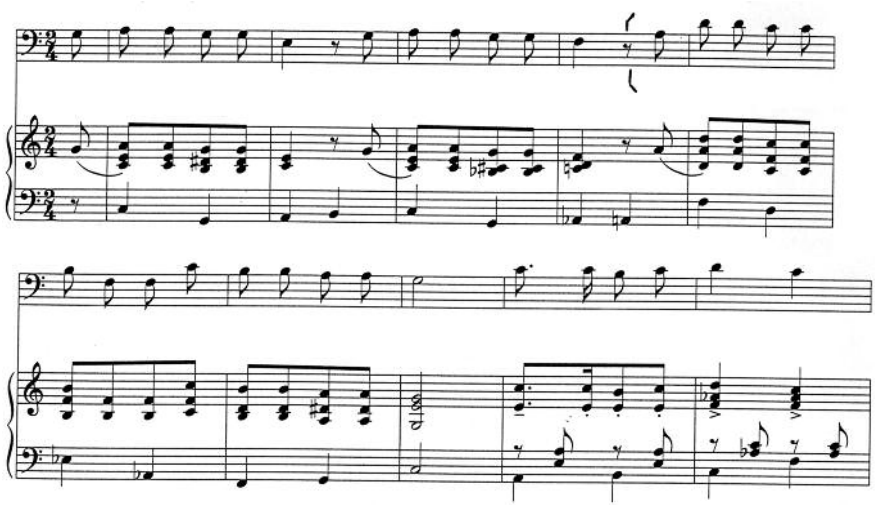

Fig. 4 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens*, bb.5-10).

Ancor più ridicola la seconda presenza, dove la *Ballata* viene letteralmente mortificata grazie ad un utilizzo dell'*incipit* come ritornello che, ripetuto meccanicamente, conferisce a tutta la pagina il carattere di un motivetto da sagra paesana, ancor più enfatizzata dall'utilizzo del *Charleston* e della batteria (Fig. 5).

Le melodie di Weill, impoverite e degradate, divengono atmosfera e contribuiscono a delineare i toni da *Vaudeville* della sequenza. Non solo. Il contrasto, forte e marcato, che

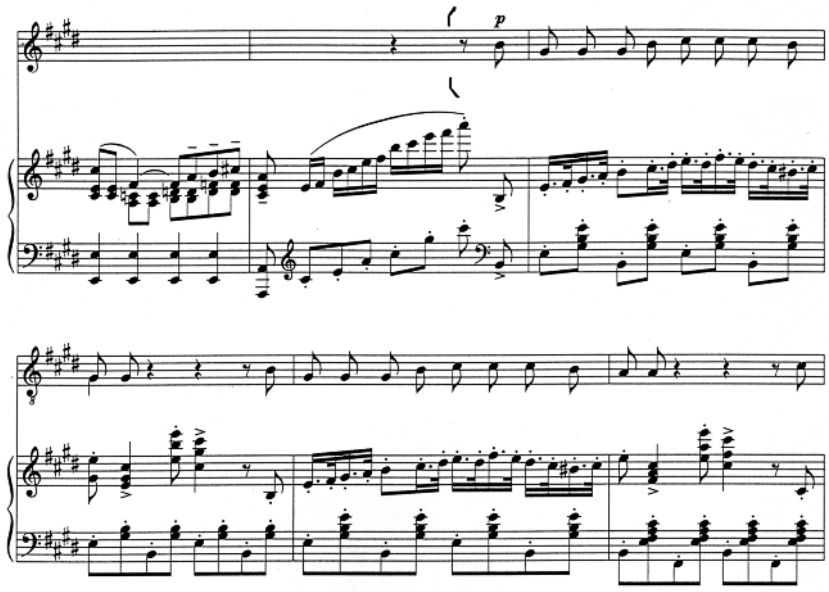

Fig. 5 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Ballade von angenehmen Leben*, bb.5-8).

Brecht e Weill avevano creato fra la brutalità del testo e la piacevolezza dell'accompagnamento qui viene vanificato. La musica viene mercificata e perde la voluta ambiguità di cui parlavamo.

Non è da escludere che la scelta di utilizzare queste pagine sia nata da una presunta affinità fra il carattere della musica e la situazione "*angenehm*" del locale. Il secondo inserto, infatti, si basa su uno *Shimmy*, una danza allora giudicata con toni molto severi dalla società borghese e ritenuta addirittura immorale, che Weill utilizza in maniera del tutto personale e soggettiva, privandolo della forza delle sincopi e rendendolo molto veloce metronomicamente.

Le due versioni si identificano e non presentano sostanzialmente differenze.[16]

4. Notte dei furti nei negozi londinesi
Die Moritat von Mackie Messer, n. 2, Prologo

Brevi cenni strumentali della *Ballata*, usata come *Leitmotiv* del film, accompagnano in sottofondo questa scena. La strumentazione varia: non c'è più il monotono organetto delle precedenti sequenze con il cantastorie. Le due versioni non presentano differenze.

5. Preparativi per la festa di matrimonio
Hochzeits Lied, n. 5, Atto I

Il *Lied* viene fischiettato e poi canticchiato fino a b.12 ("Aber sie wusste seinen Namen nicht genau"). Manca l'intervento: "Hoch sollen sie leben, hoch, hoch, hoch." La melodia di Weill, nella sua disarmante ma provocatoria monotonia, procede sillabicamente per gradi congiunti e aderisce alla situazione grottesca che si sta delineando. In questo caso, come nel numero seguente, la ricerca di verosimiglianza con l'originale ne giustifica l'utilizzo, anche se la fedeltà al soggetto si rivela essere un suo semplice rispecchiamento superficiale che ne fraintende lo spirito e l'autenticità per un'apparente fedeltà testuale (Fig. 6).

Non ci sono differenze fra le due versioni.

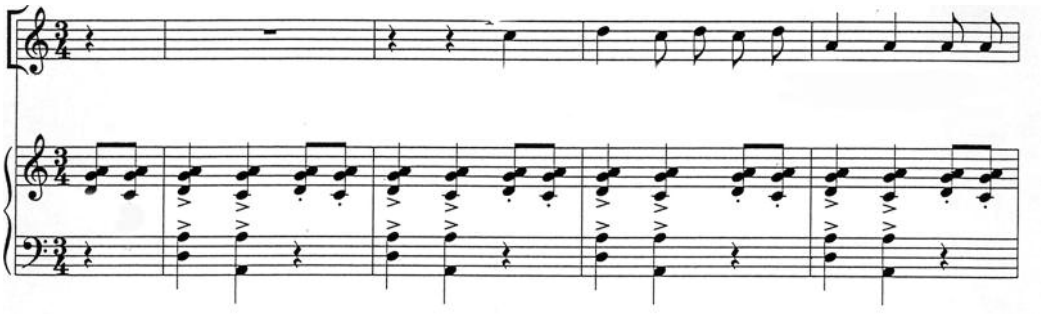

Fig. 6 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Hochzeitslied*, bb.1-4).

6. Mackie e Polly
Liebeslied, n. 8, Atto I

Anche in questo caso abbiamo una voluta concordanza con l'originale. Brecht e Weill in questo *Liebeslied* realizzano una pagina singolare. Vi sono, infatti, momenti di artificiosità, come gli accordi in tremolo dal sapore operistico che portano, nella seconda sezione, ad un *Boston*, usato ancora una volta in modo singolare con un evidente rallentamento che ne accentua il carattere sentimentale (Fig. 7).

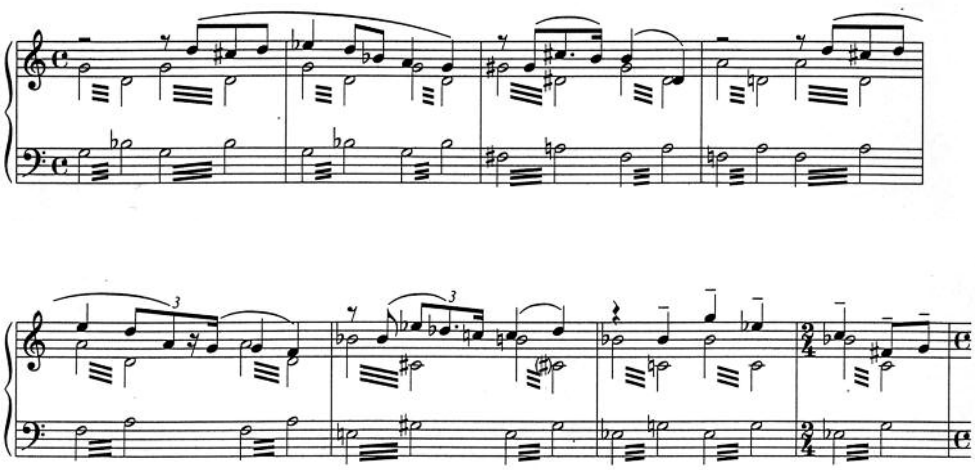

Fig. 7 (Kurt Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Liebeslied*, bb. 1-8).

Ne risulta una pagina molto *kitsch* che ben si associa alle parole del testo.

Nel film questo contrasto viene perso nella banalità della scenografia, ridotta a semplice pretesto figurativo. Numerose sono le differenze rispetto all'originale che accomunano le due versioni. Il recitativo iniziale, molto più sostenuto rispetto al *Molto tranquillo* previsto dalla partitura, a b. 12 sfocia nel canto per intonare romanticamente "da will auch ich sein". Il seguente *Boston-Tempo* viene poi cantato dalla sola voce maschile e non più all'unisono da Macheath e Polly. La versione tedesca, contrariamente a quella francese, alle parole: "Die Liebe dauert", fa entrare un breve recitativo, subito vanificato dal seguente "oder dauert nicht". Inspiegabile la chiusa di ambedue le versioni che, quasi fosse un *refrain*, ripropone il motivetto del *Boston-Tempo*.

7. Nozze
Barbarasong, n. 9, Atto I

Lo spostamento nell'ordine sequenziale del brano porta ad un fraintendimento dello spirito con cui gli autori l'avevano pensato. Qui Polly non informa più i genitori, con una canzoncina, delle sue nozze col bandito Macheath, ma rivela la sua storia ai commensali.[17]

Accanto al consueto disordine nell'inserimento dei diversi *Songs*, questo intervento è

testimonianza di un ulteriore fraintendimento. La "musica gestuale", a cui Brecht e Weill avevano pensato, implica infatti il carattere autonomo della sua presenza nel contesto drammaturgico.[18]

Nel film di Pabst, invece, i *Songs* perdono questa loro autonomia e vengono eseguiti quando il contesto narrativo lo richiede: il regista si preoccupa di far cantare gli attori quando verosimilmente esiste un motivo per farlo fare, secondo le modalità della commedia hollywoodiana. La musica non agisce sull'azione ma piuttosto la segue: non sollecita lo spirito critico dello spettatore, ma piuttosto si lascia godere.

Le due versioni, allo stesso tempo, differiscono notevolmente. Quella tedesca rispetta l'aggressività del testo con una sillabazione molto scandita e salti di registro evidenti,[19] per cui vengono parodiate le movenze tipiche dell'opera lirica. La versione francese, invece, presenta un'intonazione molto chiara che, grazie ad un vibrato leggero, assume delle movenze liriche. La voce di Odette Florelle, per quanto bella, non si rivela consona allo spirito della musica, nonostante Weill, sembra, preferisse il suo timbro chiaro a quello di Marianne Oswald, apprezzata interprete delle sue opere.[20]

Molto evidenti sono le alternanze fra melodia e recitativo, che ambedue le versioni realizzano in maniera diversa e che nella partitura di Weill non esistono. Seguiamole ora dettagliatamente.

Versione tedesca	Versione francese
Moderato assai	
bb. 1-12 Recitativo bb. 12-14 Canto bb. 14-16 Recitativo	bb. 1-8 Canto[21] bb. 8-12 Recitativo[22] bb. 12-16 Canto
Più animato	
bb. 17-24 Canto bb. 24-26 Lo strumento esegue la linea melodica. Subito dopo la voce intona le parole finali del verso	bb. 17-20 Canto bb. 21-24 Recitativo bb. 24-26 Lo strumento esegue la linea melodica. Subito dopo la voce intona le parole finali del verso
Breit	
bb. 26-33 Recitativo bb. 34-37 Canto bb. 38-41 Recitativo	bb. 26-41 Canto

Questo schema propone le differenze fra le due versioni nella prima strofa del *Barbarasong*. Quella tedesca, allo stesso tempo, apporta ulteriori modifiche nelle altre due, per cui nella seconda "sovverte" l'alternanza Canto-Recitativo in questo modo: bb. 1-8 Recitativo; bb. 8-20 Canto; bb. 21-24 Recitativo; bb. 24-26 Canto. Singolare l'enfatizzazione del testo alla sezione *Breit*, dove la linea melodica viene eseguita un'ottava sotto

con una notevole accentuazione dell'esclamazione "Ja". Così la terza strofa, dopo il lungo recitativo iniziale (bb. 45-56), intona i versi rimanenti spesso intercalando dei Recitativi nella sezione *Breit*. Meno importanti, invece, le differenze tra la prima e le rimanenti strofe della versione francese che prevedono solo un allargamento del Recitativo iniziale fino a b. 12.

Queste "licenze" sono molto importanti. Contrariamente alle scelte di Weill di diversificare l'agogica musicale (con ritardando e accelerando), il film adotta dei salti di registro, con vistose alternanze fra recitativo e melodia, che si rivelano essere un espediente più appariscente ma anche più scontato. Basti pensare alle battute iniziali, fino a b.12, che vengono eseguite in Recitativo, appiattendo e banalizzando la linea melodica (Fig. 8).

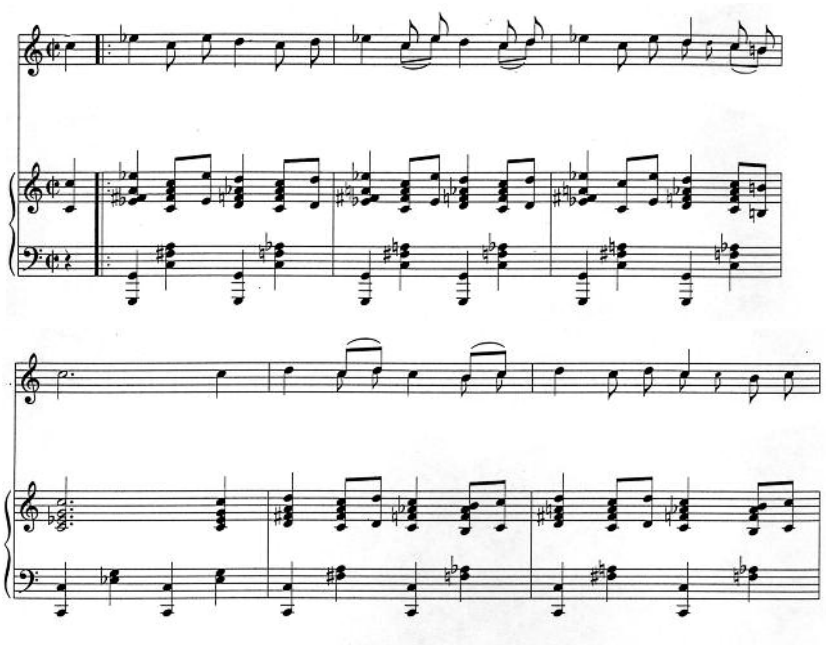

Fig. 8 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Barbarasong*, bb.1-6).

Il fraintendimento, in particolar modo, tradisce il vero significato del celebre "parlare contro la musica" invocato da Brecht nei suoi *Scritti teatrali*.

> *Per quanto riguarda la melodia egli [l'attore] non la seguirà ciecamente: esiste un modo di "parlare contro la musica", che può ottenere grandi effetti, resi possibili da una sobrietà ostinata, indipendente e incorruttibile dalla musica e dal ritmo.*[23]

Le alternanze Canto-Recitativo, previste in determinate situazioni del testo per enfatizzare e sottolineare quanto le parole vogliono esprimere si rivelano essere ridondanti. In particolar modo risulta essere un controsenso affidare la melodia ad uno strumento per poi far recitare le parole. Più che "parlare contro la musica" si ottiene, infatti, un parlare in maniera diversa.

8. Nozze
Hochzeitslied, n. 5, Atto I

Il canto di nozze – i suoi primi versi – viene eseguito "a cappella". Nella versione tedesca è molto rallentato e poi accelerato grottescamente ("Als sie drin standen vor dem Standesamt"). In quella francese, con mezzi meno evidenti, si raggiungono i medesimi effetti caricaturali.

9. Cantastorie
Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens, n. 16, Atto III

Negando un principio della drammaturgia brechtiana, questi interventi, dove si alternano la *Moritat* e questo *Lied*, divengono un *Leitmotiv* della partitura musicale che interrompe l'azione del film. Le due versioni non differiscono.

10. Addio fra Mackie e Polly
Polly's Lied, n. 11, Atto II

Nel film il sax esegue la melodia vocale. L'accompagnamento è molto povero e perde parte dello spessore e delle tinte naïf con cui Weill l'aveva pensato. La maniera con cui viene posto a commento delle immagini è molto banale. Le figurazioni con le crome dell'*Andante con moto* sembrano scandire il passo stanco dei due che salgono le scale, riproponendo uno dei tanti *clichés* della musica hollywoodiana.

L'intervento si chiude poi citando, sempre al saxofono, la conclusione del *Melodram* precedente ("Die Liebe dauert oder dauert nicht...") (Fig. 9).

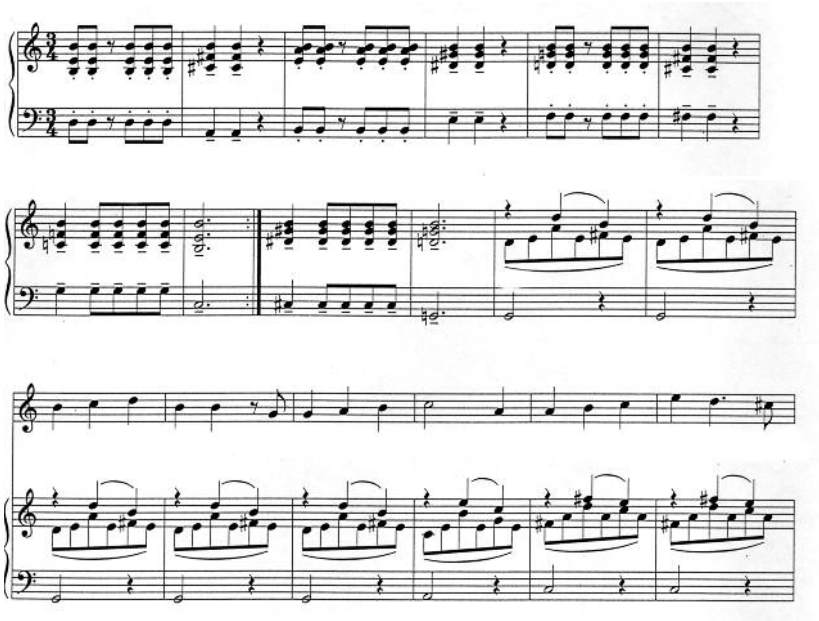

Fig. 9 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper*. *Polly's Lied*, bb.1-18).

11. Bordello
Zuhälterballade, n. 12, Atto II

È molto simile al seguente *Seeräuber-Jenny*. Come sottolinea Gottfried Wagner:

La melodia a grande arco delle linee di canto (soprattutto nella terza strofa), insieme ad ampi salti di intervallo [...] ha un effetto estremamente enfatico, e sembra dunque cozzare con il testo. Il pathos musicale indica qui una sentimentalizzazione della cruda realtà dei tempi passati, realizzata con una linea di canto che nell'accompagnamento presenta spostamenti e sovrapposizioni. (Fig. 10)[24]

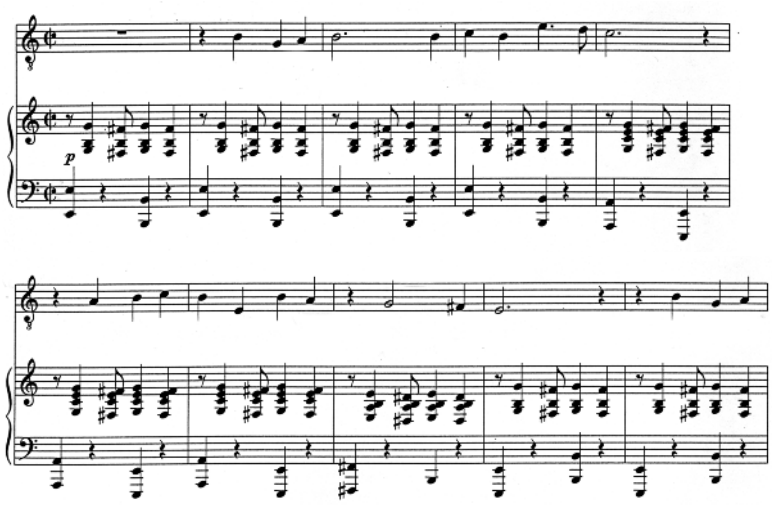

Fig. 10 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Zuhälterballade*, bb.1-10).

Il tema della *Ballata* è proposto, diegeticamente, al pianoforte con movenze preludianti e con un'agogica molto lenta che fanno perdere il carattere di *Tango* della partitura.

12. Bordello
Seeräuber-Jenny, n. 6, Atto I

La musica presenta un'evidente differenza fra strofe e *refrain*. Quanto le prime sono sottolineate con insistenza dall'accompagnamento tetico, tanto il secondo presenta dei valori allargati che testimoniano l'effettivo cambiamento avvenuto fra Jenny e la città (Fig. 11).

L'incongruenza di questo numero con l'originale brechtiano è evidente. L'attacco alle istituzioni borghesi, contenuto nelle parole, si trasforma in un lamento ispirato dal risentimento della donna abbandonata dall'amante. Le due versioni, allo stesso tempo, differiscono notevolmente. Quella tedesca è molto più fedele a Weill, grazie anche alla presenza di Lotte Lenya, ed è interamente cantata. Quella francese, invece, presenta una struttura maggiormente declamata, con dei salti di registro più morbidi. Ingiustificata appare la scelta di alternare le strofe, recitate, al ritornello, cantato che "s'impenna" sul salto ascendente di sesta.[25] (Fig. 12).

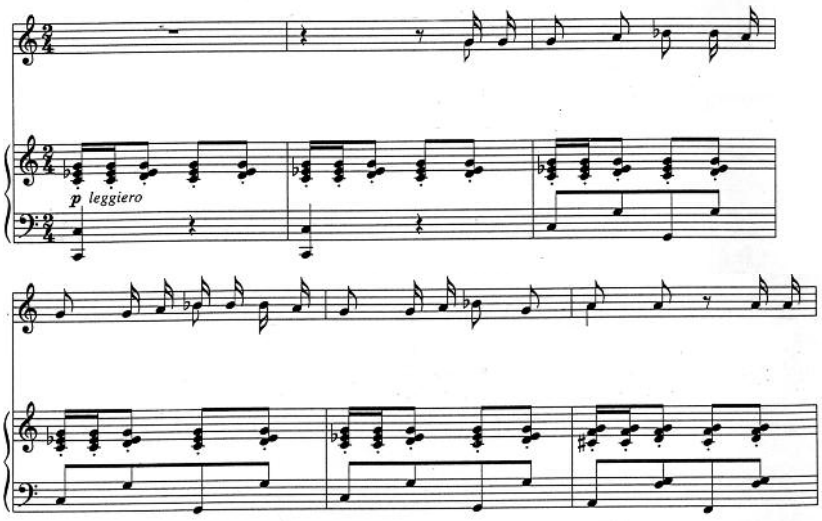

Fig. 11 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Seeräuber-Jenny*, bb.1-6).

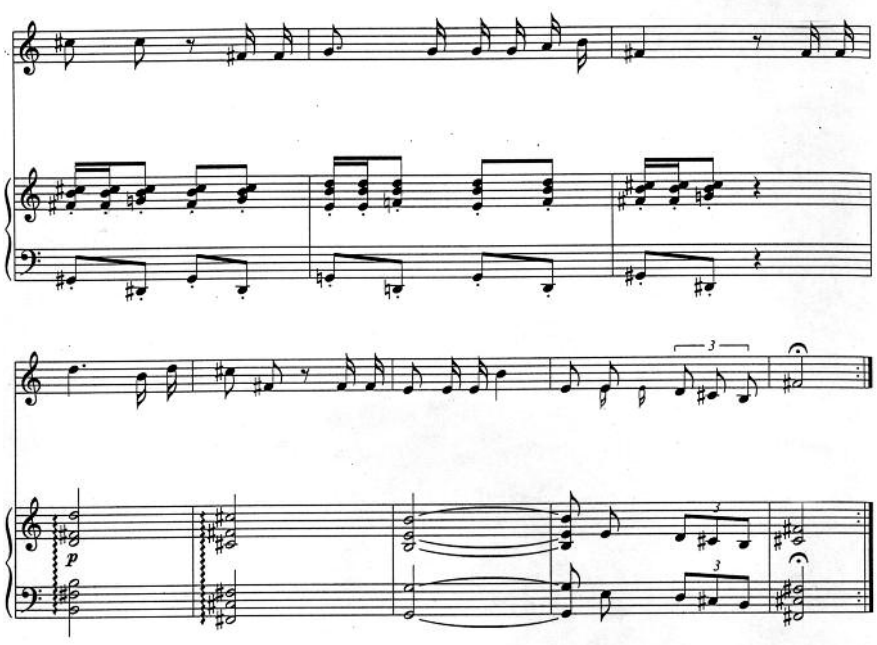

Fig. 12 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Seeräuber-Jenny*, bb. 20-27).

In questo caso l'interprete è Margo Lion.

Margo Lion est sèche, grande, a la voix dure et figure avec ses traits de cheval dans la maison

close qui ne saurait manquer dans un film de Pabst. [...] Margo Lion chante. Que Margo Lion chante et l'on comprend ce que les hommes appellent avec quelque irréflexion un désespoir sans bornes.[26]

13. Cantastorie
Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens n. 16 Atto III

Si tratta di un brevissimo intermezzo.

14. Brindisi finale
Kanonen-Song n. 7 Atto I

Weill, nella partitura, definisce questa pagina come un *Fox-Trot*. In realtà, come nota Gottfried Wagner, non ci troviamo di fronte ad un ritmo molto sincopato. Si tratta, quindi, di un *Fox-Trot* straniato che demistifica il peggior militarismo con un canto con movenze da osteria (Fig. 13).

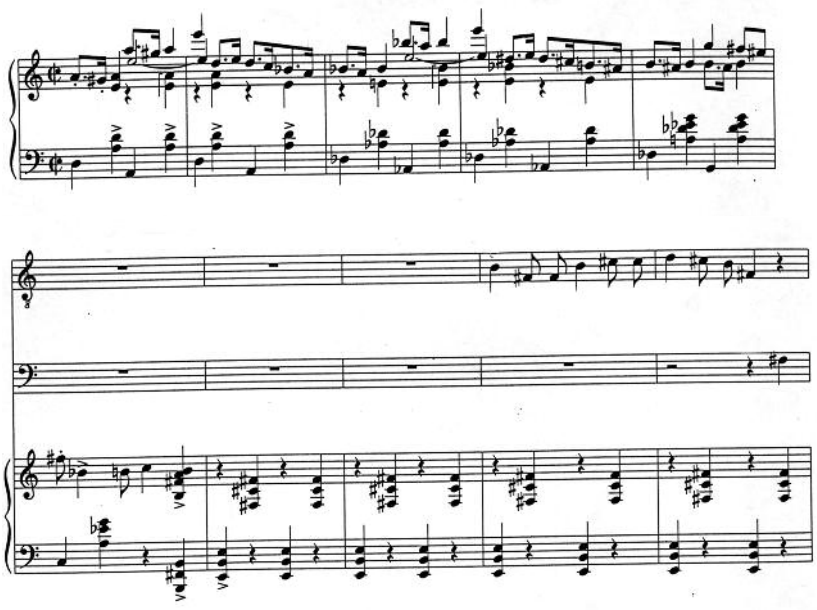

Fig. 13 (K. Weill, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Kanonen-Song*, bb.1-10).

Le due versioni non presentano differenze. Quella francese, forse, manifesta dei toni maggiormente affermativi. Analogamente a quanto rilevavamo a proposito del *Barbarasong* (n. 7), anche questo intervento nega il carattere gestuale della musica di Weill. È stato raggiunto l'accordo: i delinquenti brindano intonando il *Kanonensong*.

15. Finale

Com'è noto, Weill e Brecht hanno composto appositamente un finale per il film, sempre sulle note della *Moritat* iniziale.

Le sorti della musica nel cinema degli anni Trenta

Le vicende musicali dell'*Opera da tre soldi* sono significative di una ben precisa situazione vissuta dalla musica da film, e dal cinema in genere, nei primi anni del sonoro. Nelle differenze che intercorrono fra le due versioni, e che abbiamo messo in risalto nel corso dell'analisi, è emerso come il soggetto brecthiano sia stato letteralmente piegato alle tipologie del film-operetta, spesso intervenendo sulla stessa musica che assume delle tipologie a volte grottesche e banali. In ogni caso private della carica e della forza con cui Weill le aveva pensate e scritte. Del resto, le sorti di questo film possono essere paragonate a quelle di altri venuti alla luce in questi anni. Basti pensare ai "viaggi musicali" de *L'Atalante* (J. Vigo, 1934) la cui colonna sonora viene privata della bellissima musica di Maurice Jaubert per lasciare spazio al facile melodismo di Bixio, e alle frequenti rimusicazioni a cui vengono sottoposti molti film nel passaggio dal muto al sonoro. In un panorama molto complesso, e di estremo interesse, sembra emergere un comune denominatore per cui le tipologie musicali pensate all'insegna del "leggero" sembrano prevalere. Come ricorda Fernaldo Di Giammatteo:

> *Gli anni intorno al '30 videro il pullulare di film musicali europei più o meno sostenuti dall'apporto del denaro americano [...] Era una strada ben vista da tutti, perché redditizia senza sforzo, tematicamente priva di impegno, amabilmente scacciapensieri in un'epoca in cui il pubblico era afflitto dalla più grave crisi economica.*[27]

Di questa situazione dovevano farne le spese anche opere di estrema importanza, come *Die Dreigroschenoper* di Brecht, e la relativa musica, privata della sua specificità e assuefatta a schemi operettistici e da *Divertissement*.

1 "Il nuovo cinema andò subito a nozze con l'opera", dichiara Giovanni Morelli in un suo prezioso intervento. Indagando alcune modalità di divulgazione del teatro musicale nell'Italia della prima metà del secolo, egli poi afferma che "il gioco a incastro fra opera, Opera-Radio e Cinema divenne un fenomeno molto significativo. Questo già a partire dal 1935, quando la seconda Coppa Mussolini al Festival cinematografico di Venezia venne assegnata in pompa magna a Carmine Gallone per il film *Casta Diva*. Questo genere di operazioni piaceva al pubblico, in particolar modo agli amanti della lirica, la cui struttura ricettiva del melodramma ben si addiceva a queste operazioni. È così che l'opera cinematografica, sebbene la sua drammaturgia fosse radicalmente diversa da quella d'impianto teatrale, divenne un luogo di memoria-identificazione popolare. Piaceva il 'melodramma raccontato' e adattato al consumo e alla fruizione di larghe fasce di pubblico." Giovanni Morelli, "L'opera", in Mario Isnenghi (a cura di), *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1996), p. 103.

2 Come vedremo, il film di Pabst è difficilmente circoscrivibile in una precisa tipologia (film-opera, opera in prosa...).

3 Le perplessità del compositore sono state riportate in una celebre monografia dedicata al regista. A tal fine si veda: Wolfgang Jacobsen (a cura di), *G. W. Pabst* (Berlin: Argon, 1997).

4 "Fatta eccezione per il *Corale mattutino*, che introduce il primo atto e per il quale gli autori decisero di utilizzare la musica originale di Pepusch, Weill ricorre a generi diversi: *Moritat* della tradizione popolare, musica leggera, da *cabaret*, jazz, musica da ballo, Tango, *Fox-Trot*, *Shimmy*, insieme con musica 'colta' e operistica, musica dalle forme opulente, dagli accenti declamatori e drammatici come quella di Händel." Consolina Vigliero, "Introduzione", in Bertolt Brecht, *L'opera da tre soldi* (Torino: Einaudi, 2002), p. XX.

5 Lo stesso Brecht, consapevole di queste radicali novità, aveva descritto il nuovo atteggiamento richiesto ai fini "Del cantare le canzoni" nei seguenti termini: "L'attore, quando canta, compie un mutamento di funzioni. Nulla di più fastidioso dell'attore che faccia finta di non rendersi conto d'aver già abbandonato il terreno del discorso corrente e di aver cominciato a cantare. I tre piani – discorso corrente, discorso elevato e canto – devono sempre essere distinti l'uno dall'altro: in nessun caso il discorso elevato deve corrispondere a un più alto livello del discorso corrente, e il canto a un più alto livello di quello elevato. In nessun caso dunque il canto deve soccorrere quando la piena del sentimento faccia mancare le parole. L'attore non deve soltanto cantare, deve anche mostrare uno che canta." Bertolt Brecht, "Del cantare le canzoni", in *Scritti teatrali* (Torino: Einaudi, 2001), p. 39.

6 Molto opinabile, a nostro avviso, l'opinione di Mannino e Recupero, per cui i tradimenti di Pabst nei confronti del testo brechtiano non sono dovuti ad un'impossibile traduzione linguistica dello specifico teatrale, ma solo a divergenze politiche tra Pabst e Brecht.
Francesco Mannino, Antonio Recupero, "Da Brecht a Pabst: licenze musicali e divergenze politiche", *Giovane critica*, n. 4 (aprile-maggio 1964), pp. 8-14.

7 "Un destino analogo toccò alle musiche di Weill che divennero presto familiari al vasto pubblico attraverso svariati arrangiamenti ed edizioni discografiche. Nel tentativo di evitare che il successo popolare ne svilisse l'efficacia e gli scopi per i quali erano state composte, il musicista volle ridar loro dignità riproponendole in una Suite, la *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik für Bläserorchester*, eseguita la prima volta nel febbraio 1929 dall'orchestra della Berliner Staatsoper diretta da Otto Klemperer. Ma i *Song* di Weill continuarono per la loro strada del successo popolare fino a entrare anche nel repertorio di orchestre da ballo". C. Vigliero, *op. cit.*, p. XXII.

8 Contrariamente a quanto pensava Louis Chavance che, a chiusura di un proprio articolo, afferma: "Même lorsqu'il rencontre exactement la pièce de théâtre, le film l'emporte en qualité. Une réplique, une chanson prennent bien plus d'importance lorsqu'elles sont dites en gros plan sur quinze mètres carrés d'écran que lorsqu'elles sont débitées dans plusieurs centaines de mètres cubes à la scène." Louis Chavance, "L'Opéra de quat'sous", *La Revue du Cinéma*, n. 22 (1 maggio 1931), p. 79. Non a caso, Groppali descrive il film in questi termini: "Siamo nel regno dell'operetta ridicola e fatua, sovraccarica di inutili orpelli". Enrico Groppali, *Georg Wilhelm Pabst* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1983), p. 73.
Anche Kracauer che, da un lato, dimostra di apprezzare la versione cinematografica poiché "conserva la satira sociale [dell'originale brechtiano], il lirismo sincero e il timbro rivoluzionario", dall'altro, ammette che "il film mescola annotazioni sincere e frivole finzioni, alla maniera della commedia." Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947); tr. it.: *Da Caligari a Hitler. Una storia psicologica del cinema tedesco*, a cura di Leonardo Quaresima (Torino: Lindau, 2001), pp. 299, 301.

9 "Dunque se l'opera conserva un *senso come opera*, si devono trovare nuovi mezzi musicali che abbiano una funzione gastronomica *analoga* a quelli tradizionali dell'opera, ma che, nello stesso tempo, ne siano una 'critica' e servano per proporre nuovi contenuti, attaccando in questo modo, sul suo stesso terreno, la società borghese capitalistica". Luigi Rognoni, "Funzione della musica nel teatro di Bertolt Brecht", in *Fenomenologia della musica radicale* (Milano: Garzanti, 1974), p. 280. Non a caso Brecht definiva *Die Dreigroschenoper* "un tentativo di reazione al totale rincretinimento dell'opera", un tentativo, continua Vigliero, che mira alla dissoluzione di un genere musicale stereotipato nel quale – almeno nella sua forma tradizionale – la fusione di parola e musica offre innanzitutto emozioni, ovvero l'opposto di ciò che egli esige dal teatro". Bertolt Brecht cit. in C. Vigliero, *op. cit.*, p. XIX.
Ben coglie questa valenza del linguaggio di Weill il musicologo Stuckenschmidt, quando afferma che i suoi *Songs* derivano "dal tipo di canzone per le serve, un genere di canzoni lacrimogene, da cantarsi in tempo rubato, ed eseguite nei cortili di una grande città. [...] Weill ne accentuò il tipo mediante sincopi da ritmo di macchina, sconcordanze [*sic*] e ritardi dell'armonia, [...] e piccoli procedimenti polifonici nell'accompagnamento". Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, *La musica moderna* (Torino: Einaudi, 1960), p. 234.

10 Al fine di combattere i meccanismi dell'*Einfühlung*, Brecht aveva esclamato: "Staccate le canzoni dal resto! / Con un simbolo musicale, l'alterna illuminazione, / i titoli, le immagini, indicate / che l'arte sorella ora / entra in scena. Gli attori / si trasformano in cantanti, In posa diversa / si volgono al pubblico, sempre / figure del dramma, ma ora anche in modo palese / complici del drammaturgo". Bertolt Brecht, "Le canzoni", in *Scritti teatrali*, cit., p. 221.

11 Ricordiamo che la strumentazione della partitura di Weill è ad opera di Theo Mackeben. Un discorso a parte andrebbe fatto per quanto riguarda gli interventi sul testo messo in musica che, nella versione francese, sono molto liberi. L'analisi di questo aspetto, però, ci allontanerebbe troppo dal nostro iter.

12 E. Groppali, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

13 *Ivi*, p. 70.

14 Era tradizione che il cantastorie, intonando la *Moritat*, si servisse dell'organetto. A mano a mano che il racconto procedeva, le sue diverse fasi venivano indicate sui cartelloni e su volantini distribuiti fra il pubblico. Weill, come di consueto, si era servito di questi materiali molto liberamente.

15 Gli accenti dei versi sono molto enfatizzati.

16 Come vedremo, tutte le parti strumentali dei due film si identificano mentre quelle vocali presentano delle sostanziali differenze. Soprattutto su queste focalizzeremo la nostra attenzione.

17 Anche in questo caso l'opinione di Mannino e Recupero risulta opinabile.
"Che durante le nozze Polly canti la *Canzone di Barbara*, invece di *Jenny dei pirati*, come nell'originale, ha meno importanza del fatto in sé e per sé che Polly canti una canzone, in quel contesto, in quel momento e con quel tono." F. Mannino, A. Recupero, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

18 Weill stesso aveva specificato: "La musica gestuale non è affatto legata al testo: si tratterà di fissare ritmicamente il testo [...] la fissione ritmica basata sul testo non è dunque, per il compositore, un vincolo maggiore di quello che, per esempio, ponevano al musicista del passato gli schemi formali della Fuga, della Sonata, del Rondeau. Nel quadro di una musica così predeterminata sotto l'aspetto ritmico sono ora possibili tutti i mezzi della espansione melodica e della differenziazione armonica e ritmica, purché gli archi di tensione musicali corrispondano all'evento gestuale.", cit. in *Ibidem*.
Anche Brecht aveva ribadito: "Per 'gesto' non si deve intendere la gesticolazione: non si tratta

di movimenti delle mani intesi a sottolineare o a chiarire, bensì di un atteggiamento d'insieme. 'Gestuale' è un linguaggio che si basa sul gesto così inteso: un linguaggio che dimostra determinati atteggiamenti che colui che tiene assume di fronte ad altre persone." Bertolt Brecht, "Sulla musica gestuale", *Scritti teatrali*, cit., p. 213.

19 In questo modo è più vicina all'originale che prevede una vocalità molto aggressiva, in certi punti ai limiti dell'urlato.

20 "Le compositeur qui préférait de loin le style musical de Florelle à celui, beaucoup plus noir, de Marianne Oswald, devait retrouver sa protégée quelques mois plus tard dans les studios de Joinville". Pascal Huynh, *Kurt Weill à Paris* (Assai : Rete due Radio svizzera, 1995), p. 7.

21 Un canto molto vibrato, in particolar modo sulle cadenze a fine verso.

22 Il recitativo, velocissimo, risulta essere molto goffo e ridicolo.

23 B. Brecht, "Del cantare le canzoni", *op. cit.*, p. 40.

24 Gottfried Wagner, *Weill e Brecht* (Pordenone: Studio Tesi), p. 283.

25 Scelte ingiustificate in quanto lontane, come abbiamo visto, dalle norme dello stesso Brecht.

26 L. Chavance, "L'Opéra de quat'sous", *cit.*, p. 78.

27 Fernaldo Di Giammatteo, *Die Dreigroschenoper. Ritratto del Pabst prenazista*, cit. in E. Groppali, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

NEL NOME DI MADDALENA. UNA COMPARAZIONE TRA *CASTA DIVA* E *THE DIVINE SPARK*

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Nel panorama della produzione italiana degli anni '30 *Casta Diva* presenta più di una ragione di interesse. Innanzitutto perché Carmine Gallone gira *Casta Diva* nel 1935, dopo un periodo all'estero, in cui ha lavorato fra Berlino e Parigi; poi perché la storiografia si è interessata a *Casta Diva* in quanto tiene a battesimo il genere del film-opera in Italia, che fiorisce per un ventennio (fino al termine degli anni '50) e di cui Gallone è considerato il maestro.[1] In *Casta Diva* si è anche scorto, per la sua qualità, una prova dello sviluppo che il cinema italiano conosce a metà del decennio[2] (ottiene la Coppa Mussolini per il miglior film italiano al Festival di Venezia nel 1935), ma si è trascurato l'apporto dato al film da esponenti di primo piano della cinematografia tedesca. Tale contributo è rilevante e concerne la sceneggiatura (Walter Reisch), la fotografia (Franz Planer), la scenografia (Werner Schlichting), la musica (Willy Schmidt-Gentner), oltre che il ruolo dell'attrice protagonista (Marta Eggerth) e quello dei produttori (Gregor Rabinowitsch e Arnold Pressburger), dei quali si coglie la presenza dietro l'Alleanza Cinematografica Italiana, la società che produce *Casta Diva*. Partecipazione che spinge a interrogarsi sulla collocazione di *Casta Diva* nel quadro della produzione degli anni '30 e che lo caratterizza come un *Emigrantenfilm* in Italia, termine con cui la storiografia d'oltralpe designa le produzioni degli esponenti del cinema di lingua tedesca all'estero, che abbandonano la Germania quando il Nazionalsocialismo giunge al potere.

Fra i film in più versioni che si producono in Italia nel corso degli anni '30 *Casta Diva* presenta una particolarità: la realizzazione di una versione in lingua inglese. Il titolo è *The Divine Spark* e la versione è girata da Gallone, insieme a *Casta Diva*, nello stabilimento della Cines in via Veio. Il fatto rappresenta un'eccezione nel cinema italiano degli anni '30, quando Parigi e Berlino fanno da riferimento. In Italia *Casta Diva*, insieme a *Tredici uomini e un cannone* e *Kiki*, è l'unico film di cui all'epoca sia stata girata una versione in lingua inglese.[3] Dagli anni '20 all'inizio della guerra la maggior parte delle coproduzioni avviene con Francia e Germania ed è indicativo che del primo film sonoro realizzato in Italia, *La canzone dell'amore* (G. Righelli, 1930) si propongano delle versioni in francese e in tedesco. Si tratta infatti delle lingue in cui – in Italia negli anni '30 – si girano la quasi totalità dei film in più versioni. In alternativa a Parigi e Berlino, la produzione di *Casta Diva* riflette il proposito di avviare un rapporto con il mercato di lingua inglese, e il progetto è il frutto di una intesa fra Pressburger, Rabinowitsch e Luigi Freddi, che è a capo della Direzione Generale per la Cinematografia;[4] questa è istituita nel 1934 all'interno del Ministero per la Stampa e la Propaganda, con il compito di "regolare, ispirare, dirigere, controllare" il cinema in Italia.[5] Il progetto di *Casta Diva* risponde da un lato all'esigenza della Direzione di

aprire uno spazio alla produzione italiana in Europa, dall'altro consente a Pressburger e Rabinowitsch, ai quali è interdetto di lavorare nel Terzo Reich, di trasferire la produzione al di fuori della Germania ed è attribuibile all'iniziativa di Pressburger che, dopo aver lasciato la Germania, si è stabilito a Londra, dove costituisce la British Cine-Alliance.[6] La versione in lingua inglese è prodotta in collaborazione con la Gaumont British, che distribuisce *The Divine Spark* in Gran Bretagna. In precedenza Pressburger e Rabinowitsch hanno collaborato con la Gaumont British per *My Heart is Calling*. Si tratta della versione in lingua inglese di *Mein Herz ruft nach Dir* (C. Gallone, 1933-34) di cui Marta Eggerth è la protagonista, al fianco di Jan Kiepura. Il regista aveva già lavorato con Pressburger all'inizio del sonoro, per *Die singende Stadt* (1930) dirigendo anche la versione inglese, *The City of Song* (1930). La collaborazione che si intreccia fra Gallone, Rabinowitsch e Pressburger all'inizio degli anni '30[7] costituisce la premessa per *Casta Diva*.

Riguardo al raffronto fra *Casta Diva* e *The Divine Spark*[8] è opportuna un'avvertenza. Non è stato possibile considerare, in questo intervento, tutti gli ambiti in cui si pongono delle differenze fra le due versioni; tra gli altri, il ruolo della recitazione e dell'apporto che viene dall'interprete alla caratterizzazione del personaggio di Vincenzo Bellini[9] (in *Casta Diva* è Sandro Palmieri, in *The Divine Spark* Phillips Holmes) e le differenze che, da una versione all'altra, si riscontrano riguardo ai dialoghi. Questi ultimi nel caso di *Casta Diva* sono di Corrado Alvaro, mentre l'adattamento per *The Divine Spark* è stato curato da Emlyn Williams e Richard Benson. Nondimeno è importante rilevare un cambiamento, che concerne il riferimento alla figura della madre nel dialogo fra Bellini e Maddalena in giardino e, successivamente, nel palco all'opera. In *Casta Diva* il compositore menziona la madre, insieme agli amici in Sicilia e ad una bella donna, in risposta alla domanda di Maddalena sulla ragione che lo spinge a comporre musica. Nel palco il riferimento alla madre si colloca nel contesto della dichiarazione del musicista a Maddalena, con l'invito a sposarlo. Egli è certo che la madre accoglierà Maddalena con affetto. In *The Divine Spark* il riferimento è assente in tutte e due i passaggi ed è possibile spiegare la variazione come un adeguamento alla sensibilità del pubblico d'Oltremanica. Indirettamente il dialogo diviene la spia di una società e una cultura e il cambiamento ci parla della differenza fra Italia e Gran Bretagna negli anni '30. Inoltre, va rilevato che la riflessione riguardo ai dialoghi in una versione e nell'altra non si esaurisce in un confronto a due. La discussione chiama in causa anche la sceneggiatura che serve da base per entrambe le versioni. L'autore è Reisch e la sceneggiatura è scritta in tedesco.

Il *fulcro* di questa comparazione fra *Casta Diva* e *The Divine Spark* è costituito dalle scene o dai segmenti (spesso si tratta soltanto di una inquadratura) in cui, da una versione all'altra, si riscontra una differenza di elementi o una mancanza di componenti. Le lacune concernono in maggior misura la versione in lingua inglese, dove sono numerose le parti di cui si constata la soppressione rispetto alla versione italiana. È raro che si riscontri l'inverso, ovvero che un segmento sia presente in *The Divine Spark* mancando in *Casta Diva*. Accade tuttavia per l'incontro fra Bellini e Maddalena di fronte ad una chiesa. In *Casta Diva* la scena termina con Maddalena che si accomiata e sale in carrozza. Invece la scena prosegue in *The Divine Spark*. Uno stacco porta a un piano di Maddalena in procinto di ordinare al cocchiere di andare, ma Bellini le si avvicina. Maddalena lo esorta a diventare famoso, se vuole che sia felice. Ora la carrozza

parte e la macchina da presa si ferma sul compositore, che inclina la testa e riflette sull'esortazione di Maddalena. In proposito si osserva come il gesto e la inquadratura sono analoghi nel rifacimento di *Casta Diva* che Gallone gira dopo la guerra, nel 1954, con cui *The Divine Spark* presenta più di un tratto in comune.

Complessivamente la lunghezza di *The Divine Spark* (il confronto è stato condotto sulla copia conservata al National Film and Television Archive – British Film Institute di Londra) è inferiore all'incirca di dieci minuti rispetto alla versione italiana. L'accorciamento si distribuisce sull'intero film. Per la maggior parte i tagli sono d'entità modesta e intervengono soltanto ad abbreviare una scena, senza modificarne lo svolgimento; ma sono continui e riguardano la quasi totalità delle scene. Probabilmente l'accorciamento è dovuto all'esigenza di conformare la durata al sistema di programmazione adottato in Gran Bretagna dove, negli anni '30, era usuale la pratica del *double bill*, del doppio spettacolo, con l'offerta di due film al prezzo di un biglietto. Ciò esigeva di contenere la lunghezza fra i settanta e gli ottanta minuti. È probabile che l'accorciamento sia stato compiuto per mano di Pressburger, dopo il completamento del film da parte di Gallone. Lo suggerisce l'accreditamento del montaggio di *The Divine Spark* al figlio del produttore, Fritz Pressburger.[10] Invece *Casta Diva* fu montato da Fernando Tropea.

Gli *incipit* dei due film sono diversi e il cambiamento è considerevole. In *The Divine Spark* è assente tutta la scena, con cui comincia *Casta Diva*, che mostra il concerto di Paganini e, a seguire, l'incontro fra Bellini e il maestro. Si tratta del taglio di maggior entità fra le due versioni. *The Divine Spark* si apre con la scena in cui il direttore del conservatorio convoca gli allievi per informarli circa il luogo in cui si terrà, conformemente alla tradizione, il pranzo annuale. La scena è preceduta da una didascalia che informa sul luogo e la data: ci troviamo a Napoli nel 1827. La didascalia manca in *Casta Diva*. L'alterazione dell'*incipit* incide in profondità sul racconto, modificando l'equilibrio fra Bellini e Maddalena e, conseguentemente, fra gli interpreti che ricoprono i ruoli.

In *Casta Diva* l'*incipit* assolve al compito di presentare Vincenzo Bellini come si conviene ad un protagonista individuandolo e poi isolandolo fra il pubblico che assiste al concerto con un movimento in avanti della macchina da presa, che termina in un primo piano che il montaggio alterna con il volto di Paganini, istituendo un rapporto fra il giovane, ancora ignoto, e il maestro sul palco. La soppressione della scena, che si configura come un prologo (in cui si presenta il protagonista ed è introdotto il tema del bisogno del successo e del consenso) muta l'assetto enunciativo, così che *The Divine Spark* comincia *in media res* e l'introduzione del personaggio è diretta. Quando il direttore ne pronuncia il nome, uno stacco mostra Bellini. Invece *The Divine Spark* non interviene sulla presentazione del personaggio di Maddalena, che la sceneggiatura articola *in crescendo*. Prima il padre la convoca a tavola (ma lei si trattiene in camera); poi ci è mostrata in effigie (il riferimento è al ritratto); infine la scorgiamo nella sua stanza, ma una tenda la nasconde parzialmente, mentre Bellini lascia la casa, percorrendo il giardino. Perché la macchina da presa presenti Maddalena in primo piano è necessario attendere che Bellini si rechi di nuovo in casa del giudice, per regalarle la romanza che gli ha ispirato. La conseguenza è una diversa importanza attribuita al ruolo di Maddalena e di Bellini all'interno del racconto, in favore della figura di Maddalena che, in *The Divine Spark*, diviene preponderante. Mentre *Casta Diva* si incentra sulla coppia, elevando entrambi i personaggi a protagonista, l'accento si sposta su Maddalena in *The Divine Spark*, di cui si decreta la centralità. Conseguentemente è modificata la rilevan-

za degli interpreti che, rispettivamente, impersonano Maddalena e il musicista. Mentre in *Casta Diva* Sandro Palmieri (all'inizio della carriera) e la Eggerth sono trattati pariteticamente, in *The Divine Spark* l'attrice domina.

Insieme alla presentazione di Bellini, al prologo è affidato il compito di introdurre un tema, nella conversazione fra il protagonista e Paganini, che attraversa *Casta Diva* in filigrana, per culminare nell'incontro che Bellini avrà di nuovo con il violinista a Milano, dopo l'insuccesso della *Norma*. Mentre Paganini dichiara il bisogno di successo, del plauso del pubblico, Bellini spiega di non desiderarlo (e lo ripete al segretario del re di Napoli, quando lo incarica di comporre una cantata per il genetliaco del sovrano). Tuttavia, di fronte al fiasco della *Norma*, Bellini invoca il successo e lo avrà, ma al prezzo della morte di Maddalena. In un saggio su *Casta Diva* Guglielmo Pescatore scorge un riflesso di Faust, che vende l'anima al maligno per il successo.[11] In *Casta Diva* lo incarnerebbe Paganini, come vuole una tradizione a cui s'ispira la sua presentazione nell'*incipit*. A introdurlo è un'ombra sulla parete, che deforma e ingigantisce la figura. Veste di nero, il suo sguardo è torvo e contrasta con la solarità che contrassegna il giovane Bellini. Il punto è rilevante perché l'eliminazione del prologo in *The Divine Spark* e del riferimento al rapporto fra artista e pubblico, che prosegue l'esposizione del tema, nel dialogo fra Bellini e Maddalena in giardino, ha per conseguenza l'attenuazione del motivo nella versione in lingua inglese. Ugualmente, il motivo scompare nel remake del dopoguerra.[12] Qui l'*incipit* è mantenuto, modellandosi sulla versione italiana degli anni '30, pur variando la messinscena, ma è eliminato l'incontro a Milano. Nell'assenza del tema di Faust, che fa da cornice alla storia d'amore in *Casta Diva*, si riscontra un punto in comune fra la versione in lingua inglese e il rifacimento dello stesso Carmine Gallone.[13] Analogamente, nel rifacimento è assente il soggettivismo che permea fortemente *Casta Diva* e lo contraddistingue, a partire dalla scena in cui il musicista scorge il ritratto di Maddalena, subendo il fascino del suo sguardo, che non dimentica più. Ma l'annotazione coinvolge anche *The Divine Spark*, in cui si osserva un ridimensionamento del soggettivismo che, in *Casta Diva*, permea la relazione fra Bellini e Maddalena. Fra il *remake* e *The Divine Spark* si constatano degli elementi in comune che, contemporaneamente, li differenziano da *Casta Diva* (1935). Sorge la domanda se, in una comparazione, non si debba anche considerare la versione in lingua inglese talché, in un raffronto fra *Casta Diva* (1935) e *Casta Diva* (1954), un posto spetti a *The Divine Spark*: da una partita a due si passa a un confronto a tre.

Ci si soffermi sul soggettivismo di cui è soffuso il rapporto fra il compositore e Maddalena, perché esso introduce una differenza di rilievo fra *Casta Diva* e *The Divine Spark*. Insieme all'*incipit* l'unica scena che risulta soppressa per intero in *The Divine Spark* è la passeggiata di Bellini, dal collegio in riva al mare, durante la quale compone musica. La scena procede *in crescendo*, terminando con una inquadratura del cielo, in controluce, che si congiunge con il mare all'orizzonte. Fra le nubi si fa largo la luce del sole. In sovrimpressione s'intravede il volto di Maddalena e sembra che appaia in cielo, emergendo dalla luce, simile a un angelo. Una dea che ispira il musicista e che, al contempo, la musica evoca. È un momento (presto la dissolvenza mostra che si tratta del ritratto di Maddalena, che un cameriere è intento a spolverare, ed è facile scorgere la mano di Reisch nello *humour* con cui si raffredda il pathos). Ma la soppressione non è indifferente per una valutazione del modo in cui si connota la figura di Maddalena in una versione e nell'altra.

È necessario quindi esaminare la scena in cui Bellini scorge il ritratto di Maddalena.

Come vuole la tradizione del conservatorio, una volta all'anno gli allievi sono invitati a pranzo da personalità del luogo. Il montaggio ci conduce da un pranzo all'altro, soffermandosi su quello di Bellini in casa del giudice. Qui è abbreviato il dialogo fra Bellini e il giudice sull'importanza della musica che il giudice nega recisamente, così come l'esecuzione di Bellini al pianoforte. Mentre la macchina da presa si sofferma in *Casta Diva* sulla compagnia che si divaga dopo il pranzo, *The Divine Spark* ci conduce subito al momento nel quale Bellini, mentre suona, scorge il ritratto. È un momento centrale nel racconto, in cui Maddalena si trasforma nella musa che ispira il compositore. In apertura del segmento, ad un primo piano di Bellini segue uno scorcio del salone. Al centro spicca il ritratto. La macchina da presa torna sul musicista, poi mostra il ritratto da vicino. In *Casta Diva* l'inquadratura è in movimento. Con un'angolazione dal basso verso l'alto, la macchina da presa si avvicina al ritratto, assumendo il punto di vista di Bellini al pianoforte. Progressivamente l'inquadratura coincide con il ritratto, quasi scompare la cornice che lo circoscrive. Invece l'immagine è fissa in *The Divine Spark* e la macchina da presa mostra il ritratto a distanza. Il taglio è di qualche secondo, ma incide sulla scena. Il movimento della macchina da presa traduce la cancellazione della distanza fra il musicista e Maddalena che, diversamente, *The Divine Spark* mantiene, giustapponendo uno sguardo all'altro, sopprimendo il movimento in cui si compenetrano. In *Casta Diva* il volto di Maddalena si stacca dalla tela, si fa immateriale, permea lo spazio e, mentre *The Divine Spark* lo mostra oggettivamente, *Casta Diva* lo caratterizza soggettivamente. Lo rivela l'inquadratura del ritratto che, in entrambe le versioni, è alternata a un primo piano di Bellini per due volte. In *The Divine Spark* l'immagine è neutra. Invece il ritratto si trasforma in *Casta Diva*. Una luce avvolge il volto, esaltando lo sguardo. Gli occhi brillano. Il ritratto si caratterizza come una visione, che si produce nell'animo di Bellini. L'immagine è interiore.

La scena segna l'avvio di un processo che, attuandosi nel corso di *Casta Diva*, investe la figura di Maddalena e la trasforma. Gradualmente Maddalena si caratterizza come un fantasma. È indicativo che il film la introduca in effigie e che, letteralmente, Maddalena sia privata del corpo con la morte. Diviene un'immagine che Bellini porta in sé – come le dice lo stesso compositore, quando le consegna la romanza. Un'aura avvolge Maddalena e la sua natura è incorporea. Invece *The Divine Spark* attenua tale tratto, quasi lo cancella. Accade nella scena che si è appena esaminata e il processo culmina in quella in cui Maddalena muore, dopo il viaggio a Milano. Vale la pena di porre attenzione all'inquadratura conclusiva. In *The Divine Spark* Maddalena è inquadrata in mezza figura; giace nel letto e parla al *fiancé*, credendolo Bellini. Quando muore, l'inquadratura non cambia, soltanto la macchina da presa indietreggia un poco. L'accadimento ci è mostrato oggettivamente. Invece *Casta Diva* stacca dalla mezza figura, passando per un'inquadratura del *fiancé* in soggettiva, su un primo piano di Maddalena, che isola la figura dall'ambiente. Scompaiono il letto, la tenda, il baldacchino e una luce inonda l'immagine, alterando la percezione. Ora il volto di Maddalena dissolve, perdendosi nella luce. L'inquadratura sancisce la trasfigurazione di Maddalena, che lascia il mondo e assurge in cielo, dove ci è già apparsa, e diviene la "casta diva" di cui canta l'aria nella *Norma*. La dea che ispira il compositore, come proclama il finale, quando la macchina da presa si alza da Bellini alla fiamma che arde in un braciere. Ora il volto di Maddalena si sovrappone alla fiamma nel crescendo della musica. Mentre *Casta Diva* insiste sul volto, prolungando la sovrapposizione, *The Divine Spark* abbrevia l'inquadratura. È soltanto un cenno. In *Casta Diva* il finale suggella la trasfigu-

razione, mentre la versione in lingua inglese l'attenua. Nuovamente si riscontra come *Casta Diva* e *The Divine Spark* si differenziano per il modo in cui si rapportano a Maddalena. Una differenza che si riflette nel titolo. Mentre *Casta Diva* evoca Maddalena, di cui suggella la trasfigurazione, in *The Divine Spark* scompare il riferimento, parallelamente al ridimensionamento che la trasformazione di Maddalena in "casta diva" subisce nella versione in lingua inglese. Il titolo si riferisce alla qualità che, inizialmente, manca alla *Norma* e la "scintilla" è la romanza. La diversità emerge di nuovo nel testo della romanza. In un caso il testo chiama Maddalena per nome. "Maddalena / Maddalena / Maddalena / cast your wondrous smile upon me" si canta in *The Divine Spark* e, per inciso, si rende evidente la divergenza fra il riferimento al sorriso di Maddalena e la strategia del racconto che, a partire dal ritratto, pone l'accento sullo sguardo e gli occhi. Ma ciò che interessa è il riferimento alla donna per nome, che manca nella canzone di *Casta Diva*. Assenza significativa, perché *Casta Diva* proclama il fascino di uno sguardo che distaccandosi dal corpo a cui appartiene, si fa divino. "Occhi casti / Occhi casti / che incantate / Occhi puri", canta la romanza, che non parla di Maddalena, ma di una "casta diva", di cui il protagonista esperisce l'incantesimo. La differenza fra *The Divine Spark* e *Casta Diva* è nel nome di Maddalena.

1 Per una ricognizione sul film-opera in Italia si segnalano: Sergio Toffetti, Stefano Della Casa (a cura di), *L'opera lirica nel cinema italiano* (Torino: Comune di Torino, 1977); Davide Turconi, Antonio Sacchi, *Un bel dì vedemmo. Il melodramma dal palcoscenico allo schermo* (Pavia: Amministrazione Provinciale, 1984); Cristina Bragaglia, Fernaldo Di Giammatteo, *Italia 1900-1990. L'opera al cinema* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1990); Gianfranco Casadio, *Opera e cinema. La musica lirica nel cinema italiano dall'avvento del sonoro ad oggi* (Ravenna: Longoni, 1995).

2 Cfr. Alfredo Baldi, "*Casta Diva*", in Fernaldo Di Giammatteo (a cura di), *Dizionario universale del cinema*, vol. 1 (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1984), , p. 184.

3 Per un elenco dei film in più versioni che si producono in Italia negli anni '30 si veda Aldo Bernardini, "Le collaborazioni internazionali nel cinema europeo", in Gian Piero Brunetta (a cura di), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, vol. I, *L'Europa. Miti, luoghi, divi* (Torino: Einaudi, 1999), p. 1027.

4 Sulla produzione di *Casta Diva* e il ruolo della Direzione si sofferma Francesco Bono, "*Casta Diva*. Das deutschsprachige Kino und der italienische Musikfilm", in Malte Hagener, Jan Hans (a cura di), *Als die Filme singen lernten* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 1999), pp. 150-165.

5 Luigi Freddi, *Cinema*, vol. 1 (Roma: L'Arnia, 1949), p. 85.

6 Riguardo all'attività di Rabinowitsch e Pressburger si segnalano Michael Töteberg, "Geschäftsgeheimnisse. Gregor Rabinowitsch und die Ufa-Russen-Allianz", in Jörg Schöning (a cura di), *Fantaisies russes. Russische Filmmemacher in Berlin und Paris 1920-1930* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 1995), pp. 83-93; Michael Esser, "Produzent, Producteur, Producer. Arnold Pressburger internationale Karriere", in Sybille M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgemuth (a cura di), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris! Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 1996), pp. 101-110.

7 Sulla collaborazione si veda Francesco Bono, "Augen, die bezaubern. Marta Eggerth, Jan Kiepura und der italienische Regisseur Carmine Gallone", in Günter Krenn, Armin Loacker

(a cura di), *Zauber der Bohéme. Marta Eggerth, Jan Kiepura und der deutschsprachige Musikfilm* (Wien: Filmarchiv Austria, 2002), pp. 335-364.

8 Ringrazio Günter Krenn per la possibilità di visionare *The Divine Spark*.

9 In una parola, cosa differenzia Vincenzo Bellini fra una versione e l'altra, per il fatto che l'interprete che lo impersona è differente? La domanda palesa l'interesse che i film in più versioni assumono per gli studi sull'attore, rappresentando un terreno privilegiato per una riflessione sulla *performance* e sul contributo dell'attore al personaggio. Per inciso segnalo che il *cast* cambia interamente fra *Casta Diva* e *The Divine Spark*, a eccezione di Marta Eggerth che recita Maddalena: l'attrice non è doppiata.

10 Ringrazio Hans-Michael Bock per l'informazione.

11 Guglielmo Pescatore, "La musica negli occhi", in Leonardo Quaresima (a cura di), *Il cinema e le altre arti* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1996), pp. 395-401.

12 G. Pescatore, *op.cit.*, pp. 398-399.

13 Ringrazio Francesco Pitassio per la possibilità di visionare il film.

UNDOING THE NATIONAL: REPRESENTING INTERNATIONAL SPACE IN 1930S CZECHOSLOVAK MULTIPLE-LANGUAGE VERSIONS

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The sound film, for its part, is dualistic.
Its dualism is hidden or disavowed to varying extent;
sometimes cinema's split is even on display.
The physical nature of film necessarily makes an incision
or cut between the body and the voice.
Then the cinema does its best to restitch the two together at the seam.
Michel Chion

Between 1928 and 1931 the European and the US film industries tried out different strategies for adapting their sound films to markets in other countries. Regardless of their relative success, these strategies included: part-talkies, remakes of successful silent films, synopses of plot printed on cards and handed out to audiences in movie theatres, live commentators accompanying films, side-titles projected on a separate screen from slides, intertitles, superimposed titles, multiple-language versions, and different methods of dubbing or partial dubbing.[1] Thanks to a wide range of transformations and hybridizations brought on by the new technology of synchronized sound, the film commodity soon had at its disposal a range of variations unknown to it since its early years and the domain of exhibition gained, once again, a much stronger influence. At the same time, however, this tendency toward a greater variability was counterbalanced by a tendency toward standardization: film could no longer be accompanied by live spoken word and music to the same extent as before, and the speed of its projection could no longer be altered.

This tension between the tendency toward variability and the opposing tendency toward standardization is also apparent in "multiple-language versions" (MLVs). On the one hand, the MLVs had to devise a common denominator to link up different textual variants and to minimize economic expenses through the highest possible degree of repetitiveness in the sphere of their production. On the other hand, in order to meet the expectations of different national audiences, the particular variants required differentiation with regard to the fictional time-space (which we will later refer to as "diegesis") of the subject matter and with regard to the elements of production.

Most Czech-spoken MLVs were not of the American or German provenience, since no majors in these countries considered Czechoslovakia to be a market big enough for them to start a larger-scale production of Czech-language or dubbed versions. Moreover, they assessed Czechoslovakia as a country where German-language ver-

sions could easily be distributed. Generally, it might thus be said that the MLVs were export rather than import goods: thirty-nine of the forty-two foreign-language versions of Czech films made during the 1930s were produced in Czechoslovakia (mostly in Prague).

This fact should perhaps be seen against the background of the excessive and unrealistic worries concerning the future of the Czechoslovak cinema in the sound era. Czechoslovak producers were keenly aware of the risks connected with the increased costs, the closing foreign markets to Czech-language films, and with the shrinking of the domestic market caused by the relatively rare sound movie-theatres at the beginning of 1930.[2] In sum, local attributes of national language accompanied by narrowed social space, the provincialism of the domestic stars and the relatively low technical and artistic quality of Czechoslovak films all hindered their prospects for international acceptance, even if they were presented in dubbed or subtitled versions. Thus it should be underscored that the MLVs produced in the Czechoslovak studios were not aiming to serve the international expansion of a national industry or the export of domestic cultural values under the veil of a foreign language – as was the case of their Hollywood counterparts. Their main purpose was, rather, to ensure the very survival of the domestic film industry by lowering the costs of sound production and, by extension, lowering the costs of spreading Czech in domestic cinemas.[3] Later, following the rapid transition of the Czechoslovak movie theatres to sound, with the success of sound films shot in Czech version only, and with the boom of attendance in 1930–1931,[4] these assumptions proved to be wrong. In the first half of 1930, however, such fears were well grounded.

In the Czechoslovak production practice of the 1930s, foreign-language and the Czech versions were usually shot in parallel, i.e. on the same sets and with the same costumes, and often by same director.[5] Due to restricted resources and the fast pace of shooting[6]no sophisticated attempts were introduced to adapt either the scenes, the costumes, the plot, social mannerisms, historic and geographic realities or political connotations to any preferences of the target audience. Following the logic of economy, any efforts to modify the film's diegetic space with regard to changes in the language were mostly very straightforward, not to say primitive. For the MLVs export it was necessary to combine maximum common denominator which would guarantee its economics with a minimum of variation which would afford an undisturbed viewing on the part of the foreign spectators.

The remainder of this paper will outline four basic strategies of how this economic logic affected the relationships between the textual variants in terms of diegetic time-space. Diegesis is the time-space of the story which is only constructed by the viewer in the process of reception, on the basis of correlation of the extratextual and intratextual data: the perception of the viewer and that of the character. Diegetic is what could be seen or heard by a character in the world of fiction and what the viewer imagines he or she would see if he or she were the character.[7]

As has been pointed out elsewhere, the American foreign-language versions provided not only a strategy of re-conquering the foreign markets given the changed global conditions of sound cinema; they also aimed to provide a formal compensation for the shattered subjectivity and increased spectatorial distance given rise in the confrontation of (a Hollywood) diegesis and the (American-speaking) actor's body with the large variety

of linguistic landscapes. Dubbing thus brought about discrepancies between the voice and the body in which the acoustic unity of diegetic space was fractured, while subtitles were perceived as unacceptable regression back to silent cinema and thereby a further obstacle in the viewer's identification with the character. MLVs, by contrast, offered, with their reliance on domestic actors, a potential for reintegration of the social and the linguistic space of film in the cultural space of reception. MLVs were based on the theatrical requirement of organic unity of body and voice which ensured the effect of presence and maintained the unity of the subject.[8]

In MLVs the aim to preserve both the character's organic unity and the viewer's immersion in diegesis confronts the need to generate several textual variants out of a single space of production (joint capital, the production capacities of the studio, sets, technological means, shared crew and actors) as well as a single "latent" diegesis of the script. The space of production can thus be said to be "used up" and temporalized by several more or less overlapping processes of shooting and postproduction. The fictional time-space of the script is transformed into two different texts which, in the course of their reception, seed clues for the viewer to construct two distinct manifestations of the film's diegesis.

Yet there are circumstances when something may keep us from imagining that we could perceive the same thing as the character if we were in his or her situation, and thus from constructing a coherent diegesis. Our acceptance of a character's perception can under some circumstances be incomplete or disturbed: this can for instance be the case when the voice and the body or the moving body and the diegetic space do not form an organic unity. We can then sense the actor "behind" the character, or the profilmic, physical material of the scene "behind" the story. When such fissures of diegesis occur, there emerges another, external space, pointing to the "real" place of production of the discourse itself. With respect to the MLVs such fissures and moments of incoherence thus refer to a composite space-time of production: an unknown foreign actor speaking with a strange accent, in exotic localities which, inexplicably, are peopled by characters speaking the local language. Or the discrepancy between the exterior and studio shots, or, as technical disturbance in the form of a noticeably substituted original sound track. Therefore, the key dilemma of MLVs was the question of how to profit from the economic advantages of an identical subject-matter and production set-up, while at the same time finding the best way of tackling the diverse cultural contexts of the various national audiences. In other words, how to preserve in all the versions the organic unity of body, voice and space.

Initially, the MLVs were conceived of as a procedure that would secure the economic return of the Czechoslovak producers' investments by providing all of the audiences with "a full guarantee of a real recognition of environment, atmosphere and mentality."[9] In other words, the MLVs had to preserve the highest possible measure of "same" across the several textual variants without making this "same" seem strange. From a theoretical perspective this "sameness" penetrating the different versions has two forms: one of them corresponds to the space of production and of diegesis, the other to the space of reception. What is at stake in that latter space is not primarily the proper reading of the same semantic content, the same effect of "decoding," but rather the same degree of communicativeness, the feeling of authentic expressiveness and the full mobilization of cultural connotations.[10] Sameness on the level of reception is the effect of a certain amount of variety (of language, of acting, of film style) on the level of pro-

duction and diegesis; while sameness on the level of diegesis and production can bring about a variety of differing effects in the space of reception. Let us next have a closer look at how the Czechoslovak MLVs constituted elements of sameness as common denominators of the diegesis. These common denominators had to be constructed so as to bring about the least possible disturbance, "noise" in the moment of reception.[11]

In the sample of ten films to be examined here, I propose to identify four different strategies for constructing a common denominator of the diegetic space: (1) commutable locations, (2) a non-specific/universal world, (3) a shared historic past and (4) exotic locales. Thus, in the first case, it is an arbitrary and mechanical attribution of additional "signposts" that helps the domestic audience accept the diegesis as their own; in the second case, the fictional space can function as a stage for a drama of universal human values because it lacks any particular cultural anchorage; in the third case the different textual variants draw on some historic experience shared between two national audiences; in the last case exotic locale preferably equi-distant from both reception contexts, is used to make any "displacement" vis-à-vis the diegesis irrelevant.

The first strategy may be illustrated through the example of *V tom domečku pod Emauzy* (O. Kanturek, 1933). In the Czech version the story takes place in a Prague district near the well-known Emaus cloister, while the German version was renamed *Das Häuschen in Grinzing*, Grinzing being a suburb of Vienna, well known for its vineyards. The set design of the film itself was, however, left unchanged.[12] Interestingly, the change in the geographic setting of the plot actually bears on the Czech version and addresses the Czech, not the Austrian viewer, for in the Joseph Lanner operetta on which the film is based, and which has the same title as the German version, the setting of the story is in fact Grinzing. Nonetheless, the film's exteriors were shot neither in Prague nor in Vienna but in Libechov, near Mělník, forty km. from Prague.

The second strategy is evident in *Uličkа v ráji* (M. Frič, 1936) and its German version, *Das Gässchen zum Paradies*. A melodrama about three lonely beings – an old knacker, a little orphan and a stray dog – takes place in a small city with universal traits. As the designations of setting suggest – the mockingly named "Paradise street" ("Zum Paradies"), where Tobiáš the knacker (Hugo Haas in the Czech, Hans Moser in the German version) has his shack, or the name of the town weekly "Globus" ("The globe"), whose owner plays the part of the generous patron – the diegesis is constructed as a world of universal poles: the poor vs. the rich, the children vs. the adults, etc. The key message lies in overcoming these opposites and reaching an all-encompassing social reconciliation: the knacker adopts both the orphan and the dog, the rich man takes care of the poor knacker; all the characters free each other from poverty and/or loneliness. This utopian embrace of social classes encountered in the aftermath of the Depression replaces any more specific depictions of these classes, accentuating a sense of universality.

The contrast between the sober documentary look of the footage showing first stray dogs and then modernist public spaces, the expressionistic look of the knacker's shanty, and the shots of the publisher's ornamental villa creates a general sense of a discontinuous, incoherent space.[13] This incoherence could possibly be interpreted as an attempt at condensing many different faces of the world in a single allegorical place. Nevertheless, a more practical reason is that both versions probably used the standing

resources of the Barrandov A-B studios, likely reusing the sets from the adjacent production of *Golem*, just completed there by Julien Duvivier.[14] Even though some of the shots are duplicated, several camera set-ups are similar, and some minor characters, extras and the dog are identical, there are also significant differences in several shots, in some elements of *mise-en-scène*, in the acting styles of the main protagonists, as well as in the typology of some minor characters. These differences may be explained as side effects of the overall emancipation of visual style in sound cinema of the late 1930s. The universal feel of the social space is nonetheless apparent in both versions: the name of the small town is never mentioned, the headlines of the newspapers, or the shreds of posters are not identifiable and all the characters are somehow social oucasts (a comedian, a knacker, a publisher, an orphan) and could not be identified with any sizeable social group.

Let us now pay closer attention to the two latter strategies of "diegetic transposition." As already noted, the third key mode used in MLVs production through which the joint space of production and latent diegesis was dedifferentiated for two different reception contexts consisted in the choice of a historic setting that could, in part at least, provide a common denominator for both the Czech- and the German-speaking audiences. The most popular actor capable of acting in both language versions was the theatre comedian Vlasta Burian who prided himself on his near-native knowledge of German. His films *C. a k. polní maršálek*/*Der Falsche Feldmarschall* (K. Lamač, 1930) and *Pobočník jeho výsosti/Der Adjutant seiner Hoheit* (M. Frič, 1933) are set in the milieu of the Austro-Hungarian army officers, embedding the German language in the very subject of the Czech screenplay. Thus for instance, in the Czech version of the first film the military commands are heard in German, German songs are sung, many characters have German names or ranks and most of the story takes place in a setting of a faraway province – military barracks in the Empire's easternmost outpost Galicia. In other words, the Czech version already contains a potential for being transposed into the German cultural environment. On the level of language it also reveals a kind of *mise-en-abîme* principle of multilingualism: Burian delivers several German sentences, immediately repeating them in Czech.

The German version of the film imitates almost exactly the "canned theatre" style of the Czech version – studio scenes interrupted by a few identical exterior shots of cavalry displays, the same leitmotif, even the errors in editing (e.g. violation of the 180° line rule in the scene of the fake field marshal's disclosure). The performances of the minor characters verge on dilettantism, and speaking in German Burian loses some of his bravado acting and delivery. Nevertheless, the star succeeded in preserving the integrity of his characteristic comic style on the level of facial expressions and diction, and it might thus be said that, in preserving the theatrical unity of subject and the effect of presence across different linguistic and social spaces he fulfills the key function of foreign-language versions.

Pobočník jeho výsosti/Der Adjutant seiner Hoheit is based on a theatre play by the same author, the story is again situated in the officer/aristocratic milieu of Austria-Hungary, and a section of it is again set in distant provincial barracks. However, the film is much more sophisticated in its use of nonverbal sound elements, establishing a prominent common denominator between the two versions. In the opening scene of a pistol duel the principal character, lieutenant Patera (V. Burian) is distracted from his turn to shoot by the singing of some birds, which he then starts to imitate. Later in film,

the tune from Bizet's *Carmen* which prince Evžen chooses as a secret signal from his mistress to adjutant Patera is used as a musical and vocal leitmotif, efficiently linked with the spaces of *mise-en-scène*. The recurring tune reinforces the continuity of editing (matching simultaneous whistling of different characters at different places), as well as the continuity of the non-diegetic music with the diegetic sound.

Not only does this sound effect provide motivation in a number of comic gags; it also serves as a universal metaphor of the new sound technology. Patera receives written instructions to whistle the tune from Carmen under the windows of the Prince's mistress, but can't remember it. After several attempts he asks some servants for help. The first one doesn't know the melody, but addresses the question successively to a number of footmen standing in a line-up side by side until the last one finally remembers. Here the metaphor of the new means of cinematographic *mediation* is dramatized. Technology of sound recording and reproduction is shown as something that is at once universal, capable of crossing different spaces, but also difficult, fugitive, requiring a lot of components and links on its way from the record to the receiver. Sound recording is not immediately perceptible (in contrast to e.g. photography) because sound needs to be reconstructed through a special apparatus. Lest he forgets, Patera intends to whistle the tune all the way to the mistress' windows, but then it slips his mind again as his carriage hits a pothole. He tries to whistle a number of other tunes, to no avail, until he is reminded of the right one by a squeaking pump. Later on, we hear the tune again, this time as an unintended sound flashback. Similar function is fulfilled in both versions by the sound of church bells. These uses of sound as a tool for connecting different places, objects and characters could be understood as an allegory of sound technology's powers and limits. They express a historical "imagination of technology"[15] which fictionalizes the media apparatus and transcribes it into diegesis.[16]

Both versions contain a number of entirely or nearly identical shots and sequences, with respect both to the position of camera as well as to basic character movement; the versions share a few minor characters and most of the extras. Much like in *C. a k. polní maršálek*/*Der Falsche Feldmarschall*, the provincial town of Mňuk (where Patera is transferred to serve out his punishment) is neutral for both reception contexts. But in the German version "Prague" is changed to "Vienna", though no changes occur in sets. In fact, it would have made more sense to have Vienna in the Czech version, too, as the presence of prince Evžen and other members of Austrian aristocracy would suggest. Paradoxically, the principal agent of variation is therefore the main character, Burian himself, given his extensive improvising.

Der Falsche Feldmarschall had a successful premiere in Berlin but met with calls for its prohibition in Vienna's monarchist nationalist press, where the film was perceived as mocking the Austrian military tradition. "These protests led subsequently to a real prohibition on using former Austrian uniforms and ridiculing the former imperial and royal army in Czech films."[17] *Der Adjutant seiner Hoheit* was re-examined by censors in Germany in 1934 and then prohibited because there too the mockery of the imperial army had became politically unacceptable.

The MLVs built around Vlasta Burian thus combine two complementary strategies: they sell abroad a highly adaptable star while also making use of history and sound as common denominators.

A competing strategy of double reading of a single space is developed in *Štvaní lidé* (F.

Fehér, 1933), or *Gehetzte Menschen* (F. Fehér, 1932). The plot of this drama of an unjustly convicted escaping prisoner whose assumed identity has been revealed after twenty years, on the day of his second marriage, when he and his son set out to escape, was situated in Marseille and the countryside of southern France. The soundtrack is dominated by non-diegetic music and expressive sound effects, while some of the lines in the Czech version are dubbed. The German version includes some extra footage, and is technically superior in terms of both its soundtrack and its editing. As far as style is concerned, both versions resemble a heterogeneous collage: they combine documentary and silent acted shots in accelerated motion with added music and noises, studio scenes with synchronous sound recording, dubbed sound as well as the dominant non-diegetic music; there is a variety of degrees of graininess and light exposure of the film stock, and drastic switches in the volume, pitch and timbre of the sound track. The most blatant manifestation of this heterogeneity (becoming effectively a technical break-down) is an exterior scene in the Czech version where under the police announcement on the radio in Czech a faint German voice can be heard (sic!).

There was no French version, which is why the setting could be considered as a distinct yet neutral third element for both national audiences. Contrary to many other MLVs the social milieu as well as the atmosphere of the local countryside is depicted in detail and in a suggestive way: the associative montage sequences of the silent exterior shots of rocks, ships and the harbor at the beginning of the film are later replaced by a rhythmic montage of a table being set, and of dancing and feasting wedding guests in a village house. Escaping through the streets of Marseille, the father and his son join a parade of musicians, and the expressive, free-ranging camera's sweeping movements show tall buildings in narrow streets as the expression of the boy's panic. The exteriors of Marseille were shot without sound and include only the main acting pairs: Jan Fehér (son of the director) and Josef Rovenský in the Czech version, and the same Jan Fehér with Eugen Klöpfer in the German version. The dialogue scenes were shot at the A-B studios in Prague. The role of a common denominator for the Czech and the German version is here filled by the exotic setting and by the convincing bilingual performance of the child protagonist.

Combining elements of several of early sound cinema strategies, *Štvaní lidé* has the characteristics of a hybrid. Foreign-language versions profit here from techniques of alternative construction of a synthetic transnational diegesis – sending the cinematographers out to exotic locations and combining the obtained material with scenes of conversation shot in studios.[18] Paradoxically, *Štvaní lidé* also creates the effect typical for dubbed films: when speaking in Czech or German the French wedding guests, policemen and beggars could – against the background of the authentic exteriors – provoke a feeling of linguistic inappropriateness so common during the early years of dubbing,[19] an impression further strengthened by the embedded elements of sound when it really was dubbed in. With regard to the exteriors of Marseille, obviously shot without sound (as indicated for example by the highly mobile camera and the accelerated motion) we can speak of partial supplement of sound – something the viewers were already acquainted with since the successful premiere of the first Czech "speaking" film *Tonka Šibenice* (K. Anton, 1930).

What these strategies for construction of a common denominator in terms of diegetic time and space all share is the attempt to establish a common ground for communica-

tion with two or more national audiences. Now, since the patterns described here come from a limited sample of films, they cannot be generalized mechanically. Nonetheless it is possible to establish correspondence with some quantitative data gathered from the surviving MLVs, and also with the discourse referring to them. The contemporary commentators criticized the MLVs on three general grounds, bearing on matters of aesthetics, the ideology of the national, and technical-economical issues. From the national point of view, they evaluated MLVs as an attempt to return to the international comprehensibility of silent cinema, but also as a (mostly lost) opportunity to reinforce the cinema's national identity through the specificity of its spoken language.[20]

In his 1933 book *Dějiny filmu* (Film History), which primarily focuses on the technological aspects of the medium's evolution, the prominent pre-war film historian Karel Smrž includes a chapter called "Searching for the lost internationality." Here he considers the advantages and drawbacks issuing from the different strategies of overcoming the linguistic specificity of sound cinema: "international versions using inserted subtitles instead of dialogue;" "versions in various languages;" and two methods of "supplementary synchronization."[21] Smrž sees the most perfect and the most simple of all the strategies for replacing one language by another in the dubbing procedure of the Berlin-based Rhytmographie company. On the other hand, he pays the least attention to subtitles which "show all the shortcomings of the silent cinema, but not a single advantage of the sound cinema."[22] He perceives the MLVs as a transitory phase between subtitles and dubbing, for they first appeared to offer "the only hope for the world market" and the beginning of "a new period of film internationality,"[23] but soon showed themselves to hamper the continuous progress of work in studios because different actors had to take turns in the same sets; furthermore there was the expense of these versions compared to dubbing. The main reason for rejecting the MLVs, however, is the fact that they deny the principle of original in favor of serial production of a "mediocre commodity." For any masterpiece, according to Smrž, fundamentally defies the possibility of making more versions. MLVs destroy the actor's and director's conception of the original: "The artistic imprint of the original author is wiped off from the work forever."[24] Thus, MLVs deprive the original work of all essential artistic qualities and preserve the identical only in the area of decor and plot – the elements corresponding to our categories of production values and diegesis. In the words of another contemporary, the production of MLVs was considered as "word and sound factory," fabricating "word cans, prepared for distribution to all parts of the world."[25]

Our count of the shooting locations and the temporal-geographical setting of the diegesis shows that among the forty-two films made with a foreign-language version only two thematise in any substantial sense the Czech country life and include elements of folklore,[26] while nine Czech variants work with five well-known Prague locations. Ten additional Czech variants situate the story or its subplot in exotic locations abroad, including mountain scenery, a spa or a castle; three take place in the era of Austria-Hungary,[27] and one refers to the times of medieval knights. Nevertheless, further research into other examples of MLVs could also show some inverse cases with the diegesis being adapted to the needs of a foreign audience. For example the heroine of *Falešná kočička* (Vl. Slavínský, 1937) sets out to study the customs and speech of the *Lumpenproletariat* from the suburb of Prague, even hiring a teacher to learn the local vernacular, and to sing drinking songs. Unfortunately, the fund of the National Film Archive does not have the German version,[28] which is why we still do

not know what kind of transformation these linguistic and social phenomena might have undergone in it.

MLVs open in front of us a new category of space – a space that is here constructed as a synthetic hybrid, in which different frames of reference and functions mix and are confronted on the level of production (e.g. film crews alternating on one set during the shoot), diegesis (e.g. a foreign actor speaking a domestic language) and reception (e.g. the ironic image of a historical past shared by two countries, causing the prohibition of the movie in one of them). The diegetic spaces of the Czechoslovak MLVs are somehow universal, commutable, smooth, but at the same time internally split. Invariably they reveal to some extent the existence of their doubles, at least insofar as they partake of undoing the national. One version refers to another, the textual logic of the common denominator allegorizing the transnational industrial production – which now includes the new sound technology.

1 See Donald Crafton, *History of American Cinema 4. The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1997), pp. 424-441.
2 The number of sound cinemas was rather low in 1929 and in the first half of 1930, but then it raised very quickly: from 10 at the beginning of 1930 to 148 in the end of the year, while the whole number of cinemas was 1817. See Ladislav Pištora, "Filmoví návštěvníci a kina na území České republiky," *Iluminace*, Vol. 8, no. 3 (1996), pp. 43-44.
3 See the extensive questionnaire made among six of the main Czech film producers and businessmen: [u], "Co bude nyní? Odborníci o nynějším stavu zvukových filmů," *Lidové noviny* (October 3, 1930), p. 6; *Lidové noviny* (October 10, 1930), p. 13; *Lidové noviny* (October 17, 1930), p. 12.
4 L. Pištora, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
5 The director was changed nineteen times out of thirty-nine.
6 10-14 shooting days in studio with 30-50 shots per day on average. See Jaroslav Brož, "Na prahu jubilejního roku našeho filmu III.," *Film a doba*, Vol. 4, no. 4 (1958), p. 223. The parallel production of MLVs probably further increased these numbers.
7 Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (New York-London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 35, 50.
8 See Nataša Ďurovičová, "Translating America: The Hollywood Multilinguals 1929-1933," in Rick Altman (ed.), *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (New York-London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 139-153.
9 "Co je nového ve filmu," *Národní politika*, no. 155 (June 6, 1930), p. 5.
10 See the distinction between the *semantic*, *expressive* and *phatic* dimensions of film speech as discussed by Nataša Ďurovičová, in "Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema," in Anna Antonini (ed.), *Il film e i suoi multipli/Film and Its Multiples* (Udine: Forum, 2003), p. 89.
11 A discussion at Gradisca Spring School's workshop directed by Nataša Ďurovičová and Francesco Pitassio led to a conclusion that there are two distinguishable types of common denominators in the field of MLVs. The first type involves sameness of the semantic content despite possible differences in reception on the part of a particular national audience. This is the case of Siodmak's *Voruntersuchung* and its French version, *Autour d'une enquête* (1931),

where not only the acting style, but also the names of the streets and characters from the German version are retained in the French version, and their foreignness is even emphasized through the superimpositions of two name tags. This effort to preserve a maximum of the semantic sameness thus leads to a literal superimposition of two different linguistic contexts within one diegesis, and hence to a sort of alienation effect in the French version. The second type, shown in Roberto Calabretto's analysis of Pabst's *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *L'Opéra de quat'sous* (1931), consists in the work towards the sameness of expressivity and communicativeness despite differences in semantic content. There are considerable differences in the acting styles and the construction of characters between these two versions, differences that could be understood as an attempt to adapt a Brechtian theatrical conception of film for the French spectators by making it more melodramatic, and by connoting the domestic popular theatrical style of acting and singing. The common denominator of Czech MLVs would then be an attempt to combine these two types into one.

12 Jan Kučera, "Československý film," in *Zvukový film let třicátých* (Prague: ČS. společnost pro šíření politických a vědeckých znalostí, 1960), p. 7.

13 This effect is for instance emphasized by the discrepancy between the spaciousness of the interior of the knacker's shanty and its relatively small exterior. This apparent disproportion was later parodied by Martin Frič in his self-referential film *Pytlákova schovanka* (1949).

14 See *Czech Feature Film II. 1930-1945* (Praha: NFA, 1998), p. 374.

15 I am here referring loosely to James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema. Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 16-61.

16 During the 2003 Gradisca Spring School, Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener each presented a thought-provoking interpretation of allegorization or *mise-en-abîme,* within particular filmic texts, of sound technology in early sound films. Thomas Elsaesser went even further, suggesting that the allegorical presence of technology in early sound films could serve as a model for a new kind of textual analysis, focusing on the performativity of media apparatuses inside diegesis.

17 Luboš Bartošek, *Náš film. Kapitoly z dějin (1896 – 1945)* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1985), p. 177.

18 See N. Ďurovičová, "Translating America: The Hollywood Multilinguals 1929-1933", *cit.*, p. 147.

19 See N. Ďurovičová, "Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema", *cit.*, p. 84.

20 See e.g. Rudolf Myzet, "O situaci I.-III.," *Lidové noviny* (May 1, 1931), p. 18; *Lidové noviny* (May 8, 1931), p. 10; *Lidové noviny* (May 15, 1931), p. 8. Myzet even claimed that Prague studios could serve as a base for film production in all European Slavic languages (much like Hollywood with its production in western languages). See also Gustav Machatý, "Co s českým filmem?," *Žijeme*, Vol. 2, no. 5 (1932), pp. 145-146.

21 Karel Smrž, *Dějiny filmu* (Praha: Družstevní práce, 1933), pp. 561-567.

22 *Ibidem*, p. 562.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 J. A. Urban, "V továrně na slova v Joinvillu," *Studio*, Vol. 2 (1930-1931), p. 206.

26 *Lidé pod horami/Menschen in den Bergen* (V. Wasserman, 1937); *Boží mlýny/Die Gottes Mühlen* (V. Wasserman, 1938). Two country films out of forty could represent approximately a half of the quantity which equals the total Czech production of the 1930s. It is interesting that both films were made in late 1930s, which could indicate shifts in the criteria for constructing common denominators.

27 In addition to the two Burian films described above there is also a spy drama *Aféra plukovníka Redla/Der Fall des Generalstabs-Oberst Redl* (K. Anton, 1931).

28 *Heiraten – aber wenn?* (in Germany)/ *Verliebte Herzen* (in Czechoslovakia)/*Die falsche Katze* (in Austria).

LANGUAGES, ACTORS AND AUDIENCE. *C. A K. POLNI MARŠALEK* VERSUS *DER FALSCHE FELDMARSCHALL*

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Correspondence and Dissimilitudine

Multiple-language versions of films produced at the beginning of the sound film era represent an extreme example of the tension between a tendency towards correspondence and a necessary dissimilitude, a tension that is present in virtually all cases when a film is transposed from one language into another. This is demonstrated also by dubbing or subtitles, the two translation techniques most widely used following the transition-to-sound era. Multiple-language versions show an evident identity on the level of the narrated story, in their overall use of sets and costumes, in framing as well as in the principles of editing: this is why they are called versions and not (separate) films. On the other hand, multiple productions with different actors result in a significant differentiation in the concrete speech realisation and in the actors' physical expression.

Linguistic differences between the individual versions (not only additions, omissions and semantic distinctions within the discourses, but also differences due to intonation or the relationship between speech, facial expression and gestures) can generally be viewed as a result of factors of three types:

(a) intralinguistic factors – expressive and semantic features specific to the individual languages;

(b) "realisation" factors – inherent in the acting abilities of the performers cast in a given role in the different versions;

(c) communication factors – connected with the fact that each version is addressed to a different audience, modelling a different addressee with a distinct linguistic as well as national and cultural background. What becomes crucial here are such factors as national mentality (or rather the stereotypical ideas about it), collective historical and cultural experiences, opinions, attitudes and prejudices predominant in a particular community (we should again note a contradiction between the real situation and the filmmakers' ideas of it).

Obviously, it is not possible to ascribe all differences to the factors stated above. The motivation for some differences is very difficult to assess, and they may in some cases been caused by a mere accident.

Two Versions of a Film Comedy

A particularly suitable example for supporting our claims is a film comedy about a

false military commander. The Czech version, *C. a k. polní maršálek* (Eng. Tr.: The Imperial and Royal Field Marshall) was made in 1930 by the director Karel Lamač [1] (who based his film on the eponymous play by the Czech playwright Emil Artur Longen). This was the second fully synchronised Czechoslovak film (after the unsuccessful melodrama *Když struny lkají* [F. Fehér, 1930]). The story of a retired Austrian officer who seizes an opportunity to pretend to be a Field Marshal, i.e. a commander-in-chief, capitalised on the popularity of satirical representations of the Austro-Hungarian army, a body which had ceased to exist with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. After its first run in October 1930 *C. a k. polní maršálek* became an enormous success, providing an important stimulus for the development of the Czechoslovak sound film production. *C. a k. polní maršálek* was also significant for the theatre comedian Vlasta Burian and his success as a (speaking and singing) star of Czech cinema: in the 1920s Burian performed in four silent films which had been much less popular, because his inimitable humour, developed on the stage, was based on thorough interpenetration of sound realisation, facial expression, gesticulation and physical action

At the same time Karel Lamač also directed a German version, *Der Falsche Feldmarschall* (Eng. Tr.: The Fake Field Marshall), with a title that already revealed the main conceit of the plot, though it was also shown under the title of *K. und K. Feldmarschall*, equivalent to the Czech title. The leading part in the German version was again performed by Vlasta Burian, now speaking German; the other roles were cast with German actors. The extras are more or less identical in both versions, including several figures delivering short speeches; in some cases, a given speaker among the present figures differs in the two versions.

It is worth noting that among the authors of the German version's dialogues was the popular Austro-German humorist Alexander Roda Roda, who had been an officer in his youth and had written many satirical texts about the monarchy, and its army in particular. Moreover, Roda Roda plays the real Field Marshal in the German version – who, however, is only a minor character, appearing at the very end of the film.

In 1931 Lamač directed a French version called *Monsieur le Maréchal*, with an all-French cast and situated in the French environment; unfortunately, the copy of this version is not available in the Czech National Film Archive, and it was not possible to consult it.

The following notes are based mainly on a systematic comparison of the linguistic component in the opening parts of the Czech and German versions of *C. a k. polní maršálek*. The later parts are discussed selectively, with attention only on the most characteristic examples. The opening sequence, approximately fifteen minutes long, functions as an exposition where the chief emphasis is placed upon the introduction of the main characters and their relations. It is entirely dominated by Vlasta Burian playing the role of a retired officer who yearns to be an active officer again. The officer's characterization is achieved on one hand by revelations of his subconscious (the film opens with the protagonist dreaming about his enormous success on the battlefield), and on the other through encounters with other characters (maidservant, waitress, members of his "veterans' club" gathered in the pub). The hero's account of the achievements of his lieutenant nephew introduces a set of other characters connected with the garrison in the little Galician town (the nephew, the garrison commander, his daughter, etc.).

Nationalities and Languages

The first important differentiation between the two versions is a function of the characters' nationalities, and the use of the national languages connected with it. The German version is placed in a homogenous German-speaking environment, without any references to the Czech community. The hero played by Burian is called Alois Buschek (the name indicates a Czech origin, however, the graphic form – visible in a letter written by the protagonist – identifies the person to be a German-speaking Austrian), the garrison is led by colonel Gewitsch, etc. On the other hand, the situation in the Czech version is much more complex. This version constantly emphasises the Czech element, which is strengthened by the very choice of the characters' names. The Austrian army is full of Czech officers in this version: Burian plays a captain called František Procházka (a typical Czech name), the garrison commander in Galicia is colonel Alois Přecechtěl (again a typical Czech name), one of the local officers is called Hřebík ("Nail"), etc. (here the German version uses the corresponding "Nagel"). It is not without interest that this tendency towards the "Bohemicization" of the Austrian army does not affect those characters within the story that are clearly negative. The comical figure of a prying and timorous military servant is called Sep(p)l in both versions (the German version uses an appropriate gemination of the consonant *p*), in the same way the disclosed spy is a nobleman evidently of Hungarian origin, called Géza von Medák (Medak in the German version, without the Hungarian – and Czech – diacritics).

However, all the characters performing in the Czech version speak fluent Czech. It is evident in many cases that what is brought to the fore is the convention according to which "our" language, the language of the community that represents the intended addressee, captures the whole fictional world; for instance, at the end of the film it is natural for the Field Marshal to also speak Czech.

At the same time, the position of German as the official language of the Austrian army is here repeatedly brought to the fore; the same applies to German as the language of the dominant nation of the monarchy in general. There are German signs in the barracks, and people connected with, and influenced by the army often use German commands and typical phrases (*abgeblasen!*, *marsch!*, *gehorsamst*, *auf mein Kommando*); at times they may also use expressions that commonly evoke the military and administrative sphere (*Kriegsminister*). In addition, the characters' speeches contain many distorted words of German origin, words symptomatic of the speech of the Czech members of the Austrian army (*feldflašk*a, *raport*, *lajtnant*, *obršt*, *vachcimra*, *maník*, etc.), sometimes also other words showing the German influence upon the Czech language (*sauvirtšaft*, *šnicl*).[2] The Austrian army, and virtually the whole monarchy, is in this version viewed as both "ours" and "foreign."

Differences in Language Usage

The effect of the Czech version is based entirely upon Vlasta Burian's performance, in which he links casual everyday expression with stylized comic diction. Captain Procházka, played by Burian, speaks a brilliantly conceived non-standard Czech (what is known as "obecná čeština," "common Czech"); furthermore his utterances show a regular use of marked linguistic devices, expressive words (*sekanice*[3] "a pile-up of chops",

i.e. "a fierce battle") and expressive word modifications (e. g. emphatic vowel lengthening: *majór* instead of the unmarked pronunciation *major*), conspicuous archaic forms (*jenerál* instead of *generál* "general"), etc. Principally, Burian uses language as a source of play with forms and meanings, his speech is full of "accidental" slips suggesting relations between semantically opposed expressions (*magor*/"butthead" – *major*/"major"; *pověšení*/"hanging" – *povýšení*/"promotion"), puns, associative connections between words, allusions to their hidden semantic possibilities, etc. Burian views the Czech language primarily as a source for his constant spontaneous improvisations.

In a minor way, this kind of treatment of language can be observed in the speech of several other characters as well; however, the extent of its playfulness is limited by the fact that they necessarily need to be overshadowed by the protagonist, not to mention the rather awkward and amateurish performances of many of them. We may notice, for instance, a playful use of the name *Medák* (this name of the unwanted suitor wooing the colonel's daughter is the same as the popular designation for a bumble-bee, activating a connotation of "a ridiculous, unproductive person"), or the accumulation of unimportant, absurd details (i.e. the description of the booty in the opening dream sequence of the film).

The German version reveals Burian's excellent command of the German language. His way of speaking can be labelled as correct in terms of his formulations; perhaps only the absence of labialisation in the pronunciation of some vowels ([gehe:rt] instead of *gehört*) shows that he is not a native speaker. Nevertheless, the loss of linguistic confidence is obvious. His utterances concern mainly the subject matter, the number of marked expressions being considerably lower (e.g. the German equivalent of the expressive Czech word *sekanice* is *schwere Schlacht*, "a heavy battle"). Essential weakening can also be observed in the creative approach to language. A symptomatic procedure in the German version is for instance the replacement of a dialogue with a waitress based on linguistic play (present in the Czech version) by a comical scene with a menu where words are unnecessary. Most instances of wordplay in the Czech version lack equivalents in the German version, and it is only occasionally that we find some attempts for creative compensation based on the German language.

If we focus on the correspondences in other scenes, we will come to the same conclusion. The name *Medak* occurs in the German version as well, but it is not semanticised; the description of the booty is considerably shorter.

Differentiated Audiences

Some other differences that emerge out of a comparison between the two versions may be ascribed to the fact of two distinct audiences, complementing further the primary differentiation caused by the used languages and the characters' nationalities.

The explicit references linking the characters' speech to the historical, geographical and cultural context (on one hand Czech, on the other hand Austrian, or German) can only be carried so far. It is only the Czech version that contains the garrison commander's suggestion to sing a well-known Czech children's song called *Já husárek malý* (approximately: "What a little hussar I am"), producing a comical effect by being utterly inappropriate to the situation as well as to the social position of the persons present; the scene is omitted in the German version even though it would not be probably too

difficult to find an equivalent song. Similarly, when evaluating an officer's work, the false Field Marshal uses a comparison whose punchline depends on the name of a castle in central Bohemia familiar to the Czech audience ("Musím vám říct, že jste si počínal tak jako divokýskaut na Křivoklátě" – "I've got to tell you that you behaved yourself like an out-of-control Scout at the Křivoklát Castle"); the geographically concrete element is missing in the German version ("Sie haben sich benommen nicht wie ein Offizier, sondern wie ein Pfadfinder auf einem Sonntagsausflug" – "You behaved not as an Officer but like a Scout on a Sunday trip").

On the other hand, the German version contains "additional" statements, such as one ascribed to Emperor Francis Joseph I ("Mir bleibt doch nichts erspart" – "I am not spared anything"[4]), uttered by the fake Field Marshal, or a cabaret singer's mentioning that he was born in Vienna, which initiates one of the few puns occurring in this version, i.e. a Lower Austrian (*Niederösterreicher*) being "elevated" to an Upper Austrian (*Oberösterreicher*).

At the same time it should be underscored that the Czech version relies on the Czech recipients' relatively extensive familiarity with the Austrian and German historical and cultural contexts: Both versions show Burian excelling at yodelling; later the audience is expected to know not only about the case of the captain of Köpenick, but also the name and appearance of Andreas Hofer, a Tyrolean anti-Napoleonic fighter.

But more significant yet, even though more difficult to capture, are those differences that reflect the presupposed different attitudes of the intended audiences towards the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and its army.

The producers of the Czech version could rely on most recipients having rather negative or distanced attitudes towards the monarchy, yet simultaneously viewing it as a closed matter, not affecting the present. Therefore, it was appropriate to use comical and satirical ways of representation, perhaps with a certain indulgent distance. This is reflected in a core paradoxical incongruity: the retired captain Procházka's behaviour as an officer has features of a vulgar caricature, and his love of the uniform bears on the symbol of an organisation whose shining facade can no longer hide its decay. Nonetheless, it is evident that Procházka is stylised as a figure intended to generate sympathy, and his reinstatement effort results in a triumphant success.

The version intended for the German-speaking audience starts from a different premise, for a substantial part of this audience might have been assumed to view this recent period in a different light. It then follows that the German version attempts to contain, at least partly, the humorous-satirical view of the monarchy, the army and the "military spirit." However, even this effort did not prevent the nationalist press in Austria from objecting the film.[5]

Other things apart, the comparison shows that the German version displays a significant tendency to "tune down" the ironic undermining of the old monarchic values and military virtues. This tendency can be observed in the very appearance and behaviour of some characters. Unlike the Czech version, in the German version the protagonist's nephew Rudi really is – as is said with admiration over his photograph – "ein fescher Offizier" ("a handsome officer"). And here the members of the "veterans' club" are considerably more disciplined and brisker compared to their Czech counterparts.

Viewed from this perspective, the long scene showing the "veterans' club" meeting deserves a closer examination. We can see various subtle differences between the two versions, e.g. the fact that the German version links the name of Prince Evžen with a tra-

ditional attribute, "der edle Ritter" ("a noble knight"); above all, the difference concerns the fatal song leading to the dismissal of the protagonist. The announcement that the song has been banned is staged as a serious warning in the German version, whereas in the Czech version the statement is presented by a "Mr. Apothecary" with an intonation and gesticulation so overacted that his distance towards the Austrian official regulations is entirely evident. If we compare the two versions of the lyrics about the Field Marshal, it's clear that they present the song's subject in two considerably different ways. The "Czech" Field Marshal avoids fighting and prefers other activities, such as playing cards; he is generally indifferent to all warfare ("na války kašle na všecky" – "he spits on all the wars"). Moreover, the lyrics also present (in a rather unflattering way) Emperor Francis Joseph I as someone who likes to get smashed with the marshal (in the Czech version a slang structure "maže deku" is used). The German version of the song focuses on the Field Marshal's appearance (bold head, big belly, red nose) and uses it as a source of humorous effects; yet he still keeps his military attributes (his courage, an unsheathed sword), and carries himself as a forceful commander; the climax of the song conveys an affectionate relation between the marshal and his subordinates.

C. a k. polní maršálek was no more than a comedy aiming for commercial success; nonetheless, the two versions present us with a great deal of information concerning contemporary film practice as well as with contemporary strategies for attracting differentiated audiences.

1 A brief survey of the film career of Karel Lamač (1897, Prague-1952, Hamburg) in Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, France and Great Britain is included in Hans-Michael Bock (ed.), *Lexikon Regisseure und Kameraleute* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999), pp. 272-273.

2 The respective German words sound as follows: *Feldflasche*, *Rapport*, *Leutnant*, *Oberst*, *Wachzimmer*, *Mann*, *Sauwirtschaft*, and *Schnitzel.*

3 The noun *sekanice* is derived from the verb *sekat* "to chop".

4 This is a resigned sigh provoked by a series of tragic events in Emperor's family. Cf. the ironic song performed by the sleeping (!) Francis Joseph I in Karl Kraus' play *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*: "Der Sohn, die Frau, der Otto – / bis in die Gegenwart / bleibt meines Lebens Motto: / Mir bleibt doch nichts erspart." Karl Kraus, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1978), p. 427.

5 See Luboš Bartošek, *Náš film. Kapitoly z dějin (1896-1945)* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1985), pp. 176-177.

MAKING FILMS COMPREHENSIBLE AND POPULAR ABROAD: THE INNOVATIVE STRATEGY OF MULTIPLE-LANGUAGE VERSIONS

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Many of the European films of the 1920s had strong cross-national export potential, yet their success was restricted by linguistic and cultural barriers. To be understood by the linguistically and culturally diverse audiences of Europe, films had to be translated by one means or another. But translated films could only succeed abroad if they were compatible with the cinematic cultural traditions of the country to which they were exported. The multiple-language versions solved both problems by making a film at once comprehensible to and popular with foreign-language audiences.

In this article, I will explain why multiple-language versions emerged as a production strategy in 1929, why they became the optimal strategy to solve the problems of exporting sound films for a couple of years, and why they declined within a relatively short time span.[1] To answer these questions, we must examine what alternative strategies were available at the time for solving the marketing problems that arose from the diversity of languages and cultures in Europe. I will show why the decline of multiple-language versions as the 1930s progressed should not automatically be construed as an indication of their overall failure.

Here I will concentrate on multiple-language versions produced for the German market or produced in Germany and intended for export to other European countries, especially to France. Germany began making multiple-language versions in 1929; their production peaked in 1931 and then declined. My theses might not necessarily be appropriate to multiple-language versions in all other countries, but it could offer a useful testing model which would more methodically improve our understanding of the significance of the multiple-language versions.

Making Films Comprehensible to Foreign-language Audience

The problem of translating films was brought to a head by the conversion to sound. In the years between the introduction of sound to Europe, between 1929 and 1932, it was not dubbing or subtitling which enabled the maintenance of film as an export commodity, but the innovative strategy of producing and distributing multiple-language versions. In the early sound film period multiple-language versions were *the* means of making a film comprehensible to a different language audience.

Two characteristic features define a multiple-language version: firstly, a multiple-language version is based on the same scenario as the "original" version and is produced by the same company. Secondly, the actors in each version themselves speak the language of the country to which the version is being exported. Unlike the dubbing of a foreign

film, the unity of the actor's voice and body is preserved: the audience hear the voice of the actor whom they see speaking. In the vast majority of productions, most of the actors used in the "original" version were replaced by a new set of actors speaking the language for the foreign-language version.

Alternative strategies for solving the problem of the international comprehensibility of sound films, such as subtitling and dubbing, were untenable. In the first case, audiences of the period were not receptive to the idea of reading subtitles while trying to follow the pictures. Moreover such films audibly retained the language of the "original," clearly marking the film as foreign. In 1931 René Lehmann argued from the point of view of the French.

> *The audience of the popular houses only want to hear films speaking French and they are quite right too. For the foreign-speaking film to find a few specialist cinemas in Paris and thus a select audience is all well and good, but the vast cinema going public of Paris, the provinces and the colonies, will not tolerate having its eardrums assaulted by the sounds of an incomprehensible language.*[2]

Unlike sub-titling, dubbing eliminates the foreignness of the original language by replacing it with the local one. It was not the case, as some have suggested, that the production of multiple-language versions in the early sound period was necessary because dubbing was not technically possible. Films had in fact been dubbed for abroad as early as 1929, for example Gustav Ucicky's sound film-operetta *Der unsterbliche Lump* and Kurt Bernhardt's Prussian ballad *Die letzte Kompagnie*.[3]

Dubbing was also a much less costly method than multiple-language version production for solving the problem of language transfer. A version in another language added two-thirds of the production costs of the "original" version to the cost of the film, because the replacement actors had to be paid as well as the actors in the "original" version.[4] With dubbing, even if there was an extra expense for the dubbing itself, both the "double payment" of the stars and the additional costs for the crew and use of the studio were eliminated.

Despite being both technically feasible and cheaper than multiple-language version production, dubbing did not catch on straight away, however. A May 1930 trade survey came to the conclusion that "dubbed films were unsuccessful or impossible [for the mass audience]"[5] all over Europe. This was due to the fact that contemporary audiences could not bring themselves to identify the voice of one person with the body of another in the creation of a new "synthetic person". Claire Rommer wrote in November 1931:

> *It was strange, almost shocking, to hear a familiar [German] voice coming from a totally unfamiliar [American] body. My colleague's voice had wandered away from him – had disappeared into a stranger – from whose mouth it now runs on incessantly – DESPITE his tongue not uttering those words – despite his lips never framing them! A strange homunculus-like being has been summoned into existence by a conjuring trick.*[6]

Evidence suggests that contemporary cinema-goers were quick to spot when foreign films were dubbed: for the German cinema audience simply hearing a foreign actor speak German without an accent was proof that the film was dubbed. The more impossible it was for the speaker and actor to be one and the same, the greater the

rejection: "You really have to watch out!" said the French fan magazine *Pour Vous* in March 1931. "We are hard put to understand how an African from Chad can be speaking in French."[7]

Making Films Popular Abroad

But the initial reluctance to accept a foreign actor speaking in the voice of someone using the local language was not the only reason why the multiple-language version strategy established itself in the early days of sound film. Multiple-language versions continued to be made even after dubbed versions had long been accepted by German and French audiences: in 1936, for instance, there was a French version, *Les Gais lurons*, of the German comedy *Glückskinder.* Indeed, multiple-language versions were still being made, albeit in ever smaller numbers, as late as the 1950s. In 1953 the American movie *The Moon is Blue* was shot with a German language version as *Die Jungfrau auf dem Dach*. The 1955 remake of *Die Drei von der Tankstelle,* to give another example, was shot in a German and a French version, *Le Chemin du paradis,* like the 1930 film.

The problem of exporting films is connected with the different tastes of the culturally differentiated national audiences in Europe. I would argue that the reason why multiple-language versions had a chance of showing a profit even at a time when dubbing had come to be accepted was that they responded not only to linguistic diversity, but were also an effective response to the problem of cultural diversity.

Contrary to what has previously been claimed,[8] the German cinema-going public's favourite films and stars in the 1920s were those in their own national tradition.[9] American films only came second in terms of box-office success, while films from other European countries usually trailed in the third place. Surveys in *Film-Kurier* on the success of films with the public suggest that from 1925 to 1930 67.5 per cent of audiences were going to German films.[10] According to these surveys, Hollywood films accounted for only 19.4 per cent of German cinema-going, while 13.2 per cent of all tickets sold at the box-office were for films by fellow Europeans. According to Colin Crisp, French audiences also preferred their own national films:

> *Attendance figures at the screening of French films, whenever they have been measured, have proved significantly higher than at screenings of films of other nationalities [...] in 1936, of the 75 most popular films in France the top six were French; only 15 of the 75 were American, against 56 French.*[11]

If one assumes the nationality of a star not by where he or she was born but by the national-cultural context in which he or she first rose to stardom, all the top stars during the 1920s in Germany were German, as evidenced by film magazine surveys for 1923-26.[12] Lya Mara, for instance, was born in Riga, Latvia, but only made films in Germany during the 1920s. The most popular American star by far was the child actor Jackie Coogan (receiving 2.8 per cent of the votes for the most popular male actor in 1923-6, and so reaching no. 11), who owed his success to the fact that although the public demand was there, building up child stars was taboo in Germany.[13] These statistics suggest that, as a rule, it was the German rather than the American stars that were most

popular with German audiences. And since French films were more popular with the French audience than films from any other country, then it makes sense to assume that this audience also preferred national actors.

If this pattern was typical not only of Germany and France but also of other European countries in the 1920s and 1930s,[14] an export-geared film industry had to adapt its own products to serve the national cultural traditions of the target country. Hence the use, during the silent era, by American companies of creative talents like Greta Garbo or Emil Jannings, imported from Europe in order to improve their own market opportunities with European audiences. It was uncommon, however, to cast different actors in multiple versions. With the coming of sound, this replacement procedure became common practice in multiple-language versions to solve the problem of translation. The new strategy not only made films comprehensible to foreign-language audiences, but made them culturally more compatible as well.

Because of the audiences' preference for actors from their own country, the casting of a language version with actors from that country could increase the film's chance of popularity there. Thus Alfred Abel and Olga Tschechowa played the parts of Herbert Marshall and Nora Baring in *Mary,* the German version of Hitchcock's *Murder* (1930). Even if Alfred Abel and Olga Tschechowa were not big stars, they were undoubtedly well-known and accepted German actors with long careers in the film business. Contrary to common assumptions, even top stars played in multiple-language versions. Take for instance the casting of the French versions of the German films of *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* (1930) and *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931), known as *Le Chemin du paradis* and *Le Congrès s'amuse*. Both films star Lilian Harvey alongside Henri Garat in the part that Willy Fritsch played in the "original" German version. Garat was already popular as Mistinguett's partner in the Parisian music hall at the Casino de Paris and Moulin Rouge. As Francis Courtade notes of the casting of Garat in French language versions: "It was certainly a clever move on the part of the German producers: they had chosen a French actor idolized by the masses [...] so that the French-speaking audience would be swept off its feet."[15] In a contest in the fan magazine *Pour Vous* in 1931 readers had to choose their favourite stars from a total of 160 actors and actresses, French and foreign, who had appeared on French screens during the year. They were asked to select "the most photogenic star whose moving image was the happiest, the most statuesque, the most pleasant to look at."[16] Henri Garat was voted "the most photogenic French male star" and Lilian Harvey "the most photogenic foreign female star."[17]

As with multiple versions of silent films, the extent of a multiple-language version's adaptation to the cultural environment of the target country was circumscribed by the demands of production efficiency. For reasons of economy, it was not viable to shoot multiple-language versions which were too different from each other. Thus, even if most of the actors were replaced in the foreign versions, most of these were cast true to type. The jovial little man embodied by Heinz Rühmann in *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* has his counterpart in Jacques Maury's character in the French version. The three elderly gentlemen admirers of Käthe von Nagy in *Ihre Majestät die Liebe* (1930) and of Annabella in the French version, *Son Altesse l'amour*, are cast true to type in each case. Versions in which roles are interpreted with significant differences appear to be the exception: in *F.P.I antwortet nicht* Hans Albers plays a "daredevil," whereas in the English version, *The Secrets of F.P.I,* Conrad Veidt plays a "gentleman." A similar alteration was made in Hitchcock's German version of *Murder*, where the role of Sir John is

interpreted differently by making him the German cliché of a British gentleman: consequently, for example, Mary Baring is no longer his love interest.

In terms of direction and cinematography, most language versions which were produced in Germany hardly differ at all from their "originals." As far as the *mise en scène*, the length of the take and the editing are concerned, as a rule hardly any marked difference is discernible. This can be explained by the German production practices, for here the multiple-language versions were made by shooting the take of the foreign version immediately after the take of the "original" version, thus shooting both versions in alternation.

The story told in the "original" version was only altered in the language version if the adaptation could be done by simple means. As a rule the nationality of the characters and location of the plot was adapted for the target country. To take just two examples: *Gloria* (1931) was set in Germany in the German version and in France in the French version; similarly, *Ihre Majestät die Liebe* was set in Berlin and Paris, respectively. Only if the historic setting or the national image brooked no modification would the plot location remain the same, as with the French version of *Der Kongreß tanzt,* set, like the German version, in the Austrian world of operetta at the time of the Congress of Vienna. Or consider the German version of *Murder*. Entitled *Mary,* it was adapted to fit the German audience's image of britishness. Most names were changed to English names familiar to German audiences (Diana to Mary, Markham to Brown, Mitchum to Miller). And most importantly, the German version shifts the genre to a classic whodunit because Germans imagined British crime stories as whodunits. The "original" version resolves the case two-thirds into the plot while the German version resolves the case only at its end. Following the same logic, Sir John's assistant Brown/Markham (strangely enough not the master himself) looks like the contemporary German audience's idea of Sherlock Holmes. As Michael Ross has shown, the Germans had a different idea of Holmes's appearance than the English: "No deer-stalker, no curved pipe, no magnifying glass; instead a checked cloak and a flat cap – these are the characteristic features of Sherlock Holmes in Germany in the 1930s."[18]

Apart from adapting the nationality of the characters and location of the plot, it was not common practice to adapt story-lines to the preferences of the target audience because making two culturally perfectly adapted versions would be too expensive. Stories could be varied by changing how scenes were directed only if this was simple to achieve. This practice was not as innovative as is commonly assumed; it had already been established in the silent era. The European-release versions of *Love* (1927) and *The Gold Rush* (1925), for example, both had unhappy endings, while the US-release versions were more optimistic. In *Love*, Greta Garbo's love affair ends in suicide in the European version, while in the Hollywood version it has a happy ending. The European version of *The Gold Rush* shows Charlie's love of Georgia to be an illusion, while in the American version it is, against all odds, crowned with success. The multiple-language versions adapted this practice of efficient story variation. Take for instance the English version *of Der blaue Engel* (1930) and the German version of *Murder* (1930). All the roles of *The Blue Angel* were played by the same actors as in the "original" German version. The fact that the German actors only spoke very poor English was motivated by changing the story: in the English version the pupils of Professor Rath (Emil Jannings) are expected to speak English all the time because they are supposedly learning the language. The German version of *Murder* adapts the British film by altering Diana Baring's

reason for not wanting to betray Handel Fane, the murderer. In *Mary*, Handel Fane is not a "half-cast" but an escaped prisoner, because the British taboo on being "half-cast" was not well understood by Germany audiences.

The strategy of casting actors who were successful in the target countries while leaving the film's other parameters more or less untouched worked well. This is suggested by a variety of primary sources. An industrial report from 1932 reads:

> *UFA-ACE and Pathé-Natan have brilliantly demonstrated that Franco-German co-production can bring nothing but success. So far no single UFA-ACE film has been a flop; on the contrary these films have been among the top films of both the previous and the present season [1930-1 and 1931-2].*[19]

More Effective Strategies of Making Films Acceptable Abroad

My claim is that the importance of multiple-language versions gradually declined during the 1930s because other strategies emerged which solved both of the exporting challenges – the films' linguistic comprehensibility as well as their cultural acceptance – more efficiently. Within a few years, dubbing had become an accepted form of translation. According to a 1933 observer of the scene:

> *Audiences have become used to German conversation dubbed to American lip movements. The critics do not even mention it in their reviews unless it happens to be particularly ineffective, which is seldom the case today. Despite the campaign against dubbing, which filled the German press when the first dubbed pictures appeared here, there is no doubt that it has come to stay and that the average public accepts it without worrying about who owns the voice that comes out of the loudspeaker.*[20]

If we attribute the rejection of dubbing to the audience's sense that the voice and the body did not belong to one another, then we must see the acceptance of dubbing as a cultural learning process, in which viewers gradually closed their minds to the realization that the person apparently speaking the words and the person who has actually spoken them are not the same. This learning process made it possible for the film industry to use the cheaper translation process as the standard practice after 1933. This situation applied broadly in Europe but was radically different in the US – a point to which I shall return.

As the problem of the comprehensibility of foreign films came increasingly to be solved by dubbing, the strategy of making multiple-language versions as a form of cultural adaptation lost some of its appeal, for multiple-language versions could not always be efficiently adapted so that the film would lose its foreignness. But there were other means by which this effect could be achieved, and these became gradually more attractive than the multiple-language versions, for not only did they allow films to be cast with the top stars of target countries, but also made possible more culturally differentiated narratives – something which had been largely impossible in the case of versioning, because of production costs. This greater cultural differentiation was also possible because, unlike the multiple-language versions, creative control was now placed entirely in the hands of the nationals of the country for which the films were being made.

One such strategy had already been deployed by Hollywood in the 1920s, and involved using domestic capital to produce films in the target country itself. Even if in this case final control remained in the hands of the foreign financier, the creative process was controlled by nationals of the country for which the film was destined. A second strategy was to sell not a film but the rights to remake that film elsewhere in Europe. According to *Film-Kurier* in 1931: "Experts are [...] of the opinion that this, rather than versions' productions, is the way the international film business [...] will go."[21] In this way, stories could be altered to adapt the film to a different cultural milieu. Such was the case with *First a Girl* (1935), the British remake of the German comedy *Viktor und Viktoria* (1935), in which the lower-class Berlin Varieté was replaced by the more middle-class British music hall. With remakes, not only was it possible to cast a country's own stars, like Jessie Matthews in *First a Girl,* without having to pay for them to go abroad. The entire narrative became worked through by a producers and creative talent adept in their own culture.

Today, unlike the strategy of producing films in the target country itself, the strategy of remaking films for more than one European market is no longer viable. Arguably, this is a result of the integration of popular film cultures in Europe from the 1970s onward. Whereas in the 1950s hardly any film was equally popular in both France and Germany, in the 1980s the number of hits that the two countries shared shot up dramatically. Never before have so many people seen the same films throughout Europe as they do today. The films which are successes on a European scale are nearly all American-produced. As the tastes of Europe's national audiences have grown closer together, procedures for adapting films to different national cultures have become increasingly unnecessary. The phenomenon of the multiple-language version has thus vanished from the cinemas as irrevocably as the remakes of European films across national frontiers.

If we include the American film market in the equation, however, we note that the integration of popular film culture appears to be a one-way street. European audiences are thus accustomed to American films, while the preferences of the American audiences remain largely unaffected by European film. That is why there are no remakes of American films in Europe but there are remakes of European films for the American market. When European films are not made in English, remakes are necessary not only because of the cultural difference between the USA and Europe, but also because the American public will not accept dubbed versions of foreign films.

1 This is an abridged and revised version of the article "Made in Germany: Multiple-Language Versions and the Early German Sound Cinema", in Andrew Higson, Richard Maltby (eds.), *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920-1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 249-273.

2 René Lehmann, "A Propos du 'dubbing'," *Pour Vous,* no. 133 (June 4, 1931).

3 Hans-Michael Bock, "Ein Instinkt und Zahlenmensch. Joe May als Produzent und Regisseur in Deutschland", in Hans-Michael Bock, Claudia Lenssen (eds.), *Joe May: Regisseur und Produzent* (München: Text + Kritik/CineGraph, 1996), p. 148.

4 Michaela Krützen, "Esperanto für den Tonfilm", in Michael Schaudig (ed.), *Positionen deutscher Filmgeschichte* (München: Schaudig & Ledig, 1996), pp. 149.

5 "Antworten auf 10 Fragen über die Tonfilmlage Europas", *Film-Kurier* (May 31, 1930). Yugoslavia and the Netherlands were the only countries where dubbing seems to have been accepted.
6 Claire Rommer, "Stimmenwanderung", *Die Filmwoche,* no. 48 (November 30, 1932).
7 "La Question des langues", *Pour Vous,* no. 121 (March 12, 1931).
8 Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Market, 1907-1934* (London: British Film Institute, 1985).
9 Joseph Garncarz, "Hollywood in Germany: The Role of American Films in Germany, 1925-1990", in David W. Ellwood, Rob Kroes (eds.), *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), pp. 94-135; Joseph Garncarz, "Art & Industry: German Cinema of the 1920s", in Lee Grieveson, Peter Krämer (eds.), *Silent Cinema Reader* (London-New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 763-788.
10 *Film-Kurier,* no. 129 (June 2, 1930), p. 2.
11 Colin Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 12.
12 *Neue Illustrierte Filmwoche*, no. 23 (1924); *Deutsche Filmwoche,* no. 19 (1925); no. 19 (1926); no. 11 (1927).
13 Joseph Garncarz, "Warum gab es im Stummfilmkino keine deutschen Kinderstars", in *KINtop: Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Films*, no. 7 (1998), pp. 99-111.
14 Furhammar makes a similar claim for the market share of Swedish films in this period. See Leif Furhammar, *Filmen i Sverige* (Stockholm: Wilken, 1991), p. 133-134.
15 Francis Courtade, "Die deutsch-französischen Koproduktionen", in Heike Hurst, Heiner Gassen (eds), *Kameradschaft Querelle: Kino zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich* (München: Institut Français de Munich /CICIM, 1991), p. 169.
16 *Pour Vous,* no. 151 (October 8, 1931).
17 *Pour Vous,* no. 161 (December 17, 1931).
18 Michael Ross, "The Early German Iconography of Sherlock Holmes," in Peter Horrocks, Richard Lancelyn Green (eds.), *The Return of Sherlock Holmes: The Handbook of The Sherlock Holmes Statue Festival, 21-26 September 1999* (London: The Sherlock Holmes Society, 1999), p. 61.
19 "France and Germany", *La Cinématographie française,* no. 699 (March 25, 1932). *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* and *Der Kongreß tanzt* were not co-productions in the usual sense. Both films were produced by Ufa, and the French versions were distributed by L'Alliance Cinématographique Européenne (ACE).
20 C. Hooper Trask, "On Berlin's Screens", *New York Times* (February 5, 1933), p. 4, quoted in K. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
21 "Auslandsfassung erfolgreicher Filme: *Privatsekretärin* wird Englisch sprechen", *Film-Kurier* (April 2, 1931).

MULTIPLE VERSIONS IN FRANCE: PARAMOUNT-PARIS AND NATIONAL FILM STYLE

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In the established film-historical literature, multiple versions are discussed mainly as an oddity deriving from conditions and forces singular to the first years of world cinema's conversion to sound.[1] The literature's frequent focus has been on operations at Paramount's Paris studio which have then been taken to exemplify the phenomenon of multiple versions as a whole. Insofar as the phenomenon is thought significant, it is studied for what it suggests about the uncertainty faced by the American film industry, which, by the mid-1920s, is estimated to have relied on exports for roughly one-third of its gross income.[2] In this context, Paramount's multiple versions show up as a very costly stop-gap measure for maintaining the company's place in the European film market, with little relevance for the cinema's subsequent artistic or economic evolution.

In light of the marginality of multiple versions to general film historiography, the project of the Spring School is provocative. My claim here will take off from the premise that Paramount's multiple versions are more significant than is ordinarily assumed. But what exactly is the nature of this significance, and in which film-industrial and aesthetic contexts might it become apparent? Most fundamentally, to what extent might multiple versions, as simultaneously a national and international phenomenon, impose the need for new contexts, and for bringing together new combinations of archival and research methods? A many-faceted object of study, the multiple versions invite economic, sociological, and aesthetic analysis, and possibilities for historical contextualization are themselves multiple. My intervention will situate Paramount's multiple versions in the context of trends in national film style, juxtaposing film-sound practices at Paramount-Paris to analogous developments in the French and German film industries. The objective of the national comparisons is to suggest some ways in which a consideration of Paramount's multiple versions can illuminate aspects of French film history, particularly with regard to the latter's sound-film technique, which was (and still is, in important respects) distinctive when compared to that of other national cinemas.

The following examination of possibilities for an explicitly comparative approach to national cinema proceeds through three parts. Part One contrasts sound-film technique at Paramount-Paris to that at the German company UFA, Paramount's principal multiple-version competitor in the French film market. Here the key issue concerns the stylistic implications of national differences in film-production practice: can the Paramount-Paris films be said to have differed stylistically from films made in other studios in France, Germany, and the United States? In Part Two, the investigation turns toward Paramount-Paris' place within the history of American sound-film technique,

emphasizing the difference between Paramount's production of multiple versions during 1930-1931 and a basic and permanent transformation in American sound-film style during that same period, when multi-track technologies were being quickly adopted throughout the American studio system. As Hollywood was shifting toward a multi-track approach to film sound, in which voices were recorded separately from ambient sound, films made at Paramount-Paris, with their emphasis on the "liveness" of actors' direct-recorded performances appeared anachronistic and stylistically comparable more to the "canned theatre" of the Vitaphone era than to the narrative-oriented multi-track films defining Hollywood's output of that moment.

In the Conclusion, claims made before are brought together to outline a new hypothesis that bears on the significance of Paramount's multiple versions for the history of film style. Put briefly, the hypothesis is that Paramount's multiple versions, with their direct-recorded soundtracks, served as exemplars for an approach to sound-film technique that would distinguish the French cinema stylistically from other national cinemas – including, paradoxically, the Hollywood cinema. In other words, by 1932, in the wake of the American cinema's adoption of dubbing in place of the making of multiple versions, the direct-recorded "filmed theatre" – initially associated with both French and American companies – came to define the French cinema exclusively. In this event, the sound-film style that seemed international in 1930 and 1931 – when films featuring stage performances recorded with multiple cameras and microphones were made in both Europe and the United States – appears by 1932 to have evolved into a national style that served to differentiate direct-recorded French films from dubbed American imports.

Sound-Film Technique at Paramount-Paris

In film studies today Paramount's Paris studio is known almost entirely for its production of foreign-language versions of American films. In fact, however, Paramount-Paris also produced many films that were not multiple versions, and during 1931, Paramount's production strategy had shifted away from multiple versions and toward French-language originals, a majority of which were made in a single, French-language version only.[3] In light of its brevity, Paramount's multiple-version effort shows up as a costly, temporary strategy whereby the American film industry sought to maintain its export market. Given that multiple versions were far more expensive than analogous silent-era methods for ensuring a film's exportability, the American film industry had a pressing incentive to devise an alternative sound-era method. By 1931, such an alternative had emerged as technical developments allowed dubbing to become institutionalized at Hollywood's major studios. By 1932, the American film industry had abandoned regular production of multiple versions, and instead began dubbing and/or subtitling films intended for export. By 1933, these films were generally exported "semi-finished," with the dubbing (and/or subtitling) undertaken in the countries where the films were to be distributed. In this regard, the history of Paramount-Paris is exemplary: when the company ceased producing multiple versions in 1931, its studios became a centre for post-synchronization, where films made in the United States and in other countries were dubbed for distribution in France and/or in other film-consuming nations in Europe.

In the established literature on early sound film, multiple versions and dubbed films are typically discussed as alternative ways of rendering sound films exportable to foreign-language markets. In other words, from the standpoint of the economics of film distribution, the two approaches are seen as functionally equivalent – different ways of accomplishing the same distribution-related objective. But when the frame of inquiry extends beyond strictly economic questions to encompass matters of film aesthetics, it becomes evident that these two methods of ensuring a sound film's exportability entailed fundamental differences. Moreover, the basic aesthetic distinctions carried implications for distribution, as specific styles became associated with different forms and degrees of marketability. Given Hollywood's centrality to world cinema during the early sound years, the systemic adoption there of multi-track sound proved consequential for other national cinemas, too, both aesthetically and economically.

Before examining the relevance to French cinema of Hollywood's adoption of dubbing in place of the making of multiple versions, a closer look at production methods at Paramount-Paris can help define the company relative to its Hollywood and German counterparts. Paramount's manufacture of multiple versions at its Paris studio complex has been the focus of the English – and French – language literature on the early sound period in which multiple versions are discussed the large scale of Paramount's operation – one hundred features and fifty shorts made during the studio's first and only full year of operation – has ensured the studio's film-historical interest; when a film historian thinks of multiple versions, the first instance that comes to mind is likely to be Paramount-Paris.[4] For the same reason, however, a study of multiple versions centering on Paramount may yield a distorted view of the multiple-version phenomenon as a whole.

The term "multiple version" might be understood in a variety of ways. What *exactly* is a multiple version? Where, for instance, does one draw the line between a multiple version and a remake? (Unlike UFA's operettas, whose foreign-language versions were made essentially simultaneously with the German-language originals, Paramount's multiples were, in some cases, made over a year after the original versions, and thus are perhaps more appropriately thought of as remakes.) Another issue concerns historical periodization: the multiple version phenomenon today associated mainly with Paramount had antecedents during the silent era (e.g., the preparation of a second negative, taken by a second camera, for American and Canadian films intended for export to Britain and Europe), and it endured, albeit on an artisanal rather than industrial scale, throughout the 1930s, years after Paramount ceased making films in Paris, when companies in France, Britain, Germany, and Italy continued to make one-off productions such as *The Divine Spark* (C. Gallone, 1935), the English language version of *Casta Diva* (C. Gallone, 1935).[5]

Examinations of the phenomenon of multiple versions invariably stress Paramount-Paris' large number of films and the repetitive character of its serial-manufacture production process, as if Paramount's practices were paradigmatic of the multiple-version phenomenon as a whole.[6] In fact, however, Paramount's strategy of producing large numbers of films, in serial fashion, was essentially unique – even among American production companies, which had become famous for their industrialized methods. MGM for instance also invested significantly in the making of multiple films, but devoted more resources to each version, in light of an assessment of the expectations and tastes of specific national audiences – as is evident in differences in costume, make-up, performance, and *mise-en-scène* between the American and German versions of *Anna*

Christie (C. Brown, 1930). Moreover, in the French context, Paramount by no means represented the only major option with regard to multiple versions. A principal alternative approach was that pursued by the German company UFA, and also by Tobis-Klangfilm, which, a few months prior to Paramount, had also opened a production subsidiary in Paris. Like Paramount, UFA and Tobis were struggling to maintain the national film industry's sizable export market, and also like their American counterparts, the major German companies adopted the strategy of multiple versions, beginning in 1930 and continuing through 1932. According to Joseph Garncarz, multiple versions made up some 22 per cent of the German film industry's total output during this time.[7] Similar to the majority of the films made at Paramount, the German-made multiple versions were intended mainly for the French film market; indeed virtually all German films chosen for multiple-version production were made in a French version. These French-language operettas proved very popular in France, where they also drew considerable critical acclaim, and where René Clair – perhaps the most famous director of the moment – cited them as a key inspiration for his own work.

One important point to be made regarding the high reputation of the UFA films concerns the distinctiveness of UFA's production methods relative to those employed at Paramount-Paris, and also at French companies such as Pathé-Natan. The films made at Paramount were known for scenes that amounted to straight recordings of performances by vaudeville and music-hall actors familiar to the national theatre-going public. For the multiple versions, the typical practice at Joinville was to shoot all of the scenes for one version prior to scenes for any additional version. Thus all the scenes for the French version would be shot, then the French cast and crew would vacate the sets to be next used for the shooting of all scenes for the Spanish version, or Swedish version, and so on. The production process was notoriously rapid, particularly in late 1930, during the studio's first half-year of operation, with minimal time devoted to scripting, pre-production planning and rehearsal. Moreover, the reliance on multiple-camera shooting produced aesthetic results that have been characterized as formulaic, characterized by their uniformly flat, high-key lighting and predictable patterns of staging and cutting.[8]

UFA's multiple versions were made according to methods that differed significantly. At UFA, by contrast, scenes were broken into individual shots, and the shots for each version were recorded immediately after one another. So, instead of completing all shooting for one version before beginning the shooting of additional versions, at UFA German and French versions were made essentially simultaneously, scene by scene, one shot set-up at a time.[9] Thus, production stills of films such as *Quick* (R. Siodmak, 1932) show French and German actors on the set at the same time, both in costume, waiting their turns in front of the camera. At UFA, considerable emphasis was placed on pre-production planning and rehearsal – far more so than was the norm at Paramount or at Pathé-Natan, where the actors, already thoroughly familiar with their parts from having played them on stage, often improvised their film performances. In contrast, producer Erich Pommer, in an article published in April 1930 in the French trade press, discussed the careful manner in which scenes for the multiple versions made at UFA's Neubabelsberg studios were scripted and rehearsed.[10] When scenes included song and dance performances, actors there rehearsed with a metronome to ensure that their movements matched the rhythm of the music that was to be added in during post-production. Multiple camera shooting was also employed at UFA (cf. *Dactylo*, the French-language version of *Die Privatsekretärin*, both W. Thiele, 1931), but appears to have been less common there

than at Paramount or at Pathé-Natan. For certain scenes, each shot was set up and filmed separately, with a single camera, in the multiple-take manner familiar to the silent era. In some cases, the length of the shots was decided in advance, and the actors were timed with a stop watch, thus ensuring that the delivery of particular fragments of dialogue would coincide exactly with particular shot lengths.[11]

Implicit in these practices is an understanding of the scene that differs radically from that suggested by practices at Paramount and also at French companies such as Pathé-Natan. Rather than think of the scene as the recording of a performance, production personnel at UFA conceived of it as an assemblage of separate shots. Thus, while the "filmed theatre" productions made at Paramount and at Pathé-Natan powerfully simulated the "liveness" of the event of the actors' performances, the UFA films could be said to have offered a fundamentally different experience, contingent on the viewer's absorption into the sort of self-contained story-world that is unique to cinema. UFA operettas such as *Le Chemin du paradis* (W. Thiele, M. de Vaucorbeil, 1930), the French version of *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* (W. Thiele, 1930), were praised for having recovered the formal coherence and mutability familiar to the best film comedies of the late silent era.[12] Like the cartoons of Walt Disney and the Fleischer Brothers, these films opened possibilities for a sound-film style free from the technical constraints associated with dialogue recording.[13] In contrast, the French-language films made at Paramount-Paris offered a different kind of sound-film experience, one resting on an astonishingly effective simulation of the liveness of a stage show or radio broadcast.

Style Differences Between Paramount-Paris' Multiple Versions and Dubbed Hollywood Films

Conditions that sustained this configuration of national film styles started eroding in late 1930, as the American film industry began abandoning the multiple-version strategy in favour of dubbing, a method of preparing films for export with radically different implications for film style. Crucial in this regard was the chief technical characteristic of the multiple versions relative to the dubbed alternative: in the multiple versions, actors' voices and ambient sounds were recorded simultaneously with the image, thus ensuring that the unity of actor's voice and body was never in question. In these direct-recorded films, with their consistent, lock-tight lip synchronization, actors' voices seemed to originate from the actors shown speaking rather than from a loudspeaker or some other source in the auditorium. In France, the liveness characteristic of the Paramount films, and also of the *théâtre filmé* produced at Pathé-Natan, proved commercially significant, with exhibitors reporting that films with direct-recorded voices attracted significantly more viewers into their theatres than did *films sonores*, i.e., films that had been shot silent and then supplemented with a soundtrack during post-production.[14] French-language *films parlants* – made by French companies, and, in many cases, featuring the same music-hall, boulevard stage, circus, and vaudeville entertainers who had appeared in the Paramount films – routinely topped exhibitors' polls of the most popular films for French audiences.[15]

Given the national preference for direct-recorded speech, companies producing dubbed films for the French market faced a formidable challenge. How might the post-

synchronized voice be matched to the actor's image so as to achieve the naturalism characteristic of the direct-recorded film? From the technical standpoint, the principal objective was to efface any indication that voices had been added to the image in post-production. By some accounts, the goal was achieved during 1931, when dubbing technique had evolved to the point where, in certain cases, the matching of one actor's voice with another's body was sufficiently illusionistic to appear indistinguishable from a direct-recorded multiple version. Examples cited in the French trade press included Paramount's *Derelict*, starring George Bancroft, and released in France in the summer of 1931 under the title *Desemparée*.[16] But "successful" dubbed films appear to have been exceptions that had required special, *ad hoc* efforts. Such was the case with *Desemparée*, which had been dubbed in Paris, under the supervision of Robert Kane, the head of the Paramount studio. Also cited in France as an example of acceptable dubbing was *Dance, Fool, Dance*, an MGM feature starring Joan Crawford, which was released in France as *La Pente* (1931); in this case, the dubbing had been performed in Culver City under the supervision of Claude Autant-Lara, who employed special methods, i.e., the original American actors spoke French rather than American, thus facilitating synchronization of the dubbed voices in close-ups.[17]

The majority of the dubbed American films of that year, however, and of the next few years, appear to have been less well-crafted. Dubbed films drew complaints from exhibitors in France and in other countries, and until mid-decade, technicians in Hollywood continued to struggle to dub images satisfactorily – particularly close-ups: "For every successful example of such 'dubbing' one can count a dozen rank failures," reported one dubbing specialist in February 1934.[18] Such failures posed particular problems in France, where the resistance to dubbed films was said to have remained strong throughout the 1930s.[19] Thus, stylistic differences between dubbed and direct-recorded films remained relevant for at least several years after Hollywood's abandonment of multiple versions, as audiences in France continued to prefer direct-recorded national popular films over dubbed imports. In this post-1931 context, the style initially associated with the multiple versions made at Paramount-Paris took on a new identity, becoming exclusive to French production firms. Given the national audience's resistance to dubbed films, the entry of such films into France, ironically, could be characterized as advantageous to French producers, on the grounds that such entry enhanced the national product's attractiveness relative to the imported alternative.[20]

Within the field of film-historical study, dubbed films, like multiple versions, have attracted relatively little interest, including in works concerned with the history of film technique. With developments in dubbing practice carrying major implications for film sound as a whole, and vice versa, the neglect has had the unfortunate effect of obscuring the international dimension of the sound-film practice of the early 1930s. One point to be made here concerns the close relationship between Hollywood's introduction of dubbing in 1931 and the American film industry's simultaneous adoption of multi-track techniques. Hollywood's approach to dubbing presupposed another, more fundamental change in sound technique: the industry-wide standardization of a multi-track approach to film sound whereby voices were recorded separately from other sounds. It was only when the American film industry adopted multi-track sound – at extraordinary cost, and after protracted trial-and-error effort – that dubbing became a cost-effective alternative to the strategy of multiple versions. Hollywood's adoption of dubbing involved much more than the addition of a new technique to its established

set of practices but instead depended upon what has been characterized in recent scholarship as a fundamental industry-wide change in film-sound technique.[21] Instead of most sound, including music, being recorded simultaneously with the image – as it had been in the majority of American talkies made in the 1920s – following the film season of 1930-1931, most sound, except for dialogue, was recorded independently, onto separate tracks, and then mixed together in post-production.

The stylistic impact of this basic change in sound-film practice is evident, for instance, in the opening prison yard sequence from the French and American versions of MGM's *The Big House* (respectively P. Fejos and G. Hill, 1930). While the French version of the sequence features French actors speaking French, it is otherwise sonically identical to the American version, featuring the same mix of noises of the truck motor, the siren, the footsteps, the din of prison-yard chatter, and so on. This layered sort of soundtrack exhibits clear stylistic differences from the direct-recorded "filmed theatre" made at Paramount and at Pathé-Natan – to the point of implying a different sort of style altogether, one centered no longer on the recording of actors' performances but on the creation of a coherent story-world. As Nataša Ďurovičová has observed, the direct-recorded multiple versions made at Paramount-Paris and the dubbed American films of 1931 imply basically different modes of spectatorship: whereas Paramount's multiple versions offered "a collective, 'public' experience of the stage space," the dubbed films provided the "'private' (if mass-produced) experience of the lit screen."[22] In this regard, the dubbed films can be compared to UFA's operettas: in both cases, the implied viewer is sufficiently absorbed in the viewing experience to become oblivious to his/her physical location in the theatre auditorium. In contrast, the Paramount films, as well as the filmed-theatre productions made at French companies such as Pathé-Natan, exhibit an alternative mode of address in which the viewer is invited to become aware of his/her membership in a collectivity of fans, gathered in a theatre to see a show. This distinction can also be explored at the level of national differences in the conditions of exhibition, with attention directed to the role of full-size film-theatre orchestras and live stage-show entertainment which, although discontinued in the United States around 1929, endured in major movie houses in Paris through the mid-1930s.[23] In the context of these national film-cultural differences, Hollywood's abandonment of multiple versions in favour of dubbing appears to have altered the range of technical options in France in a way that allowed direct-recorded *théâtre en conserve* to evolve from an international to a national genre.

Conclusion

In the account of Paramount-Paris in the preceding pages, the studio's production of multiple versions is situated in the context of national film-cultural differences that conditioned the particular relevance of the Paramount films to French film practice. Given the brevity of the investigation, its international scope, and the limitations of the documentation, the claims made here must be seen as tentative, and subject to revision in light of the emergence of new evidence. With respect to evidence for the period's broad national film-style trends, one research method likely to prove essential is the statistical analysis of film style, which, at the least, can provide a relatively firm empirical basis for claims regarding the prevalence of particular sound techniques in particular

national cinemas. Of course, such an analysis will require considerable labour in the gathering of data, and may ultimately entail a collaborative effort involving scholars from different countries. It must also confront familiar limitations relating to the unavailability of films of the period. Such limitations appear imposing concerning Paramount, of whose three hundred some films made at the studio between 1930 and 1933 only few appear to have survived. Until more films become available to researchers, it is difficult to imagine what a definitive account of the studio's output might look like.[24] Finally, given the complexity of multiple versions as an object of study, the historiographical challenge extends beyond the archival domain to include basic questions bearing on how the object is to be conceptualized. Relevant here are attempts to revise the concept of national cinema in a way that differs from what might be called the traditional model, whereby the national film corpus centers on films produced within a particular nation-state by auteur filmmakers. In other words, multiple versions invite the historiographical "gestalt-shift" proposed by Andrew Higson and others, whereby national cinema is understood in terms not only of production but also consumption. In the event of such a shift, the analysis must encompass the range of films shown in a country's theatres, including films made by foreign companies, and at studio facilities located either within or without the national borders.

1 See, for instance, the survey of the film-historical literature on Paramount-Paris in Ginette Vincendeau, "Hollywood Babel: The Coming of Sound and the Multiple-Language Version," in Andrew Higson, Richard Maltby (eds.), *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920-1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 207-224.

2 Regarding Hollywood's international market during this time, see Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).

3 See "La nouvelle production Paramount," *La Cinématographie française*, Vol. 13, no. 650 (April 18, 1931), p. 17.

4 On the studio's output, see for instance "Anniversaire des Studios Paramount de Joinville," *Ibidem*.

5 Regarding the ongoing production of multiple versions by French companies subsequent to the early 1930s, see, for example, Lacroix de Malte, "Films en deux versions," *Le Film sonore* (February 1936), p. 2; and "Films en deux versions," *Le Film sonore* (March 1936), p. 2.

6 See, for instance, the chapter on Paramount-Paris in Ilya Ehrenbourg, *Usine de rêves* (Paris: Gallimard, 1936 [1932]), pp. 117-131.

7 Joseph Garncarz, "Made in Germany: Multiple-Language Versions and the Early German Sound Cinema," in A. Higson, R. Maltby (eds.), *op cit.*, especially pp. 253-255.

8 See the report on shooting practices at Paramount by cinematographer Michel Kelber, in the interview in Kevin Macdonald, "From Vigo to the Nouvelle Vague: A Cameraman's Career," in John Boorman (ed.), *Projections 6* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), pp. 232-238. Intriguing counter-examples can be found in *Marius* (A. Korda, 1931), whose shot framings, in which speaking actors are shown from the back rather than the front, differ from the norms Kelber describes.

9 I am grateful to Hans-Michael Bock and Thomas Elsaesser for their comments regarding film-production practice in Germany.

10 Erich Pommer, "Ce que dit Erich Pommer sur le film sonore et sa technique," *Comoedia* (April 22, 1930), p. 6.
11 See, *Ibid.*; and Jean Lenauer, "Hanns Schwarz et le premier 'talkie' allemand," *Pour vous*, no. 48 (October 17, 1929), p. 2.
12 See, for instance, Emile Vuillermoz, "Le Chemin du paradis," *Nouvelles littéraires* (November 22, 1930); Jean Fayard, "Le Chemin du paradis," *Candide* (November 21, 1930).
13 See comments by music publisher Francis Salabert in Philippe Roland, "Une Visite aux Studios Salabert," *La Technique cinématographique*, Vol. 4, no. 34 (October 1933), p. 521.
14 See P.A. Harlé, "Ne confondons pas films parlants et films sonorisées," *La Cinématographie française*, Vol. 12, no. 600 (May 3, 1930), p. 11.
15 See, for instance, the results of the exhibitors' poll reported in Pierre Autré, "Les Films à grosse recette en 1932," *La Cinématographie française*, Vol. 15, no. 760 (May 27, 1933), p. 13, according to which, the top six films – which received more than double the number of votes of the other films listed – were all French-made, with the quasi-exception of *Marius*, a Paramount production.
16 See L.M., "Il faut mettre au point la question du 'dubbing,'" *Pour vous*, no. 129 (May 7, 1931), p. 2.
17 See Pierre Autré, "Le triomphe du dubbing *La Pente*," *La Cinématographie française*, Vol. 13, no. 686 (December 26, 1931), p. 3.
18 In William Stull, "New System for Foreign Translations," *American Cinematographer*, Vol. 14, no. 10 (February 1934), p. 400.
19 Concerning this point, see Martin Danan, "Hollywood's Hegemonic Strategies: Overcoming French Nationalism with the Advent of Sound," in A. Higson, R. Maltby (eds.), *op cit.*, pp. 230 ff.
20 See, for instance, claims made in Jean Morienval, "Le Doublage, ses necessities et ses limites," *Le Cinéopse*, no. 152 (April 1932), p. 158. "N'oublions pas [...] que le film français est déjà protégé parce qu'en France il aura évidemment la supériorité sur un film en doublage."
21 See, for instance, Donald Crafton, *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to sound, 1926-1931* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
22 Nataša Ďurovičová, "Translating America: The Hollywood Multilinguals 1929-1933," in Rick Altman (ed.), *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 153.
23 Additional discussion of this topic can be found in: Charles O' Brien, *Cinema's Conversion to Sound*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming September 2004).
24 For a survey of the studio's total output during these years, based mainly on film reviews and other print sources, see Harry Waldman, *Paramount-Paris: 300 Films Produced at the Joinville Studios, 1930-1933* (Lanham, Maryland-London: Scarecrow Press, 1998).

MULTIPLE-LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF CZECH FILMS AND THE FILM INDUSTRY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE 1930s

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The versioning routine in Europe (or at least in some European countries) issued from incentives that were somewhat different than those of the Hollywood studios, and these incentives had very little to do with the issues of dubbing. This is the general point I want to demonstrate, *pars pro toto,* on the example of Czechoslovakia, with occasional references to Austria, Germany and Hungary. Czechoslovakia will figure here as an entity within the European film market, albeit an entity of secondary significance, which therefore had to try harder to make it on the international market.

In researching this essay I wanted to get a feel for the issues that may need to be anticipated were we planning a catalogue of multi-language versions. One of the first tasks that FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives) assigned to its members in 1946, right after WW2, was to produce national filmographies. If any multiple-language versions showed up at all in that first generation of such catalogues, a great many details had not been given. Some of these gaps have not been filled in to date. I have not been successful in tracking down the names of the sound engineer, the editor, or the set designer of many multiple-language versions of Czech films. Compared to the Czech "originals," we have only fragmentary pieces of information on the cast, and so on. We trust our project is going to reverse the situation.

The Czechoslovak film industry of the 1930s was marked by a relatively high output – the annual average from 1931 to 1938 was more than 34 films; roughly 25 films a year in the early 1930s, 45 or more annually in the late 1930s. In 1937 Czechoslovakia was the fifth biggest film producer in Europe. The film industry was relatively self-sufficient, meaning that the existence of the domestic production did not depend on export. A network of nearly 2,000 movie theaters constituted a market on which the domestic film producers could survive, especially if they combined production with distribution. It was just the other way round in Austria – a mere 10% of production costs came from the film's national distribution; the remaining 90% came from export.[1] Lastly, the Czechoslovak film industry enjoyed a certain amount of support from the government: between 1932 to 1934 this included artificial regulation of foreign film imports, but for the most part it took the form of subsidies to domestic films.

From 1930, when sound film production began in Czechoslovakia, a total of three hundred full-length feature films had been shot through the end of 1938. This aggregate number includes the Czech versions of three films from Paramount's European production, and thirty-nine foreign-language versions of Czech films, or of films mostly in the Czech language. Statistically speaking, about 16% of domestic production appeared thus in a foreign-language version. The multiple-language versions were here produced continuously from 1930 through 1938; when this routine was brought to an end it was for political reasons.

Three to six multiple-language versions were thus produced each year. Additionally, Czechoslovak film industry records from 1933 to 1936 mention dubbed versions, all in German, of another ten films.[2] In other words, export-oriented Czechoslovak producers made both "autonomous" multiple-language versions as well as dubs. The more expensive variants (parallel production of multiple-language versions) were considerably more numerous than the cheaper variant, i.e. dubbing. It is interesting that all the dubbed versions shown in the period records had different lengths (generally shorter) than the original, in some case by several hundred meters.[3] This means that these films were, strictly speaking, not dubbed but rather adapted.

What were the reasons for such extensive production of multiple-language versions? Even though local producers could live off the domestic market, the market was small, which put limits on potential sales and forced the film producers to invest only modestly. With the advent of sound, average feature film production costs quadrupled. Costlier projects were always somewhat iffy in the Czechoslovak Republic. Bigger profits could only be had by expanding to markets abroad. Early on it became clear that foreign distributors were quite passive when it came to importing Czechoslovak films. More than fifteen titles were presented annually at the Viennese film exchange toward the last years of the silent film period, but with the arrival of sound the Czechoslovak films disappeared altogether. When they reappeared, these were, with some exceptions, Czech films presented in a German-language version or dubbed by the Czech producer.[4] In mid-1930s, complicated and unsuccessful negotiations were held between Czechoslovakia and Austria concerning a bilateral agreement on films. It was primarily the Austrian side that had a stake in this. Czechoslovak negotiators wanted to increase the import of Czechoslovak films to Austria. While Czechoslovakia regularly purchased practically the entire Austrian film production, the Austrian distributors showed only German-language versions of Czech films. The Austrian film industry representatives were unable to guarantee that the exhibitors would widen their repertoire, even though the industry as a whole had an eminent interest in the agreement.[5] This case exemplifies the Czechoslovak producers' situation on foreign markets: if they wanted to break into any of them, they simply had to deliver a ready-made product in the form of a foreign-language version. Other small filmmaking countries in Europe found themselves in the same predicament: Austrian producers made in 1932 to 1935 multiple-language versions for the Anglo-Saxon and French markets, and participated in the production of Hungarian films in Hungarian and German versions for the Austrian, German and Swiss markets.

Access to these markets had been made more difficult yet by the protectionist policies current in many European countries. Roughly from the mid-1920s, pro-active protective measures were being enacted against the expansion of American films. A number of countries such as Germany, Great Britain, France, Austria, Hungary and others set import quotas, quite frequently linked to domestic film production. Although such measures were aimed at Hollywood in the first place, they actually affected all importers indiscriminately.

Thirty-nine multiple-language versions (of which thirty German-language versions of Czech films, eight French-language versions, and one Czech version of a German film) were made in Czechoslovak production or co-production. This includes multiple-language versions made of so-called synchronised films, i.e. silent films with an added sound track. For example, *Erotikon* (G. Machatý, 1929) was synchronised into both a Czech and a German version in 1933.

The occasional efforts to make a push for the French market apparently arose not only from the dominant position France held among the European cinemas, but also from Czechoslovakia's foreign policy orientation between the wars. France was a major ally of the new Czechoslovak Republic, and contacts between the two countries were developing on all levels. The French-language versions of Czech films were always made with a completely new cast, the sole exception being the French language version of *Extáse* (G. Machatý, 1933).[6] This practice distinguishes the French-language films from the larger group of German-language versions, which shared some cast members with the Czech version. This brings us to German, the dominant language of Central Europe, and consequently the dominant language of the multiple-language versions of Czech films. Although this orientation of the Czechoslovak film producers is in this respect logical, a few remarks should be added.

The producers of German-language versions presumed double sales – to Germany and to Austria – but they also attempted regular inroads into other countries, where a German version stood a much better chance than its Czech equivalent. The larger the number of target countries, the lesser the risk represented by a given country's censorship, import license rejection, or administrative obstacles. Furthermore, the producers of German-language versions counted on the more than three million strong German minority in Czechoslovakia. This was another target group; even if a film could not be sold to German-speaking countries, this domestic niche market would help out. The production of German-language versions was thus secured in several ways, but this "ideal" is obviously relative. If we were to go case by case, we would see a variety of complications, economic impact being not the least among them. Thus, for example, the German-language version of *Pobočník jeho výsosti* (M. Frič, 1933), *Der Adjutant Seiner Hoheit* with Vlasta Burian, was banned in Germany for disrespecting the Austrian army uniform, and encountered problems in Austria itself. More broadly, the political development in the course of 1930s led Czechoslovakia's Germans to become a somewhat unreliable group of cinema-goers as far as domestic production was concerned.

By the mid-1930s, Prague's central authorities knew that Czechoslovakia's Germans were boycotting the domestic production. No doubt the influence of Nazi propaganda, and their historical anti-Czech animosity were factors, especially among the Germans settled in the so-called Sudetenland, a western border region. This ethnic population had its own cultural life, however, which is only beginning to be investigated by scholars today, so that we still know little of the reception there of Czechoslovak cinematography in the interwar period. It is certain that the situation for distribution of the German-language versions of Czech films in Sudetenland was quite complicated.

In the 1930s more than three hundred fifty cinemas in Czechoslovakia were German, i.e. operated by a German owner. This represents approximately one-fifth of the number and capacity of Czechoslovakia's network of cinemas, corresponding also to the proportion of the country's German population. However, the distribution of German-language versions was regulated not only by the market but also by the government. Pursuant to a special Ministry of Trade decree, the German-language versions of non-German films could be shown only in those municipalities where Germans had an absolute majority.[7] There were three hundred forty-seven such locations. Prague was an exception: here a single German cinema, Urania, served a forty thousand strong German minority.

As the 1930s unfolded, the importance of this German audiences in Czechoslovakia grew for a related set of political reasons. Forced to leave Nazi Germany, several Jewish

producers, directors and actors – among them Kurt Gerron, Franzisca Gaal, Hans Jaray, Hermann Kosterlitz (later Henry Koster), Max Neufeld, Richard Oswald, Szöke Szakall, and Otto Wallburg – attempted to get established in the Austrian film industry. Here they made so-called "independent films" – i.e. independent of the German film industry, given that their work could, of course, not be distributed in Germany.[8] The Austrian film industry representatives tried on several occasions to negotiate exemptions for these films, but the *Reichsfilmkammer* invariably turned them down.

Czechoslovakia became the main customer for these "independent films." These included over twenty German-language films, some of which were made in Hungary and six of them in Czechoslovakia, since some Jewish émigrés from Germany found work in the Prague and Brno studios. Whereas virtually all the Jewish productions made in Austria or Hungary were made in German only, the six films made in Czechoslovakia were produced as multiple-language versions. The Brno company Terra-film in made *Rozpustilá noc* (Vl. Majer, 1934), whose German-language version, known as *Csardas* or *Ihre tollste Nacht* was directed by a trio of German émigrés: Walter Kolm-Veltée, Jakob Fleck and Luise Fleck. Not only did the film have different directors; it also had different casts, save for one cameo role. A year later Jakob Fleck and Luise Fleck then directed a German-language version of *V cizím revíru* (Vl. Majer, 1935) under the title *Der Wilderer vom Egerland* for the same company. It is curious that here the cast was identical with that of the Czech version, and that different directors instructed the same actors. A third case is atypical, too: the filmed operetta *Taneček panny Márinky* (*Hoheit tanzt Walzer*, M. Neufeld, 1935) shot for Elekta by another Jewish émigré from Germany. The film did not have a Czech-language version; its multiple-language versions were German and French, both directed by Neufeld. Each version had a different cast: in the German-language version, Neufeld provided employment opportunities for other Jewish émigrés (such as Hans Jaray). It is worth noting that the main shareholder of Elekta was one of the most successful Czechoslovak film entrepreneurs, Josef Auerbach, who, being Jewish himself, had to leave Czechoslovakia in January 1939.[9]

Among the Jewish talent that took part in the production of German-language versions in Czechoslovakia was Otto Kanturek, who had worked as a cameraman in Germany in the 1920s. In 1934 he established in Prague the film company Okafilm which produced the film operetta *V tom domečku pod Emauzy*/*Das Häuschen in Grinzing*, in Czech and German versions, both directed by himself. A similar case was that of Robert Land, born as Robert Liebmann.[10] A native of Moravia, he worked for a number of years as a director and distributor, first in Vienna, later in Berlin. After Hitler came to power, Land moved to Prague, where he directed the German version of the Czech film *Sextánka*, *Die Sextanerin* (1936). In 1938, somewhat paradoxically, it was he who made the Czech-language version of the film *Panenka* whereas the German-language version, *Robot Girl Nr.1*, was shot by the Czech director Josef Medeotti-Boháč. *Robot Girl Nr.1* is the last multiple-language version of a Czech film ever made in Czechoslovakia. The Czech-language version premiered on March 31, 1938. We do not know the date of the Czechoslovak premiere of the German-language version, but as it was censor-approved in September 1938, it is likely that it actually never reached audiences in Sudetenland, which in that same month was ceded to the German Reich by the Treaty of Munich. The Austrian market was closed to it as well, since for all practical purposes it had been under the control of the Film Chamber of the German Reich ever

since the 1936 Austrian-German agreement on films. For Metropolitan, the company that produced *Robot Girl Nr. 1*, it was an investment which would never be recouped.

The space in Central Europe for the distribution of works in which Jews (especially those emigrating from Germany) took part, had been shrinking dramatically since the mid-1930s. Nevertheless, throughout the decade the German-Czechoslovak relations in cinematographic matters remained very strong, with both sides demonstrating an extraordinary interest in developing their common ties. Germany, for example, accepted the terms of Czechoslovakia's quota system which required that film importers also produce Czech films. UFA's Prague branch started production in 1933, and by 1940 made fifteen Czech films. (Incidentally, no German-language version of these fifteen was ever made.) UFA took this step at a time when Germany, following Adolf Hitler's rise to power, was losing the positions it had until then held on the European markets.[11] Czechoslovakia had been one of its traditional customers, importing some eighty German films annually. In contrast, the large American companies represented by MPAA had in the course of 1932-1934 decided to boycott the Czechoslovak market; their Prague branches did thus not get involved in film production in the country, forfeiting to Germany their dominant position on this market.

Germany wished to have its position secured contractually, as was the case with respect to other countries (France, Austria, Poland). A Czechoslovak-German agreement on the imports of German films to Czechoslovakia was signed in 1936. The agreement was important for the Czechoslovak side, because it accepted the pricing terms stipulated by the recently established Film Importers' Cartel, thereby imparting legitimacy to its very existence.[12] Another Czechoslovak-German agreement, on the mutual exchange of films, was signed in 1937, remaining in force through the end of 1938. The agreement lay down that for every fifteen German films imported to Czechoslovakia one Czech film could be exported to Germany without a quota-compliant certificate, meaning outside of the agreed quotas. It is significant that the wording stated: "Films produced in the Czechoslovak Republic in a German-language version." The agreement consequently envisaged the continuing production of versions, and gave certain guarantees and benefits for exports to Germany – provided, of course, that the German laws (Nuremberg ones included) were adhered to.[13] Furthermore, it stipulated that the number of the German-language versions of Czech films was not to exceed five titles a year, i. e. that no more than five Czech off-the-quota films could be imported each year. The pertinent regulations applied to all other films. The fixing of these numerical proportions and limits corresponded to the actual production capabilities: more than six foreign-language versions a year had never been produced in Czechoslovakia; and the number of German films purchased by the Czechoslovak film distributors was eighty-two in 1936 and seventy-nine in 1937, which translates into slightly over fifteen times the number of the foreign-language versions.

It should be said that Prague and Berlin enjoyed very good cinematographic relations in the second half of the 1930s, and that the Czechoslovak film industry representatives viewed Germany with great respect, even admiration. They were impressed with the attention paid to the German cinema by the German state, attracted by the centralising trend in the Reich's organisation of the film industry, and inspired by the institution of the Reich programming director for films. This interest in German affairs was manifested in the large number (forty) of Czechoslovak delegates attending an international film congress in Berlin in 1935.

Prague's Ministry of Foreign Affairs perceived this rapprochement or, if you will, mutual accommodation between German and Czechoslovak film industries, with alarm. It was also met with criticism from observers outside the film industry.[14] Nevertheless, it was precisely this link of a small film sector to an industrial film giant that provided such fertile soil for the Czechoslovak production of multiple-language versions. The state had expressed its interest in the production of such versions, having included them in the system of production subsidies. When its conditions were met, the Film Advisory Committee at the Ministry of Trade would grant a Czech film producer a basic subsidy of 70,000 Czechoslovak crowns or up to 140,000 crowns if the film was deemed especially interesting or worthwhile; the subsidy could go up to 210,000 crowns (i.e. roughly one-quarter of the average production costs for a full length feature movie) for a film of outstanding qualities. The subsidy for making a foreign-language version amounted to 40,000 crowns.[15] It should be remembered that German-language versions of Czech films were also sold to countries that were not German-speaking, and that such exports improved considerably the country's balance of payments. These government subsidies were not disbursed from the state budget but rather from a fund generated from the registration fees on imported foreign films.

Let us now have a look at what can we learn from the list of these forty-two versions, summarised in the accompanying table (Fig. 1). As regards the production aspect, all three models are represented here. Twenty-two multiple-language versions were produced by the same company that made the Czech versions. In ten cases, when foreign-language versions were made in a co-production, the Czechoslovak producers collaborated with foreign companies that were well established in the target country. This was commonly the case for films by Karel Lamač, whose German-language versions always involved his Berlin company Ondra-Lamac-Film. It is also possible that by doing so, the German-language version of a Czech film could secure the status of having a German origin so that the German authorities would consider it a domestically produced film. In nine cases, the foreign-language versions were made by new producers. Here Electa was the most pro-active one, having made nineteen Czech films and twelve multiple-language versions. Meissner made twenty Czech films and eight multiple-language versions. Unlike Josef Auerbach of Elekta who – as has already been mentioned – went into exile before the Wehrmacht take-over, Emil Meissner unfortunately stayed on in the Bohemian Protectorate. In 1942 he left on a transport for Theresienstadt, and was from there deported to Auschwitz.[16]

Change in director for the version's production occurred nineteen times. The notion of the multi-language versions as batch-produced was widespread, and issues of authorship did not play much of a role. Again and again we see that the new director, or a new author, is listed as the author of the foreign-language version's script, while the authorship of the Czech original is not credited at all. On the other hand, however, there are cases which accentuate the author figure. This is the case for *Extáse* and Gustav Machatý, and for Karel Lamač's films, as well as for the majority of films by Martin Frič, especially when they centred on a key star, namely Vlasta Burian.

Even while changes did occur with respect to cameramen, composers or sound engineers, it was the cast that was most likely to be changed. Only in a single case did it remain identical (*V cizím revíru/Der Wilderer vom Egerland*); a curiosity in itself, and one that will have to be re-checked. Some two-language projects took advantage of bilingual actors who played the same role in both versions, but for the most part these

were cameo roles. The main roles were mostly given to actors who were stars in the target countries – Hans Moser, Theodor Loos, Lil Dagover, or Olga Tschechowa. Thus the producers of multi-language versions hooked up to the star system in the target countries, something that made distribution there easier. With one exception, for it was via their German versions that the Czechoslovak production companies Elekta and Meissner managed to launch one Czech star onto the international scene. I am referring to the outstanding stage and film actor Vlasta Burian, regarded to date by Czech journalists as "the comedy king." Burian was a bilingual actor, so his films – always scripted as "one-man shows" – could readily have a German-language version. He won a great popularity in the German-speaking countries already with his first sound film, *Der falsche Feldmarschall/ C. a k. polní maršálek* (K. Lamač, 1930). This success was then strategically heightened with *Er und seine Schwester/On a jeho sestra* (K. Lamač, 1931), where he teamed up with the Czech actress Anny Ondra, a star in the German cinema since the late 1920s. Out of the fifteen films Burian made between 1930 and 1938, five had a German-language version starring himself. A similar attempt to create an international star through multiple-language versions occurred with another bilingual actor, Rolf Wanka. While Burian was unbeatable as a popular comedian, Wanka was a polished lover type. Between 1935 and 1937 he shot six films with German-language versions, but given his limited acting talent, was unable to match Burian's success.

Oddly enough, Czechoslovak producers did not attempt to use the linguistic and "star" potential of Lída Baarová, who starred only in Czech films when shooting in Czechoslovakia. We encounter a similar project, aiming to promote a domestic star to international fame via multiple-language versions, in Austria. In the mid-Thirties, a plan (which never took off) was conceived to found a company that would produce English-language versions of Paula Wessely's films for the American market.[17]

The regular production of German-language versions of Czech films offered space for a better integration of the German minority into the Czechoslovak film industry. Regrettably this opportunity remained largely unexploited. The ensemble members of Neues deutsches Theater, Prague's leading German-language stage, would only occasionally appear in the German-language versions, even though their ranks boasted many remarkable actors. An exception is *Der Fall des Generalstabs-Oberst Redl/Aféra Plukovníka Redla* (K. Anton, 1931) in which eight actors from that theatre appeared, although not in any of the main roles. There were absolutely no contacts between Prague's filmmakers and actors in the German-speaking Sudetenland border region. When Martin Frič made a goodwill gesture in late summer of 1938, proposing that the cast of his next German-language version would consists entirely of actors from Sudetenland theatres, it was woefully too late.

The foreign-language versions were commonly premiered several weeks or months after the premiere of the Czech version, although there were exceptions as well. The German-language version of *Falešná kočička, Die falsche Katze* (Vl. Slavínský, 1937) was not made in parallel with the Czech version but rather with a six-month delay, so that its opening took place a full year later. In many cases we don't even know the opening dates of German-language versions in Czechoslovakia, because the press took no notice.

In closing, let me sum up our current knowledge about the existent copies of multiple-language versions produced in Czechoslovakia from 1930 through 1938. According to our records, eleven out of the forty-two films did not survive. Neither did a single one of the three Czech-language Paramount films made in Joinville in 1930-1931. Prague's

National Film Archive owns nine titles; another eight films are stored at Archives du film du Centre National de la Cinématographie at Bois d'Arcy; ten multiple-language versions are at Gosfilmofond in Russia, and ten films are in Berlin at Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv. To date, we have had no additional reports on such films in other archives.

1 Gernot Heiss, Ivan Klimeš (eds.), *Obrazy času. Český a rakouský film 30. let/Bilder der Zeit. Tschechischer und österreichischer Film der 30er Jahre* (Praha-Brno: NFA-OSI, 2003), p. 336
2 Jiří Havelka, *Čs. filmové hospodářství I. Zvukové období 1929-1934* (Praha: Čefis, 1935), pp. 102-110; Jiří Havelka, *Čs. filmové hospodářství II. Rok 1935* (Praha: Nakladatelství Knihovny Filmového kurýru, 1936), pp. 17-20; Jiří Havelka, *Čs. filmové hospodářství III. Rok 1936* (Praha: Nakladatelství Knihovny Filmového kurýru, 1937), pp. 23-26.
3 *Kantor Ideál* (1932), 2.600 mt./*Betragen ungenügend*, 2.300 mt.; *Řeka* (1933), 2.550 mt./*Junge Liebe*, 2.085 mt.; *Za řádovými dveřmi* (1934), 2.345 mt./*Hinter Klostertüren*, 2.130 mt.; *Hudba srdcí* (1934), 2.800 mt./*Musik der Herzen*, 2.625 mt.
4 See the Austrian journal *Paimann's Filmlisten* (1930-1935).
5 G. Heiss, I. Klimeš (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 345-353.
6 *Český hraný film II. 1930 – 1945 / Czech Feature Film II. 1930 – 1945* (Praha: NFA, 1998), pp. 91-93; A. Loacker (ed.), *Extase* (Wien: Filmarchiv Austria, 2001), pp. 479-481.
7 J. Havelka, *Čs. filmové hospodářství III. Rok 1936*, cit., p. 19.
8 Armin Loacker, Martin Prucha (eds.), *Unerwünschtes Kino. Der deutschsprachige Emigrantenfilm 1934-1937* (Wien: Filmarchiv Austria, 2000).
9 Petr Bednařík, *Arizace české kinematografie* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), pp. 116-118.
10 Christian Dewald, Elisabeth Büttner, *Das tägliche Brennen. Eine Geschichte der österreichischen Films von den Anfängen bis 1945* (Salzburg-Wien: Residenz, 2002), pp. 361-365.
11 Jürgen Spiker, *Film und Kapital. Der Weg der deutschen Filmwirtschaft zum nationalsozialistischen Einheitskonzern* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1975) pp. 113-114.
12 G. Heiss, I. Klimeš(eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316.
13 Jiří Havelka, *Čs. filmové hospodářství IV. Rok 1937* (Praha: Nakladatelství Knihovny Filmového kurýru, 1938), pp. 15-16.
14 Julius Schmitt, "Filmová situace optimisticky," *Přítomnost*, Vol. 12, no. 24 (1935), p. 377.
15 J. Havelka, *Čs. filmové hospodářství III. Rok* 1936, cit., pp. 16-18.
16 P. Bednařík, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.
17 G. Heiss, I. Klimeš (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339.

Fig. 1 - Production of multiple-language versions in Czechoslovakia (and three Paramount-films), 1930-1938

no.	original version	German version	French version	other	note
1	*C. a k. polní maršálek* (K. Lamač; P: Elekta, 1930)	*Der falsche Feldmarschall* (K. Lamač; P: Elekta, Ondra-Lamac-Film, 1930)			NFA, Prague
2	*C. a k. polní maršálek* (K. Lamač; P: Elekta, 1930)		*Monsieur le Maréchal* (K. Lamač; P. Standard, 1931)		Archives du film du C.N.C., Bois d'Arcy
3	*Aféra plukovníka Redla* (K. Anton; P: Elekta, Sonorfilm, 1931)	*Der Fall des Generalstabs-Oberst Redl* (K. Anton; P: Sonorfilm, Elekta, 1931)			NFA, Prague
4	*Kdyžstruny lkají* (F. Fehér; P: AB, 1930)	*Ihr Junge* (F. Fehér; P: F. Fehér, 1931)			
5	*The Doctor's Secret* (P: Paramount, 1930)			*Tajemství lékařovo* (J. Lébl; P: Paramount, 1930)	
6	*On a jeho sestra* (K. Lamač, Martin Frič; P: Elekta, 1931)	*Er und seine Schwester* (Karel Lamač; P: Elekta, Ondra-Lamac-Film, 1931)			Gossfilmofond Rossii
7	??? (P: Paramount, 1931)			*Žena, která se směje* (J. Bor; P: Paramount, 1931)	
8	*To neznáte Hadimršku* (K. Lamač, M. Frič; P: Elekta, 1931)	*Wehe, wenn er losgelassen / Unter Geschäftsaufsicht* (K. Lamač, M. Frič; P: Elekta, Ondra-Lamac-Film, 1931)			NFA, Prague

no.	original version	German version	French version	other	note
9	??? (P: Paramount, 1931)			*Svět bez hranic* (J. Lébl; P: Paramount, 1932)	
10	*Extáse* (G. Machatý; P: G. Machatý, Elekta, 1932)		*Extase* (Gustav Machatý; P: Elekta, 1932)		Archives du film du C. N. C., Bois d'Arcy
11	*Extáse* (G. Machatý; P: G. Machatý, Elekta, 1932)	*Extase* (G. Machatý; P: Elekta, G. Machatý, 1932)			
12	*Lelí?ek ve službách Sherlocka Holmese* (Karel Lamač; P: Elekta, 1932)		*Le Roi bis* (Robert Beaudoin; P: Elekta,1932)		Archives du film du C.N.C., Bois d'Arcy
13	*Tisíc za jednu noc* (J. Svára; P: Wolframfilm, 1932)	*Tausend für eine Nacht* (M. Mack; P: Wolframfilm, Avanti-Tonfilm Berlin, 1932)			Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
14	*Gehetzte Menschen* (F. Fehér; P: Emco-Film, 1932)			*Štvaní lidé* (Czech version) (F. Fehér, J. Sviták; P:Panfilm, Emco-Film, 1933)	NFA, Prague
15	*Pobočník Jeho Výsosti* (M. Frič; P: Meissner, 1933)	*Adjutant Seiner Hoheit* (M. Frič; P: Meissner, 1933)			NFA, Prague
16	*Kantor Ideál* (M. Frič; P: V. Kabelík, 1932)		*Professeur Cupidon* (R. Beaudoin, A. Chemel; P: Elekta, 1933)		Archives du film du C.N.C., Bois d'Arcy

no.	original version	German version	French version	other	note
17	*V tom domečku pod Emauzy* (O. Kanturek; P: Kanturek], 1933)	*Das Glück von Grinzing* (O. Kanturek; P: Oka, 1933)			
18	*Diagnosa X* (L. Marten; P: Dafa, 1933)	*Um ein bisschen Glück* (von Lukawieczki; P: Dafa, 1933)			Gossfilmofond Rossii
19	*Život je pes* (M. Frič; P: Moldavia, 1933)	*Der Doppelbräutigam / So ein Hundeleben* (in ČSR) (M. Frič; P: Moldavia, Itala-Film,1934)			Gossfilmofond Rossii Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
20	*Život je pes* (M. Frič; Moldavia, 1933)		*La Mari rêvé* (R. Capellani; P: Elekta, 1935)		Archives du film du C. N. C., Bois d'Arcy
21	*Anita v ráji* (J. Sviták; Wolframfilm, 1934)	*Annette im Paradies* (M. Obal; P: Wolframfilm, 1934)			
22	*Žena, která ví, co chce* (V. Binovec; Meissner, 1934)	*Eine Frau, die weiß, was sie will* (V. Janson; P: Meissner, 1934)			Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
23	*Polská krev* (K. Lamač; Elekta, 1934)	*Polenblut* (K. Lamač; P: Elekta, Ondra-Lamac-Film, 1934)			Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
24	*Rozpustilá noc* (Vl. Majer; Terra, 1934)	*Csardas / Ihre tollste nacht* (in ČSR) (W. Kolm-Veltée, J. Fleck, L. Fleck; P: Terra, 1934)			Gossfilmofond Rossii
25	*Polibek ve sněhu*	*Kuss im Schnee*			

	(V. Binovec; Alex, 1935)	(R. Katscher; P: Praha-Paříž, 1935)			
no.	original version	German version	French version	other	note
26	*Hrdina jedné noci* (M. Frič; Meissner, 1935)	*Held einer Nacht* (M. Frič, H. Oebels-Oebstrom; P: Meissner, 1935)			NFA, Prague
27	*Koho jsem včera líbal* (J. Svoboda; Elka, 1935)		*Le Coup de trois* (J. de Limur; P: C. P. L. F., 1935)		Archives du film du C. N. C., Bois d'Arcy
28	*Jana* (E. Synek, R. Land; Meissner, 1935)	*Jana, das Mädchen aus dem Böhmerwald* (R. Land; P: Meissner, 1935)			Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
29		*Hoheit tanzt Walzer* (M. Neufeld; Elekta, 1935)	*Valse éternelle* (M. Neufeld; P: Elekta, 1936)		Archives du film du C. N. C., Bois d'Arcy
30	*Sextánka* (Sv. Innemann; Meissner, 1936)	*Arme kleine Inge / Die Sextanerin* (in ČSR) (Sv. Innemann; P: Meissner, 1936)			Gossfilmofond Rossii Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
31	*Divoch* (J. Sviták; Meteor, 1936)	*Der Wildfang* (J. Sviták; P: Metropolitan, 1936)			Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
32	*Irčin románek* (K. Hašler; Meissner, 1936)	*Flucht an die Adria* (E. Schulz-Breiden; P: Meissner, 1936)			NFA, Prague
33	*Ulička v ráji* (M. Frič; Moldavia, 1936)	*Das Gässchen zum Paradies* (M. Frič; P: Moldavia, Tobis, 1936)			NFA, Prague Gossfilmofond Rossii Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
34		*Port Arthur* (N. Farkas; Slavia-film, 1936; German version)	*Port-Arthur* (N. Farkas; P: Slavia-film, F. C. L. Paris, 1936)		Archives du film du C. N. C., Bois d'Arcy Gossfilmofond Rossii NFA, Prague (German

no.	original version	German version	French version	other	language version) note
35	*Falešná kočička* (Vl. Slavínský; Elekta, 1937)	*Heiraten – aber wen?* (in Germany) / *Verliebte Herzen* (in ČSR) / *Die falsche Katze* (in Austria) (C. Boese; P: Donau-Film, Elekta, 1938)			Gossfilmofond Rossii Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.
36	*Důvod k rozvodu* (K. Lamač; P: Moldavia, 1937)	*Der Scheidungsgrund* (K. Lamač; P: Moldavia, Ondra-Lamac-Film, 1937)			Gossfilmofond Rossii
37	*Zevšech jediná* (V. Binovec; P: Lloyd, 1937)	*Adresse unbekannt* (K. H. Martin; P: Josef Kabeláč, Th. Czernin, 1938)			
38	*Poslíček lásky* (M. Cikán; P: Metropolitan, 1937)	*Kein Wort von Liebe* (A. Elling; P: Lord-Film, 1937)			Gossfilmofond Rossii Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin
39	*Boží mlýny* (V. Wasserman; P: Meissner, 1938)	*Die Gottes Mühlen* (J. Medeotti-Boháč; P: Meissner, 1938)			
40	*Lidé pod horami* (V. Wasserman; P: Meissner, 1937)	*Menschen in den Bergen* (V. Wasserman; P: Meissner, 1938)			
41	*Panenka* (R. Land; P: Metropolitan, 1938)	*Robot Girl Nr. 1* (J. Medeotti-Boháč; P: Metropolitan, 1938)			

PRIX DE BEAUTE AS A MULTIPLE INTERSECTION. NATIONAL CINEMA, AUTEURISM, AND THE COMING OF SOUND

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The period of the transition to sound film offers
a splendid example of historical over determination.
Alan Williams

Multiple versions of films in the period after the coming of sound can be conceptualised around two basic issues. The first could be described as a multiplying of one film into several different ones which oscillate between being identical and non-identical. Different versions of the same film thus stage, foreground and allegorise on the level of *mise-en-scène*, editing, dialogue, acting, sometimes even plot, the basic conflict of any commercial film production between the standardisation of production methods and the differentiation of the product. From a producer's point-of-view, on the one hand, films should be as similar as possible to one another in order to minimise production costs; on the other hand, films have to be different from one another in order to promise a novelty value and to be attractive to an audience. Every film has to take a position on this spectrum. This problem comes to play in the similarity of the different versions of the same film to one another as well as between different films made in language versions. Indeed, the discussions of distinguishing a multi-language version from a remake or a dubbed film with some reshot material revolves around such issues of identity, similarity and difference.

The second issue to be considered comes in through the question of translation, linguistically as well as culturally. Multiple versions propose different solutions to this problem. Whereas Hollywood trusted in the universal appeal of its story lines, stars and production values, and resorted fairly quickly to dubbing, the multi-language versions strike a different note in this balancing act between self and other, between home-produced film and film manufactured in a foreign country. By substituting the actors, the multi-language versions (MLVs) stressed two factors: firstly, the unity of body and voice in its refusal to dub the voices into another language; secondly, the MLVs implicitly trust in the drawing power of stars or well-known actors. The investment of spending extra money on another set of actors was hoped to be recouped by extra revenues at the box office. Since all other elements of the film usually stay the same, the stars were perceived as the most important element in attracting an audience.

Both issues take a paradoxical shape in the way they have to address both poles simultaneously: films produced with the intention to be exported have to try to be as specific and culturally grounded as possible (language, milieu, stars, setting, style) in order to address a specific audience, yet they are also made with the intention to cross borders in linguistic, political, and cultural respect as easily as possible. This translates into the

production context where on the one hand ways have to be found to show a specific place through language, geographical markers, gestures, objects, etc., while also not complicating the production unnecessarily. This "catch-22"-situation, if you will, leaves multiple versions in a difficult position where the solution often has been sought either in an underdetermined setting and places reminiscent of fairy tale locations (operettas in fantastic kingdoms somewhere in the far-flung expanse of the Balkans) while also condensing in an overdetermined manner markers of a cultural modernisation around technological progress and social transformation.

I want to concentrate on a single film, *Prix de beauté*, directed by Augusto Genina, shot in 1929 and released in 1930. A disclaimer to start with: *Prix de beauté* is not a MLV in a traditional sense. The line between MLVs and other "multiplied versions" in the early years after the introduction of sound is notoriously hard to draw. Indeed, there are many cases in which different versions are hard to tell apart from remakes or from dubbed variants. Just to give one example: what is the relation between *Liebelei* (M. Ophüls, 1932-33) and its French version *Une histoire d'amour* (1932–34): is it a remake, a multi-language version or some other sort of deviation? And even within "classical" MLVs we have significant differences: while UFA-MLVs seem to be very similar to one another in regards to camera placement and movement, scene dissection and even look of actors, Paramount obviously shot in a different style, using the same script and the same decorations, but otherwise leaving the directors much more choice as to how direct and edit a sequence. It could very well be that the title of the Gradisca Spring School, "Multiple and Multiple-Language Versions," maybe addresses exactly the gap between identity and non-identity.[1]

Prix de beauté instantiates many of these problems, since the film was fabricated in four different synchronised versions: French, German, English, Italian, as well as in a silent version.[2] Instead of comparing one version to another philologically and maybe even fetishistically so as to find significance in the most minute of differences I intend to take another approach: to look at the different strategies adopted with the coming of sound by production companies and directors to get a more comprehensive overview within which the MLVs would represent one specific position. Any film produced on the threshold between silence and sound raises a number of issues around translatability as well as differentiation/standardisation. This period is fascinating because it opened up towards a huge uncertainty which allowed many different choices until standardisation closed many of these avenues down again. Martin Barnier has similarly argued for an understanding of the transitional period around 1930 as a time of experimentation and opportunity.[3] I believe that the period of the coming of sound with its many different ways of converting and adapting poses a key problem for the emergence of a European film historiography – as opposed to either national or global (which is often just another term for Hollywood) versions of film history.

Production

L'odyssée de ce film permet d'evoquer diversees facettes
de cette irruption du parlant qui chambarde les moeurs du cinéma.
Pierre Billard

It was in the spring of 1929 that Georg Wilhelm Pabst suggested the project *Prix de beauté* to his colleague and friend René Clair.[4] Pabst was at that time one of the most

celebrated directors of the European art film. He had turned out a string of film that had struck a chord with critics and audiences alike: *Die freudlose Gasse* (1925), *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (1925-26); subsequently he had imported Louise Brooks from the United States to become the star in *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1928-29) and *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* (1929).

René Clair, more than ten years Pabst's junior, had at this point just graduated from the avant-garde (*Paris qui dort*, 1923; *Entr'acte*, 1924) into commercial feature making and had scored a huge success with *Un Chapeau de paille d'Italie* (1927). Clair had just lost his contract with Albatros when Romain Pinès and Michael Salkin(d) of the French production company Sofar (Société des films artistiques) approached the young director to be in charge of what would become *Prix de beauté*, Brooks' third European venture after the two films directed by Pabst. Pabst's role seems to involve not much more than an idea and the initial push that brought together Clair, Brooks, and Pinès, and later added Augusto Genina to the group. In fact, Genina had worked with Pinès before on *Quartier Latin* (1928), a German-French co-production, while Pabst and Pinès knew each other from the production of *Die freudlose Gasse* with another "transatlantic actress," Greta Garbo, produced through the Berlin office of Pinès' and Salkind's Sofar-production. Thus, as coincidental as this meeting of these European players might seem at first sight, on closer inspection it becomes clear that the net around these actors was already pretty densely woven and only a little push was needed to draw them all together. This project brought together Pabst, Clair, and Genina – three key players in the Avant-garde, the art film, and the popular film which were not that far apart in those days, but had many points of contact.

The immediate production circumstances add transatlantic crossings to the European networking. Louise Brooks had returned to the United States after finishing *Die Büchse der Pandora* in the Winter of 1928-29.[5] Both Paramount and RKO offered her lucrative contracts, but she refused to work under their strict supervision and, more importantly, she did not want to go back to Hollywood, a place she detested. Thus, when a cable from her mentor Pabst arrived in April 1929, she was only too happy to return to Europe. Clair had already drawn up a working schedule, starting with the production on May 6 and wrapping up on July 2 – or so at least he thought. The main reason that the production did not start as announced seems to be that the financing had not been put together yet. Clair was subsequently taken under contract with the French Tobis-subsidiary which led him to his next project *Sous les toits de Paris* (1929-30) thus making Clair unavailable for *Prix de beauté*. Actually, in a strange twist of fate typical of film history, Clair's first script for *Prix de beauté* contained what later became the first scene of *Sous les toits de Paris*, thus marking an immediate contact between these two otherwise so different films.[6]

When Louise Brooks prepared to return to the United States in early June after some weeks of vacationing at the Mediterranean, Pabst took the opportunity to ask her back to Berlin where *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* was shot in June and July of 1929. In late July Brooks boarded a ship for New York, but she had barely arrived in New York when she was summoned back, since the financing for *Prix de beauté* had finally been secured. She was back in Paris on August 28. In the meantime the Italian director Augusto Genina – himself one of the large number of wandering for-hire directors – had been asked to replace Clair and became attached to the project. The shooting

period of the film lasted from September to November. Louise Brooks left Europe for good on November 29, 1929.[7]

In the first stages of the preparation the film was most probably planned as silent, yet in the course of the year from the first exchanges between Pabst, Clair, and Pinès in spring 1929 to the final stages of synchronisation in Spring-Summer 1930, the context changed completely – and so did *Prix de beauté*. It is not quite clear at what point the film metamorphosed from a silent into a sound feature, and it seems that both forms overlapped in different ways in the production as well as in the finished product. As early as June 1929 when René Clair was still assigned to the project, he was reported as saying that it was being developed as silent, but – as the silent film "is going through a terrible crisis" – Clair sees the possibility that the finished film will have a "synchronisation."[8] The first positive mention of a sound version in the trade press was on October 25, 1929 when it was announced that the film was currently being shot and will be released in a German-language version.[9]

Prix de beauté was meant to be distributed in four languages – English, French, German, and Italian,[10] and there is even mention of Spanish-language songs.[11] Strangely enough, a special screening of the film "very close to its completion" is reported in the German trade press already in December, mentioning "first verdicts which refer to the film as one of the highest quality products of the German sound film to date."[12] A premiere for January was announced, of which no further traces could be found. Judging from the time lapses between different premieres, the different language versions seem then to have been produced one after the other rather than side by side. The long gap between Brooks' departure for the United States (late November) and the premiere of the film – in Italy on April 12 in Milan (Odeon), in France on May 9 in Paris (Max Linder-Pathé), in Germany on August 11 in Berlin (Titania Palast) – is probably spent editing and post-synchronising, not an easy task in those days.

Reception

> Prix de beauté *was unusual in many ways: it was antimarriage, proto-feminist, and critical of the working class, the bourgeoisie, and the dilettante rich in equal measure. It was not about "the ruination of her man" but, rather, the attempted liberation of a virtuous woman – for 1929 a fairly advanced theme. Yet as a film, it was neither fish nor fowl: a transition period silent, doctored up with music and some badly post synchronised dialogue.*
> Barry Paris

As already mentioned, a relatively long time passed between the end of shooting and the premieres, especially given the fact that with every week the public inclination shifted further toward sound. Thus, every delay and postponement meant a blow to this film, a film that was so precariously balanced between sound and silence, but also between different European nations and *auteurs*. I will now briefly look at the reception of the German version which premiered under the title *Miss Europa* in August 1930 in Berlin. It was the dubbing that met most criticism at the time of its premiere:

> *As soon as the dialogue begins, it is terrible. It is not possible to dub a dialogue that is spoken in French later into German. Even though the words of the dialogue were counted syllable by syllable in order to match, the spectator does not believe for a moment that the actors speak the German words because the lip movement does not fit. [...]* Miss Europa *is a proof for the failure of any linguistic synchronisation. The international sound film has to be put on another basis.*[13]

The reviewer assumes that the dialogue was spoken in French, yet as Louise Brooks did not speak French this at least does not hold true for her. As a means of translation from one nation or language to another, dubbing was not seen as a true possibility at the time of *Prix de beauté*'s premiere, at least by the German film critics. In a very similar vein, the *Reichsfilmblatt* stated: "The acting is French, the talking is German, with mediocre artistry. The contrast leaps to the eyes and ears. Synchronisation encounters after all artistic difficulties, the technical ones can only just be overcome."[14] Thus, critics were well aware that still persisting technical problems could be mastered, yet they did not see dubbing as a method feasible for international distribution from a cultural and artistic point of view. Even if some reviewers were more laudatory, such as the *Lichtbildbühne* which praised Genina's direction, when they briefly dealt with the issue of sound the verdict was, in keeping with most other critics, at best sceptical: "The mainly German dialogue (the film is 100%) is unfortunately awkward and sounds somewhat clumsy. But thankfully [the dialogue] is only very brief, thus not disturbing the overall positive impression."[15] Another generally well-inclined voice remains nonetheless also quite ambivalent: "As a real sound film [the film is] not particularly successful. As a synchronised film it brings considerable novelties."[16] Yet the film obviously did not meet the expectations of the audience. An almost apocalyptic tone of voice can be discerned in the *Variety* reviewer who concluded in early September, three weeks after the premiere, that "owing to bad synchronisation this talker is a failure. After five days it had to be removed. The Titania Palast has at no time done bad business with a film as with this one."[17] One argument for this seeming disaster might be the timing, for the film came at a time when the audience had already gotten used to direct sound. A half year earlier the reception might have been quite different.

Crossing Borders

Film has been an international art form and business from the very beginning to this day: not only did the diverse technical inventions leading up to cinema originate in different countries, but it was also technical and artistic personnel that circulated across borders. France in the interwar period was no exception to this rule: the two largest contingents of foreign film workers in the interwar period came from the Soviet Union in the 1920s[18] (to name only the top layer: producer Joseph Ermolieff and his production company Albatros, directors Volkoff and Tourjansky, art directors Lazare Meerson and Andrei Andreiev, actor Ivan Mosjoukin), and from Germany in the 1930s[19] (Curt and Robert Siodmak, Kurt Bernhardt, Max Ophüls, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Seymour Nebenzahl; Anatole Litvak who came to France from Russia via Germany falls in both categories). Moreover, many key figures in the French cinema of this years are of foreign origin: Alberto Cavalcanti and Luis Buñuel, the Italian directors Mario Bonnard, Mario

Camerini, Carmine Gallone, Augusto Genina, and the many Eastern European emigrants who were often referred to as Germans but came from the fringes of the former Habsburg empire.

On the surface *Prix de beauté* would quite obviously seem to be a French film: it was produced by a French company, shot and post-produced in French studios, many of the actors and technicians are of French origin and the story takes place in France, with a short excursion to San Sebastian, just across the Spanish border. Nevertheless, many of the key figures were less interested in a national cinema culture than in a European production space. The director Augusto Genina had in previous years sold his Italian films exclusively to Germany; he understood cinema as an international medium needing a market bigger than one single country. In the mid-1920s, Genina was also involved with the founding of an Italian company, Adia, which was co-producing films with the French Sofar and the German Orplid. The triangle Italy-France-Germany for circulating stories, personnel and market is thus already in place long before *Prix de beauté*, for Genina as well as for producer Romain Pinès. The former's *Quartier Latin* (1928) not only boasts a programmatic title for this production strategy – pitching local specificity as global glamour and vice versa in evoking a multi-cultural Parisian borough whose name is a household word all over the world – but was also a co-production between the Berlin-based Orplid and the Paris-based Sofar. A year later the same group will produce the third European Louise Brooks film, *Prix de beauté*. The period after the coming of sound thus benefits by being situated within a longer history of European co-operation that extends temporally in both directions.

The producer Romain Pinès, a Jewish émigré from Latvia,[20] had worked with Pabst some years before, co-producing in 1924 through the Berlin-subsidiary of Sofar *Die freudlose Gasse.* Pinès and his partner Michael Salkind, another refugee from Soviet Union's periphery, had built up a European network of contracts and joint ventures, especially in the triangle between France, Germany and Italy. Its partners and subsidiaries were companies such as Hirschel-Sofar and Hisa-Allianz;[21] the films were deliberately international as were the artists and technicians. Thus, neither Pabst nor Genina were strangers to Sofar. Pinès and Salkind should be seen in a series of trans-European producers such as Erich Pommer and Alexander Korda, Gregor Rabinowitsch and Arnold Pressburger, Sascha Kolowrat and Iosef Ermolieff, Heinrich and Seymour Nebenzahl (and later on David Puttnam, Horst Wendtland, Carlo Ponti, Claude Berri and Bernd Eichinger). These figure heads were the engine behind the countless international contracts and contacts that made up "Cinema Europe". In contrast to what has been labelled "Film Europe" in literature, namely a series of conference and high-profile contracts masterminded by the national associations of producers, distributors or exhibitors,[22] I believe that there was a "Cinema Europe" which, in its more durable and interesting form was instead a "rhizomatic" network of contracts and contacts, of travel and communication, of influence and exchange. The "modernist" attempt of constructing one single market through top-down initiatives under the guidance of Franco-German conferences organized by their national associations failed to deliver what it had promised. Instead, what did materialise and survive well into the 1930s was the bottom-up version of co-operation, a network that also helped many exiles to find work outside the Nazi sphere of influence. For a few years after Hitler's ascent to power.[23] The centralist version of co-operation was international in a very literal sense: representatives standing in for nation states talked to each other on a bilateral basis; the model I propose is transnational in the sense that it down-

played nationality and regional specificity, stressing instead cultural and technological modernisation and mobility which was affecting all of Europe in similar ways. It was the outbreak of World War II which ultimately shattered this network of cont(r)acts. I believe that the strategies of the MLVs are best considered within this European context, as they were the preferred method of those producers who had earlier been the key players in this transnational European context.

Prix de beauté is instructive with respect to Film Europe's strategies, as well as to its successes and failures. As a bottom-up collection of small contracts and contacts, of friend and partnerships, Film Europe did not exist as a real entity. Thus a common effort was impossible because there was no means to speak with one voice, nor the power to act in unison. On the other hand European co-operation was an economic and cultural imperative, as most key players from the 1920s continued their transnational efforts after the introduction of sound. Now, *Prix de beauté* is not only simultaneously overdetermined and indeterminate regarding its position within Europe (does it belong to the French cinema, the exile cinema or the international film? is it territorial or extraterritorial?), but the (over)indetermination can be found in respect to its stance *vis-à-vis* the United States.

Crossing Oceans

[I]n the traffic between Europe and America images are being traded, images of America, but also images of Europe.
Thomas Elsaesser

Much of cinema's history can be read as a policy of (mis-)recognitions across the North Atlantic. From its initial dual fathers in the Lumières and Edison, the tension between Europe and the US has played a key role in canonised film history. From the founding fathers of the big American studios, eager to leave behind and shed their Eastern European heritage, to the European *émigrés* of the 1930s and 1940s whose pessimistic and time-convoluted labyrinthine films were labelled *film noir* when they reached France after World War II, a transatlantic mirror maze characterises film history. The *Nouvelle Vague* and the New Hollywood, cinephilia and film studies – the axis Europe-United States (or more precisely Paris-Hollywood)[24] has been central for this field. Much more could be said about this "cultural politics of exchanging compliments"[25] and *Prix de beauté* forms one telling episode in this long history of mutual self-(mis)-recognition – not just in the multiple crossings of Brooks mentioned above.

Louise Brooks could be rightfully called a transatlantic actress, joining a category which boasts the likes of Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo, whose images, careers and personalities took shape in the imaginary as well as real crossings of the Atlantic. American Dream and European Art – all too obvious seems the great divide that these actresses crossed with such ease. Two later entries could be filed in this category. After initial successes in Sweden Ingrid Bergman followed Selznick's call to the US where she first played a martyr to the European resistance against fascism in *Casablanca* (M. Curtiz, 1942) and then a martyr to the French nation in *Joan of Arc* (V. Fleming, 1947) before returning to Europe for a legendary private and professional collaboration with

Roberto Rossellini. Just like Bergman Jean Seberg played the French arch-heroine Joan of Arc for the Austrian émigré Otto Preminger in the American production of *Saint Joan* (1957) after which she was appropriated by Jean-Luc Godard as a Parisian street vendor of the *New York Herald Tribune* in his homage to the American B-movies *A bout de souffle* (1959). Louise Brooks had, as the epitome of the mid-Western girl from Kansas, made her way from a chorus girl to the Ziegfeld Follies to starring roles in Hollywood working in *A Girl in Every Port* (H. Hawks, 1928) and in *Beggars of Life* (W. Wellmann, 1928). After her three European films and a long period of decline and oblivion it was the joint efforts of a European and an American archivist, Henri Langlois of the Cinémathèque Française in Paris and James Card of the George Eastman House in Rochester, which resuscitated her from the past of the living dead. And even though Brooks never played Joan of Arc, we have a statement from possibly the greatest of her admirers, Henri Langlois, that provides us – almost too neatly – with the missing link when he sings the praises of "Louise Brooks's face, eyes, the hair cut like that of Jeanne d'Arc."[26]

Only some months ahead of *Prix de beauté* the Danish director Carl Theodor Dreyer had directed the Italian actress Renée Falconetti as Saint Joan in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1927-28); the credits both of this and Pabst's film reveal the cameraman Rudolph Maté, a Polish émigré who had come from Cracow via Budapest (where he had worked with the young Alexander Korda), Vienna and Berlin to Paris. There he was hired as the director of photography for Dreyer on his film about the French saint. Jeanne d'Arc might just be the tip of the iceberg, signalling a cinema in which the tension between a national(ist) icon and the transcendence of boundaries becomes apparent. Without venturing too far into interpretations in this respect, I believe that multi-language versions can be adequately assessed only when viewed within a context of the various forms that cinema had tried out in order to cross and overcome national borders. The MLVs were as much an answer to the coming of sound, as they were an attempt to make the cinema European rather than French, English, Italian or German.

For everybody involved with film the passage from Europe to the United States is more important still than the one in the opposite direction: "The traffic in movie actors traditionally moved westwards, from Europe to Hollywood, where their national characteristics were sedulously exploited. Brooks, who was among the few to make the eastbound trip, became in her films with Pabst completely Europeanized."[27] Not coincidentally, this article appeared in that most Europeanised of American magazines, *The New Yorker*. Yet on closer inspection at least two other actresses surfaced in the same years around the coming of sound which were likewise US exports: Betty Amann and Anna May Wong. It would be interesting to investigate at what point the import of stars from the US occurs, and what motives the European film industry might have had for this move. The late 1920s were seeing protective measures by many European governments favouring the domestic film industries, as well as strong resistance to Hollywood talkies, rendering more real the perspective of a viable home-grown film production. In addition to the period around 1930, another period saw a similar development: the 1960s when European westerns, often co-produced with many international partners, also resorted to the strategy of importing US actors to Europe. The Italian-Spanish or German-Yugoslavian co-productions boasted the likes of Clint Eastwood and Lex Barker.

Allegorising the Coming of Sound

No woman becomes Miss Europe with impunity,
and least of all at the time when film constantly needs new faces.
The demon sound film lures Miss Europe.
Anonymous

Like many films of this period *Prix de beauté* dissolves characteristics of national identity in favour of a technological and cultural modernisation which goes along with cosmopolitanism and internationalism. It brings this internationalism into focus not only in its crew but even more forcefully in its story line, and in the four (five) different versions which to a certain extent allegorise their own conditions of possibility.

Prix de beauté tells the story of Lucienne who works as a secretary at the newspaper *Le Globe* (one of the many overdetermined instants of the film, here foregrounding the globalising turn of the media) where her fiancée André is employed as a printer. They spend their leisure time at fairgrounds or at the open-air swimming pool where the film begins. The French language version opens with the title "Dimanche," announcing the free day of the week and then showing proletarian Parisians bathing and relaxing in an open-air swimming pool. Immediately two classics from that same year come to mind which also revolve around similar Sunday leisure activities, expressively addressed in their titles: *Menschen am Sonntag* (R. Siodmak, E. G. Ulmer et al., 1929) and *Nogent, Eldorado du dimanche* (M. Carné, 1929). And indeed, the opening sequence of *Prix de beauté* fits in a perfect series with these two films, both of which are closely aligned with the international avant-garde of the interwar period. Especially Rudolph Maté's mobile hand-held camera underlines this lineage, giving the seemingly spontaneous images of lower-class recreation a documentary feel. The year 1929 – and *Prix de beauté* is no exception to this – marks in many respects a convergence of many different trends in the avant-garde, art cinema and commercial film. With *Drifters* (J. Grierson, 1929) and Čelovek *s kinoapparatom* (D. Vertov, 1929) that year also saw new trends surfacing which would come to dominate the 1930s: the social documentary, the commissioned film and the political film.[28] And indeed, even the man with the movie camera is visible in *Prix de beauté,* suggesting to the people "faites vous filmer." The film is thus precariously balanced not only between silence and sound, between different nationalities and auteurs, but also between different schools of filmmaking.

Already the overture plays through the narrative of the film *en miniature*: Lucienne takes the suggestion to be filmed quite literally, and puts herself on display. She undresses in a car – one of the supreme symbols of modernity – and is introduced only through a shot of her legs which dangle out of the door. Her body is reduced to parts, like in a girl revue, that epitome of Americanism where Brooks started her career. I am passing over the gender issue here since this subjugation of women under modernity's strict regimes has been discussed elsewhere.[29] Lucienne makes a show of herself and provokes André's jealousy which she then soothes by a song. This song originates from a gramophone so that technology gives her a voice not her own, and this song will then circulate through the film, finally sealing her tragic fate. It is, among other elements, this circulation of a popular song that answers to the "crisis of indexicality" which characterises the coming of sound. The gap that opened up between the body of the performer visible on the screen and the voice heard through the loudspeakers – two com-

pletely unconnected and different technological set-ups, synchronised in order to create the illusion of simultaneity – was indeed very often addressed in the early 1930s films, whether explicitly or implicitly.[30] And in fact, Brooks herself was here into French dubbed by another actress (Hélène Regelly), thus literalising this borrowing of voice from the gramophone. In the beginning, the song is still employed in a playful manner, even though André's final bite of her neck hints already of his lethal jealousy.

From the leisure of Sunday we move to the daily routine of work when a title announces "Lundi" over images of city streets crowded with people rushing to work, and is followed by loudspeakers announcing a beauty contest. A disembodied voice invites all women to join up in a competition that will propel Lucienne out of her daily life as a secretary into the international Jet Set. Let me stress two points before turning to a closer look on the final sequence: firstly, in its insistence on the parameters of mobility and immobility the film allegorises its own production process as the result of a European co-operation. Lucienne wins the Miss France-pageant and is subsequently sent to the Miss Europe-competition in San Sebastian where an international *haute volée* of princes and maharajas compete for the attention of the new Miss Europe. It is social and geographical mobility that allows Lucienne to leave the stability but also the limits of her proletarian life. After she returns home, her enforced immobility in the petit-bourgeois flat is rather crudely metaphorised by a caged bird while she is waiting for André to return from work. Her only comfort is a gramophone record of the initial song and the fan post she still receives as Miss Europe. The film continuously juxtaposes luxury hotels, sleeping coaches and expensive spas with working class amusements, daily labour and the drudgery of a housewife's routine. Two standard approaches can be found in multi-language versions and other productions meant to cross borders: either the films are set in fantastic operetta kingdoms, or they allude to the many markers of modernity and modernisation transcending national limits: ocean liners and overnight trains, upscale hotels and exclusive spas, racing cars and gramophones, fashion, style and revue girls.[31] Indeed, the maharaja and the prince embody the simultaneous cosmopolitanism, freedom and mobility, but also uprootedness of the aristocracy. Set against this is the captivity and immobility, but also groundedness of the working class which nevertheless works for a transnational medium (the newspaper *Le Globe*) and falls for the international jet set vacationing at a spa. In its use of cultural modernisation, *Prix de beauté* anticipates some the MLVs' strategies.

My other point would be the film's ongoing foregrounding of its use of sound, the many "Allô! Allô!"-scenes calling attention to sound as a fact in itself.[32] The rather poor lip synchronisation contrasts with the richness of the film's sound effects. Furthermore, the film constantly foregrounds mechanical and electronic devices for recording and replaying sound and images, such as loudspeakers, gramophones, mechanical pianos and indeed even the sound film itself when the prince hires Lucienne for a production of the *International Sound Film Company*. Especially interesting for this self-reflexive aspect is the sequence of the beauty contest. A beauty contest is, after all, a visual event. Yet, as the disembodied voice of the host explains via a loudspeaker, the success of the participants in the contest is measured by aural means, i.e. by the length of the audience's applause measured on a chronograph. In a similar vein to the *Superstar/Idols* style TV shows, the decision process is handed over to the audience in a travesty of democratic decision making. An excessive process of allegorisation seems to be at work in early sound cinema in the way the tension between

silence and sound is played out in dramatic terms, much like in *Blackmail* (A. Hitchcock, 1929).[33] Moreover, early sound cinema had a deep fascination with devices and machines that inscribed, recorded or replayed sound: an obvious example would be *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* (F. Lang, 1932-33).[34]

Sound is also dramatised through the way the song enters the narrative in the opening swimming pool scene through the gramophone, and then again, at the end, via the sound film, sealing her fate by guiding her jealous husband into the cinema. The film in the film – in which we see Lucienne singing the theme song in a bourgeois setting and expensively dressed – is called *La Chanteuse éperdue*. In a way, this title sums up Europe's reaction to sound film where the triumphant exclamation "You ain't heard nothin' yet!" of the male American *Jazz Singer* was answered by a troubled female singer imported from the United States. The ending of the film disconnects the body from the voice again: as the first scene gave Lucienne a voice thanks to technology, both in a literal and in a metaphorical way, the last scene severs this allegorical tie again. Her image and voice continue after her death and "over her dead body." Now, while Louise Brooks' (dubbed) singing voice in *Prix de beauté* ironically comments on her tragic fate, life had (one is tempted to say, of course) just one other ironic turn to offer when – after her return to the United States – it was exactly her refusal to lend her voice to a post-synchronisation of *The Canary Murder Case* (M. St. Clair, 1929) that ultimately led to her tragic fate as the Hollywood executives branded her a "difficult" actress, refusing to cast her in any important roles. Thus, while the voice of Lucienne, Brooks' last major role, persisted into the sound film, it was Brooks' silent image that persisted into our day. Her refusal to comply with the Hollywood rules only underscored her retroactive image as a proto-feminist and a stubborn individualist willing to defy the normative power of the Hollywood studio system, granting her thus a honorary membership in cinematic Europeanness.

Over-In-Determination

I have tried to understand and analyse *Prix de beauté* across a number of topics: the employment of sound; the question of authorship (where much more could be done around the contributions of Pabst and Clair); the issue of national cinema and the question whether it is applicable in any meaningful sense to put this film in relation to other films such as *Casta Diva* and its English version *The Divine Spark* (C. Gallone, 1935); finally, I addressed the cinematic interrelationship across the Atlantic, between the US and Europe. All these topics, which in my opinion are highly important to any discussion of the MLVs and the coming of sound can be found on the level of production history as well as inside the story – a process of condensation and allegorisation is at work. In fact, the way these topics are played through on both levels reveals a high degree of over determination. At the same time, the film ultimately remains poised in between any firm stances, in an indetermined posture.

The same sort of (over-)indetermination, to coin a term, can be found in another quintessential European product with a similar global approach to marketing and scope : the James Bond-series. In its uses of mobility and technological gadgets, but also in its ambition to draw together production crews and actors from widely diverse back-

grounds, and finally in the way it engages the cinematic divide between the US and Europe, the Bond series could be seen as one among many possible objects of comparison to the multi-language versions. Seen under this perspective, the MLVs appear much less an aberration or a dead end, but rather form a central chapter of a transnational and truly European film history which remains as yet to be written.

1 See Rémy Pithon, "Les 'Versions Multiples' ont-elles existé?," in Anna Antonini (ed.), *Il film e i suoi multipli/Film and Its Multiples* (Udine: Forum 2003), pp. 123-129.
2 The only surviving versions are the French language version and the silent version recently restored by the Cineteca del Comune di Bologna; more on the history of the restoration can be found in Davide Pozzi, "*Prix de beauté*: un titolo, due edizioni, quattro versioni," in A. Antonini (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-78.
3 Martin Barnier, *En route vers le parlant. Histoire d'une évolution technologique, économique et esthétique du cinéma (1926–1934)* (Liège: Éditions du Céfal 2002).
4 Pierre Billard, *Le Mystère René Clair* (Paris: Plon, 1998), p. 435.
5 See for a biography Barry Paris, *Louise Brooks* (London-New York: Hamish Hamilton-Knopf, 1989); see also Brooks' own collection of (autobiographical, critical and historical) articles: Louise Brooks, *Lulu in Hollywood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).
6 Thanks to Davide Pozzi for bringing this to my attention.
7 For more on this European venture see Malte Hagener, "Unter den Dächern der Tobis. Nationale Märkte und Europäische Strategien," in Jan Distelmeyer (ed.), *Tonfilmfrieden, Tonfilmkrieg. Die Geschichte der Tobis vom Technik-Syndikat zum Staatskonzern* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 2003).
8 Claude Doré "Du film ironique au film dramatique. Les projets de René Clair," *Cinémiroir* (June 7, 1929), article reprinted in and quoted after: ‹http://www.pandorasbox.com/louise-brooks/pix/articles/6-7-29cinemiroir.jpg›
9 "Der Schönheitspreis", *Kinematograph*, Vol. 23, no. 250 (October 25, 1929).
10 P. Billard, *op. cit.*, p. 152f.
11 "Au sujet de *Prix de beauté*," *La Cinématographie française*, no. 584 (January 11, 1930), p. 38.
12 *Reichsfilmblatt*, no. 51-52 (December 21, 1929) p. 37.
13 "Miss Europa," *Kinematograph*, Vol. 24, no. 187 (August 12, 1930). ["Sobald der Dialog beginnt wird's fürchterlich. Es geht eben nicht an, einen französisch gesprochenen Dialog späterhin mit deutschen Worten synchronisieren zu wollen. Obgleich die Dialogworte silbengetreu nachgezählt wurden, glaubt der Zuschauer in keinem Augenblick, daß die Darsteller die deutschen Worte sprechen, denn ihre Lippenbewegungen stimmen damit nicht überein. [...] MISS EUROPA ist ein Beweis für das Versagen jeder sprachlichen Synchronisation. Der internationale Tonfilm muß auf eine andere Basis gestellt werden."]
14 -go, "Miß Europa," *Reichsfilmblatt*, Vol. 8, no. 33 (August 16, 1930). ["Gespielt wird französisch, gesprochen wird deutsch mit mäßiger Redekunst. Der Kontrast springt ins Auge und ins Ohr. Dies Zusynchronisieren stößt eben doch auf künstlerische Schwierigkeiten, die technischen lassen sich gerade noch überwinden."]
15 H.H. [Hans H. Wollenberg], "Miß Europa," *Lichtbildbühne*, Vol. 23, no. 192 (August 12, 1930). ["Der größtenteils deutsche Dialog (der Film ist 100prozentig) ist leider schwerfällig und klingt etwas unbeholfen. Doch ist er dankenswerterweise sehr kurz gehalten, so daß der günstige Gesamteindruck gewahrt bleibt."]

16 l., "Im Titania-Palast: Miss Europa," *Der Film*, Vol. 15, no. 33 (October 15, 1930).
17 *Variety* (September 3, 1930), p. 44; reprinted in and quoted after B. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 342.
18 For Soviet émigres in France see François Albera, *Albatros. Des russes à Paris 1919–1929* (Paris: Cinémathèque Française, 1995); Jörg Schöning (ed.), *Fantaisies russes. Russische Filmmacher in Berlin und Paris 1920–1930* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 1995).
19 For an overview see Thomas Elsaesser, Ginette Vincendeau (eds.), *Les Cinéastes allemands en France. Les années trente* (Paris: Goethe Institut, 1983).
20 On the life and work of Romain Pinès see Eric Le Roy "Romain Pinès, ou l'itinéraire d'un producteur racé," *Archives*, no. 73 (December 1997), pp. 22-30.
21 "Kleines Lexikon," in Sybille M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgemuth (eds.), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris! Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text+kritik/CineGraph, 1996), pp. 179-184, here p. 183.
22 I am thinking here especially of the highly valuable work of Kristin Thompson and Andrew Higson. See Kristin Thompson: "The End of the 'Film Europe' Movement," in Tom O'Regan, Brian Showsmith (eds.), *History on/and/in Film* (Perth: History and Film Association of Australia 1987), pp. 45-56; Kristin Thompson, "National or International Films? The European Debate During the 1920s," in *Film History*, Vol. 8, no. 3 (1996), pp. 281-296. See also Andrew Higson, "Film-Europa. Kulturpolitik und industrielle Praxis," in S. Sturm, A. Wohlgemuth (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 63-76. See also the essays in Andrew Higson, Richard Maltby (eds.), *"Film Europe" and "Film America". Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920 – 1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999).
23 Francesco Bono's ongoing work on the (loose) production team around Willi Forst, including Géza von Bolvary, Walter Reisch, Arnold Pressburger, Gregor Rabinowitsch and others, with *Leise flehen meine Lieder* as the network node, proposes a very similar model of co-operation to the one that I am putting forward here. See for instance: Francesco Bono, "*Casta Diva*. Das deutschsprachige Kino und der italienische Musikfilm," in Malte Hagener, Jan Hans (eds.), *Als die Filme singen lernten. Innovation und Tradition im Musikfilm 1928–1938* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 1999), pp. 155-165.
24 It is not coincidental that Peter Wollen's recent collection of essays is entitled *Paris – Hollywood. Writing on Film*. (London: Verso 2002).
25 Cf. Thomas Elsaesser, "Über den Nutzen der Enttäuschung: Filmkritik zwischen Cinephilie und Nekrophilie," in Irmbert Schenk (ed.), *Filmkritik. Bestandsaufnahmen und Perspektiven* (Marburg: Schüren, 1998), pp. 91-114, here p. 107.
26 Henri Langlois, "More than Garbo," in Paola Cristalli, Valeria Dalle Donne (eds.), *Louise Brooks, l'européenne* (Paris et al.: Cine Classics, 1999), p. 83, brochure accompanying screenings at the Cannes International Film Festival.
27 Kenneth Tynan, "The Girl in the Black Helmet," *The New Yorker* (June 11, 1979), pp. 45-78, here p. 57 ff.
28 On the "birth" of the documentary from the spirit of the Avant-garde see the important article: Bill Nichols, "Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde," *Critical Inquiry*, no. 27 (Summer 2001), pp. 580-610.
29 Tracy Cox, "Consuming Distractions in *Prix de Beauté*," *Camera Oscura*, Vol. 17, no. 2 (2002), pp. 40-67.
30 A fascinating discussion of this and other issues surrounding the employment of sound in the cinema can be found in James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema. Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
31 A description and analysis of some of the elements as they are used in the films with Jan Kiepura can be found in Malte Hagener, Jan Hans "Der Sängerstar im Zeitalter seiner tech-

nischen Diversifizierbarkeit," in Günter Krenn, Armin Loacker (eds.), *Zauber der Bohème. Marta Eggerth, Jan Kiepura und der deutschsprachige Musikfilm*. (Wien: Filmarchiv Austria, 2002), pp. 299-333.

32 This formulation is taken from Marc Chevrie, "France années 30: L'Internationale et la voix," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 42 (April 1984), pp. IX–X, here IX.

33 Cf. also Elsaesser's reading of *Das Lied einer Nacht*, a film which also excessively dramatises the tension between real, recorded and fake voices. Thomas Elsaesser: "'Going Live'. Körper und Stimme im frühen Tonfilm am Beispiel von *Das Lied einer Nacht*," in G. Krenn, A. Loacker (eds.), *op. cit.,* pp. 271-298.

34 Tom Gunning, "The Testament of Dr. Mabuse," in *The Films of Fritz Lang. Allegories of Vision and Modernity* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), pp. 139-159.

NEW STUDIES

THE MEANING OF THE MUSIC-HALL: FROM THE ITALIAN FUTURISM TO THE SOVIET AVANT-GARDE

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Music-hall, not poetry, is a criticism of life.
James Joyce

The Music-hall as Tireless Ventilation of the World's Futurist Brain[1]

If one can detect a common characteristic between the first avant-garde movements (Futurism, Dada, Surrealism), it is undoubtedly their predilection for popular art and forms of entertainment. This penchant was closely related not only to the rejection of traditional bourgeois art, i.e. the institutionalised forms of Art "with a capital A",[2] but also to the necessity of a new rhythm, a renovated vitality. One of the most celebrated spectacles in the early years of the twentieth century was the music-hall, also called variety or vaudeville. Consisting of an explosive mixture of attractions, this spectacle revealed itself as the perfect metaphor for modern society. As Roland Barthes observes, it is indeed natural that the music-hall was born in the Anglo-Saxon world with its sudden urban concentrations and its Quaker myths of labour.[3] More specifically, the origin of this form of entertainment can be traced back to the musical performances given during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the English town taverns. The first so-called variety theatres opened their doors in the middle of the nineteenth century in London, where the swiftly population increased, on the one hand, the demand for this kind of entertainment and, on the other, the necessity of institutionalisation by means of laws and licences. At the turn of the century the variety phenomenon penetrated into city life in the whole of Europe, likewise, first through taverns and night-clubs – namely the French *café-chantant* (later called *café-concert*, or briefly *caf'-cons'*), the Italian *caffè-concerto*, the German *Kabarett*, etc. – and subsequently through real music-hall establishments.[4]

The music-hall, thus, is an exclusively urban phenomenon and this specific feature differentiates it from the circus, a spectacle that can be found both in the city and in the countryside. A second fundamental difference between these two related forms of popular entertainment is their architectural structure which greatly affects their relationship with the spectator (Fig.1). Because of its circular shape, the circus exercises a strong centripetal force: by collecting the audience all round the arena, the attention is automatically drawn to the centre. At the same time, this particular spatial organisation preserves, following Walter Benjamin, the "aura" of the artists, their fabulous perfection and especially their inaccessibility (*Unnahbarkeit*).[5] The music-hall, on the contrary, is characterised by the use of the traditional stage which establishes a frontal, face-to-face relationship with the audience; furthermore, in a cabaret, the distance between stage and auditorium, namely the taproom, is practically non-existent.[6] This contact with the spectator, close and

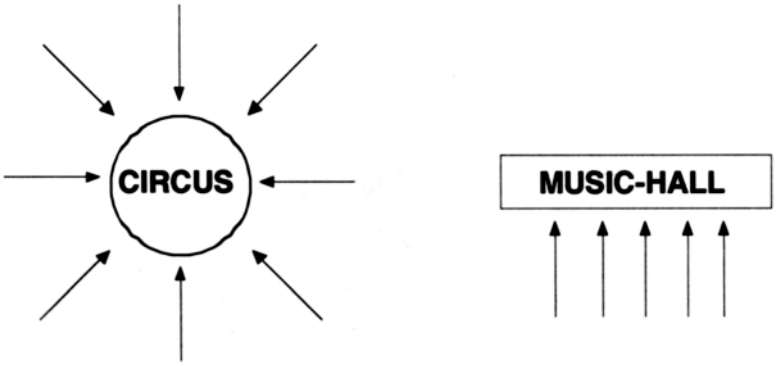

Fig. 1

straight, is the underlying condition for experimentation: here, more easily than in the circus, young artists can explore new forms of expression, violate the rules of the traditional theatre, and perturb or directly affect the citizen (*épater le bourgeois*).

The music-hall seems to be the ideal place for combining all kinds of acts, which can vary (as explicitly indicated by the term *variety*) from popular songs to conjuring tricks, from clownish nonsense to erotic dance performances. The inherited circus attractions (such as the numbers performed by acrobats, gymnasts, rope-dancers, jugglers and animal trainers) are transformed and dynamically re-assembled into a new spectacle. In contrast to the circus, no exceptional apparatus is utilised: the human body is exalted for itself. The music-hall, unlike the traditional theatre, has no use for intellectual and symbolic elaboration, let alone for psychology. Its nature is subversive, its expressiveness mechanised and definitely physical. Defined by Barthes as the "aesthetic form of labour", the music-hall exhibits upon the stage the physical efforts of the performer: every attraction remains somehow an exercise. And Barthes continues: "In the music-hall everything is *nearly* acquired; but it is precisely this *nearly* that constitutes the spectacle, and preserves, in spite of the preparations, its virtue of labour."[7] The bodily, purely visual expression is, of course, a feature typical of the circus that is carried into the theatre by the music-hall and that, thanks to the reduced distance between performer and spectator, becomes more visible and more tangible.

A last significant distinction between the circus and the music-hall regards their fortune in history. Whereas the former seems to be timeless, resistant to the concurrence of new rising forms of entertainment, the popularity of the latter is tied to a very specific epoch, namely the first decades of the twentieth century. The music-hall is a form of spectacle that perfectly embodies the spirit of the roaring Twenties, and that can bear comparison with a "bursting balloon"[8] spitting out innumerable new inventions. In the beginning of the thirties, the French drama critic Legrand-Chabrier started his essay "Le Music-hall" by defining his topic as an entertainment formula that expresses the epoch and that corresponds with the "actual evolution of human civilisation."[9] Precisely at that moment, with the advent of the sound film, the music-hall began inevitably to decline; and eventually, television would carry out the finishing stroke.

Although the sparks of the music-hall are still not entirely extinguished today (considering, for instance, the ongoing success of the Parisian tourist attractions at the Moulin Rouge, or the significant revival of music-hall genre in Hollywood with productions such as *Moulin Rouge* [B. Luhrman, 2001] and *Chicago* [R. Marshall, 2002]), it is clear that the inherent modernity of this spectacle can only be read from the perspective of the historical avant-garde and the modernist age. In that period it turned out to be the appropriate medium for the young experimenters of the stage, who exploited the means of music-hall for dislocating the traditional theatre, for hurting the good taste of the public, in brief, for provoking. This anti-bourgeois attitude was cultivated especially in the café-cabaret, which often fulfilled its function as breeding ground of avant-garde thoughts and concepts. Emblematic in this respect is, of course, the meaning of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in relation to Dada and its foundation in 1916. In Paris, the Lapin Agile was circa 1900 the meeting place of the Montmartre artists, Picasso among them. Similarly, in Moscow, the Pink Lantern cabaret functioned as one of the experimental bases of the Russian Futurists and Rayonists; in St. Petersburg, the avant-garde rendezvous by excellence was the Stray Dog, opened in 1911 by Kulbin and Evreinov; in London, the Vorticists gathered in the Golden Calf, decorated by Wyndham Lewis, etc.[10] As far as the Italian Futurists are concerned, it is true that they rather chose an established theatre for their provocative Futurist evenings (the so-called *serate*) – a tradition that was inaugurated on January 12, 1910 in the Politeama Rossetti of Trieste. But, as Günter Berghaus reminds us, they habitually invaded afterwards some public places, mainly cafés and restaurants, for an outrageous "post-performance".[11] The proper Futurist cabarets, like Balla's Bal Tic Tac and Depero's Cabaret del Diavolo, will open their doors only in the beginning of the Twenties.

Yet in 1913 Marinetti fully developed the role of the music-hall as vehicle for new, aggressive emotions and avant-garde experimentation in one of his most fortunate manifestos: "The Variety Theatre", dated September 29.[12] Because this manifesto was republished many times and translated from the very beginning into several languages, its historical value is indisputable. On the other hand, its wide distribution led to misconceptions in relation to the original edition.[13] In fact – and, as far as I know, this detail has never been pointed out – there exist two different Italian versions: a short one, which corresponds to the original text published in 1913 in *Lacerba*, and a longer one, which is the traditionally best (or even only) known version of the manifesto, reproduced in all Futurist anthologies as if it were the original. The latter is a re-elaboration carried out by Marinetti himself for the publication of *I manifesti del Futurismo*;[14] it includes – as I shall discuss below – an interesting formula for the use of cinema. Originally, the structure of the manifesto was twofold: in the first part, composed of fifteen programmatic points, Marinetti praises the music-hall because of its *anti-passéist* qualities and its explosive character; in the second, he proposes in five paragraphs a transgression of the genre, a transformation of the Variety Theatre into a "Theatre of Wonder and Record". In the final version, the first part of the manifesto is re-organised in nineteen programmatic points (of which only the numbers 4 and 18 are really new); the second part is followed by a passage of *parole in libertà* (words-in-freedom). Furthermore, Marinetti added the anti-psychological concept of *fisicofollia* (body-madness), that is essential to the transgression of the genre: "The Theatre of Amazement, of Record-Setting and of Body-Madness".

The Resonance of "The Variety Theatre" Manifesto in Russia

In 1914 the first Russian translations of "The Variety Theatre" manifesto appeared. While the St. Petersburg journal *Teatr i iskusstvo* published a translation of the original version of the manifesto,[15] the volume *Manifesty italianskago futurizma* translated the manifesto in its final version (with exception of the words-in-freedom passage that has been omitted).[16] The issue of these different Russian translations is crucial, as we shall see further.

In the same year, Marinetti undertook a tour to Russia, giving lectures on poetry and provoking the necessary skirmishes among his audience members.[17] Along with this first open confrontation between the two Futurist camps, it is interesting to remember that Marinetti spent several nights in the company of the painter Kulbin at the Stray Dog, tasting in that way the vitality of the Russian variety theatre. Russian theatrical experimentation did not have to wait for Marinetti's manifesto to be translated (suffice it to say that the two key spectacles of the Russian Futurism, i.e. Alexander Kruchenykh's *Victory Over the Sun* and Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Tragedy of Vladimir Mayakovsky*, took place in December 1913). In fact, as František Deák has pointed out, it is only after the Russian Revolution that "The Variety Theatre" manifesto starts exerting an effective and provable influence.[18]

Nevertheless, parallels can be drawn between Marinetti's ideas concerning the stage and a few pre-Revolutionary statements by Russian Futurist poets and painters. The founding manifesto "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste", dated December 1912 and signed by Mayakovsky, Burliuk, Kruchenykh and Klebnikov, recalls some of the basic concepts of the Italian Futurism, such as the command to get rid of the classics ("Throw Pushkin, Dostoyesky, Tolstoy, et al., et al., overboard from the Ship of Modernity") and adopt an anti-audience attitude, i.e. standing amid "the sea of boos and indignation" rather than appealing to the taste of the public.[19] This last idea had already been promoted by the Italian Futurists in their "Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights" (1911), a polemic text in which they expose their contempt for the audience, their "horror of immediate success" and their "lust of being whistled at". These statements are the base of all the coming Futurist theatre experiments that often will be conceived as mere *happenings*.

Another interesting pre-revolutionary manifesto is Larionov's and Zdanevich's "Why We Paint Ourselves" (1913), that explains one of the provocative habits of the Rayonist artists, namely their face and body painting.[20] In "The Variety Theatre", Marinetti proposes likewise to "oblige the *chanteuses* to dye their décolletage, their arms, and especially their hair, in all the colours hitherto neglected as means of seduction"[21]. Although one might argue that Rayonist tattooing aimed toward a deeper, more symbolic dimension, revealing itself as "a modern extension of an ancient rite, i.e., ritualistic face- and body-painting in primitive societies"[22] (Marinetti view of this practice, however, was one of extravagance, or absurdity), it is important to underline that the Russian painters experimented their extraordinary appearances on stage, most specifically with dance performances. And Natalia Goncharova shocked the good taste of the public by appearing with her décolleté painted with Rayonist patterns.

After the Revolution of 1917 a large number of theatre manifestos emerged in the context of the Soviet avant-garde's education of the proletariat. It is in this context that the resonance of Marinetti's ideas concerning the stage becomes manifest. Yuri

Annenkov was one of the first who openly acknowledged Marinetti as a source of inspiration. As a matter of fact, he quoted almost half of "The Variety Theatre" manifesto in one of his own manifestos: "Teatr bez prikladnitchestva" (The Theatre to the End), published in 1921. In this pamphlet, he defines his concept of "Theatre of Pure Method", that is clearly impressed by the Futurist notion of dynamism: "In all the stage space there would be no moment of calm."[23] Annenkov regards "artistically organised" movement as the end in itself. His idea of the theatre as a "tempest of movements wrought by rhythm", as a "synthesis of velocities in a visual form" can be associated with the program of "The Futurist Synthetic Theatre" (1915). Marinetti, Settimelli and Corra, the co-authors of this latter manifesto, specifically emphasise the necessity of brevity, of "synthesising velocity."[24] Furthermore, they propose to drag the audience "through *a labyrinth of sensations imprinted on the most exacerbated originality and combined in unpredictable ways*",[25] which recalls the method of the music-hall, i.e. the principle of combining acts in an unusual way and thus creating surprising chains of associations. The mixture of attractions will reoccur in several Russian experimental productions of the early Twenties in Russia. It was Annenkov himself who inaugurated this tendency in 1919 with the staging of *The First Distiller* at the Hermitage Theatre of St. Petersburg, to which I shall return.

In 1919, Annenkov also published the manifesto "Merry Sanatorium" that, in opposition to Marinetti's exaltation of the variety theatre, glorifies the circus. The circus, as will result from my comparative study, remains an important point of reference in the Soviet avant-garde.[26] Annenkov defines the magnificent art of this timeless spectacle not only in terms of an "heroic theatre" (which conforms to Marinetti's concept of a "school of heroism",[27] but also – as the title of the manifesto indicates – in terms of a "medical treatment", a cure against the oppression of city life.) In a quite anti-Futurist way, he renders homage to the countryside, with pastoral metaphors such as the poultry yard and the quacking of ducks. However, the general tone of the manifesto recollects much of the Futurist hilarity, and pays attention to the figure of the eccentric comic:

> *Right under the big top, a painted puppet leaps to the barrier of the gallery with a loud laugh. Who is it? A gigantic parrot, a wonderful wood-goblin, or a red-haired orang-utan – this is the joyous clown in colored wig and checked pantaloons.*[28]

In opposition to the seriousness of the white clown, the eccentric comic bodily displays the ridicule and avows absurdity as the only possible logic. Whereas this character has a merely supporting role in the circus, in the music-hall it exists independently, detached from the white clown; its subversive acts are both physical and verbal.[29] The use of the eccentrics appears as well in "The Variety Theatre", as fifth and last proposal to subversively change the music-hall into a "Theatre of Amazement, Record-Setting, and Body-Madness":

> *In every way encourage the type of the eccentric American, the impression he gives of exciting grotesquerie, of frightening dynamism; his crude jokes, his enormous brutalities, his trick weskits and pants as deep as a ship's hold out of which, with a thousand other things, will come the great Futurist hilarity that should make the world's face young again.*[30]

The clown's pants, "as deep as a ship's hold", bring us to the very root of the FEKS (Factory of the Eccentric Actor), more specifically to the manifesto "AB! The Eccentric's Parade" by Grigori Kozintsev, who quotes Marinetti's statement as follows: "The Eccentricist's pants are deep, like a bay, from which squeals forth the thousand toned joy of Futurism." In an interview with Natalia Noussinova, Leonid Trauberg relates how in December 1921 the young Kozintsev, merely 16 or 17 years old, proclaimed during a public debate that "eccentrism was the theatre of Marinetti, of *l'épate*, i.e. of amazement, of nervousness and what they needed was a theatre that came from the circus, from the music-hall and from the cabaret."[31] Moreover, Trauberg declares that Kozintsev and himself have become alive to this new form of theatre after having read Marinetti's manifesto.[32] On July 9, 1922, the FEKS was officially inaugurated, Kozintsev and Trauberg being by then joined by Yutkevich and Kryzhitsky.

Convergences and especially divergences between the Italian Futurism and the Russian Eccentrism have often been pointed out by critics and historians. In my view, the similarities seem preponderate, at least in the early years of the FEKS (1922-1929). If, according to Trauberg's comment, one can regard the pursuit of a stunning, overwhelming theatre as the chief inheritance from Marinetti, other typically Futurist characteristics and methods are immediately involved. First, the importance of dynamism, velocity and rhythm is a recurring topic of the FEKS manifestos published in 1922.[33] In Kozintsev's "AB! The Eccentric's Parade" eccentrism is defined as "a synthesis of movement"; and Kryzhitsky's "The Theatre of Hazard" recalls not only Marinetti's love of danger, but also his concept of Record-Setting Theatre: "Theatre programs will indicate the most recent record of the actor and his *top speed*". Beside the beauty of speed, they also glorify modern technology that inspires both the mechanical/mechanised expressiveness of the actor and the protagonism of the machine. Proclaimed deity by the Italian Futurists, the machine seems to be adored by the young FEKS alike. In "Eccentrism" they whistle to the actor: "Forget about emotions and celebrate the machine!"[34] While this exaltation of technological progress and new mechanised society, is a thoroughly Futuristic characteristic, in the FEKS program it is symbolically related to America. As Bernadette Poliwoda observes, they are obviously not concerned with industrialisation following the example of American capitalism; on the contrary, what they aim at, is an inner Americanisation by appropriating some American "techniques", such as advertising gimmicks, sensational press, detective stories and slapstick comedy.[35] This is, in fact, not much more than an original "clothing" of Marinetti's lesson. For the young members of the FEKS, America is a metaphor: it represents a world of joy and hilarity, of amusement parks with breath-taking roller coasters (or Russian mountains, as they are called both in French and in Italian).

The world of the FEKS is a very imaginative one where the strangest and most extreme things can be associated. The Americanisation is therefore not exclusive to Americans. Next to the American detective hero Nat Pinkerton, for example, they include the British Sherlock Holmes; next to Charles Chaplin (or better, his "rear")[36] they refer to the Italian variety artist Leopoldo Fregoli, who was at the turn of the century celebrated world-wide for his art of lightning-speed character changes. In one evening, he could interpret more than sixty personalities, incessantly changing clothing, voice and sex: his success was, indeed, very related to his ability as female impersonator. While Kozintsev mentions his name just briefly in "AB! The Eccentric's Parade"

("Flying from the fantastic to clever hands, from Hoffman to Fregoli"), Trauberg commemorates more specifically his protean capacity in "The Filmmaker as Denouncer":

> *On the 5th of December when we catapulted ourselves as Eccentrism into the public, we didn't realise that suddenly there would be Fregoli! And before you could sneeze a transformation had taken place!*

The Italian artist visited Russia and performed both in Moscow and in St. Petersburg at the end of the nineteenth century, that is before Kozintsev and Trauberg were even born. Since Fregoli retired in 1918, it is evident that we have caught the FEKS committing an anachronism. It confirms, once again, that they did study Marinetti's manifesto, wherein Fregoli's name appears twice, first to exemplify the formula "synthesis of velocity plus transformations", and second in a list of artists (next to Eleonora Duse, Sarah Bernardt, Zacconi, and Mayol). A central difference between the FEKS manifestos and Marinetti's "Variety Theatre", is, once more, the importance given to the circus. That is, the FEKS evaluate it on the same level as the music-hall. In the manifesto "Eccentrism", the latter is even not alluded to, instead: "Technology is circus, psychology is turned inside out!"

As far as stage techniques are concerned, most of FEKS' rules are in direct line with Marinetti's: provocation of the audience, "prostitution" of the classics, and improvisation as the supreme values. In 1928, Vladimir Nedobrovo discusses the method of the FEKS, and asserts that its eccentrism was not at all that of the music-hall, this being the "most primitive, indelicate and absurd" form of eccentrism, that generates from the "deformation of the realistic form".[37] The FEKS method is defined by Nedobrovo as the method of *complicating* the form. This is related to the principle of estrangement by which the objects, put in a new, abnormal context, are withdrawn from their perceptive automation. The object is no longer understood through recognition, but through vision. Eccentric combinations of objects that "complicate the form" can be found, for instance, in the first FEKS film *The Adventures of Octobrine* (*Pokhozhdenya Oktyabrina*, G. Kozintsev-L. Trauberg, 1924), which featured an itinerant office, composed of a desk, a typewriter, an inkwell, and its accessories mounted on a motorcycle. This technique of estrangement – closely linked, indeed, to the Formalist process of semantic distortion – was conceived in a very similar way by the Italian Futurists during the Teens. In their "Manifesto of Futurist Cinema" (1916), one of the fourteen cinematic proposals is the realisation of "dramas of objects" that aims at the de-familiarisation (or *Verfremdung*) of common things:

> *Objects animated, humanised, baffled, dressed up, impassioned, civilised, dancing – objects removed from their normal surroundings and put into an abnormal state that, by contrast, throws into relief their amazing construction and non-human life.*[38]

In the summer of 1916, the Italian Futurists shot their film *Vita futurista* (*Futurist Life*), that may have illustrated this formula for "dramas of objects" wherein a discussion between a foot, a hammer, an umbrella, and an exploration of herrings, carrots, and eggplants took place. The film, unfortunately, is lost. In 1915, Marinetti had already experimented on stage with some "dramas of objects" in which inanimate things moved and spoke, namely in the theatrical syntheses *Il teatrino dell'amore* (*The Little Theatre of Love*) and *Vengono* (*They Are Coming*).

This particular treatment of objects can be associated with the Futurist concept of "analogy", appropriated by Marinetti in terms of a new synthesising of literary techniques and applied to the arts and the cinema alike (similar to the creation of very condensed – and irrational – metaphors, defined as "nothing more than the deep love that assembles distant, seemingly diverse and hostile things").[39] In fact, the very first proposal of the "Manifesto of Futurist Cinema" concerns the application of "filmed analogies". In order to express the state of extraordinary happiness, the Futurists suggest showing a group of chairs "flying comically around an enormous coat stand until they decide to join", whereas the fracturing of a character character "into a whirlwind of little yellow balls" would be the visualisation of the state of anger.[40]

In "The Variety Theatre" there is a brief allusion to the analogical technique as well: among the ingredients of the Futurist *marvellous*, one reads "profound analogies between humanity, the animal, vegetable, and mechanical worlds."[41] The Futurist "marvellous" is a mixture – or should we say *montage*? – of absurdities. With such a mixture of absurdities, Marinetti seeks to produce not only general hilarity ("The whole gamut of laughter and smiles, to flex the nerves"), but also an antirational hygiene of the human psyche ("The whole gamut of stupidity, imbecility, doltishness, and absurdity, insensibly pushing the intelligence to the very border of madness"). Because of this specific goal, this preoccupation of provoking a shock among the audience, the Futurist "marvellous" can be associated with Eisenstein's *montage of attractions*. Remember that Eisenstein theorises this fundamental mechanism in the first place as a theatrical device! Written in consequence of the subversive staging of Alexander Ostrovsky's play *Enough Simplicity in Every Wise Man* (and published in 1923 in Mayakovsky's journal *LEF*),[42] "Montage of Attractions" proposes a new approach of constructing a performance:

> *[...] We advance to a new plane – free montage of arbitrarily selected, independent (within the given composition and the subject links that hold the influencing actions together) attractions – all from the stand of establishing certain final thematic effects – this is montage of attractions.*[43]

In other words, the subject – *in casu* Ostrovsky's play – is a mere pretext in order to give way to a chain of effects, a "montage of surprises", as Victor Shklovsky has defined it.[44] Furthermore, the Formalist explains that in Eisenstein's staging of *The Wise Man*, the montage was indeed not a way to create a conceptual construction forcing us to consider both the single parts of the work and its totality; on the contrary, the montage "reconciles the irreconcilable", which is rather close to the idea of assembling "distant, seemingly diverse and hostile things", operated by Marinetti's analogy.

Eisenstein distinguishes an attraction from a trick in terms of the involvement of the spectator:

> *The attraction has nothing in common with the trick. Tricks are accomplished and completed on a plane of pure craftsmanship (acrobatic tricks, for example) and include that kind of attraction linked to the process of giving (or in circus slang, "selling") one's self. As the circus term indicates, inasmuch as it is clearly from the viewpoint of the performer himself, it is absolutely opposite to the attraction – which is based exclusively on the reaction of the audience.*[45]

Basically, an attraction should produce "emotional shocks".[46] The aggressive dimension to which Eisenstein aims can be considered a Futurist inheritance passed on by the FEKS, and more specifically as a lesson learned from the variety theatre.[47] Already in 1913 Marinetti was "seeking the audience's collaboration",[48] and proposed to transform the spectator from "stupid voyeur" into an (inter)active element of the show, to surprise and to fool him/her, for instance, by selling the same ticket to several persons or by putting glue on the seats.

Interesting enough, the term "attraction" appears in "The Variety Theatre" manifesto, since its very first version:

> *The Variety Theatre destroys the Solemn, the Sacred, the Serious, and the Sublime in Art with a capital A. It cooperates in the Futurist destruction of immortal masterworks, plagiarising them, parodying them, making them look commonplace by stripping them of their solemn apparatus as if they were mere attractions.*[49]

Although Marinetti's use of the term seems rather fortuitous and not so well thought-out as Eisenstein's, it is nevertheless one of the few words printed in italics (next to *"meraviglioso" futurista* and as well as some French expressions such as *chic*, *couplet*, *Revues*). Moreover, Marinetti shares with the young Eisenstein the fundamental attitude of rejecting "Art with a capital A" in favour of a minor art (the circus or the music-hall): according to the former, "Art" should be reduced to a *mere number* of attraction; according to the latter, it should be (de)constructed as a *montage* of attractions.[50] For both, cinema can function as an attractional element, a subject I will return to shortly.

It is important to note here that the very first English and Russian translations of "The Variety Theatre" manifesto did not conserve the notion of "attraction". Both *Daily Mail* and *The Mask* translated the Italian expression into "ordinary turn". In the Russian journal *Teatr i iskusstvo* the notion of "attraction" is rendered as "veshch", i.e. "thing." In Shershenich's volume, however, the original term is conserved: "attraksiona". It remains to be verified which version the founders of the FEKS (and, more importantly, Eisenstein) actually read.

Futurist Attractions on the Stage

The Italian Futurists rarely transposed their principles concerning the revolution of the theatre into a full-scale production. As a matter of fact, their performances took place mostly in the form of Futurist evenings, that consisted of a chain of attractions: words-in-freedom, speeches, explanation of exhibited paintings, pieces of Futurist noise music, theatrical syntheses and, eventually, film projection. With their original concept of "synthetic theatre", they conceived extremely short pieces (called *sintesi*), two pages average in length. Presumably, most of the Futurist sketches were *hic et nunc* creations, improvised on stage or at least performed without too much rehearsal. A Futurist evening was a *happening*.

This dimension of uniqueness in some way characterised in some way the spectacular productions of the Russian avant-garde as well. Often, they could not endure more than two evenings since they were simply too chaotic or even too dangerous to be performed during a whole season. Furthermore, in terms of the level of freshness and scan-

dal, only the premiere could reach the best and highest effects. This "rule" is certainly valid for the two pre-Revolutionary productions *Tragedy of Vladimir Mayakovsky* and *Victory over the Sun*, which were performed in St. Petersburg on alternate evenings from December 2 to 5, 1913. The latter was an especially authentic Futurist set-up (with scenery and costumes by Malevich and music by Matyushin). According to the testimony of the actor Tomashevsky, Kruchenykh's concept was nothing more than "pure nonsense and abracadabra", but the audience was delighted: "The opera was as easy to look at as it was interesting, and there were many intermissions. In other words, it was just this abstruse but interesting Futurism that the St. Petersburg public wanted, since they had a weakness for unusual sights."[51]

Very probably, both Mayakovsky and Kruchenykh were, at that specific moment, unfamiliar with "The Variety Theatre" manifesto; as already stated, it is only after the Revolution that Marinetti's ideas concerning the stage are fully intercepted in Russia and deliberately implemented into several theatre productions. Representative of this actualisation are *The First Distiller* by Annenkov, *The Wedding* by the FEKS, and *The Wise Man* by Eisenstein. When in 1919 Annenkov was given the opportunity to direct at the Hermitage Theatre of St. Petersburg, he decided to stage *The First Distiller*, an almost unknown play by Tolstoy, published in 1886. This play was purposefully chosen, as a pretext for a completely free and subversive *mise-en-scène*. The entire staging was built on circus attractions performed by acrobats, trapeze artists and clowns. Most specifically, the scene in Hell was decomposed into a Futurist variety theatre. Similarly, the FEKS took advantage of Gogol's play *The Wedding* for their first eccentric performance on September 23, 1922. The production was promoted as an "electrification of Gogol" (the author was literally "electrified" on stage), as a mixture of "operetta, melodrama, farce, film, circus and Grand Guignol".[52] During the rehearsals, the scenario was incessantly adapted and enriched with new tricks. The lack of time and the chaotic dress rehearsal made the premiere's unfolding as a real, unforeseen happening.[53] In direct line with these two innovative productions is Eisenstein's staging of *The Wise Man* that consisted of a revolutionary modernisation of Ostrovsky. Its conception was conditioned by Meyerhold's production of *Tarelkin's Death*, for which Eisenstein was an assistant director and in which Meyerhold introduced a large number of traditional fair and circus tricks.[54] The premiere of *The Wise Man* was given in Moscow on April 16, 1923. Conceived as a dynamic montage of stunts, it turned into an extremely physical performance, involving tremendous risks. Several of the 25 attractions that constituted the epilogue of the show can be defined as utterly Futurist: the *mise-en-scène* of a fight (no. 19: "Battle with swords") and the physical involvement of the audience (no. 25: "A salvo under the spectators as the final chord"), for example. As for the montage principle, it has to be regarded as an intrinsic quality of the variety theatre. To repeat Shklovsky's words, the technique of montage "reconciles the irreconcilable", and emphasizes the strangeness of the alternation of attractions; only because of the bizarre, unusual combination, a stunning spectacle is created.[55] When in 1934 Eisenstein looks back at this production of *The Wise Man*, his conclusion concerning the meaning of the music-hall is unequivocal: "The music-hall element was obviously needed at the time for the emergence of a 'montage' form of thought."[56] As far as the setting was concerned, Eisenstein transformed the traditional stage into an arena, three-fourths of which were surrounded by the audience. This particular spatial organisation emphasises, once again, the importance of the circus within the context of the Russian avant-garde.

More generally, one can state that the Russian revolution of the theatre results in a real amalgam of different forms of entertainment, which perfectly reflects Marinetti's original designation of the variety theatre as a collective notion (properly translated in *The Mask* as "Theatre of Varieties"). So far, I have not focused my attention on the remarkable integration of film in these hybrid theatre productions. In fact, the interplay between live action and illusion of action, between reality and its substitute, is a highly relevant aspect of the experimental staging in the Teens and the Twenties. It was emblematically applied by the FEKS in the final scene of *The Wedding*, where the fake (but real) assassin-character Chaplin was killed on stage by Nat Pinkerton (= live action), and then resurrected on the screen in the shape of the real (but fake) Charlie Chaplin (= illusion of action). This demonstration of "Technique against death!" aptly reflects the growing occurrence of the use of cinema in the theatre. Eisenstein, at his turn, shot some film fragments for the staging of *The Wise Man* that were integrated in the play. Among the attractions of the epilogue, there are two film segments: one showing the theft of Glumov's diary, an unmistakable parody of an American detective film, and the other revealing Glumov's transformations into various shapes, an homage to Georges Méliès (or even to Leopoldo Fregoli).

The Wedding and *The Wise Man* were not the first examples of interaction between stage and screen. According to Yuri Tsivian, similar hybrid performances were given in Russia already in 1911; such attempts were meant not only to animate the backdrop with the help of film projection, but also to alternate theatrical and cinematic scenes in function of the action. Tsivian especially refers to the experiments of the Theatre of the Mosaic and the troupe of Pavel Orlenev[57] The originality of the post-revolutionary productions, however, consists of the treatment of film as a music-hall or variety attraction, as a spectacular element in the chain. It is exactly this use of the cinema that Marinetti promotes in "The Variety Theatre" manifesto, at least in its traditionally best known version of 1914:

> *The Variety Theatre is unique today in its use of the cinema, which enriches it with an incalculable number of visions and otherwise unrealisable spectacles (battles, riots, horse races, automobile and airplane meets, trips, voyages, depths of the city, the countryside, oceans, and skies).*[58]

Again it would be very useful to know which version the FEKS (and Eisenstein) read, in order to know precisely whether or not the "use of the cinema" in their subversive theatre productions can be considered as a lesson taken directly from Marinetti. As far as Marinetti himself is concerned, it is not unlikely that the idea of utilising film as an enrichment of the variety theatre was inspired by Fregoli's shows. Since 1898, the latter had started to fill his performances with cinematic images, at first with views from Lumière and then with his own films. One of Fregoli's favourite tricks was to show a film backwards, which always provoked hilarity in the auditorium.

In this context of hybrid spectacles, the distribution of *Vita futurista* is emblematic as well. Screened at the end of Futurist evenings, with its premiere at the Theatre Niccolini of Florence on January 28, 1917, it was shown as a spectacular attraction rather than as an autonomous work of art (and this in spite of the position taken in the "Manifesto of Futurist Cinema" wherein the Futurists no longer consider the new medium as an auxiliary element of the stage, but fully acknowledge it as an "autonomous art").[59]

Furthermore, instead of presenting a well organised structure, the film consisted of a chain of sketches, of a juxtaposition of Futurist attractions, each of which illustrated an aspect of "Futurist life". In contrast to the kolossals produced at the same time in Italy, *Vita futurista* signalled a return to the origins of the cinema. With this occasional experiment, the Futurists re-appreciate the cinema in its original form as fairground attraction, and as base popular amusement.

This homage to the so-called "primitive" cinema underlies likewise not only the FEKS program, but also Eisenstein's "Montage of Attractions" that refers to Chaplin and "the specific mechanics of his movement."[60] This is precisely why André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning have used the term "attractions" to indicate the early conception of non-narrative cinema (that dominated the screens until 1907-08). According to Jacques Aumont, they rely on an Eisensteinian definition of the attraction, as music-hall number, as spectacular and as an "autonomisable" performance.[61]

From the perspective of the revolution of the stage and especially from that of the exploitation/exploration of the variety theatre, the reassessment of the cinema as attraction (or the cinema as a "cinema of attraction") is very significant. It is noticeable that more than one avant-garde short emerged from within the context of the performance art. The very first example is not *Vita Futurista*, but *Drama v Kabaré futuristov No. 13* that was shot in late 1913 in one of the Moscow café-cabarets and that featured, presumably, Larionov, Goncharova, the Burliuk brothers and Mayakovsky. It contained some poetry reading and dance performances, such as the "Futurist tango" and the "Futuredance of Death".[62] Another good illustration is *Retour à la raison*, that Man Ray made in one day in 1923, on demand of Tristan Tzara, for the Dadaist evening "Le Cœur à barbe". Similarly, René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924) was conceived as an attraction, or as the title indicates, as an act to be shown during the interval of another spectacle, namely the Dadaist ballet *Relâche*.

Thus, the meaning of the music-hall can be considered in terms of a link between the early cinema and the experimental cinema of the Twenties. In a re-appreciation of the cinema as attraction, or by conceiving it as entr'acte or short entertainment, a bridge between primitive and avant-garde film is built. And it is also thanks to this specific role that the music-hall of the roaring Twenties still survives, at least in some fleeting images.

1 This is the closing formula of Marinetti's manifesto "The Variety Theatre", in Umbro Apollonio (ed.), *Futurist Manifestos* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p. 131.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 129.

3 Roland Barthes, "Au music-hall", in *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), pp. 178-179.

4 For a historical overview of the music-hall, see J. Feschotte, *Histoire du Music-Hall* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965); on the role of the *chanson* within the history of the French café-concert, see G. Harris, "Regarding History: Some Narratives Concerning the Café-Concert, Le Music Hall, and the Feminist Academic", *The Drama Review*, no. 40 (Winter 1996), 70-84.

5 Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit: drei Studien zur Kunstsoziologie* (1936) (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 53.

6 Harris, who quite rightly points out the differences between the café-concert and the music-hall, stresses that the latter is marked by "the presence of the *promenoir*, a walkway where

prostitutes could encounter clients." In other words, the stage literally intrudes in the auditorium. See: G. Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

7 R. Barthes, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178. The English translation is mine.

8 This metaphor is taken from the experimental Flemish poet Paul Van Ostaijen (1896-1928), who twice composed a series of five poems celebrating the music-hall. The second series, dated from 1921, is an explosion of words-in-freedom that starts as following: "SUDDENLY / within the circle of its dejection / the city began to / live // Music Hall is / full / vague / desire / in its electric economy / people in suspense / before the banal marvel // Music hall a balloon that will / b u r s t." See Paul Van Ostaijen, *Verzamelde gedichten* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1992), p. 350. The English translation is mine.

9 Legrand-Chabrier, "Le Music-hall", in *Les Spectacles à travers les âges*, Vol. I (Paris: Editions du Cygne, 1931), p. 247.

10 See S. Fauchereau, "Café-Cabaret in the World", in Pontus Hulten (ed)., *Futurism & Futurisms* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), p. 439; on the Russian cabarets, in particular the Stray Dog, see J. E. Bowlt, "When Life Was a Cabaret", *Art News*, no. 83 (December 1984), pp. 122-127.

11 G. Berghaüs, *Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 90.

12 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "Il teatro di varietà", *Lacerba*, Vol. 1, no. 19 (October 1913).

13 Generally, one regards the publication in *Daily Mail* (November 21, 1913), as the very first one. Not only was the text published by the London newspaper not the original version (but its translation), it was also a very revised form of Marinetti's manifesto. The editors of *Daily Mail* conceded that they had "slightly – very slightly" edited the article by "Signor Marinetti". In reality, the manifesto underwent drastic changes: the title altered into "The Meaning of the Music-Hall", at least ten paragraphs were entirely cut, and – most importantly – the typical manifesto structure, i.e. its division into numbered items, vanished. In 1914 another English version appeared in Florence, in Gordon Craig's theatre journal *The Mask*, Vol. 4, no. 3 (January 1914), pp. 188-193. Translated by D. Neville Lees, the manifesto is followed by some notes "On Futurism and the Theatre" by Craig himself, who is probably also the author of the anonymous, somehow ironic footnotes added to Marinetti's text. In spite of the remark "The first unabridged English translation – By permission of Marinetti & Papini" that accompanies this second English version, one is wrongly tempted to consider it as unfaithful to the original, as in his study does: Michael Kirby: "This version was also incomplete. Although it retained the original format, three one-paragraph sections and Marinetti's fanciful *parole in libertà* ending were omitted, and one fabricated paragraph – apparently an attempt at summarising the final poetic passages – was inserted." It was indeed the "first unabridged English translation" of the first version of the manifesto (as published in *Lacerba*, Vol. 1, no. 19, October 1913). See Michael Kirby, *Futurist Performance* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1971), p. 20.

14 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *I manifesti del Futurismo* (Firenze: Edizioni di Lacerba, 1914).

15 *Teatr i iskusstvo*, Vol. 5 (1914).

16 V. Shershenevich (ed.), *Manifesty italianskago Futurizma* (Moskva: Russkago Tov-va, 1914).

17 Originally, the Russian Futurists planned to welcome Marinetti with rotten tomatoes, but they did not. During his conferences, they principally insisted – according to the testimony of Antonio Marasco, who was travelling with Marinetti – on the equality of languages. Since Marinetti was reading poetry in Italian, they wanted to speak in Russian. In fact, what happened was a genuine linguistic combat between two strongly nationalistic movements. See Antonio Marasco, "Marinetti en Russie", in Giovanni Lista, *Futurisme. Manifestes – Proclamations – Documents* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1973), p. 433.

18 František Deák, "The Influence of Italian Futurism in Russia", *The Drama Review*, no. 19 (December 1975), p. 89.
19 The manifesto is translated in: Ian Christie, John Gillet (eds.), *Futurism Formalism Feks* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), pp. 62-63.
20 The manifesto is translated in John E. Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde. Theory and Criticism. 1902-1934* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), pp. 80-83. Larionov and Zdanevich declare: "The synthesis of decoration and illustration is the basis of our self-painting. We decorate life and preach – that's why we paint ourselves. [...] City dwellers have for a long time been varnishing their nails, using eye-shadow, rouging their lips, cheeks, hair – but all they are doing is to imitate the earth. We, creators, have nothing to do with the earth; our lines and colours appeared with us. [...] We paint ourselves because a clean face is offensive, because we want to herald the unknown, to rearrange life, and to bear man's multiple soul to upper reaches of reality."
21 F. T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre", *cit.*, p. 130.
22 John E. Bowlt, "Natalia Goncharova and Futurist Theater", *Art Journal*, no. 49 (Spring 1990), p. 46.
23 Quoted in F. Deák, *op. cit.*, p. 91; the manifesto is partly translated in Italian in Cesare De Michelis, *Il futurismo italiano in Russia 1909-1929* (Bari: De Donato, 1973), pp. 178-181.
24 Bruno Corra, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli, "The Futurist Synthetic Theatre", in *Futurist Manifestos*, cit., p. 184.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 195.
26 It has to be said that Marinetti too included the circus in his "Variety Theatre" manifesto, at least in the first version of 1913. In the introductory words, the variety theatre is explicitly considered as a collective noun covering "Music Halls, Café-chantants or equestrian circuses". This specification disappears in the later version, yet the horses remain thanks to the attractions of "colourful riding masters" and "*Looping the loop* on bicycles, in cars, and on horseback" See: F.T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre", *cit.*, pp. 127-128.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
28 The manifesto is translated as: Yuri Annenkov, "Merry Sanatorium", *The Drama Review*, no. 19 (December 1975), pp. 110-112.
29 See Claudine Amiard-Chevrel, *Du cirque au théâtre* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1983), p. 12.
30 F.T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre", *cit.*, pp. 130.131.
31 Natalia Noussinova, *Leonid Trauberg et l'excentrisme. Les débuts de la fabrique de l'acteur excentrique 1921-1925* (Crisnée: Yellow Now, 1993), p. 28. The English translation is mine.
32 Next to Marinetti at least three other names have to be mentioned as inspirational persons for the FEKS: first, their master Mardjanov (who was at his turn a pupil of Stanislavski), because of his concept about the actor; secondly, Radlov whom Kozintsev and Trauberg considered the father of eccentrism for having introduced the circus and the music-hall in his Theatre of Popular Comedy (1920-1922); and lastly, Foregger because of his search for a "music-hallization" of the theatre. See: N. Noussinova, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-23.
33 Grigory Kozintsev, Georgy Kryzhitsky, Leonid Trauberg, Sergei Yutkevich, "Ekscentrism" (Eccentrism); Grigory Kozintsev, "AB! Parad ekscentrika" (AB! The Eccentric's Parade); Georgy Kryzhitsky, "Teatr azarta" (The Theatre of Hazard); Leonid Trauberg, "Kinematograf v roli oblicitelja" (The Filmmaker as Denouncer); S. Yutkevich, "EkscentrisM - ZivopiS - ReklamA" (Eccentrism Painting Publicity). For the English translation of these manifestos, see *The Drama Review*, no. 19 (December 1975), pp. 95-109.
34 The cult of the machine is even more explicitly expressed in: S. Yutkevich, "Eccentrism

Painting Publicity", *cit.*, that recommends not only to study machines ("Locomotives, autos, steamships, motors, mechanisms"), but also to love them: "We teach the love of the machine!".

35 Bernadette Poliwoda, *FEKS - Fabrik des exzentrischen Schauspielers. Vom Exzentrismus zur Poetik des Films in des frühen Sowjetkultur*, *Slavistische Beiträge*, B. 312 (München: Otto Sagner, 1994), p. 115.

36 See G. Kozintsev, "AB! The Eccentric's Parade", *cit.*: "We revere Charlie Chaplin's rear more than Eleonora Duse's hands!".
If the person of Chaplin appealed to the FEKS, it was in the first place because of his ambivalent reputation, that is his success in West-Europe and the label of vulgar that he had in Russia (where he was yet practically unknown at that moment). Thus, the FEKS used his name to shock. Chaplin is also mentioned in the poster list established by Yutkevich in "Eccentrism Painting Publicity": there he figures among other eccentric representations such as laxative pills and fantastic cigars.

37 Vladimir Nedobrovo, "FEKS", in Paolo Bertetto (ed.), *Ejzenštejn, FEKS, Vertov. Teoria del cinema rivoluzionario. Gli anni venti in URSS* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1975), pp. 239-240. The English translation is mine.

38 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Bruno Corra, Emilio Settimelli, Arnaldo Ginna, Giacomo Balla, Remo Chiti, "Manifesto of Futurist Cinema", in *Futurist Manifestos*, cit., p. 218; I underline.

39 *Futurist Manifestos*, cit., p. 99.

40 F.T. Marinetti, B. Corra, E. Settimelli, A. Ginna, G. Balla, R. Chiti, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-217.

41 F.T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre", cit., p. 126.

42 An excerpt of this first article by Eisenstein is translated in English in Sergei M. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense* (New York: Meridian, 1957), pp. 230-233.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

44 Viktor Shklovsky, *Eisenstein* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1977), p. 102.

45 S. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, p. 232.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

47 Eisenstein himself, however, refers to another tradition, namely the French Grand Guignol Theatre, that was notorious for its horror and special effects: "An eye is gouged out, an arm or leg amputated before the very eyes of the audience." *Ibid.*

48 F.T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre", *cit.*, p. 127.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 129.

50 For a further analysis of the Futurist dimension in Eisenstein's work, see: Wanda Strauven, "Notes sur le 'grand talent futuriste' d'Eisenstein", in Dominique Chateau, François Jost, M. Lefebvre (eds.), *Eisenstein: l'ancien et le nouveau* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2001), pp. 45-65.

51 K. Tomashevsky, "Victory Over the Sun", *The Drama Review*, no. 15 (Fall 1971), pp. 95 and 100.

52 F. Deák, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

53 An important detail is that Eisenstein came over from Moscow to help his FEKS friends with the dress rehearsal. See Grigory Kozintsev, "Découverte de Pétrograd", in Marcel Martin, Jean Schnitzer, Luda Schnitzer, *Le Cinéma soviétique par ceux qui l'on fait* (Paris: Les Editeurs français réunis, 1966), p. 96.

54 D. Gerould, "Eisenstein's Wiseman", *The Drama Review*, no. 18 (March 1974), p. 76; see also R. Hutzler, "Vom *Mexikaner* zu *Gasmasken*", in Claudia Dillmann-Kühn (ed.), *Sergej Eisenstein im Kontext der russischen Avantgarde 1920-1925* (Frankfurt/M: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 1992), pp. 42-43.

55 V. Shklovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

56 Sergei M. Eisenstein, "Through Theater to Cinema", in *Film Form. Essays in Film Theory* (New York: Meridian, 1957), p. 12. Such idea was already expressed in the closing sentence of "Montage of Attractions", where, together with the film and the circus, the music-hall is explicitly considered as an apprenticeship for montage: "Schooling for the *montageur* can be found in the cinema, and chiefly in the music-hall and circus, which invariably (substantially speaking) puts on a good show – from the spectator's viewpoint. This schooling is necessary in order to build a strong music-hall-circus program, resulting from the situation found at the base of a play." S. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, *cit.*, p. 233.

57 Yuri Tsivian, "L'Ecran sur la scène, chez les Feks et chez Eisenstein", in N. Noussinova, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-122.

58 F.T. Marinetti, "The Variety Theatre", *cit.*, p. 126.

59 F.T. Marinetti, B. Corra, E. Settimelli, A. Ginna, G. Balla, R. Chiti, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

60 S. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, *cit.*, p. 231.

61 André Gaudreault, Tom Gunning, "Le cinéma des premiers temps: un défi à l'histoire du cinéma?", in Jacques Aumont, André Gaudreault, Michel Marie (eds.), *Histoire du cinéma. Nouvelles approches* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1989), p. 59. In this paper, which was delivered at Cerisy-la-Salle in 1985, the authors distinguish two modes of film practice in the early cinema: 1) the system of *attractions monstratives* (1895-1908); 2) the system of narrative integration (1909-1914). As far as the definition of Eisenstein's attraction is concerned, Jacques Aumont proposes three different concepts: the attraction as performance (i.e., the music-hall or circus number), as association of ideas, and as "efficiency" (*efficience*). See: Jacques Aumont, *Montage Eisenstein* (Paris: Albatros, 1979).

62 On *Drama v Kabaré futuristov No. 13* and the "inconclusive, unreliable or very incomplete" data that exist about this movie, see J. Heil, "Russian Futurism and the Cinema: Majakovskij's Film Work of 1913", *Russian Literature*, no. 19 (1986), pp. 175-191.

PROJECTS & ABSTRACTS

"BANDE A PART": SUONI, VOCI E SCRITTURA NEL CINEMATOGRAFO DI ROBERT BRESSON

Manlio Piva / Ph.D. Thesis Abstract
Università di Padova

L'espressione "bande à part" rimanda alla colonna sonora ottica presente sulla pellicola cinematografica, ma separata, relegata di lato rispetto all'immagine, al fotogramma. Allo stesso tempo "faire bande à part" significa "tenersi in disparte", "fare parte a sé". In questa duplice accezione si esprime il contenuto di un lavoro di ricerca sull'opera di Robert Bresson a partire dall'analisi del sonoro e che nello stesso tempo si propone di tratteggiare un'immagine diversa, forse più vera, del regista francese, da sempre riconosciuto autore estremamente originale ma anche irrimediabilmente e orgogliosamente solitario, "fuori dal tempo". L'importanza data al sonoro da Bresson giustifica questo taglio analitico; uno sguardo sulla temperie culturale degli anni in cui il regista francese operò arricchisce di significati le scelte compiute e mostra come egli fosse tutt'altro che estraneo alle speculazioni estetiche coeve.

La natura del suono riprodotto rispetto all'immagine è il punto di partenza: sono uno omogeneo all'altra oppure no? La questione, posta fin dagli albori del sonoro (Balázs), è ancor oggi lontana dall'avere una risposta univoca. Da una parte chi sostiene che il suono registrato viene semplicemente "dislocato" e non costituisce quindi un simulacro come l'immagine; che fra suono reale e suono riprodotto vi sarebbe insomma una semplice differenza di "grado", non di "natura" (Chion e con accezioni diverse Morin, Masson, ecc.). Dall'altra chi ritiene che il suono registrato subisca altrettante alterazioni rispetto al suono reale di quante ne subisce l'immagine (Altman, Gryzik, Jullier ecc.). Bresson si pone decisamente fra i primi. Nel 1965 dirà in un'intervista: "Deve sapere che le immagini che lei vede sullo schermo non sono della stessa natura, mentre i suoni lo sono, e in questo risiede qualcosa di molto significativo, e cioè che quanto lo schermo ci restituisce come suono è della stessa natura del suono, mentre l'immagine non è della stessa natura della natura, è piuttosto un'immagine piatta, delle onde proiettate sullo schermo". Da questa convinzione discende tutta una serie di scelte espressive che caratterizzeranno il suo organizzato universo poetico.

Partito con un curioso cortometraggio del 1934, nel quale le peripezie di un improbabile Cancelliere di Crogandie (il clown Beby) si riassumono tutte nella sua impossibilità di tenere comizi pubblici, il cinema di Bresson innesca fin da subito un rapporto privilegiato con l'elemento sonoro, ma sarà solo dopo la difficile esperienza, produttiva e professionale, di *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945) che il regista francese si sposterà da un cinema di impianto sostanzialmente classico per porsi alla ricerca di una sua forma originale, anzi "originaria" attraverso il rifiuto degli elementi di derivazione teatrale, primo fra tutti l'attore, e l'individuazione e lo sfruttamento delle caratteristiche proprie del mezzo, macchina da presa e microfono (ricordiamo che a partire dal '50 si potrà registrare il suono *à part*, su magnetofono). Nasce così, nel '51, *Journal d'un*

curé de campagne, che varrà a Bresson la prima vera consacrazione critica. Con "Le Journal d'un curé de campagne et la stylistique de Robert Bresson", pubblicato sui neonati *Cahiers du Cinéma*, André Bazin, infatti, non solo ripercorre le tappe del cinema di Bresson, ma preconizza molti degli elementi che poi diverranno propri del suo cinema, in particolare: la mono-tonia e "sacralità" della voce; l'uso strutturale del testo scritto; il rapporto fra immagine e *voce off* (novità che inoltre risolvono i problemi di recitazione, dizione e *continuity* dovuti alla scelta di non usare attori professionisti). Con il successivo *Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé* (1956) Bresson affinerà l'uso del rumore in senso espressivo ed evocativo a partire da una colonna sonora "iperrealista" che gli servirà per allargare a dismisura le strette inquadrature attraverso le quali si sviluppa la storia del prigioniero nel carcere nazista. I muri "parlano" attraverso lapidi, scritte, suoni; i rumori si "dispongono" nello spazio attorno alla cella; la voce del prigioniero si "biforca" (nel tempo e nello spazio); la musica di Mozart è data per frammenti che non accompagnano l'immagine ma scaturiscono da essa in momenti "ottusi", fino a sublimarla nel finale. Tutti questi elementi, che potevano fin qui apparire legati alle necessità dei soggetti, si confermano fondamentali scelte espressive con *Pickpocket* (1959), cristallo perfetto e fragile dell'alchimia bressoniana, nel quale il protagonista Michel "si guarda parlare" muovendosi come uno specializzato automa fra i luoghi del suo desiderio descritti attraverso la carica attrattiva dei rumori che li caratterizzano. Louis Malle potrà scrivere: "*Bresson a trouvé*".

Nell'arco di questi tre film Bresson crea tutto il suo originale universo poetico e di pari passo lo dota di una rigorosa base teorica. Fra il '50 e il '58, infatti, redige il nucleo più consistente delle sue *Notes sur le cinématographe*.[1] Dai brevi aforismi di impostazione wittgensteiniana, montati come un "film di carta", si può trarre, attraverso un'opera di riallineamento, la chiara fisionomia di un universo estetico creato a partire dalle fondamenta. Non gli sono distanti le teorizzazioni di Astruc e quelle, sintomaticamente coeve, di Kracauer.[2] Vi si ritrova la necessità etica, di matrice brechtiana, di svelare il falso nella rappresentazione per portare un messaggio "depurato" (no attore, no recitazione, ma citazione). L'immagine è man mano messa in secondo piano a causa del suo potere mistificatorio mentre il sonoro è posto in rilievo per la sua capacità di suggerire invece che di mostrare, per la sua essenzialità, il suo realismo e parallelamente la sua carica rituale ed evocatrice. Il suono: voce, rumore e musica sono trattati da Bresson alla stessa stregua, decodificati e assorbiti nel suo impianto estetico con un linguaggio e un taglio che richiamano da vicino le teorizzazioni e sperimentazioni di Pierre Schaeffer e del gruppo di ricerca parigino che a partire dal secondo dopoguerra coniò il concetto di "musica concreta".

Tutta l'opera seguente di Bresson, da *Jeanne d'Arc* (1962) a *L'Argent* (1983), si presenta come un insieme di "variabili del *cinematografo*" in cui la ricerca espressiva si approfondisce e il suono diviene sempre più testimone ed espressione di un mondo che il regista francese descrive a tinte man mano più cupe. Le analisi dei film evidenziano come si attui una "pedagogia bressoniana": la *voce off* si rivela voce del sopravvissuto (*Une Femme douce*, 1969) e poi voce del potere; l'inquinamento diviene inquinamento acustico nel quale rumore e potere si rinsaldano diabolicamente *(Le Diable probablement...*, 1977); una "ecologia", sonora oltreché visiva, sembra destinata irrimediabilmente al fallimento (*L'Argent*). Tutt'altro che un Bresson "fuori dal tempo": questi temi e rapporti li ritroviamo, fra gli altri, espressi in quegli anni nelle riflessioni di Murray Schafer sul "paesaggio sonoro",[3] e per esempio nel Barthes di *L'ascolto* (1977).[4]

1 Robert Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); tr. it.: *Note sul cinematografo* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1986).
2 Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); tr. it.: *Teoria del film* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1962).
3 Murray R. Schafer, *The Tuning of the World: Toward a Theory of Soundscape Design* (Philadeplhia: University of Pennsylvania, 1980)
4 Roland Barthes, Roland Havas, "Ascolto", in *Enciclopedia*, vol. I (Torino: Einaudi, 1977); ora in Roland Barthes, *L'Obvie et l'obtus. Essais Critiques III* (Paris: Seuil, 1982); tr. it.: *L'ovvio e l'ottuso* (Torino: Einaudi, 1985).

CINEMA ET RECEPTION DES FILMS A GENEVE DANS LES ANNEES 1920

Pierre-Emmanuel Jaques / Ph.D. Thesis Project
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Entre 1919 et 1921, les principaux journaux genevois (*La Suisse*, *La Tribune de Genève*, *Journal de Genève*) se dotent de chroniques cinématographiques hebdomadaires. L'apparition de cette critique spécialisée exprime un phénomène doté d'une dimension double: elle met en évidence l'effort fourni par une série de jeunes intellectuels qui proclament le caractère artistique du cinéma et elle témoigne, d'une façon plus générale, d'un changement d'appréciation de ce médium au sein de la société. Il constitue alors un domaine neuf, plus facilement accessible à de jeunes littérateurs en mal de reconnaissance que ceux dotés d'une critique officielle (littérature, art, théâtre). Son importance est devenue telle que les journaux s'accordent à le prendre en considération sur le modèle des arts établis (musique, théâtre).

L'analyse de ces chroniques met en évidence une rupture entre le mode de discours dominant jusqu'alors et celui qui se met à prévaloir, qui s'oriente vers une réflexion sur les fondements de l'art cinématographique, tout en suivant l'actualité des films présents sur les écrans locaux. Jusqu'alors les commentaires avaient relevé principalement de deux ordres, social et moral. D'une part, on cherchait à évaluer le poids du cinéma par rapport à l'ensemble des loisirs et à dégager l'influence qu'il exerçait sur la population. D'autre part, en s'appuyant sur ces constats "sociologiques", on pourfendait les images sensationnalistes ou violentes et on en appelait à un contrôle plus sévère.

La situation genevoise présente un intérêt particulier durant cette période dans la mesure où cette ville est un centre culturel dont l'audience dépasse le niveau strictement local. Dotée d'un ample parc de salles de cinéma, où passe l'essentiel de la production cinématographique occidentale, elle recèle alors plusieurs journaux au fort tirage et une série non moins considérable de publications au rayonnement culturel élevé. Genève occupe une place centrale dans la reconnaissance, en Suisse romande, du cinéma comme un art à part entière. Elle accueille des manifestations abondamment commentées comme l'Exposition Internationale de TSF et de Cinématographie en 1925. De nombreuses conférences (Marcel L'Herbier, Germaine Dulac, Robert de Jarville, entre autres) s'y déroulent durant toute la période étudiée, et même au-delà. Plusieurs ciné-clubs (Ciné d'art, en 1926-27, puis le Ciné-club de Genève de 1928 à 1930, les Amis du film nouveau, en 1928-30) permettent aux cinéphiles genevois de revoir des classiques et de découvrir des productions de l'avant-garde européenne ou des films en butte à des interdictions (le cinéma soviétique avant tout).

Par années 1920, il faut entendre en fait une période un peu plus large, en remontant au début de la critique en 1919, et en l'étendant aux premières années de la décennie suivante, moment où ceux qui avaient inauguré ces chroniques se retirent. La

périodisation proposée par Richard Abel concernant l'histoire de la critique et de la théorie française contemporaine correspond, avec un certain décalage, à la situation romande.[1] La première période, qui s'étend de 1919 à 1925, voit l'émergence d'une critique spécialisée. S'y affirme d'une voix commune le caractère d'art du moyen d'expression cinématographique, tout en insistant sur la nécessité d'imprimer à son cours une juste orientation, grâce notamment à de diligents conseils. Cette mission se traduit par l'adoption d'un mode d'évaluation commun aux critiques. À de rares exceptions près, ils retiennent les mêmes films comme étant des "chefs d'œuvre" ou des "navets". L'année 1925 marque un tournant dans la mesure où plusieurs chroniqueurs cèdent la place à une série de nouveaux venus: Jean Choux, qui va poursuivre une carrière de cinéaste en France, est remplacé à *La Suisse* par Albert Haubrechts, puis, plus tard, par Freddy Chevalley, le correspondant genevois de la prestigieuse revue *Close Up*; Etienne Clouzot cède cette tâche à son épouse Jeanne. Marius Noul inaugure cette même année une chronique au *Travail*. Ils seront rejoints en 1927-28 par Marthe Richon (*Courrier*), Arnold Kohler (*La Lorgnette*), Elvire Andreossi (*Journal de Genève*) et Georges Verdène (*La Tribune de Genève)*.

Cette correspondance avec la situation française se perçoit aussi dans les modes d'appréciation des films, généralement identiques à ceux de leurs confrères parisiens. Les critiques romands partagent une conception de l'art cinématographique largement similaire. Ils sont d'ailleurs fort attentifs à ce qui s'écrit en France comme en attestent de nombreuses allusions et citations. Cette relation n'est cependant pas univoque: plusieurs articles de chroniqueurs genevois sont repris dans la presse spécialisée (*Cinéa – Ciné pour tous*, entre autres). Les références à des spécialistes français comme Emile Vuillermoz, Léon Moussinac ou Louis Delluc sert aux critiques à affermir leur position: d'une part, par rapport au champ culturel en général, ils suivent le modèle de la critique d'art où il est de bon ton de s'appuyer sur le jugement des confrères estimés. D'autre part, par rapport à la corporation des chroniqueurs cinématographique, ceux qui citent les collègues français manifestent par là-même leur bonne connaissance du domaine et s'élèvent à une hauteur comparable.

Si les concepts et les jugements des critiques français et suisses appartiennent à un paradigme commun, on assiste cependant à un redéploiement particulier au sein des contributions genevoises. C'est cette recherche de distinction[2] entre les chroniqueurs qui permet d'appréhender au mieux une situation locale. Elle s'établit en fonction de trois niveaux: les collègues, la branche cinématographique et les rédactions des journaux. En effet, des jeux d'alliance (ou de rejet) entre les différents protagonistes se font jour: William Bernard marque une même communauté d'esprit avec Jean Choux ou Jeanne Clouzot. Ces trois chroniqueurs se citent fréquemment en approuvant les jugements de leurs collègues. Il se plaint par contre d'attaques dont il s'estime la victime. Son désir d'indépendance l'autorise à démolir certains films globalement appréciés. Au cours de la période, apparaissent des lignes de partage toujours plus nettes entre les chroniqueurs. Certains sujets clés, comme les films d'avant-garde, la production soviétique ou le cinéma suisse génèrent des divergences marquées sur la question du rôle de la critique. Il s'agira ainsi d'observer comment les débats esthétiques traduisent un jeu de positionnement constant. L'étude de ces chroniques, si elle porte sur des problématiques esthétiques, ne peut s'effectuer qu'en s'appuyant sur une analyse du réseau complexe de relations qui s'établit entre les chroniqueurs.

1 Richard Abel, *French Film Theory and Criticism. A History/Anthology. 1907-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
2 Entendu au sens que Bourdieu donne à ce terme, notamment dans Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

THE REDPATH CHAUTAUQUA COLLECTION

University of Iowa Libraries Special Collections
Rick Altman, University of Iowa

Few areas of film history have been so systematically overlooked as the elusive realm of itinerant exhibition. From the 1890s to the 1950s traveling showmen periodically brought moving pictures to spectators interested in topics outside the mainstream of public entertainment, avid for a level of seriousness and erudition superior to that of theaters, or located in small towns lacking permanent projection facilities. Most traveling exhibitors signed season-long contracts with booking agents who sold their services to churches, charitable and fraternal organizations, or municipalities. Turn-of-the-century shows took place in churches, Lyceums, or opera houses; later, summer tent Chautauquas and public schools were the venues of choice. Throughout this period, traveling exhibitors made or commissioned many of their films. Often uncatalogued and ignored by historians, these films were almost uniformly documentary in nature, concentrating on local events, little-known portions of North America (including the newly established national parks and Alaska), foreign sites from European cities to the Panama Canal and the South Sea Islands, or unusual and exciting experiences such as sea rescues and big-game hunts. Just as important to early film exhibition – and just as ignored – as vaudeville and amusement parks, traveling lecture circuits have been almost totally excluded from film history.

This neglect has been partly caused by lack of available archival materials covering lecturers and their shows. One collection that deserves to be consulted is the University of Iowa's Redpath Chautauqua Collection. First organized in 1874 in the western New York town that gave it a name, a "Chautauqua" was a three to seven day meeting, usually in a tent, featuring lectures on topics of cultural interest, often accompanied by music and other uplifting entertainments. Organization into "circuit Chautauquas" began in 1904, with the booking of lecturers and other acts into circuits (on the model of vaudeville). For thirty years, until the Great Depression, circuit Chautauquas constituted one of middle America's most important gathering places. At its peak in the mid-1920s, circuit Chautauqua performers and lecturers appeared in more than 10,000 communities in 45 states to audiences totaling 45 million people. What the picture palace was to the city, Chautauqua was to the hinterlands. The Redpath Lyceum Bureau was the country's foremost booking office for circuit Chautauquas, totally dominating the Midwest. Now deposited at the University of Iowa, the Redpath Bureau papers include 648 shelf-feet of talent pamphlets, business records, correspondence, and photographs dating from 1890 to 1940. This is the largest collection of its kind in existence.

Thanks to the Library of Congress program on "American Memory," major portions of

the Redpath Chautauqua Collection are now available online, under the title "Traveling Culture: Circuit Chautauqua in the Twentieth Century." Online materials include 7,949 publicity brochures, promotional advertisements and flyers for 4,545 lecturers, teachers, preachers, statesmen and politicians, actors, singers and opera stars, glee clubs and concert companies, magicians, whistlers and other performers who traveled the circuits at the beginning of the 20th century. Each page of all 7,949 brochures can be displayed. Of particular interest to film scholars are the many pamphlets advertising the services of lectures who exhibited moving pictures, most of which they personally made in the off-season. These include everything from John J. Lewis's Passion Play films to Edward Burton MacDowell's films of the Panama Canal, the Fiji Islands, and Samoa. Other filmmaking lecturers represented include Arthur K. Peck, Arthur J. Pillsbury, Clarence Price, George Earle Raiguel, and A. W. Stephens. While most of their films were shot on location to document current events or disappearing civilizations, others involve narrative recreations, such as J. E. Comerford's recreations of sea rescues. The C. J. Hite Company exhibited Gaumont Chronophone synchronized sound films. All of this and much more can be located with the help of the search function included in the online collection.

The Redpath Chautauqua Collection may be consulted in the Department of Special Collections, located on the third floor of the University of Iowa Library. The Department is open from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday to Friday, except on national and some University holidays; scholars visiting from a distance are urged to check service hours on the Department website (http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/spec-coll) or to communicate prior to their visit, preferably by e-mail at lib-spec@uiowa.edu. The Department's telephone number is 319/335-5921; the fax number is 319/335-5900. The Department generally does not have staff resources to search the record books or to make large numbers of photocopies for readers. A limited number of photocopies can be made from some of the materials in this collection.

The online collection may be found at:
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/iauhtml/ or accessed through the University site (www.uiowa.edu, select Libraries, go to specific Main Library unit, select Special Collections, select About Us, select Traveling Culture).

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