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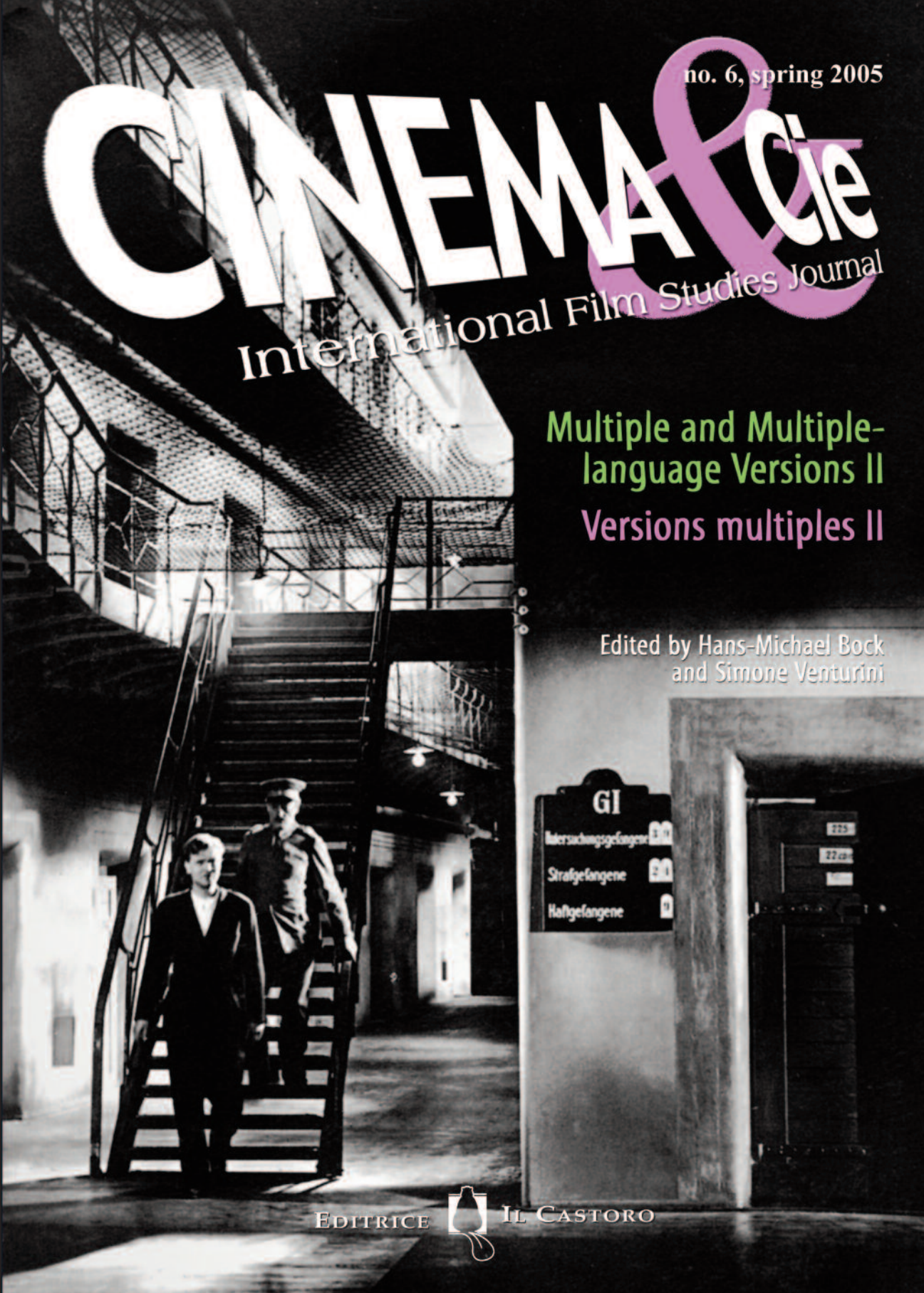
CINEMA & Cie

International Film Studies Journal

Multiple and Multiple-
language Versions II

Versions multiples II

Edited by Hans-Michael Bock
and Simone Venturini



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IL CASTORO

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International Film Studies Journal

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INTRODUCTION

The debate around the plurality and multiplicity of cinema, repetitions and differences, accurate filmographic and document research, versions and variants, remake and ‘reprise’) has identified – rediscovered – in multiple versions a polyhedral object that is observed and can be observed from a heterogeneous number of points of views but equipped, on the whole, of a strong equilibrium between historiographic tendencies and theoretical and analytical reflections. In a sort of ‘hermeneutics rebound effect’ historiographic studies have in fact forced the theory to rethink and reassess the reference categories and taxonomies, thus rendering more problematic the research’s status quo. Vice versa theory, in an effort to define adequate analytical tools, has raised new considerations and reassessments in historical studies (Horst Claus and Anne Jäckel’s paper is an illuminating example).¹

The studies published here constitute an important part of the papers and research presented, discussed and developed during the 2004 II Gradisca Spring School.² The contents of this monographic number reveal the aim of introducing the discussion starting from two theoretical studies, with different directions and orientations, centred on well-defined case studies. The first by Marie-France Chambat-Houillon, starts from an in-depth and engrossing theoretical reflection on the remake of a classic – *Psycho* – in order to bring multiple versions back into direct contact with the theoretical debate on cinematic plurality. A fruitful and productive field for the definition of the identity of multiple versions, which finds coherent confirmation in the case studies discussed by Michèle Lagny and Michel Marie. The second – by Francesca Chelu Deiana and Davide Pozzi – continues, with constancy and rigour, the debate on multiplicity, between versions and editions, faced by the theory and practice of film restoration.³

Whilst investigating “la place de l’auteur” in the dynamics put into play by the practice of ‘remaking,’ Chambat-Houillon encounters the “fluctuating frontiers” of multiplicity. As well as confirming the tools and theoretical areas that match the allographic and autographic properties of the works,⁴ there are two elements that in particular concern the differentiation between multiple versions (territory of multiplicity) and remakes (territory of plurality).

The first characteristic peculiar to the remake is the lack of “equivalence” between the works, whilst the multiple versions are typified (in part: the autographic side) by the – functional – equivalence.⁵ The second element consists of one of the identifying traits of the “originality” of a work. Along with the innovation and the singularity “l’écart temporel” between original and remake, the diachronic and ‘re-recognition’ perspective of the ‘re-made’ work “fonctionne comme un différence ‘essentielle’” that heightens and highlights the authorial intentions in the textual process and result of

the remake. In multiple versions, on the contrary, the equivalence logic, even if not always and entirely present, joins the relative indifference of the “amplitude temporelle” in defining the theoretical identity of the multiple versions and in their distinction as single works.

Could one say then, provocatively taking the seductive intuitions present in the assessments of certain theoretical studies to their extreme, that the multiplicity in multiple versions can be considered as the synchronic “version” of plurality? As Chambat-Houillon points out in her study, it nevertheless remains difficult – in the oscillations between theory and concrete manifestation, often “hybrid” and “mixed,” of multiplicity/plurality – to offer exact definitions, hierarchies and delimitations.⁶ One could in fact object that the practice of the remake often annuls or limits “the essentiality of the temporal difference.” In Italy, for example, many cases that can be ascribed to the field and ‘strong’ period of multiple versions, the first half of the 1930s, are classified as remakes of ‘contemporary’ foreign films, a practice that in actual fact is not limited to that transitional moment, but can be found throughout the history of cinema.⁷

The notion of synchronicity, even if insufficient to define the identity of the multiple versions, nevertheless offers interesting ideas and certain implications, which appear even more important, of the theoretical practices defined by the concept of *présentisme*, not by chance also treated and used by Michèle Lagny in his highly original case study⁸. Seemingly removed from the *strictu sensu* study of multiple versions, the study reveals itself to be fascinating and rich. It is able, amongst other things, to spark further considerations on the dimension of multiplicity and plurality, when defining the intertextual relationships and the mnemonic processes between heterogeneous (in the temporal sense) textual forms. In the specific case analysed by the scholar – a 1968 ‘original’ and two 1996 ‘synchronic’ versions – the 1996 documentary originates from a “frame-icon,” a “fantasme,” that demands a “devoir de mémoire,” far from the forms prescribed by the authorities, through the re-use and the stimulus of original elements (the May 1968 documentary) to establish, starting from an “objet-témoin” (the still of the working woman followed ‘live’ in 1968), a series of “images-mémoire” of the present: a “nouvelle archive” of oblivion and of the socially removed. An archive of a living memory, that works not to preserve but to create “present” testimonies, “remémoration,” in order to (as is the case of the second version of the 1996 documentary) establish more linear and pedagogic interpretations. In this extremely complex case it is perhaps the re-use dimension, the oscillation between past and present, between mythical uniqueness and the kaleidoscope of mnemonic locations, that helps us to understand well Lagny’s hesitation between the entity of the multiple and the plural.

In Deiana and Pozzi’s study the ‘silent multiple versions,’ in an analogous way and in an extremely different historical and methodological context, nevertheless reveal – as well as the confirmation of different editions, produced deliberately and with identical legitimacy and reciprocal autonomy from an ‘archetype’ – how the very practice and methodology of film restoration becomes a continuous decanting operation between past and present. The *enquiry* (the *inspection* table, the restoration *process*) questions the documentation, the texts, the historical and material heritage, archived and rediscovered to bring the film back *to the* present as a new version, restored to ‘regulate’ the distance between contemporaneity and original context. The progressive restorations of *Kif Tebbi* (1928, Mario Camerini), conditioned by the subsequent discovery of new witnesses, leads to the production of ‘new’ and further editions that feed, on the plural-

ity front, the pragmatic, original and constituent multiplicity of the text. In this sense also the duplication process, as the final element of the restoration process and as an element of a theoretical whole, must be set in correlation with the concept of the remake.¹⁰ Finally the analysis and method of the variants proves to be a common tool, when examining the texts, to restoration methodology and the study of differences/repetitions in multiple versions.¹¹

The considerations tied to the processes and temporal dispositions (in the remake, in the ‘reprises’, in the restoration) lead one to believe that if the plurality of the remake acts and “neutralises the time of the story – time as tension between the production context and the reception context” – then the synchronic multiplicity of multiple versions, works on the implementations of texts having equivalent differences and repetitions, whose aim is not to neutralise the time of the story but to establish a communication between the production context and the reception – linguistic and cultural – contexts. The production and semiotic machine of the multiple versions works (regulates the tension between production and reception contexts) in a, prevalently synchronic, adaptation and translation regime, not only strictly linguistic, but also, and especially, cultural and symbolic.¹²

If in the plurality of the remake one aims for “un accord entre le présent de l’expérience du spectateur [...] et celle de la fabrication du film,” the multiple versions operate through the multiplication to fill, translate and connect the distances between the different ‘cultural locations’ of reception.¹³

Therefore in Europe there is the notion of the multilingual version system as a form of synchronic adaptation to the international, national and trans-national cultural and linguistic identities and contexts. Much like a linguistic and cultural translation system that nevertheless, and perhaps because of it, acts on a level that intersects the remake.¹⁴

The investigations into the adaptations to the multilingual contexts, on the constructions and representations of national and trans-national identities, on “national styles,” carried out also through multiple versions, follow this direction and are part of this theoretical and historiographical field. The essays by Paul Lesch, Charles O’Brien and Ivan Klimeš and Pavel Zeman, in their evident differences, contain a common root in the research current that, starting from different analysis levels and contexts – the reception and diffusion of multiple versions and of talking films in the transition from silent cinema to talkies in Luxembourg in Lesch’s case; the statistical approach, between production modes and national styles in O’Brien’s case; the study of different diffusion forms and modes of newsreels in the Czechoslovak territory in Klimeš and Zeman’s case – investigate the modes of construction and representation of identity and national and trans-national aesthetic forms as well as the diffusion of multiplicity in, and for, multilingual contexts.

The case study treated by Lesch, in which the essential and characterising features of the specific historical picture provided by the cinema in Luxembourg – small multilingual and multicultural context – during the transition from silent to sound films, is of extreme interest. There are three preliminary factors that Lesch highlights: a multilingual and multicultural context; a cinematic institution that acts on the level of film distribution, exhibition and critical reception, that is, it does not produce a national cinema; a transitional moment – from silent to talkies – perceived in the initial stages as a fear of loosing, along with the aesthetic dimension, the communicative and ideological qualities of silent cinema: internationality, popularity and democratic nature. The mul-

tilinguism of the Luxembourg territory allowed, since the early 1930s, for an extended distribution of films in double-version: subtitled and dubbed. Until the second half of the 1930s the Luxembourg territory offered a broad range of possibilities: American films dubbed in German, multiple versions of American films, German films, Franco-German multiple versions, French films subtitled in German, etc. American cinema regained its dominant position only in the second half of the 1930s, to the advantage of German cinema whilst French cinema dropped in preference and screening frequency. Lesch identifies, in the consistent drop in popularity of French films during the first half of the 1930s not only the linguistic barrier, that is a minor familiarity with the French as opposed to German language, but also a lack of promotion of the films compared to the advertising campaigns and materials of Ufa films. The prevalence of the German language, especially in rural areas, in connection with the advertising campaigns does not prevent French and American films from finding their place. In conclusion there are two significant features that render the Luxembourg context unique and interesting. The contemporary presence in the territory, between 1930 and 1933, side by side or in the same cinema of French and German versions of the same film. The multiple versions tend to, in this hybrid and complex cultural and linguistic context and with different technological and linguistic solutions, to escape a strict regime of functional equivalence. They are screened in the same cinema and one is encouraged to see both of them, as is the case with *Atlantic* (1930, Ewald André Dupont, Jean Kemm), in order to appreciate the difference in treatment of the same scenario and they are also dealt with parallel in the newspapers. The particularity of the context is further confirmed by the fact that dubbing and subtitling (in French and German) were introduced and accepted relatively early and without an evident refusal, resulting in the winning model (especially for American cinema) throughout the 1930s.¹⁵

Ivan Klimeš and Pavel Zeman analyse, with different results and scope, the variants and strategies of propaganda and adaptation to the different Czechoslovak linguistic and cultural contexts present in two years of the weekly newsreel *Aktualita* (in Czech, German and to a lesser extent Slovak versions). Despite the multilingual context, the historical and political period leads Klimeš and Zeman to highlight, through a rigorous analysis and documentation, how at times, under certain circumstances – in this case the specific situation of conflict and precariousness in Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 1930s –, communicating in a particular language, with particular symbolic, cultural as well as political values, becomes more important than the content. The analysis of the variants between the Czech and the German language versions, made possible on the whole thanks to the use of a relevant quantity of non-filmic sources, identifies, with philological rigour, five types of basic variants: order, removal, substitution (to match certain current affairs pieces with the reference territories and populations or to avoid undesirable political connotations), variants in the audio commentary (for political reasons or to avoid possible misunderstandings), and finally variants that summarise and combine the above. The Czechoslovak propaganda therefore finds, through the cultural focus and linguistic commutation, a flexible strategy such as to maintain an equilibrium between the different intra-national and trans-national inhabitants. The multiplicity of the versions of *Aktualita* allows the state to represent itself as a body close and directly interested in the cultural, social and daily activities of the German minority. The media attention expressed in the Slovak version is very similar.

O'Brien's statistical analysis, in the wake of Barry Salt's studies, starts from a macro-

analytical level, fruitfully bringing together national styles and aesthetics, production and editing methods and techniques of sound cinema, in order to find, on a micro-analytical level, ways of understanding the historical weight and influence of the multiple version system. The research on the statistical data from the Average Shot Length (ASL) calculation is placed next to the assessment of the different market targets of the national cinema industries. The analysis of this data demonstrates a considerable difference between national cinemas: in particular France, throughout the 1930s, maintains a longer average shot length than the United States and English language films. This is attributable to the greater presence of live shots and contemporaneously demonstrates a much broader oscillation (a *range*) than the German or American range and therefore a greater variety of editing techniques. O'Brien puts down this last aspect to the genres employed and to the relevance of the role of the *auteur* in French cinema. In the period between 1930 and 1932 sound recording and editing techniques and the market trends devised and employed by three different film industries (United States, France, Germany) offer a diverse statistical and analytical picture. If one considers the different market targets – on one hand, USA and Germany as “export-oriented film industries,” and on the other France, more intent on maintaining the local market – the industrial and consistent impact on the production methods and editing techniques of the solutions employed through multiple versions by the United States and Germany lead to, as O'Brien suggests, a “pre-designed modular film-sound technique.” On the contrary, the French cinema industry, anchored to the local market, evolves, through differentiated solutions and a marked use of live shots, towards a national style different “from that of the export-oriented German and American film industries.” The comparison between the different ASL of English and German versions of the same film therefore have a clear convergence with the more general data, highlighting a planned modulation and adaptation process of the multiple versions to the “national styles” and not exclusively for strictly cultural and linguistic translation.

Hartvigson, differently from Lesch, O'Brien and Klimeš-Zeman states right from the outset, in his examination of *Frk. Møllers Jubilæum* (1937, *Miss Møller's Jubilee*, Denmark) and *Julia Jubilerar*, (1938, *Julia Jubilates*, Sweden), his intention of not analysing the differences in terms of nationality, but rather in the methods of actuating comic strategies. In this sense, multiple versions offer a unique opportunity to highlight the methods and processes for constructing characters in comedy. The Danish and Swedish versions, starting from the same scenario and the same set, offer two considerably different approaches to the definition of the main characters. The Swedish version, monotonous in its classical running, maintains a strong adherence to the canons of realism, in terms of a suppression of fiction codes. The Danish version, on the other hand, constructs and develops the characters by placing in the middle of the comedy their stereotypical and caricatural nature with connotations pursued by moving from one genre, and functional world, to another (the musical, the melodrama). The opportunity to investigate the traits of the comical and comedy through different acting and recitative approaches and through the construction methods of the comic substance finds, in this multiple version, a perfect case study that pitches a discussion on the clarification of the boundaries and transitions of fiction (the baroque, in the Danish version) against a discussion on the suppression of comic codes (the discreet, in the Swedish version). Such an approach sheds light both on the implementation strategies of multiple versions and on their validity, on an operative and phenomenological level,

in order to study the acting techniques, film star systems and the “substances” in the genre’s requirements.

The aims, approach and conclusions of the case treated by Horst Claus and Anne Jäckel who have re-examined (“reassessed”) nearly ten years later, the celebrated *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931, Erik Charell) and compared it with the French and English versions are different still. There are numerous reasons: a notion of historiography as a process of reassessment, “re-examinations” and revision of the texts and contexts with new available sources.

Furthermore Claus and Jäckel highlight, in the production and screening process of the different versions, the special attention paid by Ufa to financial, commercial and production policies between 1930 and 1932, with the progressive slide towards a greater attention to European markets (German and French) at the expense of English language markets (United States and Great Britain) as well as the particular and detailed attention to the production practices of the first film by the theatre director Charell and to the conflictual and non linear genesis of the film which also contained different contributions. Versions that starting from the initial multiplicity, ontological/constitutive, filmographic and productive, proliferate through the historiographic and philological enquiry towards a more extended multiplicity: the Viennese premiere, the Berlin premiere and the subsequent censorship variants, the French version, the English version and its 1932 *Old Vienna* re-edition, etc. The comparative analysis of the surviving prints and the considerations that emerge seem more significant. If the three versions, at a first cursory glance, seemed basically similar and the genre (the operetta-film in an intermedial perspective) became the main “internationalisation” vehicle of the film, allowing for the coexistence of national and contradictory elements, now a textual analysis, – still to be completed, warn the authors – the consideration of the details (at a recitative, linguistic, musical, choreographical and editing level, as well as for example the special intervention of the supervisor, Carl Winston, on the English script) leads one to reflect on the generalisations often acquired by historical research on multiple versions. That is that the production and commercial practices influenced by the historical, cultural and economic context and by the particular and individual interventions occurred at different stages of the production and distribution process of *Der Kongreß tanzt* make one in part, and positively, doubt, opening the historiographic re-examination, generalisations tied to linear views of the standardisation processes, techniques and solutions in act during the transition from silent to talking pictures or to the schematics tied to the conception and constitution ‘by nation/language/culture’ of multiple versions. Furthermore, such re-openings include in the field of multiple versions, not only of the remake, a strong rate of intentionality (authorial, textual, pragmatic, productive) that is considerably different in the different original texts.

Also Michel Marie, in the study dedicated to *Le Mépris*, stresses how the expression “multiple versions” denotes “very varied technical practices.” Therefore “dubbed” versions must then be considered as “another variant of multiple versions.” If for Marie the analytical approach goes through the textual and historiographical analysis, for the procedures that make a film multiple, this doesn’t prevent it finding in the temporality, in the contemporariness of the circumstances or in their subsequent manifestation, a fundamental difference between multiple versions and remake. It is in this sense that *Le Mépris* becomes multiple and not plural. From a different point of view, one must

also consider how the structure of the European cinema system of the sixties - with one of the dominant factors consisting of co-productions and joint ventures, on the most part at a financial level – meets, in its involution, certain ‘strong’ cases of ‘real’ co-production. Films conceived from the outset with a mixture of international and multi-layered elements (international crew, intervention of a French author on an Italian literary text, multilingualism, etc.).¹⁶

The versions indicated by Marie and analysed according to their differences (linguistic, musical, editing variants, removed and added variants, consisting of Bardot’s nudes) offer a view of multiplicity in which the proliferations, the version of *Le Mépris*, appear like the effect of an exemplary conflict (between multilingualism and cosmopolitanism and commercial and institutional requirements) and of a rejection of a unique, and in certain ways ‘old style,’ co-production model.¹⁷

In conclusion, the ‘Multiple Versions Project,’ thanks to the results produced by the Spring School in terms of research, collaboration between university, research and archive institutions has achieved a first important operational objective, that is the presentation to the European Community of an ambitious and shared international long-term project: *Multilingual Version Films and European Cultural Identity. MLV – Multilingual Versions Project*. The project partners and the associated members are: Národní Filmový Archiv (Praha), *CineGraph* (Hamburg), Università degli Studi di Udine, Filmarchiv Austria (Wien), Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (Berlin), Archives Françaises du Film du Centre National de la Cinématographie (CNC, Bois d’Arcy), in cooperation with Universität Hamburg, Ruhr Universität (Bochum), Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung (Wiesbaden), Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, Cineteca del Friuli, Università degli Studi di Bologna, CSC-Cineteca Nazionale (Rome) and the PresTech Film Restoration Laboratory.

The project will work on three levels. A basic filmography, containing the essential information of the MLV films, will be used to create an advanced filmography containing detailed information as well as related documents. Census of the existing copies of MLV films in European and world film archives and their physical state. Filmography and important documents will be made available through a website and database (English, French, German).

As a first opportunity to relate the MLV project to a wider and popular audience *CineGraph* and Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv will dedicate “CineFest - II International Festival of German Film-Heritage” as well as the 18th *CineGraph* Conference in November 2005 in Hamburg to the topic. The programme of CineFest will then be screened in Berlin, Vienna and Zurich.

The partners co-organizing the project will identify a series of MLV films, that will undergo reprinting and/or restoration of the various versions; a series of international events will present the results of the restoration projects and the progress of the researches. They will host exhibitions and screenings of MLV films; the research and restoration activity will result in publications (books as well as – hopefully – DVDs) in connection with European publishing houses.

Finally the organisation and distribution of an extensive retrospective dedicated to MLVs in the context of European production, presented in major cities of the continent. The publication of a book containing a popular summary of the MLV project.

[s.m., in collaboration with h.m.b.]

- 1 In the name of continuity, as Nataša Đurovičová recalled in the *Introduction* of the first issue of *CINÉMA & Cie* dedicated to multiple versions, the IX Udine International Conference on Film Studies, held in 2002 – *Il film e i suoi multipli / Film and its Multiples* – had called the attention of scientific research to the different dimensions, figures and fields of cinematic plurality and multiplicity. This attention, over the last two years has found in the “Scuola di Gradisca” - MAGIS – International Film Studies Spring School – a special location and an international research and comparison project on multiple versions. This second editorial appointment with the research on multiple versions, made possible thanks to the activities promoted by the Spring School and the important and constant attentions, contributions and stimuli provided by all the young researchers and scholars that have taken part (many of the latter are by now no strangers to Gradisca d’Isonzo), confirms first of all the validity of the choices undertaken and of the research contributions, themes and perspectives opened and developed. Cf. *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, Nataša Đurovičová, in collaboration with Hans-Michael Bock (eds.), *Multiple and Multiple-language Versions/Version multiples* (Spring 2004); Anna Antonini (ed.), *Il film e i suoi multipli/Film and its multiples* (Udine: Forum, 2003).
- 2 Amongst the talks presented it is worth recalling André Gaudreault’s contributions, on multiple versions in the early cinema, Charles Musser’s on the variants and on the versions of *Ame d’artiste/Heart of an Actress* (1924, Germaine Dulac), Hans-Michael Bock and Nataša Đurovičová’s on the research issues and perspectives in the field of multiple versions. Furthermore the talks by Natalia Noussinova, Casper Tybjerg, Leonardo Gandini – on two versions, in English and Spanish, of *Dracula* (1931, Tod Browning/George Melford), Lenny Borger – a talk dedicated to the *The Robber Symphony* (1935-36, Friedrich Fehér) -, Rié Kitada (on the multiple versions of the *benshi*).
- 3 Cf. Davide Pozzi, “Quelle version restaurer? Deux cas concrets: *Nana* et *Prix de Beauté*”, *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, cit., pp. 22-29; Davide Pozzi, “La passione di *Nana*. Vita morte e trasfigurazione di un film di Jean Renoir,” *Cinegrafie*, no. 15 (2002), pp. 79-115.
- 4 For a treatment of the allographic and autographic qualities see Gérard Genette, *L’Œuvre de l’art. Immanence et transcendance* (Paris: Seuil, 1994); Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968).
- 5 Cf. François Jost, *Territoires de l’œuvre cinématographique*, unpublished paper, MAGIS - Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School, March 2003.
- 6 Cf. F. Jost, *op.cit.*; see also Rémy Pithon, *Les Versions multiples: composantes, limites et problèmes d’une définition*, unpublished paper, MAGIS – Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School, March 2003. See also Rémy Pithon, “Les Version multiples: ont-elles existé?”, in A. Antonini (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 123-129.
- 7 For the quoted theme and historical context cf. Orsola Silvestrini, “L’autoremake e il cinema di genere: il caso Mario Camerini,” in A. Antonini (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 180-181: “Nel periodo compreso tra l’avvento del sonoro e la seconda guerra mondiale, coesistono in Italia due principali forme di rifacimento cinematografico: le versioni multiple (o versioni in lingua straniera) e i remake [...] I remake sono per lo più tratti da film stranieri, in larga misura europei, realizzati qualche anno prima, o addirittura l’anno stesso.”
In a different perspective, but still relative to the constituent properties of multiple versions, Pierre Sorlin, taking as an example *Die Privatsekretärin* (1931, Wilhelm Thiele), asked himself what could be the link between the German and French versions and the English and Italian remakes: Pierre Sorlin, “Multilingual Films, or What We Know About a Seemingly Bright Idea,” *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, cit., p. 18. Cf. also with R. Pithon, *op.cit.*, p. 124. Pithon, referring to

- the same, and other analogous, cases asked himself: “Où est, dans ce cas, le limite entre la ‘version multiple’ et le remake?”
- 8 The concept of *présentisme* we believe can also be useful in the identification of the, not obvious, theoretical and cultural statute of the “restored” versions and in shedding light in part on the relationship between remake and restored editions within the field of filmic plurality. Cf. François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité, présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003).
 - 9 The same Lagny, senses in the remakes and the adaptations, simple forms of multiplicity, of the “formes particulières de ‘version multiples’”. Cf. Michèle Lagny, “Le Téléfilm comme remake culturelle,” in A. Antonini (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 192.
 - 10 Cf. Cosetta G. Saba, “Cinema, differenza, ripetizione, remake” in A. Antonini (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 45-52; Michele Canosa, “Per una teoria del restauro cinematografico,” in Gian Piero Brunetta (ed.), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, Vol. V, *Teorie, strumenti, memorie* (Torino: Einaudi, 2001), pp. 1069-1118.
 - 11 Cf. with the essays by Ivan Klimeš, Pavel Zeman and Horst Claus, Anne Jäckel contained here.
 - 12 Cf. Joseph Garncarz, “Making Films Comprehensible and Popular Abroad: The Innovative Strategy of Multiple-Language Versions,” *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, cit., pp. 72-79; Nataša Ďurovičová, “Tradurre l'America. Il plurilinguismo hollywoodiano 1929-33,” *Cinegrafie*, no. 6 (1993); Nataša Ďurovičová, “Introduction,” *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, cit., pp. 8-9.
 In the 1930s Ufa produced and distributed in France, through ACE set up in Paris in 1926, French versions of German films. In certain cases as R. Pithon, *op.cit.*, p.129, suggests, only the “French” version, whose ‘original matrix’ was not realised. A sign of continuity and further concentration on the theme of cultural translation is represented in France, during the Vichy regime, by Alfred Greven already engaged by Ufa during the first half of the 1930s to manage French technicians and artists in Berlin in order to realise French versions of German films. Greven and Continental continued with this policy of realising films by French crews for French audiences. On this subject see also the proto-co-production relationships of Scalera Film with the French companies of the period.
 Cf. also Sibylle M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgemuth (eds.), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris!: Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text+kritik/CineGraph, 1996). In a symbolic sense we are referring, amongst other things, to the fact that the dubbing practices, as noted by Nataša Ďurovičová, represent in part a ‘naturalized’ exception to the fact that “usually you can’t stand in two places at once.” The learning and acceptance of dubbing and subtitling practices must, in their different levels and evolutions (see for example the Luxembourgish context described by Paul Lesch in the essay presented here), be placed in correlation to the practices and processes of literacy and affirmation of representation modes. Cf. Nataša Ďurovičová, “Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema,” in A. Antonini (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 83; Noël Burch, *La Lucarne de l’infini. Naissance du langage cinématographique* (Paris: Nathan, 1991).
 - 13 Once again P. Sorlin, *op.cit.*, p. 18, found in “a film whose different versions were shot in the same studio” perhaps the most illuminating, but at the same time unsatisfactory, definition of multiple version. The idea of a ‘studio’ as the epicentre, production and semantic-cultural network, however unstable, of focalisation and implementation of the ‘meeting’ process between production and reception context is of considerable interest, especially if compared with the methods and forms of individual and cultural ‘migration’. Cf. with the essay by Horst Claus and Anne Jäckel contained here and with Harry Waldman, *Paramount-Paris: 300 Films Produced at the Joinville Studios, 1930-1933* (Lanham-London: Scarecrow, 1998);

- Riccardo Redi, "La Fabbrica dei multipli: Joinville," in A. Antonini (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 115-122; Andrew Higson, Richard Maltby (eds.), *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange 1920-1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999); Martin Barnier, Raphaëlle Moine (eds.), *France/Hollywood. Echanges cinématographiques et identités nationales* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002); Alberto Farassino, "Cosmopolitismo ed esotismo nel cinema europeo fra le due guerre," in Gian Piero Brunetta (ed.), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, Vol. I, *L'Europa. Miti, luoghi, divi* (Torino: Einaudi, 1999), pp. 485-508.
- 14 The practice of the remake is adopted, for example, by the American cinema system as a form of replacement of multiplicity originating, amongst other things, from a refusal or at least a lasting difficulty in accepting such a translation technique on the part of American cinema audiences. Cf. N. Ďurovičová, "Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema," *op. cit.*, especially pp. 93-95.
- 15 The renewal of a dominant position by American cinema can also be associated, as well as to other factors, to the collusion between dubbing practices and the different technical, productive-commercial and stylistic approaches to talking pictures assumed by the American film industry, that quickly adopted the separate tracks and mixing technique. Cf. Charles O'Brien, "Multiple Versions in France: Paramount and National Film Style," *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, cit., pp. 80-88 and the essay by the same author contained therein; N. Ďurovičová, "Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema," *op. cit.*, pp. 83-98.
- 16 Cf. Aldo Bernardini, "Le collaborazioni internazionali nel cinema europeo," in G. P. Brunetta (ed.), *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 1013-1048.
- 17 The reference is to the initial viewpoint of the first European co-productions, that is a reciprocal productivity, the autographical components present in the practices of re-use implemented in twin co-productions, the constitution of mixed production groups as well as famous cases of multilanguage versions such as *Hallo Hallo! Hier spricht Berlin/Allo? Berlin? Ici Paris* (1931, Julien Duvivier). Furthermore it is not by chance that, as of the beginning of the 1950s, many Italian companies, Gualino's Lux being the initial and ideal reference point, feel, as well as for purely speculative and financial motives, the need to look towards exporting and look out for genres and stylistic models that are trans-national and 'popular'. They undertake the challenge of elaborating new strategies of international understanding and translation of their products. Cf. J. Garncarz, "Making Films Comprehensible and Popular Abroad: The Innovative Strategy of Multiple-Language Versions," *op. cit.*; Simone Venturini, *Galatea s.p.a. (1952-1965). Storia di una casa di produzione cinematografica* (Roma: AIRSC, 2002).

ENTRE LE MEME ET L'AUTRE: LA PLACE DE L'AUTEUR

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*Carmina non prius
Audita Musarum Sacerdos
Virginibus puerisque canto*
Horace, *Odes* L. III

Il y a plusieurs façons de parler d'un film de cinéma: l'une d'entre elles concerne sa qualité d'œuvre. Si on admet que le film de cinéma accède au statut d'œuvre, il faut également interroger, sous ce statut, celui de son auteur, aussi complexe que celui de l'œuvre. Le remake de *Psycho* (1960, Alfred Hitchcock) par Gus Van Sant en 1998 se présente comme l'exemple idéal pour comprendre ce qui se joue sous ces notions. En effet, l'auteur dans la tradition classique est défini comme celui qui "invente:" il est le créateur d'une œuvre qui se donne comme nouvelle et jamais réalisée auparavant. Or, la pratique d'un remake en questionnant les paradigmes de la répétition, de la reprise et de la copie, bouscule cette conception classique de l'auteur au cinéma. Notre réflexion s'inscrit dans la continuité du projet final du *Temps d'un regard* de François Jost qui pointait le fait que "les limites de l'œuvre cinématographique sont fluctuantes."¹ Face à la mobilité de l'œuvre produite par le remake, que devient le territoire dévolu à l'auteur?

Notre parcours se déploie en deux parties: la première, plus générale, est une tentative de conceptualisation de la pluralité des gestes du remake, la seconde consiste à apprécier les conséquences d'une "création" cinématographique particulière. A partir du remake de *Psycho*, il convient de faire la part des choses entre les gestes d'innovations, les pratiques itératives et celles imitatives qui balisent le champ de souveraineté de Gus Van Sant au titre d'auteur, cela présupposant forcément une conception très particulière de l'œuvre cinématographique.

Remake et originalité

Communément à notre époque est auteur celui qui crée et invente. Des affinités conceptuelles se tissent alors entre le concept d'auteur et celui d'originalité. Elles se tissent doublement. D'une part, l'originalité est classiquement pensée comme nouveauté. Une œuvre est dite originale si elle est inédite par rapport à l'histoire des productions. Est original ce qui ne s'est jamais fait auparavant, ce qui contraint la création auctoriale, considérée comme originale, à être une pratique devant se renouveler sans cesse. Cependant la pensée moderne a tenté de délier l'originalité de l'innovation.² Dans cette perspective, une œuvre est originale, si elle est avant tout singulière, "différente des aut-

res”. Cette différence est le siège de l’empreinte d’un auteur. Au côté de la nouveauté, l’originalité met en lumière la question du style d’un auteur, c’est-à-dire de l’exécution singulière qui façonne et distingue une œuvre des autres.³ Grâce à cette liaison intime avec l’auteur, l’originalité s’impose comme un critère d’individuation d’une œuvre. Le remake, en tant que reprise d’un film, met donc à mal ces deux conceptions du cinéaste-auteur. En effet, comment faire une œuvre originale lorsqu’on met ses pas dans des traces anciennes et notoires? Où se construit l’auctorialité d’un remake pris dans le duel – classique pour l’histoire des beaux-arts – entre *l’inventio* et la *mimésis*?

Par ailleurs, pour être tout à fait complet, il faut mentionner que le remake laisse entendre une troisième conception de l’originalité, une conception temporelle. Est original ce qui est à l’origine... du remake. Le remake cinématographique repose sur la primauté faite aux œuvres initiales: est loué ce qui est premier. Indépendamment des valeurs intrinsèques de chaque film, le remake suggère implicitement une hiérarchie entre les œuvres: entre l’œuvre première et sa reprise finale. Cette hiérarchie peut s’établir d’ailleurs dans deux directions selon le point de vue porté sur cette pratique. D’un côté, le remake se veut une amélioration de la version originale selon les aveux des réalisateurs et producteurs, tandis que, de l’autre, les spectateurs cinéphiles avouent leur mépris pour ce doublon en lui préférant le film original authentique. Ainsi, du point de vue de la pratique, le remake trouve ses motivations dans une certaine idée du progrès⁴ puisqu’au côté du gain économique (voguer sur une recette éprouvée du succès de l’original),⁵ il doit bénéficier d’un gain symbolique par rapport au film original, alors même que pour certains il n’est qu’un décalque, la mauvaise doublure d’un original fétichisé.⁶ Selon les contextes, la reprise est acceptable si le film initial supporte la répétition, alors que pour d’autres, la répétition n’est même pas envisageable.

Cet état d’esprit est d’ailleurs communément partagé en littérature lorsqu’on est confronté à la répétition du même. Bien que le littéraire et le filmique ne soient pas équivalents sémiotiquement, le détour par l’illustre exemple de la réécriture mot pour mot du *Don Quichotte* de Cervantes par Ménard quelques siècles plus tard dans les *Fictions* de Borges, permet de mettre en avant l’importance de l’auteur dans la pratique du remake. Les philosophes analytiques, Goodman et Elgin, n’hésitent pas à affirmer que “Cervantes bat Ménard parce qu’il produit la première inscription (ou le premier exemplaire) de *Don Quichotte*.”⁷ La valorisation s’opère au profit de l’œuvre initiale en respectant la primauté historique. A l’inverse, Borges avance que “le texte de Cervantes et celui de Ménard sont verbalement identiques, mais [que] le second est presque infiniment plus riche (plus ambigu, diront ces détracteurs, mais l’ambiguïté est une richesse).”⁸ Si d’un côté, on loue l’original, en tant qu’œuvre initiale, de l’autre côté, on fait valoir l’importance du contexte final dans le renouvellement sémantique. La valeur de la répétition n’est donc pas commune à nos trois auteurs. Pour les philosophes analytiques, la répétition n’apporte pas de valeur ajoutée au texte. Elle est le résultat de la nature particulière du texte littéraire, qui fait du texte de Ménard non pas *un autre texte*, mais la réplique – engendrée par l’itération commune aux arts allographiques – de celui de Cervantes. De l’identité des textes, on aboutit à une identité des œuvres pour Goodman et Elgin. Puisque la répétition dépend uniquement d’une propriété de langage, on comprend mieux l’importance accordée à la préséance historique de l’œuvre initiale sur sa reprise, du texte premier sur sa réplique. Si on tente une analogie avec le cinéma – nous discuterons par la suite de son caractère auto et allographique – dans cette perspective, le remake ne serait qu’une simple itération formelle. Toute différente

est la position de Borges dans son accentuation sur l'impossibilité de réduire une œuvre littéraire à son texte (en tant que contenu conçu comme l'ensemble des propositions textuelles qui le compose). L'écrivain considère la répétition comme un acte signifiant, c'est-à-dire produisant du sens. La répétition devient alors un acte de production sémantique *intentionnelle* et non la simple propriété essentielle d'un langage. Entre ces deux positions, on retrouve ce que Jost nomme le "Rubicon de l'intentionnalité,"⁹ c'est-à-dire cette frontière qui fait que la reprise du remake n'est pas accidentelle et fortuite mais qu'elle est une réponse à des stratégies discursives de reprises et d'imitations résultants du choix d'un cinéaste-auteur.

Au côté de la valorisation d'un modèle temporel de l'originalité, il faut tenir compte de la possibilité plurielle de la réception d'un film déclaré comme remake. Un remake suggère toujours une réception "ludique," au sens de Genette,¹⁰ tissant des liens de différents niveaux avec le film référence. Mais cette réception "relative" du remake ne vise pas uniquement la recherche de l'identité entre les films; elle peut également rendre saillantes leurs différences. En effet, rien n'interdit de penser que le remake vise aussi à souligner les divergences entre les films. Le remake aurait, en ce cas, pour objet une réécriture critique ou métatextuelle du film initial puisqu'à travers ces différences l'auteur s'affirme en donnant son point de vue sur le film élu. Mais tous les remakes n'ont pas cette valeur. Il y a donc un double horizon pour le remake: soit seules les parentés sont exploitées dans son interprétation, soit les écarts deviennent déterminants. Le remake diffère de la simple pratique de conformité à l'original. Dans le premier horizon, il apparaît plus difficile au cinéaste de bénéficier d'une grande marge de manœuvre auctoriale, puisque c'est l'identité des films qui est recherchée. Et lorsque, comme dans le cas de *Psycho* de Gus Van Sant, l'identité formelle du remake est poussée à son extrême, on peut convenir avec raison que le cinéaste est très à l'étroit dans sa parure d'auteur à moins d'insister sur la performance et la technicité que représente cette exigence de conformité littérale et formelle pour un remake. Ce que les discours publicitaires firent pour Gus Van Sant.

Entre répétition et imitation: le remake

Le fait de re-tourner des films ayant déjà eu une vie publique souvent notoire et auréolée de succès interdit une conception de l'originalité fondée sur l'innovation créative, mais permet de tendre vers une définition plus "auctoriale" de l'originalité. Ce deuxième modèle de l'originalité ne soulève pas trop de question lorsqu'il s'agit de réduire le geste du remake au fait de, classiquement, "transposer" une histoire dans un autre cadre spatial et temporel – comme en témoigne par exemple *À bout de souffle* "made in USA" (1983, *Breathless*, Jim McBride) remake du film de Jean-Luc Godard – puisque dans ce "jeu" de la transposition entre les deux films, dans cet écart, l'inventivité et le style du réalisateur peuvent se révéler. Mais, dans le cas de *Psycho*, ce remake dépasse une simple reprise diégétique pour aboutir à un décalque formel des angles de prises, de la composition des plans et du rythme de montage du film initial. Ce remake presque absolu, voulant à la fois répéter l'histoire et sa mise en scène, suggère que formellement le remake soit identique au film initial. Si, de façon générale, l'évaluation des remakes reposant en majorité sur le système des transpositions s'opère sous le critère de la parenté de l'histoire, *Psycho* de Gus Van Sant pose plutôt la question du Même dans le champ des images cinématographiques.

Quels sont les actes de langage en jeu dans le remake de façon générale? Pour comprendre ce qui se joue sous cette pratique, les concepts d'allographie et d'autographie de Nelson Goodman, appliqués au langage cinématographique, sont particulièrement opératoires pour séparer non pas le bon grain de l'ivraie, mais distinguer la répétition de l'imitation. Seulement un film ne s'évalue pas uniquement sous le seul régime allographique, il est composé aussi d'éléments autographiques.

Par définition, seules les propriétés allographiques peuvent être répétées à l'identique, sans que cette itération, nous apprend Goodman, ne conduise à produire un faux, une contrefaçon du film original. Une des conditions de l'itération de certaines propriétés tient en la possibilité d'être consignées via une partition (Goodman) ou de faire l'objet d'une dénotation verbale (Genette). Le résultat de cette consignation est donc un *texte*. Ce texte peut prendre des aspects différents selon les arts en jeu: une partition musicale, un texte verbal classique, ou encore un scénario. Ce qui est consigné dans un scénario constitue alors la dimension allographique du film. Seule cette dimension textuelle est sujette à la répétition, à l'itération. De ce fait, on peut dire que le scénario constitue la matière première essentielle du remake considéré du point de vue de la répétition. Le remake devient alors une "exécution" possible d'une œuvre cinématographique à partir d'un scénario qu'il partage avec le film initial.

A ce moment-là de notre raisonnement, les seules propriétés pouvant faire l'objet d'un remake sont celles dénotées par le scénario. L'objet premier du remake n'est donc pas l'œuvre cinématographique initiale en tant que phénomène perceptif mais le scénario en tant que matrice d'une éventuelle autre manifestation cinématographique, d'une possible autre mise en image et en son. A ce stade, la pratique du remake est toujours partielle puisqu'elle ne porte que sur les propriétés itératives allographiques considérées comme propriétés constitutives du film. Si le scénario, en tant qu'il consigne l'intrigue et les péripéties, est le support de l'itération des propriétés allographiques du film, il en existe cependant d'autres. En effet, une intensité lumineuse, un cadre, un angle de prise de vue peuvent être aussi répétés formellement. Ces indications n'apparaissent pas en l'état à même le scénario, mais peuvent être remarquées verbalement sous forme d'un diagramme ou d'une mesure mathématique pour pouvoir être reproduites. Si le texte de ces données n'est pas disponible, celles-ci peuvent être retrouvées, selon Genette, via une "réduction allographique."¹¹ Elle est l'opération "mentale" qui consiste à réduire un film, objet perceptif complexe à un certain nombre de propriétés constitutives de l'œuvre cinématographique. C'est précisément la démarche adoptée par Gus Van Sant : à partir du visionnage minutieux du film de Hitchcock, il relève des qualités et des attributs qu'il dispose dans son *Psycho*.¹² Ce travail de réduction laisse entendre que Gus Van Sant a touché et repris les caractères fondamentaux de l'œuvre, qu'il est allé retenir et reproduire l'essentiel, c'est-à-dire ce que Genette appelle "l'immanence idéale d'une œuvre allographique."

La "réduction allographique" révèle qu'un film ne peut se limiter à un scénario ou à la partition qui consigne ses propriétés allographiques. En d'autres termes une identité textuelle n'est pas une condition suffisante pour faire une œuvre. Si une œuvre peut parfois coïncider avec un texte, le plus souvent, l'œuvre est une catégorie qui le dépasse. Quand il s'enferme dans une salle obscure, c'est bien plus qu'un scénario mis en image que le spectateur regarde! Le remake n'est donc pas fondé uniquement sur une répétition des éléments allographiques du film source.

L'autographie cinématographique est ce qui fonde, au sein du film, la part de l'auteur

à travers la notion de style. Par définition, le style est précisément non répétable, non imitable. L'autographie assoie la singularité du film. Cependant en n'offrant pas de prise à la répétition, elle n'est pas pour autant perdue pour le remake. Au contraire, elle constitue l'objet même du désir pour quiconque souhaitant en faire un. En effet, une des motivations communes pour un remake est de bénéficier, à un moindre coût "inventif," du succès du film précédent, redevable en grande partie à l'auctorialité initiale. Pour le cinéaste pratiquant le remake il est alors impensable de la négliger. Le geste de reproduction de l'autographie n'est pas la répétition, mais davantage l'imitation. Le cinéaste projette de copier ces éléments qui ne peuvent être consignés, en les imitant lors de la reconfaction cinématographique. La répétition allographique et l'imitation autographique sont donc les deux types de relation distinctes du remake envers le film initial. Ces deux relations ne s'évaluent pas selon les mêmes critères. En effet, la répétition se juge par rapport à l'exactitude "littérale" de la reprise: elle fait naître de l'identique entre les deux films, tandis que la parenté et la fidélité sont les valeurs de l'imitation. D'un côté, la répétition engage une identité formelle entre le film et son remake, par exemple, les plans de Gus Van Sant sont identiques à ceux du maître anglais, les spectateurs perçoivent la même composition des plans. D'un autre côté, l'imitation suggère davantage une idée de ressemblance entre les films, ils ont quelque chose en commun.

Pour la majorité des remakes, la répétition et l'imitation sont présentes, mais pas forcément à part égale. Si le geste imitatif est encouragé, alors le film initial fonctionne tel un *modèle* pour le remake. Si la répétition est favorisée, le remake tend vers un décalque des propriétés scénaristiques, au sens défini plus haut. Le premier film fonctionne telle une *matrice* pour les exécutions cinématographiques à venir. Entre ces deux pôles de la relation au film initial, il y a bien sûr autant de possibilités formelles que de remakes particuliers. Sa pratique permet de faire la part des choses entre l'identité "textuelle" d'un film et sa valeur d'œuvre, sa détermination opérable. Entre un film et son remake, nous avons bien souvent affaire au même texte (dimension allographique), mais non à la même œuvre cinématographique.

Avec le remake nous sommes dans le cas de figure – décrit par Genette – où un objet d'immanence, en tant qu'œuvre réduite à ses propriétés constitutives, conduit à plusieurs manifestations possibles, à une pluralité d'exécutions filmiques. Ce type d'œuvre est baptisé par Genette œuvres à immanence plurielle, synthétisé sous la formule suivante "n œuvre pour un objet d'immanence."¹³ Il distingue donc les œuvres plurielles des œuvres multiples, nous permettant de distinguer le remake des versions multiples du cinéma des années 30. En effet, lors de la première édition de MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School,¹⁴ il a été mentionné à de nombreuses reprises que les versions multiples n'étaient pas reçues comme des œuvres distinctes par le public. Ainsi, malgré les différences nombreuses (montage, dialogue, acteurs, prise de vue, etc.), c'est le *même* film qui est visionné. Les versions fonctionnent comme équivalentes les unes aux autres. Evidemment, il y a des formes hybrides et des cas mixtes avec lesquels les frontières fluctuent. Certaines versions fonctionnent davantage comme équivalentes à d'autres, d'autres sont reçues en creusant leurs différences. Cette idée d'équivalence est fondamentale car le remake n'a pas pour projet de prendre la place du film source. La relation entre le remake et le film initial n'est pas celle qui existe entre les répliques d'une œuvre dite multiple, mais questionne plutôt la définition de l'œuvre plurielle puisqu'il n'y a pas d'équivalence réceptive – le rema-

ke ne prend pas la place de l'œuvre première –, ni de confusion possible dans la réception entre les deux films. “Les œuvres [...] incontestablement plurielles en ce sens sont celles dont la pluralité n'est pas un artefact technique, mais procèdent pleinement d'une intention auctoriale.”¹⁵ Avec le remake, l'écart temporel entre le film premier et sa reprise fonctionne comme une différence “essentielle” qui fait écho et amplifie l'intention du réalisateur de ne pas faire la même œuvre. Alors que pour les versions multiples, l'amplitude temporelle – parfois grande, parfois minime entre deux versions – n'est pas investie comme un critère fondamental de distinction des œuvres cinématographiques.

De ses deux façons de se comporter face au film source que sont la répétition et l'imitation, il en découle une conséquence importante pour saisir la place laissée à la créativité du cinéaste dans le remake. Sous la répétition, l'*inventio* et la *dispositio* sont subordonnées à la dimension textuelle, c'est-à-dire inscrite dans le scénario. Elles ne sont pas issues directement de l'imagination de l'auteur du remake. A la différence de l'*elocutio* qui relève de l'exécution proprement “cinématographique,” l'*inventio* et la *dispositio* ne sont pas de première main. Cette partition des lieux de la créativité n'est pas propre au cinéma. Elle a déjà existé, notamment en peinture, à l'époque de la Renaissance où le peintre Alberti conseillait déjà aux peintres de son entourage de ne pas se lancer dans l'invention d'un thème ou d'une fable, mais de l'emprunter aux poètes et aux rhéteurs circonscrivant de la sorte la portée inventive du travail du peintre au seul travail de figuration, au seul travail de l'image.¹⁶ Comme si l'image, qu'elle soit fixe ou animée, devait se délester de son “irréductible singularité” autographique en s'accrochant, en s'arrimant à un socle invariant et permanent construit par l'allographie.¹⁷ Le remake au cinéma entérinant un usage allographique du scénario suggère une conception du cinéaste qui n'est pas celle de l'inventeur, au sens du découvreur, qui n'est pas celle de l'auteur comme figure de l'*heuretès*.¹⁸ Lorsqu'on envisage le remake uniquement sous l'angle de la répétition et de l'imitation, la portée de l'auteur se limite à une responsabilité de fabricant de film. Mais le remake est aussi un film à part entière: il peut être aussi envisagé hors de sa définition “relative.” Dans ce cas, l'auteur a deux voies pour s'affirmer. Premièrement, il peut introduire dans les interstices laissés par la répétition et l'imitation, des indices et des marques de son inventivité. Deuxièmement, il peut également affirmer sa responsabilité auctoriale dans le choix des valeurs répétées et éléments imités, attributs qui déterminent son remake du film repris.¹⁹ Dans le premier cas, il nourrit la part de l'*inventio* par des éléments nouveaux, dans le deuxième cas, il s'affirme sur les fronts rhétoriques de la *dispositio* et de l'*elocutio*. Ces deux stratégies d'affirmation auctoriale ne sont pas exclusives l'une l'autre. Tous les actes de langage qui composent le remake ne sont répartissent pas uniquement entre répétition et imitation.

Psycho, un remake?

Alors que l'histoire du cinéma foisonne de remakes,²⁰ pourquoi le cas de *Psycho* est-il intéressant? Il est fondé sur un argument promotionnel peu usité consistant à ne pas mettre en avant les systèmes des transpositions employés dans la reconfaction du film référence, mais plutôt de miser sur la quasi-identité formelle avec lui: “L'idée était d'utiliser les mêmes angles de prise de vue et les mêmes ‘storyboards’. C'est probablement à

95% fidèle à l'original," comme l'affirme le réalisateur au *Time* au moment de la sortie du film.²¹ Illustrant nos conclusions précédentes, cette remarque souligne que le remake peut aussi se présenter comme un décalque presque parfait littéralement et sémantiquement de l'œuvre précédente. Ce résultat ne peut être obtenu qu'en combinant la répétition des données formelles avec l'imitation de l'originalité du maître anglais. Par ailleurs Gus Van Sant nous apprend que cette entreprise de démarquage ne nuit pas à la construction de sa propre auctorialité puisqu'il met aussi en avant les 5% rassemblant les différences avec le film de 1960. A travers les intentions du réalisateur et les "promesses"²² publiques parues dans les commentaires et autres discours d'accompagnement du film, nous allons donc essayer de comprendre quels sont les points de suture entre le remake et sa source.

Pourquoi s'intéresser aux discours publics qui entourent la sortie du remake? Il est rare que les campagnes de promotion du remake dissimulent cette qualité. Bien au contraire, elle est exhibée tel un argument publicitaire pour bénéficier de la notoriété et du succès du film repris. Ainsi un remake est rarement tu ou dénié – sauf précisément dans le cas qui nous intéresse comme nous le verrons – d'où l'importance de voir comment il est porté dans l'espace public médiatique. Le terme de remake est une étiquette publicitaire qui va conditionner sa réception.²³

Par ailleurs, comme le *Psycho* de 1998 est formellement et sémantiquement un démarquage du film d'Alfred Hitchcock, on peut faire l'hypothèse que ces discours accompagnant la sortie du film sont aussi des lieux symboliques où s'élabore l'auctorialité de Gus Van Sant. En ces discours, la qualité de créateur de Gus Van Sant n'entre pas en concurrence directe avec celle de Hitchcock. Afin que *Psycho* soit le film de Gus Van Sant et pas seulement le remake d'un chef d'œuvre d'Hitchcock, il est nécessaire qu'au côté des 5% d'écarts avoués, le cinéaste américain construise son champ de souveraineté au-delà des frontières internes de son film, dans un lieu symbolique où son statut d'auteur n'est pas disputé. Sans pour autant entrer en contradiction avec nos propos précédents, on pourrait aussi admettre que le geste même de faire un remake de ce chef d'œuvre se veut un éloge de Gus Van Sant pour le travail de son prédécesseur en une sorte de retour-critique sur son œuvre.²⁴ Mais nous ne pensons pas que la motivation principale de Van Sant soit de rendre hommage à Hitchcock. D'ailleurs le champ sémantique de la louange n'apparaît jamais dans les légitimations du projet qu'annonce Van Sant. Au contraire, le fait de clamer l'identité formelle de son film est une façon de mettre en avant la difficulté de faire naître des différences selon ce principe de création et, donc, de faire en sorte qu'elles soient reçues par le spectateur comme "autorisées," c'est-à-dire non pas seulement accidentelles ou conjoncturelles, mais investies d'une intention qui ne peut être rapportée qu'à l'excellence de la performance du réalisateur américain.

De façon globale, la lecture de l'ensemble des propos de Gus Van Sant conduit à penser qu'il ne voulait pas faire un remake de ce classique du cinéma, au sens où il ne souhaitait pas re-faire *Psycho*, mais tout simplement le faire. Ainsi dans une interview à *Newsweek*, le réalisateur américain déclare que "son" *Psycho* est un "film anti-remake"²⁵ et dans *Entertainment Weekly*, il déclare: "Il s'agit plus d'une réplique que d'un remake. C'est presque comme si nous réalisions un faux. Comme si nous faisons une copie de la Joconde ou de la statue de David."²⁶ En niant la qualité de remake de *Psycho*, Gus Van Sant refuse que son film puisse dépendre d'un autre, plus ancien selon la conception temporelle commune de l'originalité qu'implique le remake. Il

rejette une réception relative pour son film. En effet, il vise l'autonomie pour son *Psycho* en souhaitant le retirer de l'entrelacs relationnel avec l'œuvre de Hitchcock. Or le *Psycho* initial est loin d'être un film comme les autres. Certes, c'est un chef d'œuvre. Mais il est aussi le film qui engendra un vaste réseau d'influences et de reprises directes comme indirectes les plus diverses.²⁷ Les plus patentes sont des *sequels*: *Psycho II* (1983, Richard Franklin) et *Psycho III* (1986, Anthony Perkins). Mais il faut noter aussi la présence de deux téléfilms qui reprennent et poursuivent une partie des événements diégétiques du film initial: *Bates Motel* (1987, Richard Rothstein) et *Psycho IV* (1990, Mick Garris). Et c'est sans compter les reprises parodiques de la célèbre scène de la douche par Mel Brooks²⁸ ou encore, en 1979, celle réalisée par un certain... Gus Van Sant dans un spot publicitaire pour un shampoing. De façon plus lointaine et moins directe, certains théoriciens n'hésitent pas à considérer *Psycho* comme le film fondateur, sorte d'origine "architextuelle" d'un genre cinématographique fantastique, le *gore*. D'ailleurs, l'un des meilleurs représentants de ce genre au cinéma n'est rien d'autre qu'*Halloween* (1978, John Carpenter) qui s'ouvre sur une citation de la séquence de la douche de Hitchcock.²⁹ *Psycho*, l'original, continue son ensemencement dans les productions cinématographiques les plus contemporaines comme le suggère le travail de Brian de Palma. Il est au fondement d'un réseau relationnel conséquent que, certes, Gus Van Sant ne peut négliger mais précisément auquel il ne veut pas appartenir, auquel il ne souhaite pas s'ajouter. Être l'héritier du maître anglais ne l'intéresse pas. Il souhaite plutôt en prendre la place. C'est ainsi qu'il déclare: "Je savais bien sûr qu'il y avait des étudiants en cinéma, des cinéphiles et des gens du métier qui connaissaient *Psycho*, mais je pensais aussi qu'il devait y avoir toute une génération de jeunes qui ne l'avait jamais vu. J'ai pensé alors que je pourrais faire *connaître* le film d'une manière selon moi tout à fait nouvelle, c'est-à-dire en faisant une production contemporaine d'un classique, tout en restant fidèle à l'original."³⁰ Or ici, le terme de français de "connaître" est vraiment opératoire pour comprendre l'horizon du travail du cinéaste américain. Il ne s'agit pas d'élaborer une reprise du *Psycho* initial en l'actualisant au goût de la fin des années 90 qui, entre nous, est une motivation classique pour la production de remake, mais de le faire co-naître: c'est-à-dire de le faire naître, de l'inscrire dans l'espace public, en collaboration avec le maître anglais. Gus Van Sant refuse la filiation pour tenter d'assumer la paternité de son œuvre. D'ailleurs, emblématiquement, il est représenté dans la deuxième scène, par un trucage, en train de converser avec Hitchcock. Les deux réalisateurs sont réunis dans le même plan selon le rituel d'apparition initié par le cinéaste anglais, mais l'un est de dos (Hitchcock), alors que la silhouette de Gus Van Sant s'offre aux spectateurs de face. Cette métalepse – intrusion de l'auteur dans le récit cinématographique –, signature rituelle de l'œuvre de Hitchcock, opère alors comme un passage de témoin entre les deux générations de cinéaste et établit visuellement une certaine égalité entre eux.

Interprétation et remake

La motivation de Van Sant n'est donc pas de rendre hommage à l'œuvre d'Hitchcock mais de se mesurer à un classique.³¹ Son remake n'établit pas seulement une liaison avec un film particulier, mais a pour horizon la tradition cinématographique dans son ensemble. Ainsi, ce n'est pas tant *Psycho*, en tant que film singulier, qui est l'objet de

l'entreprise du remake de Van Sant, mais *Psycho* en tant qu'emblème d'un certain âge d'or du cinéma hollywoodien. Par son remake, Van Sant a le projet de renouveler la réception des classiques et de baliser l'interprétation contemporaine. "Certains pensent que le cinéma est un art relativement nouveau et qu'il n'y a donc aucune raison de reprendre un film. Mais plus le cinéma avance en âge, moins il y aura de spectateurs habitués à regarder les vieux films, les films muets, et les films en noir et blanc. *Psycho* se laisse parfaitement remodeler en un film moderne."³² Ici se retrouve la motivation relativement commune de l'actualisation par le remake d'un film qu'il s'agit de "remettre au goût du jour pour les nouvelles générations."³³ Ce faisant, Gus Van Sant introduit un rapport paradoxal au temps, rapport presque forcé et artificiel, puisque le statut de chef-d'œuvre de *Psycho* suggère une pérennité qui suspend sa réception au-dessus de toutes circonstances temporelles. Or Van Sant a pour souci d'ancrer cette immuabilité propre au chef-d'œuvre dans une dimension temporelle spécifique qui est le présent de son contexte de production. Il tente de recontextualiser temporellement la réception de *Psycho* dans ce qu'il juge être la modernité. Par ce projet, il rejoint la position de André Bazin qui considère la spécificité artistique du cinéma sous le biais de la réalité, impliquant une certaine conception du temps. Plus que toute autre œuvre d'art, un film "vieillit" plus vite. Alors même qu'il est impensable de réactualiser *La Ronde de nuit* de Rembrandt, ce vieillissement apparaît insupportable pour le cinéma car "le film est dépendant de son actualité."³⁴ Ainsi, le temps ne fait pas qu'altérer directement l'œuvre en posant des questions d'archivage et de conservation, mais dénature aussi sa *juste* interprétation que seule la proximité, sinon la concordance entre le contexte de production du film et son contexte de réception semble offrir. Ce remake induit une certaine conception de la valeur sémantique du film liée à l'histoire. La réalisation de *Psycho* par le cinéaste américain suggère que le seul "sens" correct et authentique d'un film ne peut être que celui engendré lors de sa première sortie publique. Il entretient une certaine mythologie des origines et de la pureté sémantique. Plus le film vieillit, plus il s'écarte de son sens originel, et plus la reconfec-tion du film permet aux nouveaux publics de renouer avec les intentions initiales de son auteur. La pratique du remake est ainsi conçue comme une possibilité d'ajustement entre les deux contextes, de réception et de production, voire même une correction sémantique apportée à l'expérience filmique de l'original. Autrement dit, la refondation de *Psycho* est une façon d'éconduire ou de neutraliser les "mauvaises" interprétations dues au temps qui passe. Evidemment il s'agit d'une démarche qui s'appuie sur une vision normative de ce que doit être la réception d'un film et de ce que doit être son sens, réduite à *l'intentio auctoris* original pour reprendre les termes de Umberto Eco. Ce qui est relativement conforme à la démarche de Gus Van Sant qui se positionne avant tout en réalisateur de son *Psycho*, et donc en auteur et non en spectateur fidèle de l'œuvre de Hitchcock.³⁵

Le présentisme: régime temporel du remake

Paradoxalement, si l'antériorité temporelle est un facteur important pour le remake, son but n'est pas de le vénérer de façon nostalgique, mais de plutôt de l'effacer, comme l'annonce, à sa façon, Leonardo Quaresima: "L'idée de retravailler un travail passé est étrangère au remake. En fait l'idée même du passé est complètement effacée."³⁶ En

effet, faire une deuxième fois *Psycho* est une façon de neutraliser le temps de l'histoire, temps conçu comme tension entre les contextes de production et de réception. Précisément cette tension se dissout par le projet de faire non pas *un nouveau Psycho*, mais de faire à *nouveau Psycho*, comme si c'était la première fois. L'histoire, le passé, sont abolis au profit de la recherche d'un accord entre le présent de l'expérience du spectateur de la fin des années 90 et celle de la fabrication du film.³⁷ Cette pratique spécifique du remake suggère un régime d'historicité qui s'apparente à ce que l'historien François Hartog a appelé le *présentisme*. Le présentisme constitue, d'après l'historien, face aux autres temps, en particulier le passé "l'évidence d'un présent omniprésent."³⁸ La primauté de cette catégorie temporelle dans l'expérience humaine conduit Hartog à dessiner deux grandes figures du présentisme que sont la mémoire et le patrimoine. Ces deux termes guident le projet même de Van Sant, qui, comme nous l'avons dit, choisit *Psycho* d'abord en fonction de sa valeur patrimoniale dans l'histoire du cinéma afin que perdure sa mémoire: "J'ai pensé alors que je pourrais faire connaître le film d'une manière selon moi tout à fait nouvelle, c'est-à-dire en faisant *une production contemporaine d'un classique* [...]"³⁹ Conforme aux modalités du présentisme, à travers son remake, Gus Van Sant a pour projet de "rénover" *Psycho*, au sens où l'on restaure des monuments et œuvres venant du passé pour leur assurer une existence présente. A ce sujet, Hartog souligne que la rénovation patrimoniale tient d'un "pouvoir [qui] réaffirme l'intention qui avait présidé à son édification, en le prenant à son propre compte."⁴⁰ Pour *Psycho*, ce pouvoir s'apparente à la quête de l'auctorialité pour laquelle Gus Van Sant ne souhaite pas rester dans l'ombre de la figure d'Alfred Hitchcock, mais bien en être l'égal, sinon le dépasser. Cette bataille d'auteur renvoie à ce qu'observait le poète T.S. Eliot: "A notre époque, [...] vient à l'existence un nouveau genre de provincialisme, qui mérite peut être un nom nouveau. C'est un provincialisme non de l'espace, mais du temps; un pour qui [...] le monde est la propriété des seuls vivants, dans lequel les morts n'ont aucune part."⁴¹ Van Sant, bien vivant, Hitchcock, bien mort mais revivifié sous la responsabilité du premier. Le remake suggère donc une expérience temporelle qui correspond bien au présentisme. Ainsi, le remake est une façon de faire en sorte que le cinéma continue d'être en prise avec la réalité présente. Une anecdote révélatrice de l'importance de "coller à l'actualité" de l'époque de production du film tient dans le fait que les 40.000 dollars initiaux volés par Marion Crane chez Hitchcock se transforment en 400.000 dollars et Gus Van Sant d'expliquer ne pas avoir choisi cette somme au hasard, mais de l'avoir calculée à partir d'une inflation réelle: "On a essayé de s'aligner sur l'inflation qui doit avoir augmenté de dix depuis les années 60. En France, ce doit être un peu moins [sic]."⁴² Le présentisme est donc le régime d'historicité du remake ou plus exactement la représentation du temps que sous-entend cette pratique et qui consiste en un recentrement sur l'époque du contexte de production dudit film. À travers les tentatives de remake, une certaine conception du cinéma prend corps, conception qui aboutit à un certain parallélisme entre l'évolution de "l'actuelle réalité" et l'évolution des films de cinéma.

Le présentisme débouche sur le souhait, assez commun, d'actualiser la diégèse du film, amorçant la première vague de différences avec l'œuvre élue. La transposition temporelle de l'intrigue va avoir des répercussions au niveau du profilmique. Ces différences, qui sont autant de nouveautés par rapport à l'initial, renvoient à une certaine idée du progrès. L'actualisation se doit d'endosser les atours du discours progressiste. Dans cette logique, le présent se doit d'être "meilleur" que le passé. Quelques exemples

parmi tant d'autres: progrès social des conduites via le personnage de Lila qui écoute un walkman avant de faire connaissance avec l'amant de sa sœur.⁴³ Progrès psychologique puisque, dans le film original, Marion Crane dérobe l'argent afin de pouvoir se marier avec l'homme qu'elle aime, alors que dans la version de 1998, le mariage n'est plus la motivation principale du personnage comme le suggère la tonalité ironique de l'échange entre les personnages dans la première scène, mais ressemble beaucoup à un geste impulsif. Et bien sûr, progrès technique, concernant l'ouverture du film où le montage des plans aériens successifs est remplacé par un seul et unique mouvement continu de caméra. Ici, les écarts sont admis au motif qu'ils renouvellent la diégèse pour assurer une concordance avec le présent des spectateurs. Ces différences "progressistes" fonctionnent comme autant d'ajustements au nouveau présent – de production comme de réception – de *Psycho*. Ces écarts dans la répétition du même sont autorisés au nom du régime d'historicité du remake qu'est le présentisme.

L'intention de Gus Van Sant n'est pas de re-faire *Psycho*, mais de le *fonder* en 1998 sous trois aspects: premièrement, du point de vue du texte, c'est-à-dire par la répétition des propriétés allographiques en employant le scénario et le story-board comme des partitions; deuxièmement, du point de vue de l'œuvre, en essayant de copier le champ autographique du cinéaste anglais; troisièmement, en reproduisant les conditions de tournage de 1960. En reproduisant textuellement, "opéralement" et pragmatiquement Gus Van Sant a pour objectif de faire bien plus que de "donner une seconde chance" à un classique, il souhaite s'approcher de son état original: "Van Sant voulait que la force de ses moments [...] reste aussi authentique que possible, mais il voulait également que ce soit aussi viscéral et excitant que l'aurait voulu Hitchcock lui-même."⁴⁴ Or, l'histoire des arts nous a prouvé que le génie est par essence inimitable. Comment retrouver une authenticité de l'expérience, alors même que l'on s'éloigne temporellement de l'original?

La réponse consiste pour Gus Van Sant à épouser les mêmes conditions de tournage que celles du film premier. Impérativement, il insiste pour tourner dans l'ordre du plan du tournage initial et selon une durée similaire de 37 jours. En plus d'avoir pratiquer la répétition allographique – après réduction –, tenter de copier la signature métaleptique de Hitchcock, le réalisateur américain a la volonté d'être à l'origine d'un deuxième *Psycho* authentique en s'appropriant les conditions pragmatiques de la première création. *Psycho* s'éloigne donc d'une conception commune du remake où seul le texte est visé ou, à la rigueur, couplé avec l'autographie du cinéaste copié. Car le véritable objet du désir de Gus Van Sant sont les conditions de singularité, et donc d'originalité de l'œuvre *Psycho*. A tel point que si certains écarts – communs pour le remake, répétons-le – sont motivés par le régime d'historicité mentionné plus haut, d'autres renvoient à sceller le sceau de l'authenticité de la version de 1998. En ce sens, un certain nombre de modifications est motivé par un désir de "parfaire" ce que Hitchcock n'a pu lui-même faire pour des raisons essentiellement économiques. Ainsi l'incipit du film que "Hitchcock [le] voulait en hélicoptère mais n'a pu réaliser pour des raisons techniques. Nous l'avons fait."⁴⁵

De même, une scène de bagarre dans la cave qui n'existe pas dans le film de 1960, mais qui figure sur le script d'origine a été rajoutée par Van Sant. La musique, non plus, n'est pas laissée de côté: "Un thème composé pour le nettoyage [de la salle de bain] avait disparu de l'original. Nous l'avons réintroduit."⁴⁶ Gus Van Sant met au jour les intentions initiales qui n'ont pu être menées à terme pour des raisons accidentelles en les faisant en quelque sorte siennes puisqu'elles apparaissent uniquement dans son film.

Psycho de 1998 pallie les carences opérées du *Psycho* de 1960. Gus Van Sant “plus fort” que le maître anglais? En tout cas, ce retour à une sorte de proto-originalité – une originalité archaïque – de l’œuvre *Psycho* – une originalité réservée aux initiés d’avant la diffusion publique du film – organise les conditions de la légitimité de l’entreprise de Van Sant et confère à son œuvre un parfum auratique d’authenticité. Bien que deuxième chronologiquement, le *Psycho* de 1998 se veut plus respectueux des intentions initiales. Gus Van Sant a retrouvé et rendu public le paradis perdu de l’œuvre *Psycho*: “Ces choses sont nouvelles et, pourtant, elles viennent de l’original. D’autres sont des diversions.”⁴⁷

Toutes les dissemblances entre les deux films n’ont donc pas le même statut, ni ne servent le même destin réceptif. Elles ne sont pas “intentionnalisées” de la même façon. Il va de même pour ce que Van Sant appelle lui même des “diversions.”

Authorship contre *auctoritas*

Ayant démontré des compétences techniques certaines en tant que copieur, maîtrisant la répétition, Gus Van Sant doit aussi prouver qu’il est capable, à travers les interstices des gestes de répétition et d’imitation, d’être un auteur, au sens classique d’un inventeur. *A priori*, cette auctorialité patente ne va pas soi. Un remake a souvent deux auteurs: l’auteur imité – le vrai – et l’auteur reprenant. Il doit donc faire la démonstration de sa qualité auctoriale en construisant une paternité crédible pour le nouveau *Psycho*. Il convient donc que les différences remarquables ne soient pas imputables uniquement aux deux catégories précédentes que sont la rénovation et la volonté de retrouver le paradis perdu d’une originalité archaïque. Ces écarts doivent être nécessairement attribués au cinéaste américain et donc reçus comme relevant d’un travail d’*authorship*. Qu’est-ce que l’*authorship*? L’*authorship* est un régime d’attribution d’un auteur à une œuvre qui se distingue de l’*auctoritas*, nous livre Gérard Leclerc dans *Le Sceau de l’œuvre*.⁴⁸ En effet, si entre l’*auctoritas* et l’*authorship* l’auteur est en jeu, sa construction n’est pas réglée de façon semblable. L’*auctoritas* renvoie à une autorité entérinée par la Tradition et l’Histoire. En se fondant sur la qualité patrimoniale des œuvres, l’*auctoritas* se construit moins dans l’œuvre elle-même qu’elle n’est en quelque sorte le résultat d’une attestation externe (par exemple, quelle que soit la qualité intrinsèque de ses films, Hitchcock est considéré comme le maître du suspens). Elle se démarque de l’*authorship* qui ne se construit que par une démonstration dans l’œuvre elle-même. L’*auctoritas* est un savoir imposé sur un film, une sorte de label apposé sur l’œuvre alors que l’*authorship* est le fruit de la croyance des spectateurs. Elle fait ses preuves au sein de l’œuvre. Bien que cinéaste reconnu, Van Sant rivalise difficilement avec l’*auctoritas* de Hitchcock. L’*authorship* est donc la seule procédure attributive qui lui est possible pour faire valoir sa paternité sur *Psycho*. Sans cet *authorship*, le réalisateur américain n’apparaîtrait que comme simple médiateur entre l’œuvre de Hitchcock et son nouveau public. Un médiateur qui n’aurait de responsabilité que celle de l’exécutant cinématographique et non de créateur.

Sans cette invention de l’auteur par les divergences et autres ajouts et retraits, *Psycho* de 1998 fonctionnerait tel un apocryphe. De façon générale, est nommé apocryphe, une œuvre dont l’attribution auctoriale est défectueuse soit intentionnellement (c’est le cas du faussaire), soit par accident historique, soit à la suite d’une mauvaise réception de

l'œuvre. Selon Leclerc l'apocryphe est le résultat "d'une pratique aberrante (le suicide énonciatif, le "sacrifice" de l'*authorship* sur l'autel de l'*auctoritas*)."49 Or, Gus Van Sant souhaite que *Psycho* soit, avant tout, considéré comme un de ses films et non comme une variation supplémentaire du film de Hitchcock. Face aux certitudes de l'*auctoritas*, les indices de l'*authorship* sont plus fragiles. Ils doivent donc être surdéterminés pour éviter ce "suicide énonciatif." Parmi les exemples les plus significatifs participants à l'établissement de l'*authorship*, on retrouve les ajouts d'inserts de bovin et de femme déshabillée lors du meurtre d'Arbogast. Par ailleurs, dans la troisième scène, en arrière plan, au moment où Marion fait sa valise, par la fenêtre de sa chambre, on remarque un oiseau se posant sur une branche. Ce mouvement est accompagné par un traitement sonore conséquent soulignant l'allusion intertextuelle aux *Oiseaux*.

Dans les indices de l'*authorship*, on peut encore mentionner la substitution du tableau *Suzanne et les vieillards* par *Le Verrou* de Fragonard dans la scène où Bates épie Crane à travers la cloison du motel. Quel est le sens de la substitution des tableaux? Son analyse précise permettrait certainement de mieux comprendre le profil de la figure auctoriale de Gus Van Sant.⁵⁰

Toutes les divergences, mais aussi tout ce qui est conservé comme identique, dépendent de choix du réalisateur, mais toutes n'ont pas le même statut pragmatique et ne remplissent pas le même rôle dans le projet de *Psycho*. Nous voulons seulement souligner que c'est dans l'écart, dans la dissemblance d'autant plus saillante que la répétition du reste du remake est quasi identique à l'original que s'invente la figure de l'auteur. Cette identité parfaite entre les deux films est le terrain idéal pour que le moindre indice s'en écartant profite à l'*authorship* de Gus Van Sant.

En conclusion, le remake est une pratique complexe de reconfec-tion d'un film combinant à la fois la répétition d'un texte, la copie d'un style et l'invention d'un auteur. Le paradoxe de Gus Van Sant est de refuser la primauté historique présupposée par la pratique du remake, en voulant être l'"original" même en arrivant après le maître anglais. *Psycho* soulève donc la question de l'héritage. Les philosophes en réfléchissant sur le don, nous l'ont bien expliqué: il ne s'agit pas seulement de recevoir un héritage – ce que ferait un remake traditionnel ou un acte plagiaire de *Psycho*, encore faut-il se l'approprier. Autrement dit le faire sien, l'inscrire dans un discours dont on assume la responsabilité, dans un discours finalement gouverné par un auteur. Seule l'invention de l'auteur peut satisfaire la condition de l'héritage cinématographique lors d'un remake.

1 François Jost, *Le Temps d'un regard* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck/Nuit Blanche, 1998), p. 171.

2 Pour une étude plus argumentée sur cette évolution, se reporter à Jean-Marie Schaeffer, "Originalité et expression de soi: Eléments pour une généalogie de la figure moderne de l'artiste", in Nathalie Heinich, Jean-Marie Schaeffer (sous la direction de), *Art, Création, Fiction. Entre philosophie et sociologie* (Nîmes: Jacqueline Chambon, 2004).

3 Ne dit-on pas communément à la suite de Buffon que "le style, c'est l'homme même"?

4 Cette motivation n'est pas sans rappeler le projet poétique d'Isidore Ducasse, comte de Lautréamont, qui dans *Les Chants de Maldoror*, non seulement vante les mérites de la réécriture des classiques littéraires, mais la juge impérieuse à travers une pratique qu'il nomme "plagiat."

- 5 L'une des définitions canoniques du remake est la suivante: "Le remake consiste à raconter de nouveau une histoire qui a du succès." Umberto Eco, "Innovations et répétitions", *Réseaux*, n° 68 (1994), p. 15.
- 6 C'est une thèse défendue par Schaeffer: "En tant que motivé par la singularité irremplaçable de l'œuvre, le fétichisme de l'original est une forme embryonnaire du culte de l'originalité." J.-M. Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
- 7 Nelson Goodman, Catherine Elgin, *Esthétique et connaissance* (Paris: Editions de l'éclat, 2001), p. 64.
- 8 Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Ménard, auteur du Quichotte", in *Fictions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974) p. 75.
- 9 F. Jost, *op.cit.*, p. 162.
- 10 Si on admet comme Genette que recevoir une œuvre à travers l'écheveau des relations qu'elle noue avec les autres (transtextualité) est plutôt ludique. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982).
- 11 La réduction allographique "a lieu par exemple chaque fois qu'un acte physique [...] est 'répété,' ou qu'un objet matériel est 'reproduit' autrement que par empreinte mécanique. En effet, aucun acte physique, aucun objet matériel n'est susceptible d'une itération rigoureusement identique." Gérard Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), p. 95.
- 12 "A l'aide d'un lecteur DVD, Van Sant a soigneusement revu et chronométré chaque plan de l'original afin de conserver parfaitement la synchronisation". Source DVD, vidéo widescreen, Universal studios, distribué par Columbia Tristar home vidéo.
- 13 G. Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art*, cit., p. 186.
- 14 Cf. CINÉMA & Cie, n° 4, Nataša Đurovičová, in collaboration with Hans-Michael Bock (eds.), *Multiple and Multiple-language Versions/Version multiples* (Printemps 2004).
- 15 G. Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art*, cit., p. 187-188.
- 16 Se reporter à J.-M. Schaeffer, *op. cit.*
- 17 L'allographie consignée par une partition permet de reproduire l'œuvre à n'importe quel moment et à n'importe quel endroit lui assurant de la sorte une certaine pérennité.
- 18 Jean-Marie Schaeffer, "Aesopus auctor inventus", *Poétique*, n° 63 (1986).
- 19 Il arrive que le remake permette une nouvelle lecture du film repris. En ce sens, le remake fonctionne comme une médiation aidant à la compréhension de l'original.
- 20 Pour avoir un panorama historique des remakes au cinéma, il est possible de consulter la filmographie établie dans Daniel Protopopoff, Michel Serceau, *Le Remake et l'adaptation* (Paris: Cinémaction-Corlet Télérama, 1989), pp. 168-174.
- 21 Source: AFP, dépêche du jeudi 3 décembre 1998.
- 22 Au sens de la conception médiatique de la promesse conçue par François Jost, *Introduction à l'analyse de la télévision* (Paris: ellipses, 1999) pp 52-53.
- 23 Précédemment, dans notre réflexion, nous avons insisté sur le caractère pluriel de la réception du remake oscillant entre une lecture se "conformant" au film repris et une lecture divergente. Il faut aussi signaler que le remake infléchit la réception du film initial. En permettant ce retour sur l'original, le remake participe à renouveler son interprétation. "Considérant le système textuel formé par un film et son ou ses remakes, Fausto Colombo soulignait que le remake est un paradoxe dans la mesure où, loin de se confondre avec le film original, le texte se constitue (ou se révèle) au fur et à mesure des variations et des reconfections. C'est à partir des remakes, donc, et non du film original, qu'il faudrait peut-être effectuer la lecture." M. Serceau, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 24 C'est la thèse défendue par Marc-André Noël qui voit dans le film de Gus Van Sant une criti-

que de Hitchcock qui s'appuie sur une "réécriture intégrale" de l'œuvre première. "La réécriture permet au critique de revivre l'écriture de l'œuvre originale et d'en acquérir une compréhension qui vient de l'intérieur." Marc-André Noël, *De Psycho 1960 à Psycho 1998: de l'écriture critique à la critique écrite*, Mémoire de maîtrise (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 2004), p. 20.

Si nous sommes d'accord avec le fait que ce remake permet au cinéaste américain de "revivre", pour garder ce terme, l'expérience de la création de *Psycho*, nous ne pensons pas que Gus Van Sant fait œuvre de critique, ni ne cherche à expliquer ou à comprendre l'œuvre précédente.

25 Source: AFP, *cit.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 Lefebvre montre de façon très complète comment le film d'Hitchcock est le premier terme fondateur d'une "série" qui forme un important "musée imaginaire". Voir Martin Lefebvre, *Psycho, de la figure au musée imaginaire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

28 Voir François Jost, "La parodie audiovisuelle dans quelques uns de ses états", in Clive Thomson, Alain Pagès (sous la direction de), *Dire la parodie* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

29 M. Lefebvre, *op.cit.*, pp. 205 et suivantes.

30 Textes présents dans l'édition française du DVD.

31 "Il [Gus Van Sant] était intrigué par l'idée de prendre un classique incontestable et de voir ce qui se passait si on le refilmait avec un scénario presque identique." Source: DVD.

32 *Ibid.*

33 M. Serceau, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

34 M. Serceau, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

35 "Van Sant connu pour ses choix cinématographiques osés, a voulu relever le défi et faire un remake d'un grand film, jalon dans l'histoire du cinéma, tout comme les nombreux metteurs en scène qui reprennent sans cesse le *Hamlet* de Shakespeare parce que c'est une pièce si riche et si profonde." Source: DVD.

36 Leonardo Quaresima, "Loving Two Texts at a Time: The Film Remake", *CINÉMAS*, Vol. 12, n° 3 (Printemps 2002).

37 Le paradoxe est que le *Psycho* de 1998 lui aussi voit sa réception originelle s'altérer par les années qui passent!

38 François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité, présentisme et expériences du temps*, (Paris: Seuil, 2003), p. 18.

39 Source: DVD.

40 F. Hartog, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

42 Interview de Gus Van Sant réalisé par Gérard Delorme, dans la revue *Première*, n° 270 (février 1999).

43 Cependant, curieusement, le choix des vêtements de Marion, tant par leur coupe que leur couleur, à la différence des autres personnages, sont toujours d'inspiration des années 50/60.

44 Source: DVD.

45 G. Delorme, *op.cit.*

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid.*

48 Gérard Leclerc, *Le Sceau de l'œuvre* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).

49 G. Leclerc, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

50 Martin Lefebvre montre comment ce tableau, *Suzanne et les vieillards*, fonctionne en ren-

voyant à un imaginaire mettant en place les notions de culpabilité et de faute. Voir M. Lefebvre, *op.cit.*, p. 182. Or précisément, dans l'orientation de la diégèse du film de Van Sant, ces dimensions n'apparaissent plus. Le vol n'est plus motivé suite à un adultère, mais répond à un désir impulsif. C'est ainsi que dans la version de 1998, la salle de bain n'est plus "un tribunal divin", un lieu de "purification", mais un lieu plus directement connoté sexuellement comme le suggère la suite fantasmée du *Verrou* de Fragonard relayant ainsi le caractère explicite de la masturbation de Bates épiant Crane.

COMBIEN DE VERSIONS PEUT-IL EXISTER D'UN FILM MUET? APERÇU DES PROBLEMES ET METHODOLOGIE DE LA RESTAURATION DES FILMS MUETS

Francesca Chelu Deiana, Davide Pozzi, Cineteca del Comune di Bologna

L'intervention suit la même méthodologie que l'illustration des cas concrets de restauration des films muets qui sont liés à la thématique des versions multiples, en particulier le cas de *Kænigsmark* (1923, Léonce Perret) et de *Kif Tebbi* (1928, Mario Camerini).

Une brève introduction est absolument nécessaire, parce qu'il est évident que on est "sortis" du sujet proprement dit. Il est clair que le concept de "versions multiples" est appliqué aux films sonores du début des années 30. Or, parler de cinéma muet veut aussi dire parler des versions multiples, c'est-à-dire de films ayant le même titre mais qui existent sous plusieurs formes, en plusieurs versions! Dans le cinéma muet, les éléments pouvant varier sont le montage, les colorations et les intertitres. Ces derniers ont déjà fait l'objet d'un colloque à Udine il y a quelques années.¹ On a donc le plaisir d'ouvrir une fenêtre sur le cinéma muet et de présenter un aperçu des problématiques que l'on rencontre lors de la restauration de ces films. Dans le cinéma muet, il peut exister plusieurs versions liées principalement à trois éléments: le *plan* (l'image), les *systèmes pour colorier* les films et le *montage*.

En ce qui concerne l'image, nous savons que des différences, qui peuvent être minimes mais aussi très visibles, sont dues à l'existence, à l'époque, de plusieurs négatifs d'un film. Pour un même film, il était courant de monter plusieurs négatifs, le meilleur étant normalement destiné au marché national. Plusieurs combinaisons étaient possibles.

Deux négatifs ou plus pouvaient être montés avec les mêmes plans et les mêmes prises de vues, mais tournés par plusieurs caméras.

Un autre cas qu'il est fréquent de rencontrer est celui de films pour lesquels nous avons deux négatifs ou plus provenant de la même caméra, mais avec différentes prises de vues. Nous avons donc à l'origine deux négatifs ou plus montés avec les différentes prises de vues provenant de la même caméra.

Il est également possible d'avoir des copies d'un même film monté avec les mêmes plans provenant de deux caméras qui n'ont pas la même prise de vues.

Loin d'être exhaustive, cette classification qui vise tout simplement à donner un aperçu montre très bien que le concept des versions différentes est presque toujours à l'ordre du jour lorsque l'on parle de cinéma muet.

Des différences peuvent également être présentes au niveau des systèmes de coloriage des copies. Les copies positives d'un film pouvaient être coloriées par différents systèmes et/ou avec différentes couleurs.

En ce qui concerne les différences et donc l'existence de plusieurs versions d'un film en raison de différents montages, il est possible d'affirmer que dans certains films muets, les scènes et les séquences sont montées dans un ordre différent ou, ce qui est beaucoup plus fréquent, avec une fin différente, alternative.²

*Koenigsmark*³ notamment en est un cas très frappant. Les recherches réalisées dans le cadre de sa restauration, effectuée par la Cinémathèque française en 2003, nous ont permis de découvrir que deux dénouements étaient prévus: un malheureux et un heureux. La raison de cette double fin est à rechercher dans les revues de l'époque. En effet, bien que le film ait connu un succès considérable à sa sortie – plus de 500 représentations à la salle Marivaux – il reçut malgré tout de fortes critiques quant à son dénouement: la Princesse Aurore (interprétée par Huguette Duflos) pose un bouquet de fleurs sur la tombe du soldat inconnu, à l'Arc de Triomphe.

Cette fin a été interprétée comme une profanation d'un lieu sacré pour des raisons commerciales (le cinéma) et Léonce Perret a reçu plusieurs critiques l'incitant à l'éliminer purement et simplement ou à la remplacer.

En recensant les documents consacrés à *Koenigsmark*, nous avons découvert les réactions à la disparition du dénouement "original" du film. J'en cite une: "Alors, savez-vous ce qu'on a trouvé? [...] Car, il fallait bien trouver quelque chose, pour justifier de l'indignation proclamée! On a trouvé: 1° Que la scène finale, celle qui agenouille Aurore sur la tombe du 'Poilu Inconnu', constituait une profanation. Et Perret, le plus délicat des hommes de tact, a mutilé ce passage émouvant et poétique [une œuvre que ce passage complétait avec une rare mesure]"⁴ Nous apprenons donc que Léonce Perret, sous la pression des critiques, a éliminé la fin malheureuse après les premières projections à Marivaux.

Six ans plus tard, la scène finale fit encore l'objet de plaintes de la part d'un exploitant milanais qui écrivit à la Società Anonima Stefano Pittaluga, détentrice des droits d'exploitation de la réédition de *Koenigsmark* en Italie, pour recevoir des éclaircissements à propos de la fin, "abrégée" dans ce cas, du film de Léonce Perret.

Cette lettre dut convaincre le distributeur italien car, dans les documents qui l'accompagnent au Museo Nazionale del Cinema de Turin, figure également une liste des intertitres, rédigés uniquement pour la dernière scène ("titoli finali"). Tout porte à croire qu'ils ont été tirés dans un second temps, afin d'être ajoutés avec les images de la fin, lors de la réédition du film en Italie, en 1929.

Puisque le négatif image dont nous disposons pour la restauration comprenant les deux fins, Claudine Kaufmann a décidé de les garder toutes les deux dans la version restaurée du film. Ainsi la fin que Perret avait souhaitée pour son film (avec la tombe du Soldat inconnu) figure donc en premier lieu, suivie, après l'ajout d'un intertitre ("Fin heureuse"), par la deuxième fin.

Kif Tebbi

Kif Tebbi représente un cas à part de versions multiples appliquées à l'étude et à la restauration des films muets. L'existence de deux versions du film de Camerini a été découverte lors des travaux de reconstruction du film réalisés à la Cineteca di Bologna en octobre 2003, en vue de sa dernière restauration.

Les premières interventions de restauration datent de 1988. Elles font suite à la découverte et à la restauration du négatif nitrate de première génération réalisée par l'ingénieur italien Piero Tortolina, l'un des principaux collectionneurs italiens du secteur.⁵ A partir de ce négatif, parvenu entre-temps à la Cineteca di Bologna, une copie positive fut imprimée et présentée au festival Il Cinema Ritrovato,⁶ sans la partie finale (manquante), qui fut remplacée par un intertitre récapitulatif.

Dans un second temps, grâce à la nouvelle visibilité que le film connut après 1988, la Cinémathèque Municipale de Luxembourg fit savoir qu'elle conservait dans ses archives nitrates une copie positive de l'époque avec des intertitres en français. Cette dernière copie fut donc mise à notre disposition pour achever le travail commencé précédemment. Le dénouement manquant fut ajouté à la copie positive de 1988 à partir de la copie luxembourgeoise, mais avec des intertitres en français.

Des découvertes ultérieures permirent néanmoins la reprise des travaux afin d'achever le plus exhaustivement possible la restauration et pour réaliser en parallèle une recherche sur les sources extra-filmiques.⁷ Comparé au seul élément dont nous disposions en 1988, la restauration de 2004 put utiliser trois nouvelles copies positives sur un support nitrate de cellulose. Grâce à l'étude comparée des nouveaux témoins, deux versions du film de Camerini furent découvertes.

Nous reportons ci-dessous la description sommaire des pellicules prises en examen.

Nég A: négatif de première génération, 8 bobines, nitrate, intertitres italiens, 2.600 m.

Cet élément, retrouvé par Piero Tortolina et conservé aujourd'hui aux archives nitrate de la Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, est indéniablement le plus important à notre disposition, car il s'agit du négatif italien de première génération de 1928. La copie est en bon état physique et chimique de conservation, mais elle est incomplète, car la dernière bobine est introuvable. Grâce à la présence des "flash-titles", qui ne sont, hélas, plus utilisables aujourd'hui, nous pouvons par ailleurs connaître le style graphique et le texte des intertitres originaux.

NL: positif d'époque, N/B et colorié, nitrate, 7 bobines, intertitres en hollandais, 2.126 m.

Ce positif, provenant du Filmmuseum d'Amsterdam, est incomplet en de nombreux points, mais le dénouement du film figure pratiquement dans son intégrité. Malgré la détérioration de la coloration, il demeure une trace d'une teinte verte au niveau de l'une des deux scènes de nuit. L'autre séquence nocturne présente dans le film est quant à elle en noir et blanc et elle présente également de nombreuses lacunes. Après comparaison avec le négatif italien, il s'avère que NL provient du Négatif A. Heureusement, le dénouement est complet. Les intertitres dans NL sont traduits presque littéralement par les "flash-titles" italiens. Les petites différences ne déforment pas le sens.

LX: positif d'époque, N/B et colorié, nitrate, 6 bobines, intertitres en français, 2.303,4 m.

Le positif nitrate provenant de la Cinémathèque Municipale du Luxembourg est en excellent état de conservation et il ne présente aucune lacune. Les intertitres sont en français et, au niveau des deux séquences nocturnes, la copie présente une coloration verte en bon état de conservation. Dès le premier examen, LX s'avère complètement différent de Négatif A et par conséquent de NL. La copie a de toute évidence été imprimée à partir d'un deuxième négatif (que nous appellerons Négatif B), monté différemment et avec des claps différents, mais provenant toujours de la même caméra que le Négatif A. C'est d'ailleurs l'analyse comparée de cet élément et du Négatif A qui nous a permis de découvrir deux versions du film.

FR: positif d'époque, N/B et colorié, nitrate, 8 bobines, intertitres en français, 2.334,5 m.

La copie française, gracieusement remise par Lobster Films, est en bon état physique et chimique. Elle ne présente aucune lacune et conserve intactes les séquences colorées

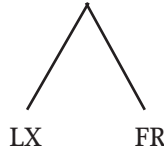
en vert. Comme on pouvait s’y attendre, cette copie parisienne provient elle aussi du Négatif B. Les études sur FR ont été menées en référence à la copie LX. Le résultat obtenu prouve que les deux copies sont pratiquement identiques: les titres et les intertitres de FR présentent le même texte et les mêmes caractères que les intertitres de LX; les deux scènes de nuit sont colorisées en vert comme pour LX, le montage et les claps utilisés correspondent eux aussi à ceux de la copie LX. Par ailleurs, compte tenu du métrage pratiquement identique, il est clair les deux copies ne présentent aucune lacune.

Il est donc évident qu’au moins deux négatifs de *Kif Tebbi* avaient été montés: un pour le marché italien et étranger (Négatif A) et l’autre destiné à la distribution dans les pays francophones (Négatif B). Le schéma suivant indique les rapports généalogiques existant entre les témoins parvenus:

Négatif A



Négatif B (perdu)



Voyons en détail toutes les différences de texte découvertes dans les deux versions du film, sans oublier que lorsque nous parlons du Négatif B, le travail a en fait été effectué sur le premier témoin positif parvenu, soit LX. Un aspect très intéressant de l’étude des variantes des deux négatifs est la découverte de scènes présentes uniquement dans le Négatif B.

Au début de la deuxième séquence, aussi bien dans le Négatif B que dans le Négatif A, l’acteur principal Ismaïl montre à ses amis un journal dans lequel sont représentés des bateaux gigantesques ainsi que des reproductions de peinture moderne occidentale. Dans le Négatif B, la prise de vues suivante cadre un journal intitulé *L’Illustration*, alors que dans la même prise de vues du Négatif A, le titre du journal est recouvert par le revers des pages du journal [Fig. 1a-b].⁸

Fig. 1a: Da LX. *L’Illustration*

Fig. 1b: NegA. Le titre du quotidien est caché

Peu après, dans les deux copies, Rassim se penche pour ramasser un journal. L’image suivante dans le Négatif B montre un journal intitulé *Vogue*: cette scène n’existe ni dans le Négatif A ni dans NL [Fig. 2a-b].

La cinquième prise de vues de la quatrième séquence du Négatif B, précédée par un

Fig. 2a. De LX. *Vogue* cadrée en PP

Fig. 2b. De LX. La revue est cadrée en PM

intertitre présentant pour la première fois le personnage de Mabuk, fait apparaître un serviteur qui porte un fouet et un revolver à son maître, Mabuk justement. La présentation de ce personnage dans le Négatif A est beaucoup plus “bucolique”: il sourit en s’approchant d’une femme qui se trouve sur la rive d’un torrent. Tout au long du film (y compris dans le Négatif B), Mabuk s’avère humble et pacifique, alors que dans le Négatif B, la prise de vues décrite plus haut le met en contradiction avec la caractérisation plus générale qu’il prend au fil du récit [Fig. 3a-b].

Dans l’intertitre 4 du Négatif B, à la quatrième séquence, Muktor dit (s’adressant à son ami qui fait la cour à une femme): “Pourquoi insistes-tu Rassim... Ce n’est qu’une pauvre nomade... Tu en trouveras bien d’autres!”. Dans le Négatif A: “Ti ostini senza



Fig. 3a. Première apparition de Mabuk en LX



Fig. 3b. De NegA. Première apparition de Mabuk

fortuna Rassim! Mne Bent Ibrahim non vorrà mai saperne di te”.⁹ L’intertitre du Négatif B est trompeur, car il en ressort un personnage “raciste” qui fait allusion à l’infériorité sociale de la jeune fille par rapport à son ami. Or, au cours du film, nous constatons que Muktor est toujours mû par de sains principes moraux. L’intertitre italien le confirme pleinement: celle qui était définie avec légèreté “une pauvre nomade” y est mentionnée par son nom et son prénom, ce qui ne manque pas de lui conférer un certain respect. Dans toutes les copies, la vingtième séquence commence par un plan général (intérieur) cadrant le bureau de la gendarmerie turque où se trouvent le lieutenant et le capitaine. Le Négatif A et NL ne présentent aucun intertitre, la séquence a donc un rôle purement informatif. Dans le Négatif B, en revanche, la même séquence est séparée par deux intertitres nécessaires à la compréhension des futures actions des personnages qui en font partie. Nous n’avons aucune idée du motif de cette omission dans le Négatif A: nous pouvons uniquement affirmer qu’il ne s’agit pas d’une lacune,

car nous avons trouvé dans NL des discontinuités dans la succession des intertitres, numérotés selon un ordre progressif.

Une des séquences de la dernière bobine du Négatif B montre de nombreuses scènes d'offensive de la part des soldats italiens contre les turcs et plus particulièrement les canons et la flotte. Cette séquence devait également être présente dans la dernière bobine égarée du Négatif A (mais que nous avons dans NL). La même séquence dans NL nous montre elle aussi des images d'offensive militaire mais, contrairement au Négatif B, aucune référence n'est faite à la flotte. Il est fort probable que ces images étaient uniquement destinées au montage du Négatif B pour le marché français ou bien elles ont été coupées par la censure italienne dans le Négatif A (une intervention de la censure hollandaise est plus improbable). A priori, nous ne devrions pas écarter l'hypothèse que ces prises de vues pouvaient être présentes dans le Négatif A et qu'elles pourraient avoir été égarées accidentellement ou volontairement dans NL, mais il est fort improbable que huit prises de vues aient été égarées et, comme par hasard, toutes celles représentant des bateaux italiens! Par ailleurs, la séquence dans NL ne semble pas incomplète [Fig. 4-5].

En confirmation de l'hypothèse de la coupure effectuée par la censure sur le Négatif A, nous savons grâce au visa de censure italienne que des coupures furent imposées aux scènes de guerre entre les italiens et les turcs dans la partie centrale du film: "Al film, conosciuto anche con il titolo italianizzato *Come vuoi...*, la censura impone la soppressione delle scene di saccheggio ad opera dei turchi a Gasr Garabuli".¹⁰ Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, ces scènes de pillage qui devaient être éliminées des copies positives de distribution sont encore présentes dans le Négatif A, alors qu'elles sont "en toute logique" censurées dans la copie hollandaise (NL) et dans les éléments provenant du Négatif B. A en juger par les différences existant entre le Négatif A et celui qui devait être le Négatif B, nous pouvons en déduire que ce dernier était destiné à la distribution en France et/ou dans les pays francophones. Il est par ailleurs indiqué dans le générique: "Adaptation française de E. L. Fouquet et Germani Fried".

Il est fort probable qu'une édition légèrement différente de *Kif Tebbi* ait été conçue pour le marché français et que le Négatif B, après avoir été monté en Italie, ait été expédié à la Sofar, le distributeur sur le territoire français. Il n'est pas secondaire d'observer que les rapports entre la Sofar (dirigée par Romain Pinès)¹¹ et l'ADIA, la maison de production, étaient particulièrement étroits et ce, grâce à Augusto Genina¹². L'année où *Kif Tebbi* fut réalisé, celui-ci tourna un film pour la Sofar (société franco-allemande) en Allemagne et en France. Il était également l'un des membres fondateurs de l'ADIA (et le cousin de Camerini). Par ailleurs, sur les quatre films produits

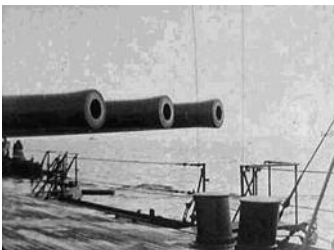


Fig. 4-5. De LX. Images de la flotte italienne

par l'ADIA (*Kif Tebbi* est le deuxième), le troisième fut co-produit avec la Sofar justement.

Signalons enfin deux autres éléments présents dans les copies provenant du Négatif B qui n'apparaissent pas dans NL: cette fois-ci, il ne s'agit pas de variantes, mais de l'état de conservation des pellicules. A l'instar de NL, LX présente une coloration verte dans la même séquence signalée auparavant; la copie luxembourgeoise conserve néanmoins intacte une deuxième coloration (toujours de teinte verte) au niveau de la deuxième scène de nuit. La coloration est parfaitement conservée et les intertitres présents sont eux aussi colorés. Grâce à cette observation et au fait que nous retrouvons également dans FR les mêmes séquences coloriées, nous pouvons affirmer que la deuxième scène de nuit de NL est exempte de couleurs à cause de sa détérioration totale. La présence des colorations dans tous les éléments positifs à notre disposition nous confirme par ailleurs que la couleur d'origine était effectivement le vert et non pas le bleu comme on aurait pu erronément le croire, car il est pratiquement impossible d'obtenir une détérioration chimique de la couleur exactement identique sur trois copies différentes.

Si l'on compare le dénouement NL (celui du négatif ayant été entièrement perdu) et le dénouement du Négatif B, nous remarquons l'absence dans NL d'une prise de vues (postérieure à la dernière parvenue) ainsi que celle d'une ultérieure courte séquence (pour un total d'environ 20 mètres) montrant les deux acteurs principaux se dirigeant vers la maison suivis du serviteur. Bien que NL et Négatif B soient de dérivation différente, il est à notre avis légitime de remonter aux dernières lacunes de NL par le biais de Négatif B, car le nombre de séquences dans les deux versions coïncide; par ailleurs, sans la dernière séquence, nous ignorerions tout du sort du serviteur. La lacune n'est néanmoins pas particulièrement grave, car le dénouement est complet sur le plan dramaturgique avec les retrouvailles des deux amoureux et la victoire de l'Italie sur les turcs.

Avant de conclure, rappelons que la pratique de la restauration cinématographique prévoit, dans la mesure du possible, de remonter au film tel qu'il fut délivré par l'auteur. La copie principale de référence est donc (s'il est disponible) le négatif sur lequel aucune intervention n'a été effectuée après le montage approuvé par le metteur en scène.

Dans le cas de *Kif Tebbi*, nous avons deux versions qui, en l'état de la recherche, ont toutes deux été délivrées par Camerini, et qui sont donc toutes les deux originales. L'une d'entre elles a néanmoins été considérée comme la version destinée au marché des pays francophones. Elle ne peut donc être le "premier choix", car "le migliori riprese erano montate sulle copie di diffusione nazionale, mentre le altre erano lasciate alle copie d'esportazione".¹³ Si l'on considère *Kif Tebbi* par rapport à son origine nationale, s'agissant d'un film italien, il faut se référer au négatif nitrate qui, au-delà de son rôle de témoin de la copie italienne, correspond également à l'"archétype", car il est exempt d'interventions de la censure et que ses remaniements étaient facilement repérables. Le seul problème irrésolu concerne le fait que NL provient du négatif conçu pour le marché italien et non pas d'un négatif de second choix. Il est très étrange d'avoir une version B destinée exclusivement aux pays de langue française plutôt qu'à l'étranger en général. Si ce n'était pour la qualité supérieure évidente des prises de vues choisies dans les copies italiennes et hollandaises, on aurait pu émettre l'hypothèse que la version principale était l'actuelle version B.

Sur la base des informations récoltées dans l'étude et dans la comparaison du matériel, nous avons donc décidé de restaurer la version de *Kif Tebbi* destinée au marché italien, c'est-à-dire le Négatif A. Pour la partie finale manquante, nous avons utilisé l'élément d'Amsterdam, alors qu'il a été décidé de ne jamais utiliser (même si elles étaient mieux conservées) les images provenant de FR et LX, car appartenant au Négatif B et donc à une autre version de *Kif Tebbi*, également légitime et authentique, mais ayant sa propre autonomie.

- 1 Voir Francesco Pitassio, Leonardo Quaresima (sous la direction de), *Scrittura e immagine: la didascalia nel cinema muto/Writing and Image* (Udine: Forum, 1998).
- 2 Voir Michele Canosa, "Per una teoria del restauro cinematografico", dans Gian Piero Brunetta (sous la direction de), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, Vol. V, *Teorie, strumenti, memorie* (Torino: Einaudi, 2001), pp. 1069-1118.
- 3 Cf. Davide Pozzi, "Køenigsmark. Journal d'une restauration", dans Jean A. Gili, Bernard Bastide (sous la direction de), *Léonce Perret* (Bologna: AFRHC/Cineteca di Bologna, 2003), pp. 215-240; Davide Pozzi, "Restaurer Monsieur Perret. Entretien avec Claudine Kauffman", dans J. A. Gili, B. Bastide (sous la direction de), *op. cit.*
- 4 André de Reusse, "Les Pâris d'Aujourd'hui", *Hebdo-Film*, n° 404, (24 novembre 1923), pp. 1-3.
- 5 Cf. article consacré à Piero Tortolina dans Gian Piero Brunetta, *Avventure nei mari del cinema* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2001)
- 6 Cf. Paolo Cherchi Usai, "Mario Camerini in Africa: 'Maciste contro lo sceicco' (1927) et 'Kif Tebbi' (1928)", *Cinegrafie*, n° 2 (1989).
- 7 Voir: "Il successo di un film italiano in America", *La Vita Cinematografica* (juin 1929); Giuseppe Bini, "Kif Tebbi", *Ibidem*; Ugo Magnaghi, "Kif Tebbi", *Ibidem*; "Kif Tebbi", *La rivista cinematografica* (novembre 1928); "Kif Tebbi", *La rivista cinematografica* (28 février 1928); "Turbine di Parigi al Savoia", *Cinegazzettino* (1929); "Kif Tebbi", *Variety – Film Reviews* (1926-1929); "Kif Tebbi", *La rivista del cinematografo* (1928); Achille Valdata, "Kif Tebbi" *Kines*, n° 6, (février 1929); critiques américaines reportées dans *Il cinema italiano*, n° 23 (1929); Aldo Camilleri, "Cinematografia coloniale", *Cinemalia* (juin 1928).
- 8 A partir des images du film, aucune référence spécifique à la France n'est découverte. Il s'agit plutôt d'un éloge à la civilisation européenne en générale, ainsi qu'à l'action italienne de "libération des turcs" (colonisation de la Libye), bien que de manière très sournoise. Nous pouvons donc affirmer que ces prises de vues étaient finalisées à la distribution en France. Il se peut également que l'intention du metteur en scène ait été à l'origine de se référer plus précisément à la France et que la production ou la censure lui aient imposé d'éliminer les détails "profrançais" des autres copies: en effet, un petit détail, une prise de vues (commune aux trois copies) montre une photo encadrée de la Tour Eiffel.
- 9 NdT: "Tu n'as aucune chance, Rassim! Mme Bent Ibrahim ne voudra jamais de toi."
- 10 Vittorio Martinelli, *Il cinema muto italiano. I film degli anni Venti. 1924-31* (Torino-Roma: Nuova ERI/CSC, 1996).
NdT: "Au film, également connu sous le titre italianisé 'Come vuoi...', la censure imposa de supprimer les scènes de pillage par les turcs à Gasr Garabuli".
- 11 Cf. Eric Le Roy, "Romain Pinès ou l'itinéraire d'un producteur racé", *Archives*, n° 73 (décembre 1997), p. 26.

- 12 Sergio Grmek Germani, Vittorio Martinelli (sous la direction de), *Il cinema di Augusto Genina* (Pordenone: Biblioteca dell'immagine, 1989).
- 13 Enno Patalas, "Il restauro del film: prospettive e problemi", *Comunicazione di massa*, Vol. III (septembre-décembre 1985).
NdT: "Les meilleures prises de vues étaient montées sur les copies de diffusion nationale, alors que les autres étaient affectées aux copies d'exportation".

THE TRANSITION FROM SILENT TO SOUND FILM IN A SMALL, MULTI-LINGUAL COUNTRY. LUXEMBOURG AS A CASE STUDY

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Preliminary Remarks

Luxembourg serves as a very interesting case study in the history of the transition from silent to sound film. It is a small country but has always been multilingual. While Luxembourgers have originally had only one mother tongue – Luxembourgish –, most of them (between the wars as well as today) acquire a more or less sufficient command of both French and German in school. Luxembourg has been and still is in this sense a multilingual country. This plurilingualism has its various limitations, however, since not all Luxembourgers command the different languages with the same degree of proficiency. Despite a traditionally deep-rooted francophilia among a large strata of Luxembourgish society, many Luxembourgers used to have – and still have – a better grasp of German, which is explained by the fact that Luxembourgish is a Germanic language and is much closer to German, although there are hundreds of words in the vocabulary that originate and/or derive from French. It must be assumed that in rural areas and among the lower social strata knowledge of French is likely to be less widespread as among the bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia, who usually command French very well. This was also true before the Second World War for the many craftsmen who spent some time in France in order to specialize their respective craft (which was called the “Tour de France” of craftsmanship) or for those numerous Luxembourgish women who worked as servants in French households, mostly in Parisian, before returning to their native country, usually to get married: their knowledge of French was far better than the other members of their social classes.

This is an important prerequisite to keep in mind in order to understand the specific situation in Luxembourg in the early 1930s. Research is complicated by the fact, that a small country like Luxembourg was, to be sure, a solid market for film exploitation, despite that it did not have a fully fledged film culture. In the early 1930s there was no indigenous feature film production in Luxembourg. The earliest documentary films which were truly Luxembourgish evolved only in the second half of the decade.¹ Moreover, film criticism was not highly developed in Luxembourg in the early 1930s. Two film magazines which were founded in the 1920s, *Le Film Luxembourgeoise* and *Hollywood*, had ceased publication by that time and the daily newspapers often limited their film reviews to a meager few lines. The largest Luxembourgish daily, the Catholic *Luxemburger Wort*, started their weekly film section as late as 1934. Other newspapers, however, ran reviews of films, playing in Luxembourg, on a more or less regular basis. Still, many films and film-related topics were largely neglected. So what was lacking in Luxembourg was a regular platform upon which to reflect and discuss film-related issues theoretically.

The Theoretical Debate

Nonetheless, even before the first screenings of sound films commenced there was a lively debate in the Luxembourgish press on new technology. In this discussion the commentators made a distinction between what they called sound films, or films with music and noises, and talking films, or films with dialogue. Even if the resistance against sound films was not very radical, there was harsh criticism against talking films on the side of the “cinephiles.”

Evy Friedrich, a young critic and co-founder of the first Luxembourgish film magazine, was the most outspoken adversary against talking pictures. He feared, like many of his contemporaries, that the language of film itself would suffer. In his opinion the cinema had to remain a silent art. “The ‘cinephile’ will never appreciate the talking picture. [...] I can in no way imagine a Chaplin, a Jannings, a Nielsen stuttering in front of us. It would be worse than theater; it would turn the cinema into filmed theater.”² According to Friedrich the spoken word could only do damage to the cinema, and he regretted that the Americans put so much weight onto this new invention. His verdict was irrevocable: “The talking picture does not belong to film art (‘cinégraphie’), film art is silent.”³ In a different context Friedrich wrote: “What has been the important thing about silent movies was to express with the face what would have to be expressed with words, sentences: the verbalization of the murmurs of the soul. Mimic and gesticulation were the meters by which to measure the talent and artistic meaning of each and every film artist. [...] The silent film has thus brought forth the various human and artistic values that have not been expressed in words till today.”⁴

One of Friedrich’s colleagues at the socialist newspaper *Tageblatt* wrote in 1928: “Silent films and sound films are never going to be rivals. Both will develop independently from one another. The silent film stands for internationality, popularity with the masses and unlimited possibilities of facial expression. It is a true art for itself.”⁵ Talkies could not possibly give something interesting to an audience interested in art cinema. On the contrary, art films would lose on their aesthetic and artistic values. Instead, the author maintained, the newsreels would be the future realm of the talking picture: “The sound film reporter will be the reporter of the future. In the field of news coverage the sound film will become an outclassing competitor for the press.” Moreover documentaries and educational films would benefit from sound: “As a mean of education and propaganda its possibilities are unlimited. Filmed interviews will give petty bourgeois audiences an opportunity to listen to the voices and opinions of great men as if they were present.”⁶ This opinion was shared by most Luxembourgish opponents of the talkies.

Sound films, consisting of noises and mainly music, met with less resistance, since they guaranteed smaller movie theaters better musical accompaniment. The critic “Luxophile” maintained that audiences in provincial movie houses, where the piano accompaniment of silent films tended to be lousy, were being served with music as well with sound films without dialogue as were the audiences of the big movie houses in the bigger cities.⁷ Evy Friedrich would concede in 1931: “The great advantage of the sound film is that it allows original scores, performed by great orchestras to be played in small cinemas. This is the only justification for the sound film.”⁸

The most respected journalist and literary writer, Batty Weber, who was also one of the most outspoken advocates of the film medium in Luxembourg during the 1920s, underlined in January, 1929, that sound did not bear advantages for the cinema: “Most

of the films today considered good, very good, exceptional, would sink into the pit of petty bourgeois kitsch, if their plots were made to be carried by talk and response.”⁹ His weightiest argument was, nevertheless, socio-political, rather than artistic: “The film of today is the most democratic cultural tool, which doesn’t make a difference between big cities and rural areas, between New York and Schlindermanderscheid. [...] *Gold Rush* and *Quo Vadis* were not presented in Luxembourg differently than in New York and Paris. This beautiful equality would be disrupted by sound films.”¹⁰ Moreover the author feared that the movie theaters in the small country of Luxembourg could not afford the installation of sound equipment and that Luxembourgish audiences would be deprived of the films that were being shown in the big cities of the world. The democratic element of the cinema would thus be the first victim of the sound film.

Yet, the sound and talking picture did not only have adversaries. Months before the first screening of a sound film in Luxembourg, Nic Molling, the journalist and founder of the short-lived film magazine *Hollywood* (1928-29), wrote: “I believe in the talkies. I believe that the synchronized sound, talking, and noise film will be the film of the future. This under the condition, however, that the talking picture not be confused with the legitimate stage play. [...] In films the moving image remains essential.” Molling attacked the adversaries of sound: “It is dangerous to be pedantic or doctrinaire, and they who deny the talking picture its right to exist even before they have seen or heard a good or even a bad one are indeed doctrinaire.”¹¹

The resistance to the new technology subsided in 1930-31, after some technically satisfactory screenings of sound films had been launched. Batty Weber belonged to those who changed their minds following these screenings. In 1930 he wrote:

*I stirred against sound film so often in this paper, that I should be ashamed that I am now writing in favor of it. It always had its set-backs, even if one wrote about something that was known only from hearsay. Meanwhile I had an opportunity to see a good sound film, Ich glaub' nie mehr an eine Frau. Richard Tauber is singing; he's in the role of a tenor turned boatsman who has gone through bitter experiences with a woman. [...] The synchronization was perfect. The voice did not come from a specific corner of the room, while the singer's mouth was opening and closing on the center of the screen. Voice and mouth were in unison. If the singer left the screen, the voice went with him. Moreover it was not disturbing that the voice was bigger-than-life; the characters were the same, after all. Only the tone of the voice was a little bit non-human, it sounded ironclad, monumental. In a legitimate theater of the same size the actors would hardly be comprehensible in the back rows. Here, everybody could understand everything.*¹²

In 1931 Weber maintained that the invention of the sound film was within the logic of film technology and that the development of this technology had not yet come to its end: at this point he even predicted the coming of color and 3D-projection.¹³

It goes without saying that Luxembourgish musicians were amongst the adversaries of sound films. They argued that film sound deprived young listeners from the experience of live music and obliged them to get used to mechanized music instead: “How could any youth or grown up person preserve their senses in light of these appalling noises? Who could still be enthused by music, if one is confronted from early on with grossly distorted tones which deadens people’s feelings for the pure sound or timbre of

an instrument?”¹⁴ Audiences who seemed to like sound films despite the lousy musical quality were strongly criticized by the musicians: “These audiences display a frightening lack of education and artistic taste should they go on tolerating these unworthy assaults on our distinguished cultural heritage.”¹⁵

First Experiments

A first attempt at introducing sound films to Luxembourgish screens was the presentation of *Lilac Time* (1928, *Ciel de Gloire*, George Fitzmaurice) at the movie theater L'Écran in February/March, 1929. Public reactions were mixed:

*The movie house L'Écran has – without having planned this – puzzled its audiences by announcing Ciel de Gloire as the first sound film in Luxembourg. It would have been right to call it a film with synchronized sound effects. [...] The audience, to be sure, had the opinion that sound film had to be a talking film.*¹⁶

Another critic was more enthusiastic: “*Ciel de Gloire* is the first partly synchronized sound film to be screened in Luxembourg. The experiment is very effective and brings to us, in a tangible and harrowing manner, the reality of the tragic air battles of the World War.”¹⁷ In the same year, 1929, two other American war films “with synchronized sounds” were shown in Luxembourg: *Wings* (1927, William A. Wellman) and *The Patent Leather Kid* (1927, Alfred Santell).

The first public screening of talking films in Luxembourg was launched on September 11, 1929, at the Ciné Marivaux: “Tonight. Acting, music making, singing, *talking films*. The distinguished Nicolas Amato in *Ramona – Perette et son pot au lait – Etincelle de Music Hall*.” The Vitaphone sound system was used, and it combined a film projector with a phonograph.

The Marivaux program, however, could not stop the war of opinions. One spectator reported:

Finally the evening had come. They went to the Ciné Marivaux full of confidence. To their surprise they must have realized that the tickets had gone up by 2, 3, or sometimes by 4 Francs. Alas. The beautiful spectacle will recoup them abundantly. The screening room is getting packed. It's 8:53, the room is getting dark and the usual opening program – a news-reel, comedy shorts... – are flitting across the screen. Then the lights go out for the third time; all eyes are tensely focused on the white wall. After a long cue of titles and text cards Nicolas d'Amato, disguised as a Marquis, the hero of the first “film parlant”, Perette et son pot au lait, appears. He is holding an open book in his hands. On the pages two human beings become alive and start moving. D'Amato is opening and closing his mouth without anything coming out of it, until after a while a phonograph voice, which is not at all in synch with the images, starts emitting all kinds of sounds such as p'tit, p'tit and pot au lait. The first number and thus the first disappointment was over. It lasted not even 5 minutes. Number 2 starts: Etincelle de Music Hall. At the beginning nothing again, than the same non-synchronicity with the images. Eventually, we see Amato in close-up and while he is opening his mouth for a sweet melody, powerful noises are ringing through the hall. The audience is receiving all this with laughter and giggling. The third part then has its turn: Au Pays de Ramona.

*Again, at first it doesn't work, but then the Gods have mercy and at least this little thing is able to satisfy its audience a little bit.*¹⁸

The reviewer of the *Luxemburger Zeitung* maintained:

*Of the three pieces shown one worked well, one fair and one didn't work at all. This is not fault of the management who was attempting to show the audience how all this looks, despite the fact that the whole thing is still in its early stages. But it seems the silent film is very likely to dominate the screens for a long time to come.*¹⁹

Despite the many set-backs in the synchronicity between images and sound and the intelligibility of the dialogue, the *Escher Tageblatt* was less pessimistic: "The progress that is depicted in this film technology, cannot be overlooked. The faults and failures are not bigger than in any other novelty; think of photography, the phonograph, the radio etc. It will be interesting to watch the further developments."²⁰ Although the first screening of sound films in Luxembourg which had been advertised with such a great ballyhoo, ended in a fiasco, subsequent screenings went far better technically and were the reason for Luxembourgish reviewers to rectify their first opinions: "It is my duty to mention that the screening on the first day met with major problems. Subsequently everything worked alright, however, and the three films are fascinating and deserve our attention."²¹ Still, it is not quite clear if these disastrous technological problems were entirely responsible for the delay of the introduction of sound films to Luxembourgish screens.

The introduction of sound or rather talking films to Luxembourg was implemented, in fact, with a short delay (compared to the neighboring countries). Since the country is so small, its audiences tiny in number, and because of the extraordinary costs for the installation of sound equipment, Luxembourgish cinema owners hesitated for some time before they engaged in the financial adventure of equipping their movie theaters with sound technology. A few barely convincing experiments took place in 1929, but the cinema owners waited until it became apparent that sound technology would carry through internationally; only after that did they invest into the innovation more readily.

As of April/May 1930, when Luxembourgish movie theaters were fitted with good technical equipment, thus guaranteeing the transmission of a satisfactory sound (optical sound), audiences were finally enthusiastic. Good technical screening conditions and the programming of good and impressive sound films in a language Luxembourgers could understand drew large audiences to the Luxembourgish movie theaters. Popular genres, such as comedies and musicals were additionally instrumental for the audience's growing interest in sound films.

Show Boat

The screening of the American film *Show Boat* (1929, James Whale) on April 19, 1930, at the Ciné Marivaux was lauded by the Luxembourgish press as a big event. The critic Marcel Kemmer wrote: "When the Americans released the first sound and talking film three years ago, Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer*, this marked the beginning of a new era in the history of cinematography. I would refer to *The Show Boat* as Luxembourg's *Jazz*

Singer. It is the first feature film of its kind to be shown in our country.”²² The *Luxemburger Zeitung* applauded the Marivaux’s initiative but regretted that sound films were still in short supply in Luxembourg: “It is a bad thing that a ‘singing and music playing’ film is still treated as an ‘event for Luxembourg’, while sound films are constantly flocking the screens in all neighboring countries.”²³

In contrast to the short features presented in September, 1929, the quality of the sound seems to have been satisfactory this time: “The rendition of the sound can, all in all, be called good. Laura La Plante sings her rendition very well, nearly faultlessly even.”²⁴ Of course, there is the occasional reserved response: “At the beginning it feels strange and odd. All the more so, since the voice sounds bigger than life as do the other noises (the bubbling of the water, the clacking of the horses’ hooves, the knocking at doors etc.). It is maybe the apparatus which could be tuned differently, or maybe it’s the acoustics – be it as it may, more ‘piano’ would be advisable, though.”²⁵

Despite the minor faults to which these commentaries referred, and which were abundant during this first period, the sound film prevailed in the long run. Ever since the most important cinema owners acquired sound equipment in 1930 despite the huge investment in cost, audience responses seemed to be very positive indeed. As of May/June a first sweep of sound films ran through Luxembourg: *The Iron Mask* (1929, Allan Dwan), *Noah’s Ark* (1929, Michael Curtiz), *Submarine* (1928, Frank Capra), *The Singing Fool* (1928, Lloyd Bacon), *The Pagan* (1929, William S. Van Dyke), *Lady of the Pavement* (1929, David Wark Griffith), *Wild Orchids* (1929, Sidney Franklin), plus the German productions *Der blaue Engel* (1930, Joseph von Sternberg) and *Dich hab’ich geliebt* (1929, Rudolf Walther-Fein).

For these early sound film screenings the Vitaphone system was used which combined a projector with a phonograph. This technology had major technical disadvantages especially concerning the synchronization between sound and images. The first cinema to implement optical sound was the Métropole-Palace in the second largest city of the country, Esch-Alzette. The splendor of this system quickly developed into a major sales and advertising tool, as one can see from the following ad:

*Important! The Pacent Sound Film Apparatus at the Métropole-Palace is the first in Luxembourg. It was delivered by the Pacent Reproducer Corporation of New York and costs around half a million. It is equalled only by its American companion Western Electric brand. Since all the other competitors are using record systems, the Métropole-Palace will be the first movie house in Luxembourg to present SOUND FILMS, which is sound on the filmstrip and not on records.*²⁶

However, the other movie houses caught up quickly and installed this technically superior equipment.

As of September, 1930, the number of sound films shown in Luxembourg went up significantly, despite a considerable raise in admission fees. Sound films turned out to be economically profitable. If it took the smaller movie houses another year or two to acquire a sound equipment, audiences in the bigger cities enjoyed a selection of two or three sound films per week. In 1930 the following sound films – among others – hit Luxembourgish screens: *Le Collier de la Reine* (1929, Gaston Ravel), *Nuits de Prince* (1929, Marcel L’Herbier), *Weary River*, *Spite Marriage* (1929, Edward Sedgwick), *Say it with Songs* (1929, Lloyd Bacon), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930, Lewis

Milestone),²⁷ *King of Jazz* (1930, John Murray Anderson), *Melodie des Herzens* (1929, Hanns Schwarz), *Der unsterbliche Lump* (1930, Robert Liebermann), *Der Korvettenkapitän* (1930, Rudolf Walther-Fein), and *Das Rheinlandmädel* (1930, Johannes Meyer).

In 1931, 17 of the 36 Luxembourgish movie theaters were able to project sound films.²⁸ One year later, this figure goes up to 24. Which systems all movie houses were using remains unknown. But according to a statistical inquiry, the following sound systems were in use in the early 1930s: Nalpas (8), Pacent (6), Tobis (6), Western Electric (2), Zeiss-Ikon (1) and Kinoton (1).²⁹

The Language Barrier

The international problem of language barriers looked different in Luxembourg. The language conditions specific to Luxembourg allowed for rich and versatile film programming, even though the original relative balance between American, German and French films, which characterized the Luxembourgish market during the 1920s, was disrupted early on in the 1930s. The multilingualism of the country, which made it possible to show two versions of the same film back to back, the lack of a quota system, as well as the reliance on subtitled and dubbed films guaranteed 1930s Luxembourgish audiences a larger array of films to choose from (at least as far as the national origin of the films were concerned) as compared to the neighboring countries of France and especially Germany.

The most important thing to mention here is the fact that the introduction of sound films in Luxembourg brought about major changes to the film market itself. While Hollywood imports dominated the market during the silent era, American films lost this leading role for quite some time but did not completely disappear from Luxembourgish cinemas thanks to multiple language versions, hybrid films and some dubbed films. It wasn't until 1936/37 that Hollywood regained its former status, which came about by the means of a pragmatic mix of dubbing and subtitling. The American diplomat George Patt Waller reported in 1937 to the State Department: "American films are greatly enjoyed in Luxembourg. There is no prejudice against them, and as they are always 'dubbed' in German or French, audiences accept them on their own merit."

Likewise, the number of French films shown in Luxembourg dropped while German imports started dominating the Luxembourgish screens. In fact, in the early 1930s Luxembourgish movie theaters predominantly played German films and only exceptionally French ones. In 1932, the owner of the movie theater L'Ecran, which had specialized in French films since its foundation in 1928, even decided for a time to screen predominantly German films and to program French films only as exceptions. This triggered a lively debate in the press: one reviewer for the liberal *Luxemburger Zeitung* applauded the decrease of US-imports: "Whichever direction the sound film will take [...] one consequence is that it – thank God – liberated us from the American cinema."³⁰ On the other hand, Batty Weber, literary author and the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, warned against the consequences of the fading of French films on Luxembourgish screens: "It will be deeply regretted if French films disappear from our screens or are shown only exceptionally. We would be foregoing one of the most powerful means to preserve our national cultural mix and to communicate it to the masses."³¹ Moreover, he maintained in a different context: "Every citizen of Luxembourg who is conscious of

the spiritual conditions of the existence of their homeland will feel that it is not only their right, but their duty, to see to it that our cultural balance not be biased by a strain of one side.”³² Weber saw one reason for the decline of French films in the fact that “certainly numerous of the spectators in this country won’t be able to follow the French film dialogue completely.”³³

Weber is not the only one to regret the decline of French films in Luxembourgish cinemas: in 1932, Jean-Marie Durand, a free lance contributor to the *Luxemburger Zeitung*, was completely disillusioned. He wrote: “Our popular theater (the cinema) speaks German, has even become German [...]. And we were thinking quite naively that the sound film would familiarize the Luxembourgish audience with the French language and mentality.” Durand saw the main reason for the decline of French films in Luxembourgish cinemas as bad and “insufficient promotion” for French films. At the same time he explains the success of German films in Luxembourgish cinemas as the result of “the immense and systematic promotional hype which was created around each and every tiny production coming from the Ufa-studios.” For Durand, the French producers were guilty of this situation since “they would not want to realize, that quality alone did not suffice and that large promotional campaigns were needed to secure big successes.” This assessment holds true even today.

Indeed, German film production had reached an artistic and popular peak in its domestic market and was generally considered superior to French products: films like *M – Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder* (1930, Fritz Lang) or *Der blaue Engel* but also the numerous and successful musicals like *Liebeswalzer* (1930, Wilhelm Thiele), *Das Land des Lächelns* (1930, Max Reichmann) or *Zwei Herzen im 3/4-Takt* (1930, Géza von Bolváry), which could easily compete with American specimens of the genre, attracted Luxembourgish audiences in large numbers. Although French productions did not disappear completely from Luxembourgish screens in the early 1930s, this thanks in large part to multiple-language versions, and although there were also reasonable successes with films like *Le Million* (1931, René Clair) or *Sous le toits de Paris* (1930, René Clair), this could not hamper the triumphal procession of German films on Luxembourgish screens up to 1937/38. This phenomenon can not be explained alone by turning to the affinity the Luxembourgish language has with German; it certainly also had to do with the highly efficient advertising campaigns that German producers launched, supplying Luxembourgish cinema owners with all kinds promotional materials: film stills, biographies of the stars, trailers etc. Moreover, as one critic put it: “The German companies regularly supply the Luxembourgish press, and at no cost, with elaborate materials on their productions, and the papers in turn are always on the look out for stories that could interest their readers, readily making use of these materials, and all the more so, since the companies also supply opulent illustrations.”³⁴

As of 1933 the movie theater L’Ecran started to show French films in larger quantities again, which was welcomed by Jean-Marie Durand in June, 1933:

*This time it must pull through. It’s a suitable moment. With their systematical reduction of the lowest common denominato, the Nazis pose a first handicap for German [film] production, and international audiences tend to be distrustful. The French cinema, on the other hand, which was inspired by the legitimate theater for too long, seems to have found a way to gain some leeway. If one believes the reviewers, this year a great deal of ‘big films of the year’ will be produced on the Seine.*³⁵

Durand suggests that the Alliance Française invite their members, “to practice their francophilia in the movie theaters. Then the French cinema would quickly become good business for the cinema owners who would no longer be totally dependent on German films as they were last year.”³⁶

It is difficult to say if Durand’s invocation was successful. It is certain, however, that after a period of decline French films were making new ground on Luxembourgish screens during the 1930s. As of the 1935/36 season the number of French films shown in Luxembourg City began to rise significantly again. By the end of the decade the French film recovered in Luxembourg as far as quality was concerned. In 1938, of the 345 films shown in Luxembourg-City 151 (43,8%) were American (three times as many as in Germany in the same year).³⁷ Thus the large number of American films dubbed in French; 85 (24,6%) German and 88 (25,5%) French!

These figures can sketch only a rough image of the situation as far as the popularity of French films was concerned. Since we do not have statistics on the total gross of individual films, it is very difficult to find out which production country attracted the most spectators. One of the rare clues we have is the prolongation of a few films. For example, in 1938 the following films were prolonged in Luxembourg-City movie theaters (which indicates they had an extraordinary success): the German film *Das indische Grabmal* (1938, Richard Eichberg), the French films *La Grande illusion* (1937, Jean Renoir) and *Paix sur le Rhin* (1938, Jean Choux), the German and French versions of *Les Gens du voyage/Fahrendes Volk* (1938, Jacques Feyder) and the American animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937, prod.: Walt Disney) which was prolonged for two weeks!

There were a number of French films subtitled in German which certainly helped to boost the French cinema in Luxembourg. Another reason for the growing success of French films was the considerable increase in their aesthetic quality during the second half of the 1930s. The success French films enjoyed in Luxembourg-City in the late 1930s should not obscure, however, the fact that in the rest of the country, especially in rural areas, German films (whether they were American films dubbed in German or German films proper) were still extremely popular.

Language Version: The Special Case of Luxembourg

Ginette Vincendeau suggests that it is true for most countries and territories that cinema audiences were presented with only one language version and that they were not familiar at all with other language versions. Luxembourg seems to be a very interesting exception to this: Luxembourg is one of the rare countries where audiences were entitled to two different language versions per film. The specific linguistic situation of the Grand Duchy provided the parallel programming of French and German language versions.

Between September 1930 and December 1933 at least fifty films were distributed in Luxembourg as multiple-language version (MLV). Since there was no censorship in Luxembourg during the 1930s, we do not have precise figures about the number of films that were available on the Luxembourgish market at the time. In the first period, the two language versions (German and French) of a film were screened at the same time in the same screening room. These were primarily German-French co-productions

which were shot in Germany or (to a lesser degree) France. Moreover there were a few German and/or French versions of American films shot in the USA. To name a few examples: *The Trial of Mary Dugan* (1931, Bayard Veiller, Arthur Robison, Marcel de Sano), *Big House* (1930, George Hill, Pál Fejós, Ward Wing), *Nothing but the Truth* (1931, Victor Scherzinger, Karl Anton, Manuel Romero, René Guissart), *Anna Christie* (1930, Clarence Brown, Jacques Feyder), *His Glorious Night* (1929/30, Lionel Barrymore, Carlos Borosque, Jacques Feyder) and *The Unholy Night* (1930, Lionel Barrymore, Jacques Feyder).

The first film that was distributed in Luxembourg in two versions was *Die Nacht gehört uns/La Nuit est à nous* (1930, Carl Froelich, Henry Roussell). Although the quality of the sound provoked a good deal of criticism, the reviewer for *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* congratulated the cinema owners on their decision to have programmed the film in two different versions. The language versions allowed the cinema owners to attract those Luxembourgers who were more fluent in German as well as those who felt more in line with the French language and, more generally speaking, with the French culture. The French version was thus not especially geared toward the relatively small number of French people living in the Grand Duchy at the time and who would have spoken neither Luxembourgish nor German.

La Nuit est à nous was screened as often as its German counterpart. After a relatively short period of time, however, it turned out that German versions generally attracted larger audiences which led to a growing number of German versions to be screened in Luxembourgish cinemas. While French versions usually ran for two or three days, German versions played for four or five days a week. Sometimes cinema owners tried to convince their audiences to take interest in two versions of the same film. In the case of *Atlantic* (1930, Ewald André Dupont, Jean Kemm) the Ciné de la Cour put up an advertisement which indicated that “although both versions narrate the sinking of the Titanic, the German version has a love interest which is very different from that of the French version. *Therefore one must see both.*”

Despite its uniqueness, the practice of double programming language versions was only seldomly taken by reviewers as an opportunity to compare two film versions in terms of their content, quality or mentality. Only now and then does one find telling comments on various films. For example, when the movie theatre Capitole screened the French version of *Die Drei von der Tankstelle, Le Chemin du paradis*, on its opening night in March 1931, the newspaper *Freie Presse* regretted that the film was shown in its French version “since this operetta was purely German in character and that it was much more natural with a German cast. The charming leading lady, Lilian Harvey, who appears in both versions, could not assert herself fully in the French version.”³⁸ The French language newspaper *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise*, on the other hand, maintained that Lilian Harvey and Olga Tschechowa acted very well and that they spoke a very charming French.³⁹

When the two versions of *Marius* were shown (1931, Alexander Korda – the German version had the title *Zum goldenen Anker*), the Luxembourgish intellectual, Joseph Hansen, wrote in *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise*: “What is missing from the German version is exactly that which contributes to the atmosphere of the film: the accent of Marseille.”⁴⁰ The *Luxemburger Zeitung*, in turn, underlined the qualities of the German version and its actors: “The German version has only first-class stage actors from Berlin, Bassermann, Lucie Höflich etc., etc.”⁴¹

The reviewer of the Catholic weekly *Luxemburger Volk* is the only one to compare the different language versions on a regular basis. Usually he prefers the French version. On *Heut küsst Paris/Rien que la vérité* (1931, Karl Anton, René Guissart) he comments that the French version was “more frivolous, but wittier and technically more faultless in its dramaturgy.”⁴² On *Die Herrin von Atlantis/L’Atlantide* (1932, Georg Wilhelm Pabst) he writes: “The French version gains through its pleasant language which is well suited to the topic, and it further gains through a logically tighter structure of some scenes. Then again it loses for the lack of discreetly subtle and delicate reserve.”⁴³

The American production of *Anna Christie* (1930, Clarence Brown, Jacques Feyder), the first Greta Garbo vehicle for which no French version was filmed, was distributed in Luxembourg in a German version, the polyglot Garbo herself in the lead. Thanks to the language version the Luxembourgish audience was privileged to witness Garbo’s long awaited and eventually successful transition to sound film. *L’Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* comments:

*And then her voice [...] Greta Garbo, this extraordinary creature; she could not have a banal voice in our imagination. And so it is in reality although we have imagined something quite different. Greta Garbo has a quiet, deep, almost masculine voice which underscores the dramatic effects of her acting style. The ring of her voice and the Scandinavian accent do not have a negative consequence on her formidable acting.*⁴⁴

The reviewer remarks that “apparently” Feyder’s German language version was “infinitely the better one.”

As of the 1932/33 season, the number of language versions dropped considerably. The reason for this is mainly that producers started renouncing this solution to the language problem since other solutions turned out to be ultimately more practical and less expensive.

Subtitles and Dubbing

Neither subtitles nor dubbing had bad press in Luxembourg, as was the case in countries like France or Germany. Relatively early on, Luxembourgish cinemas offered American films in dubbed versions – some in German, others in French – to no protest of the audience (as was also the case in Germany⁴⁵ and France⁴⁶). When *City Streets* (Rouben Mamoulian) was shown in a dubbed version, *L’Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* wrote that this “necessary trick” was executed quite “well and skillfully so that it was hardly apparent.”

At first, the popular and attractive American films, such as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Sign of the Cross* (1932, Cecil B. DeMille), *The Champ* (1931, King Vidor), or *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932, William S. Van Dyke) were to be seen with German dubbing. Eventually, however, the French dubbed versions were carried through, instead.

The pacifist German film *Westfront 1918* (1930, Georg Wilhelm Pabst), ran alternately in its original German and its dubbed French version. British and American films were usually screened with simultaneous French dubbing and German subtitles which were imported from Alsace. These films may have been produced in Joinville, where

Paramount had set up a dubbing facility as early as 1930. Thus, these films were more easily accessible for those Luxembourgers who were not in full command of French.

French films ran mainly in their original versions and were infrequently subtitled in German. German dubbing of French films was very rare. As of 1933 there were occasionally English-language films subtitled in French.

Since the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is so small, the possibility of dubbing a film in Luxembourgish was not even considered. The fact that dubbing and subtitles were so easily accepted (even with English-language films) in Luxembourg may be explained by the country's very special linguistic and cultural situation (being placed between two cultures), a circumstance that made Luxembourgers highly accustomed to hearing and speaking foreign languages.

The screening of English-language films with French dubbing and German subtitles seemed to be the best solution for Luxembourg at the time (this is due to the fact that, among others, the number of American films playing in Germany dropped constantly, from the 1933/34 season onwards).⁴⁷

Bilingual Films

In the early 1930s there were a few bilingual films in which the several German and French characters spoke their respective languages while their dialogue was not dubbed. This is true for *Hallo! Hallo! Hier spricht Berlin!* (1931, Julien Duvivier) and, more obviously for *Kameradschaft* (1931, Georg Wilhelm Pabst), a film that dealt with the solidarity between German and French coal miners. The reviewer of *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* wrote about this film, in which all actors spoke their respective language, such that the characters were especially "impressive". If the bilingualism of the films caused problems with audiences in Germany or France, it was ideally suited for the unique linguistic situation of Luxembourg.

From a commercial point of view, it is clear that bilingual films didn't stand a chance of survival on an international market. Bilingualism, to begin with, only worked for films with little dialogue, or for plots that could be easily understood without it.

[Translation from the German by Uli Jung]

- 1 These are the documentaries of the first professional Luxembourgish film director, René Leclère. Cf. Paul Lesch, *René Leclère. Pionnier du cinéma luxembourgeois* (Luxembourg: CNA, 1999).
- 2 *Le Film Luxembourgeois* (August 10, 1928).
- 3 *Le Film Luxembourgeois* (December 14, 1928).
- 4 *Le Film Luxembourgeois* (August 10, 1928).
- 5 *Escher Tageblatt* (November 23, 1928).
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (August 18, 1929).
- 8 *Füllhorn* (May, 1931).
- 9 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (January 9, 1929).

- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Hollywood* (January 18, 1929).
- 12 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (March 6, 1930).
- 13 *Luxemburger Wort* (April 10, 1931).
- 14 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (April 28, 1930).
- 15 *Luxemburger Wort* (April 28, 1930).
- 16 *Hollywood* (March 1, 1929); *Hollywood* (March 8, 1929).
- 17 *Luxemburger Landes-Zeitung und Freie Presse* (February 16, 1929).
- 18 *Luxemburger Landes-Zeitung und Freie Presse* (September 18, 1929).
- 19 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (September 11, 1929).
- 20 *Escher Tageblatt* (September 13, 1929).
- 21 *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* (September 16, 1929).
- 22 *Luxemburger Landes-Zeitung und Freie Presse* (April 22, 1930).
- 23 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (April 23, 1930).
- 24 *Luxemburger Landes-Zeitung und Freie Presse* (April 22, 1930).
- 25 *Escher Tageblatt* (April 25, 1930).
- 26 *Escher Tageblatt* (April 19, 1930).
- 27 *All Quiet on the Western Front* – along with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* – was probably the most commercially successful film in Luxembourg between 1896 and 1940. Cf. Paul Lesch, “La Réception au Luxembourg des adaptations cinématographiques de *Im Westen nichts Neues* et de *Der Weg zurück* au cours des années 30”, in *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, no. 14 (2004), pp. 10-33.
- 28 *Le Tout-Cinéma 1931* (1931-32 season).
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (January 29, 1932).
- 31 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (October 2, 1932).
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 *Luxembourg* (April 27, 1935).
- 35 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (July 4, 1933).
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 Cf. Markus Spieker, *Hollywood unterm Hakenkreuz. Der amerikanische Spielfilm im Dritten Reich* (Trier: WVT, 1999).
- 38 *Luxemburger Landes-Zeitung und Freie Presse* (March 30, 1931).
- 39 *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* (March 31, 1931).
- 40 *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* (April 16, 1932).
- 41 *Luxemburger Zeitung* (April 16, 1932).
- 42 *Luxemburger Volk* (October 23, 1932).
- 43 *Luxemburger Volk* (April 21, 1933).
- 44 *L'Indépendance Luxembourgeoise* (March 3, 1931).
- 45 Joseph Garncarz, “Die bedrohte Internationalität des Films“, in Sibylle M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgenuth (eds.), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris! Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text+kritik/CineGraph, 1996), pp. 127-140.
- 46 Roger Icart, *La Révolution du parlant vue par la presse française* (Perpignan: Institut Jean Vigo, 1988).
- 47 M. Spieker, *op. cit.*

MULTIPLE LANGUAGE VERSIONS AND NATIONAL FILMS, 1930-1933. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS, PART I

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The aim of this paper is to explore ways in which a statistical analysis of national trends in conversion-era film editing might illuminate the film-historical significance of the multiple-version phenomenon of the early 1930s.

A statistical analysis concerned with stylistic trends for the major film-producing countries of the time can suggest causal relations between multiple-version production and national filmmaking practices in general that complicate familiar characterizations of multiple-version production as a phenomenon of temporary and marginal film-historical importance. Moreover, in enabling comparisons that reveal novel patterns of evidence, statistical findings may defy the historian's expectations, and thus stimulate new research and analysis. In any case, the task here is not to substitute statistical analysis for other film-historical methods but rather to explore what the project of situating multiple versions within film history might gain from new combinations of archives and methods, statistical and otherwise. Also, I must acknowledge at the outset that a conclusive demonstration of statistical analysis' possibilities for multiple-version study will require considerably more data than I have been able to gather so far, as well as further methodological experimentation.

Regarding specific possibilities for additional research, a comparative analysis of statistics pertaining to different language versions of the same script appears promising in respects indicated in the Conclusion below. In the meantime, the findings and interpretations presented below are intended as a first step in the use of statistics in clarifying the significance of the multiple versions of the early 1930s for the film-style currents of the time.

Multiple Versions and Film-Editing Practice

With sound-film style so evidently a function of technical constraint, and certain recording methods more or less necessitating certain editing methods, film editing during the conversion years is often characterized as a function of recording technique.¹ In the context of the new sound cinema's technical requirements, questions arise regarding the effect of multiple-version production on film style.

For instance, did the technical requirements of multiple-version production in Germany and the United States condition the stylistic and technical development of the German and American film industries during the early 1930s? Or, to approach the topic from a perspective encompassing a wider range of types of national film industry, how do aesthetic trends in the export-oriented film industries of the United States and

Germany compare to analogous developments in countries such as France, where the film industry was oriented to making films for domestic rather than international consumption?

The question as to how multiple-version production affected national film style as a whole seems particularly imposing in the case of the German cinema during 1930-1932, when multiple versions were estimated to have made up roughly one-third of the German film industry's entire output during this time.² Did the demands of multiple-version production on such a large scale affect German sound-film technique generally? One factor to consider here is recorded sound's impact on the project of making films for export, a project crucial to the economic survival of the German and American film industries during the early sound years.

Key requirements in the export-cinema context concerned scripting and pre-production planning. As producer Erich Pommer had noted in 1930, *à propos* of Ufa's plan to produce multiple versions on an industrial scale, synch-sound cinema required sound-era producers to decide in advance of a film's production whether the film was to be distributed internationally or domestically, on the grounds that international productions during the sound era – multiple versions, specifically – required unprecedented preparation with respect to film technique.³

Much less amenable to subsequent modification for foreign markets than silent films, sound movies had to be conceived from the start for export. Because “[e]ine Liebesszene hat in Berlin, Paris oder London nie die gleiche Färbung,” a sort of technical modularity was needed to facilitate minute adjustments for each version in light of forces and conditions defining the target market(s).⁴ Given sound-era technical circumstances, the making of multiple versions implied a certain stylistic path for early sound film, one diverging from that exemplified by many of the period's talkies. Rather than offer recordings of actors' performances, multiple versions amounted to constructions whereby various component parts were assembled in accord with producers' expectations regarding the target market's taste formations, censorship policies and practices, and other distribution- and reception-related factors.

Statistical Analysis of Film Style

With respect to national style differences, an inevitable starting point for statistical analysis is the work of Barry Salt. Focusing on the early 1930s, my presentation juxtaposes my own findings on the average shot lengths of conversion-era films from France and the United States with analogous findings by Salt. My figures were gathered in the context of a research project concerning the familiar notion that sound conversion produced a homogenization of film style worldwide during the 1930s.⁵ In this regard, the recycling of the same sets, narratives, and production personnel in the multiple versions looks like an ideal-typical manifestation of the period's dominant film-style tendency. At the same time, multiple versions can also show up as something of a special case, particularly when the inquiry expands to cover not only image techniques such as editing and cinematography but how the aesthetic function of such techniques may change in light of the sound accompaniment. For example, sounds recorded separately from the image and then dubbed in during post-production may work phenomenologically very differently from sounds recorded simultaneously with the image, as techni-

cians involved in the difficult challenge of dubbing were keenly aware. Recorded sound open many new possibilities with regard to sound-image relations; so, if editing and cinematographic practice, in fact, became standardized worldwide during the 1930s, it doesn't necessarily follow that film-stylistic homogenization also occurred, given that the same editing and cinematic techniques might serve new aesthetic functions, and produce different artistic effects, depending on the nature of the sound technique, not to mention other decisive factors, such as exhibition circumstances. To cite a case in point, the period's numerous "filmed theatre" productions, with their evident simulation of live-entertainment, offered a viewing experience differing vastly from films inspired by the cinematic modernisms of the 1920s, as René Clair, for one, had observed.⁶

For an inquiry into the significance of multiple versions for the period's broad stylistic trends, the "average shot lengths" for films comprising a national film industry's output for a specific period provide a place to begin. A film's average shot length, or ASL, can be computed by dividing its total running time by its total number of shots.⁷ Once the individual ASLs for films comprising a national sample have been generated, they can be averaged to produce a national mean, which can then be compared and contrasted with means for other national samples. According to Salt's analysis, based on a sample of several hundred American and European films, sound conversion coincided with an increase in the mean ASL in both Europe and the United States, with sound-era technical conditions reducing the amount of cutting on both continents.

Although the American film industry remained committed to an editing-based narration, the number of cuts per film dropped during conversion as the American ASL more than doubled, climbing from a norm of 4.8 seconds for 1924-1929 to 10.8 for 1928-1933. The number of cuts for European films also fell significantly, as reflected in an increase from the European mean ASL of 6.6 seconds for 1924-1929 to roughly 11.1 seconds for 1928-1933.

In light of the history of silent-cinema practice, this decline in the cutting pace – a reversal of a twenty-year trend – would seem to count as a major film-historical event: whereas the cutting pace of films increased worldwide beginning circa 1905 and continuing up until sound conversion, during conversion, the direction of change effectively reversed, as the cutting pace for films made both in Europe and in the United States dropped substantially. In light of the fundamental change in editing practice during the 1930s, a homogenisation of film style is said to have occurred, with the technical demands of synchronous-sound filmmaking pushing filmmakers everywhere away from the sophisticated, theory-informed editing experiments of the 1920s and toward a long-take aesthetic whose history traced back to the cinema of the years before World War One. With the talkies often cut to the rhythm of actors' speech, many critics saw the new sound films as a return to the filmed theatre of the 1910s, precisely the type of cinema that the modernist and avant-garde film movements of the 1920s had appeared to supplant.

Nonetheless, a more differentiated picture of conversion-era film style, attuned to the period's wide diversity of film-style options, is suggested by statistics regarding the impact on film editing of national differences in sound technique. For instance, when the French cinema is examined relative to the American cinema, a significant national divergence in the direction of stylistic change becomes evident.⁸

Whereas Salt's figures show that the ASL for Hollywood films gradually dropped

during 1934-1939, to reach a low of 8.7 seconds late in the decade, the figure for European films during the same period went up slightly, to yield a norm of 12 seconds; among European countries during the latter half of the decade, France featured the slowest cutting, with a mean ASL of 13 seconds. With respect to French films of 1930-1933, my own statistics, based on a sample of fifty-four films, yield a mean figure of 11.2; the latter, when juxtaposed against Salt's figure of 13 for 1934-1939, indicates that French shot duration increased, on average, by nearly two seconds during the 1930s [see Table I].⁹ At issue, then, appears to be a significant national difference in the direction of change, with the cutting pace for French films evolving in a direction opposed to that for the contemporaneous Hollywood cinema: whereas Hollywood films were cut with increasing rapidity in the course of the decade, editing in French films, on average, slowed down and at a rate slightly greater than that for European films as a whole.

Table I. Statistics on national film-style trends during 1930-1933

country/ region	Source	dates	#films in sample	natl. mean ASL	natl. median ASL	ASL range	ASL std. dev.
U.S.	Salt	1928-1933	136	10.8	11	5 to 25	3.4
Europe	Salt	1928-1933	60	12	10	2 to 22	4.1
France	O'Brien	1930-1933	54	11.2	10.7	3.7 to 30.5	5.5
Germany	O'Brien	1930-1933	11	14.5	14.2	10.2 to 20.2	3.1
U.S.	Salt	1934-1939	184	8.6	8	4 to 18	2.3
France	Salt	1934-1939	64	13	11	5 to 22	4.2

National Differences in Data Range and Dispersal

Suggestive of the impact of multiple versions on film-editing technique are national differences in the dispersal of the average-shot-length data cited above, with the French cinema of the early 1930s exhibiting a data range and standard deviation much wider than that for the contemporaneous American cinema. Concerning the range for films of 1930-1933, my analysis of French films records a low of 3.8 and a high of 31.7, which yields a range of nearly 28, the widest of the national samples listed in Table I. Salt's findings show a range for American films of the same period of 20, roughly twenty-five percent less than for the French films comprising my sample. A similar national difference obtains for the standard deviation, a common statistical measure for determining a data sample's degree of internal variation. As Table I indicates, the standard deviation for the French sample remained significantly higher than for the American throughout the decade, thus suggesting greater variety in editing technique in France than in Hollywood.¹⁰

A closer look at the films comprising the sample reveals that the wide range for the French films cuts across differences in genre, with even films falling within the category of commercial film theatre exhibiting a broad spectrum. Thus, the genre expected to exhibit a standardized approach to editing – the commercial stage adaptation – instead turns out to feature remarkable variety in editing technique.

For instance, ASLs for some examples of *théâtre filmé* register at double the mean national figure while those for others fall well below it. For instance, *On purge bébé* (1930, Jean Renoir), a boulevard-play adaptation, yields an ASL of 26 seconds, an exceptionally high figure, more than double the contemporaneous national norm for the early 1930s of 11.2. At the opposite end of the spectrum are films such as *Le Roi du cirage* (1931, Pierre Colombier) and *Le Chien qui rapporte* (1931, Jean Choux), whose narratives are organized around performances by stage-identified actors, and whose liberal use of multiple-camera shooting facilitated very rapid cutting, with ASLs well under half the national average. While these films count as examples of filmed theatre, and feature extensive use of direct sound, they also exhibit great variety at the level of editing technique.

One 1934 account attributed wide variations in a French film's total number of shots to specific sound-film production methods: a post-synchronized "film reposant sur la technique 'cinéma'" might comprise up to 900 shots (in which each shot was filmed separately, in silent-era fashion) whereas a direct-recorded "vaudeville filmé" might include 400 shots or less.¹¹ At a general level, this sort of technical breakdown among types of sound films can be helpful. It seems generally true, for instance, that high shot counts are likely in films made by directors with modernist or avant-garde backgrounds, disposed perhaps to practice "la technique 'cinéma.'" For instance, *Le Parfum de la dame en noir* (1931, Marcel L'Herbier) has 844 shots, some three hundred more than the national feature-film norm for 1930-1933 of 547.¹² *La Fin du monde* (1930, Abel Gance) another celebrated film-modernist, likewise features an unusually high number of shots, as do the first three films that Clair directed at Tobis Films Sonores, all of which feature ASLs under nine seconds. Indicative here also are films such as *Fantômas* (1932, Pál Féjos), *Le Chien qui rapporte*, and *Le Triangle de feu* (1932, Edmond Gréville), all with exceptionally low ASLs (i.e., under five seconds), as well as cutting patterns familiar to silent-era modernist montage.

The French film industry appears to confirm characterizations of sound-film technique as a function of the filmmakers' intentions with regard to distribution, although in a national rather than international context. Geared to making films not for export but for the domestic film market alone, French film companies of the early 1930s – notably Pathé-Natan, the country's largest production company, but also other firms, such as Braunberger-Richebé – adhered to an understanding of sound-film technique that differed from that in Germany and the United States, an understanding according to which fiction filmmaking was seen in terms of recording rather than assembly.

Conclusion

The figures and analysis presented above suggest some possibilities offered by statistical analysis for multiple versions study. But statistical analysis can also constitute research phenomena on a smaller scale than the broad style trends considered here, most typically, the hundreds of shots comprising a feature film.¹³

In allowing for precise comparisons of different versions of the same title, micro-level analyses of this sort may offer possibilities for an improved understanding of the multiple version phenomenon. One place to begin is with how differences in cutting pace may imply producers' assumptions concerning the tastes of particular national audi-

ences. Consider, for instance, English and German language versions of *Der blaue Engel* (1930, Joseph von Sternberg), which feature an average-shot-length difference – 12.2 seconds for the German version, versus 10.2 for the English – homologous with the two-second difference in American/European averages for the early 1930s discussed above. Comparable differences in editing pace between English and German versions are evident in other multiple versions during this period. For instance, *F.P.1 antwortet nicht* (1932, Karl Hartl) features an ASL of 8.5, whereas the English version yields an ASL of 6.3; likewise, the German *Die singende Stadt* (1931, Carmine Gallone), with its ASL of 25.9, is cut much more slowly than the English *City of Song* (1931, C. Gallone), whose ASL works out to 15.8.¹⁴

Are these differences between German and English versions simply accidental, or do constitute a pattern or trend? If they suggest a pattern, what does the latter imply concerning the filmmakers' intentions? Do these figures indicate, for instance, an understanding on the filmmakers' part that English-speaking audiences, accustomed to American films, preferred relatively rapid cutting?

In the meantime, an implication of the research presented above is that industrial-scale multiple-version production in the United States and in Germany opened the way in those countries' film industries for a pre-designed modular film-sound technique, whereby scenes were assembled, according to plan, from separate and interchangeable components. In contrast, the French film industry's domestic-market emphasis seems to have allowed for an ongoing commitment to improvised simultaneous sound-image recording throughout conversion, and hence to evolve in a stylistic direction different from that of the export-oriented German and American film industries, a direction entailing the widespread use of direct-sound techniques largely abandoned in Hollywood and in the German film industry during 1930-1932, the peak years of multiple-version production.

- 1 With respect to recorded sound's impact on editing technique, see Don Fairservice, *Film Editing: History, Theory and Practice* (Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, 2001); Karel Reisz, Gavin Millar, *The Technique of Film Editing* (London: Focal, 1968).
- 2 Concerning the extent of the German film industry's commitment to multiple-version production during 1930-1932, see Joseph Garnarz, "Making Films Comprehensible and Popular Abroad", *CINÉMA & CIE.*, no. 4 Nataša Đurovičová with the collaboration of Hans-Michael Bock (eds.), *Multiple and Multiple-language Versions/Version multiples* (Spring 2004), pp. 72-79; Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London-New York: Routledge, 2000).
- 3 Concerning Pommer's ideas on the sound-era "international film," see: Ursula Hardt, *From Caligari to California: Eric Pommer's Life in the International Film Wars* (Providence, Rhode Island: Berghahn, 1996), p. 128; Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, *Das Ringen um den Tonfilm: Strategien der Electro- und der Filmindustrie in den 20er und 30er Jahren* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1999), p. 243.
- 4 A variety of dubbing-related examples of this sort of modularity are examined in Nataša Đurovičová, "Local Ghosts: Dubbing Bodies in Early Sound Cinema," in Anna Antonini (ed.), *Il film e suoi multipli/Film and Its Multiples* (Udine: Forum, 2002), pp. 83-98. The quote from Pommer appears in Corinna Müller, *Vom Stummfilm zum Tonfilm* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2003), p. 297.

- 5 An expanded version of the research presented in this paper can be found in my book *Cinema's Conversion to Sound*, forthcoming from Indiana University Press.
- 6 See René Clair, "The Art of Sound," in Elisabeth Weis, John Belton (eds.), *Sound Film: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 95.
- 7 For alternative approaches to computing the ASL, see Barry Salt, "Statistical Style Analysis of Motion Pictures", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 28, no. 1 (1974), pp. 13-22.
- 8 See Barry Salt, *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (London: Starword, 1992²), pp. 214-216.
- 9 Salt doesn't provide an ASL average for French films during 1930-1933. The figures reported here are based on my own analysis of a sample of fifty-four French films made during these years.
- 10 The standard deviation figures cited for Salt in Table I are not provided by Salt but derived from my own computations, based on data extrapolated from graphs in B. Salt, *Film Style and Technology*, cit., p. 214, p. 216.
- 11 In Arthur Hoérée, "Le Travail du film sonore", *La Revue musicale*, no. 151 (December 1934), p. 64.
- 12 This figure was generated from a sample of twenty French films of 1930-1933 whose running times exceeded sixty-five minutes.
- 13 With respect to the statistical analysis of individual films, see the writings by Barry Salt listed in these footnotes; and also Thomas Elsaesser, Warren Buckland, "Mise en scène, Criticism and Statistical Style Analysis", in *Studying Contemporary American Film: A Guide to Movie Analysis* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp. 80-116.
- 14 The ASL computations reported in this paragraph were based on a study of films and videos shown at the MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School, and ought to be verified by a second examination. For films viewed on Pal or Secam video, the ASL figures were multiplied by 1.04 to compensate for the slight speed increase (i.e., 25 rather than 24 frames per second).

AKTUALITA 1937–1938. ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ ZVUKOVÝ TYDENÍK / TSCHECHOSLOWAKISCHE TONBILDSCHAU / SLOVENSKÝ ZVUKOVÝ TYŽDENÍK

Ivan Klimeš, Pavel Zeman, Karlova Univerzita, Praha

Production of multiple language versions of films has generally been aimed at international audiences, rather than at domestic audiences made up of people who speak the language of a given version. In the attempt to create the best possible conditions for promoting a foreign language version of a film abroad, distributors, and at times competent government authorities, have adopted a variety of strategies. For example, a German language version of the British film *Atlantic* (1930, Ewald André Dupont) was sent to Czechoslovakia expecting that German would be accessible to more people. At that time, about 40% of the population in Czechoslovakia understood German. So the film was indeed accessible to more people, but the German language triggered a negative reaction that would not have been provoked by English. In addition, German versions were a way of avoiding, or at least mitigating, difficulties in the distribution of Hungarian films within Slovakia, where audiences responded with nationalist animosity to the Hungarian language. In 1938, the Ministry of Trade's *Filmový poradní sbor* (FPS, Film Advisory Board), the office responsible for the issue of import licenses, decided to give precedence to those Hungarian films that were available in a German version. In the relevant treaty with Hungary, it was settled that Czechoslovakia, which produced more films in German than Hungary, should "export all of our German language films to Hungary and import German language films of Hungarian origin in the same number that the [film production] monopoly produces, plus as many Hungarian language versions of Hungarian films as is necessary to make up the difference."¹ Therefore, under certain conditions, the language of the film was sometimes more central than was the film. Language had, and still has, its own symbolic dimension, and the fact *that one is communicating in a particular language* can at times be more important than *what one is communicating in that language*. This was especially the case in an atmosphere of high nationalist tension such as the one which undoubtedly existed in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s.

This aspect of multiple language versions forms the backdrop for the bilingual production of the Czechoslovakian film weekly, *Aktualita*. The main function of this documentary production can be summed up in three words: *news – promotion – propaganda*. If one is considering the issue of multiple language versions, *Aktualita* is a special case. The production of these films was not aimed abroad, at foreign countries, rather, it was exclusively domestic, intended for the multi-ethnic population of the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

First, some basic information about newsreels in Czechoslovakia. Newsreels produced by companies such as Fox, Paramount, Ufa and PDC dominated the Czechoslovakian market. Under a Ministry of Trade regulation, the Prague branches of

Československý zvukový týdeník

Aktualita

Historický den Slovenska
Na sjezdu poslanců slovenskej ľudovej strany v Žilinskej jednotnici sa zástupci všetkých slovenských strán a vydali manifest, čímž bola ustanovená slovenská autonómia

Minister pro Slovensko dr. Jozef Tiso, poslanci Sidor, Buday, Sivák a iní na historickej schôdzi
Minister dr. Tiso promluvil k verejnosti v Žiline

Amerika postavila největší dopravní letadlo
První let s největším letounem světa nad mrakodrapy

Deti se radují ve stínu velkomesta

Spuštění nového švédského křižáku

Statečná žena
Slavná americká krotitelka dravé zvěře předvádí své umění

Polský houslista a jeho devět kanárů

Československo má vzácné drahokamy
Nalezli českých drahokamů na vrchu Kozákové u Turnova
Zkoušení vzácných kamenů ve výzkumném ústavě Broušení a řezání kamenů
Šperky domácího původu jsou na trhy celého světa

Válečné lodi v bouři

Závod vysloužilců
V Americe uspořádali závody nejstarších automobilů

Prvo zabilo stáru vytrženo

Čís. 42. A. — XIV. ročník

Aktualita

Historický den Slovenska
Na sjezdu poslancov slovenskej ľudovej strany Hlinkovej sjednotili sa zástupcovia všetkých slovenských strán a vydali manifest, ktorým sa uskutočnila slovenská autonómia

Minister pro Slovensko dr. Jozef Tiso, poslanci Sidor, dr. Buday, Sivák a iní na historickom sjezde
Minister dr. Tiso prahovoril k verejnosti v Žiline

Amerika postavila najväčšie dopravné lietadlo
Prvý let najväčšieho lietadla sveta nad mrakodrapmi

Nový švédsky križiak spustený na more
Deti sa radujú v tieni veľkomesta

Odvážna žena
Slávna americká krotiteľka dravej zvere ukazuje svoje umenie

Polský virtuóz na husle s muzikálnymi kanárikmi

Československo má vzácné drahokamy
Vrch Kozákov pri Turnova, kde sa nachádzajú české drahokamy
Brúsenie kamenov
Šperky domáceho pôvodu idú na trhy celého sveta

Vojenné lode v búrke

Preteký vyslúžilcov
V Amerike usporiadali závody najstarších automobilov

XIV. roč.

Aktualita

ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ ZVUKOVÝ TÝDENÍK

these companies were required to add Czechoslovakian clips to each issue of their newsreels, corresponding to 20% of total footage. On the average, about ten copies of the newsreels of these companies were distributed over the territory of Czechoslovakia.

Among the Czech/Czechoslovakian periodicals, the only one to run continuously for a long time was *Elektajournal*, which was produced on an entrepreneurial and purely private basis from 1925, appearing from 1930 to 1937 under the title *Československý filmový týdeník* (Czechoslovakian Newsreel). Its market competitiveness was almost non-existent. Even during the sound era, it remained a silent newsreel, and it would be misleading to overrate the size of the audience reached by its two copies, circulated only in Prague, or its poor technical resources. But the name of its publisher, Karel Pečený, comes up again in the list of names of those who, on April 13, 1937, established the company registered under the name “*Aktualita, komanditní společnost, Karel Pečený a spol. v Praze*” (Aktualita, Limited Partnership, Karel Pečený and Co. in Prague) with the stated purpose of publishing a weekly sound newsreel. For our purposes, the participation of the state in this step is of primary interest: until this time, the government had not been in any way involved in the production and distribution of newsreels. When it did become involved, it was through the publishing firm Orbis, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a representative.² The “*Československý filmový týdeník Aktualita*” can be considered to have been a “state” newsreel in the sense that it presented the official policy of the state in a various arenas of public life. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also regularly set tasks for the film crew of *Aktualita*.³ In the 1930s,

many newsreels were already being produced under state supervision, not only in totalitarian regimes with centralized governments like those in Germany (Ufa), the Soviet Union (*Soyuzkinožurnal*) and Italy, but also in other countries, such as Austria (*Österreich in Bild und Ton*), Hungary (*Magyar Film Iroda*), and Poland (*P.A.T.*), as well as those in Romania and Bulgaria.⁴

Of course, the *Aktualita* newsreel also reflects the attitude of the state towards film propaganda in particular and towards propaganda in general. The late emergence of *Aktualita* can be put down to a general failure on the part of the Czechoslovakian government to fully recognize the possibilities that modern film propaganda had to offer. Right up until the dramatic events at the end of the 1930s, the Czechoslovakian authorities continued to hold steadfast to their conviction that a truly democratic state should not resort to the tools of propaganda, but rather, should persuade its citizens through a more rational approach. This attitude, incidentally, is documented by a brochure from as late as 1938 (!), *Propaganda v demokracii a diktaturách* (Propaganda in Democracy and Dictatorships) by Alfréd Fuchs, an official in the Press Division of the Office of the Czechoslovakian Government.

Aktualita first came out in August, 1937. At the time, fifteen copies of the Ufa newsreel, *Zvukový týdeník Ufy*, supplied from Berlin, and ten copies of the PDC *Zvukový týdeník* were in circulation in the Sudetenland.⁵ The mandatory 20% additional Czechoslovakian content was made up of harmless items relating to the country's history or geography. Nine copies of Paramount's newsreel, *Zvukový týdeník Paramountu*, and nine copies of Fox (i.e. *Fox Movietone News*) were also being circulated.

Aktualita was launched in August 1937, with 2 copies going out to 20 cinemas. The following autumn there were 10 copies (including one in German) in 250 cinemas (out of a total of 1850 cinemas), and in May, 1938, a total of 17 copies (including one in German) were in distribution. *Aktualita* reached the 25-copy mark in November, i.e., under the Second Republic, after the Munich agreement had been signed and then accepted by the Czechoslovakian government. This success therefore came after the effective separation of the Sudetenland which, among other things, resulted in the loss of 545 cinemas. A combination of several factors was responsible for this increase: the increase in nationalist sentiment among the Czech population of what remained of Czechoslovakia, the doubling of *Aktualita*, creating the A and B versions. The closing down of cinemas was also the result of the regulation making the screening of *Aktualita* mandatory and any manipulation of its content expressly illegal.⁶

In the threatening atmosphere of the country at that time, towards the end of the 1930s, interest in the official Czech film news reporting was obviously considerable. Interest in the German language version was a different matter entirely, as the disproportionate number of copies in circulation suggests. The German version of the official Czechoslovakian newsreel failed completely to gain a foothold in the Sudetenland. It came onto the scene at a time when the political situation had already progressed too far: in the border regions even Czech feature films (including German language versions) were already being boycotted by German cinemas. Whether these boycotts were due to pro-Hitler sympathy on the part of the cinema owners or to fear of violent demonstrations by the supporters of the Sudeten German Nazi politician Konrad Henlein, the final result was the same. Economic factors were also influential: cinemas were not only cultural institutions, they were also businesses that depended on audience numbers, which were, in turn, influenced not only by program selection but also

by the business' reputation and status in its community. Another aspect to consider is purely a practical one: cinemas had long-term contracts for the supply of newsreels and they didn't switch brands. We did some sample research: in the northern German city Jablonec nad Nisou (Gablonz), for example, not one of the five local cinemas switched newsreel brands at any time between August, 1937 to March, 1938. One cinema showed Ufa, another PDC, a third Paramount and the other two screened Fox. In August, 1938, production of the German edition of *Aktualita* was stopped, due to a total lack of interest from cinema owners in the German regions of the republic. By way of "substitution," *Aktualita*, as mentioned above, began to come out in two versions.

The misguided attempt of the governing Czech majority to use the film newsreel as a medium for communication with the German minority recalls the similarly inadequate exploitation of radio in this sense. Czechoslovakian radiojournal was airing regular broadcasts in German as early as 1925, but did not truly reflect the political, economic and cultural importance of the German minority in the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

We should mention at least two of the people involved in producing *Aktualita*. The editor-in-chief was the filmmaker Jan Kučera, also a noteworthy film critic and theorist with a structuralist bent. The German version of *Aktualita* was directed by Prague born Willy Haas, who had worked from 1920 to 1933 as a theatre, film, and literary critic in Berlin, where he published the famous journal *Die literarische Welt*. After Hitler came to power, the Jewish intellectual decided to return to Prague, where in April, 1934, he took over the film column in Prague's excellent German language daily, the *Prager Presse*.

Before we begin to compare the German and Czech versions of *Aktualita*, a few words about the source materials. The situation is a dismal one. Although *Aktualita* was issued every week from summer 1937 until spring 1945, only three complete issues have been preserved from the entire period. There remains also a rather large amount of individual episodes, which have been sorted and spliced together in thematic groups. No one knows when, by whom, or why the collection of episodes were put into this format, though it seems to have been done as early as the 1940s. It has made the material very difficult to work with. However, the possibility exists that someday we will be able to put some issues of *Aktualita* back together.

AKTUALITA	total number of episodes		number of preserved episodes	
	1937	1938	1937	1938
Czech edition	263	521	129	218
German edition	259	413	13	4

At any rate, all of the advertising material from *Aktualita* has been preserved, as have the texts of the commentary that were submitted to the censoring authorities (the commentary does not, however, include the transcripts of recorded speeches or interviews). So, our primary source of information consisted of written, not filmed materials. Using them, and the episodes preserved in pieces, it is possible to create a quite coherent picture of film news reporting as a whole in the years from 1937-1945.

The Czech and German editions of *Aktualita* both retained the title – *Aktualita* (Newsflash/Current News). Even in the German version, the newsreel had a Czech title, never *Aktualität*. In other respects, one can detect differences between the individual components of the two versions, some substantial and some minor, although not in

Československý zvukový týdeník

aktuAlita

KOMPLETNĚ 1157

Oslavy Antona Bernoláka v Trnavě,

za účasti ministerského předsedy dr. Hodži

●
President Roosevelt
o demokracii K

●
Zahájení výstavy „Dnešní Mánes“ K
Proslov ministra školství dr. Frankeho

VTEŘINY PŘED KAMEROU:

●
Rumunská národní hudba — Děti si hrají s draky — K
Mussoliniho syn v Hollywoodu

Autonomie Podkarpatské Rusi

●
Železné plíce proti dětské obrně K

VÁLKA V ČÍNĚ

●
Poslední snímky z Japonského vpádu K

SPORTY:

●
Concours hippiques ve Vídni K
Ženy se učí jiu-jitsu

●
Křest černochoů v moři

32

Čís. 12. — 42./XIII.

tschechoslowakische Tonbildschau

aktualita

Die dritte
Jubiläumsausstellung
des Kunstvereins „Mánes“

●
Eine Repräsentant
der moderne Demokratie:
Franklin D. ROOSEVELT

●
Liane Hald in Prag 3893

●
AUGENBLICKE VOR DER KAMERA:

Rumänische Nationalmusik — Die Kinder lassen Drachen steigen —
Mussolinis Sohn in Hollywood

●
Karpathorussland wird autonom

●
Der Krieg in China:

Neueste Bilder vom japanischen Einfall in China

●
Eiserne Lungen gegen die spinale Kinderlähmung

●
SPORT - AKTUALITÄTEN:

Concours hippiques in Wien
Mädchen lernen Jiu-Jitsu

●
Negertaufe im Meer

●
Fahrradkünstler aller Zeiten

●
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every issue. The differences we have identified can be classified into five basic categories, but the absence of the actual film material makes it impossible to exclude the possibility that other categories exist.⁷

1) Change in the order of episodes.

As a rule, when ordering the different episodes, one tried to fill the first slot with an episode that was somehow significant or interesting to the target audience, and that would serve at the same time to localize the reporting.

2) Omission of an episode without a replacement.

Generally, the reasons behind such changes were, in our judgment, political in nature. Examples: no. 4/1938, episode *The President of the Republic among Students*; no. 21/1938, episode *Celebrations of the National Theatre*; no. 34/1938, episode *Do you want this?* (i.e., “Do you want our country to meet a similar fate?”), which followed an episode of the bombing of Canton.

3) Substitution of one episode for another.

a) To localize reporting.

This generally involved episodes about cultural events or sports, sometimes ones of a historical or geographical nature. Examples: no. 10/1938 – “Aktualita’s humorous sketch,” *Jára Kohout puts his son to sleep* from the Czech version was replaced in the German version with the episode, *Falkenau: Franz Heidler, Cheb’s Folk Songbird*; no. 14/1938 – the episode *Dr. h. c. Jan Bat’a* from the Czech edition was replaced in the German version with the episode *Traditional Artistic Craft in Reichenberg*.

b) To avoid undesirable political connotations.

A side effect of these changes was the emphasis of the localized character of the newsreel. Episode: no. 6/1938 – the clearly political episode *Five Years of the 3rd Reich* was replaced in the German edition with the cultural episode *On the 70th Anniversary of the Death of Adalbert Stifter*; no. 8/1938 – instead of the clearly political episode [Parliamentary] *Deputy Jaksch on Czech-German Understanding*, the German edition had a cultural episode apparently about some aspiring film starlet *The Next Film Generation: Christa Abbel*;⁸ no. 9/1938 – a episode dedicated to the Czechoslovakian Premier *Homage to Prime Minister Hodža* was replaced, in the German version, with the episode *Sudeten-German Sledding Championships on a Difficult Natural Track*.

In the above mentioned examples, the changes led to the omission of political subjects, but there were also changes in which political subject matter was added. Example: no. 4/1938 – in the place of the episode *Women’s Floor Exercises. Preparations for the 10th All-Sokol Rally*, in the German edition came *Reception of Diplomatic Corps in Berlin’s Reich Chancellery*.

In 1937, the German edition of *Aktualita* contained a total of 259 episodes, of which 32 didn’t appear in the Czech version and were acquired exclusively for the German edition (in exceptional cases from abroad). In 1938, there were 40 episodes as such, out of a total of 413.

4) Differences in commentary of an episode.

These tended to be politically motivated and in extreme cases bordered on misinterpretation.

a)

Czech version:

Od té doby stal se Adolf Hitler hlavou státu a pronesl letos v Krollově opeře vyčerpávající kritiku své pětileté vlády nad Třetí říší.

Při té příležitosti útočil nejostřeji na Anglii a jejího zahraničního ministra Antony Edena, který odstoupil.⁹

German version:

Inzwischen wurde Adolf Hitler selbst zum Staatsoberhaupt und trug dieses Jahr in der Krolloper eine Ausführliche Analyse seiner 5-jährigen Regierung vor.

Bei dieser Gelegenheit griff er England und seinem Außenminister Antony Eden an, der sein Portefeuille zurücklegte. Er sprach ferner über die Auslandsdeutschen.

b)

Czech version:

Dožínky, slavnost česko-německé spolupráce

[...]

Ministr Spina řekl: “Nejsme jenom sudetoněmeckými sedláky, jsme především občany tohoto státu.”

10.000 aktivistických Němců, kteří se zúčastnili krásné slavnosti, odmítlo nezodpovědnou politiku těch, kteří se ohlížejí za hranice tohoto státu.¹⁰

German version:

Erntefeier

[...]

Minister Dr. Spina sagte: “Wir sind nicht nur sudetendeutsche Bauern – wir sind vor allem sudetendeutsche Bürger dieses Staates.”

10.000 deutscher Bauern, die sich an der schönen Feier beteiligten, manifestieren ihren Willen zu loyaler Zusammenarbeit im Rahmen der Tschechoslowakischen Republik.

5) Various combinations of all of the preceding types.

From the differences that have been mentioned, we can conclude that the Czechoslovakian state chose to use film propaganda directed at the German minority in what was already an extremely tense situation. In the German edition of *Aktualita*, the state presented itself as one that noticed and was directly interested in the cultural, sporting, and social life of the German minority. It tried to avoid, or at least minimize, possible conflicts and potentially soothe inflamed tempers. For example, it avoided turning the political life of Sudeten Germans into subject matter, and carefully avoided truly explosive subjects in pictorial news reporting. In those pre-television times, these strategies had the character of a delayed pictorial illustration.

Aktualita began to be produced and distributed in the Slovakian edition in October,

1938. This was another misguided attempt to use Czechoslovakian film propaganda to help rescue the republic, this time by trying to strengthen the identification of the Slovakian population with the Czechoslovakian state instead of limiting its focus to Czechs. Thus, *Aktualita* was potentially designed to work counter to the efforts of Slovakian politicians to achieve autonomy. Once again, it declared that the state was interested in Slovakia, in its cultural life, and this time, also in its political life. Only three issues were produced, probably edited by the Slovakian journalist Ivan Kovačević. Publishing of the Slovakian version of *Aktualita* was stopped, not only due to competition from the Slovakian edition of Ufa, but also because of the interest clearly articulated by the newly established Slovakian government to have a Slovakian cinema that was far from the Czech. This was afterwards carried out at a legislative level. The case of Slovakia is an interesting example in Europe of the late emergence of a national cinema by order of the state.

- 1 Excerpt from the 137th meeting of the FPS, January 20, 1938, p. 9, Praha, Státní ústřední archiv v Praze (State Central Archives in Prague), Ministerstvo průmyslu, obchodu a živností (Ministry of Industry and Trade), Filmový poradní sbor (Film Advisory Board), box 2345.
- 2 Many years later one of the instigators of the *Aktualita* project would recall that the negotiations about starting the newsreel were complex and lengthy (beginning in February, 1936) and that the unreserved support of President Edvard Beneš contributed to their success.
- 3 See Archiv ministerstva zahraničních věcí (Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs), III. sekce (III. Division), box 403.
- 4 Jan Kučera, among others, mentions this, in his broadcast lecture of *Filmové žurnály*, broadcast September 11, 1935 on Radiojournal (headed *Jak se dělají filmové žurnály*). See also Jan Kučera, "Filmové žurnály," *Illuminace*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (1990), pp. 83-88.
- 5 Both were published in a German version, though up to now we don't know what proportion of the number of distributed copies were accounted to each of them. We hope that future archival research will be able to answer this question. From 1938, a Slovakian version of the Ufa newsreel was also published.
- 6 We have drawn this information from the available literature, as yet we have no archival source to corroborate it.
- 7 One could hypothesize, for example, that different musical accompaniment was used for the same episode, or certain shots were left out of a given episode, or put in a different order.
- 8 Wenzel Jaksch was a pro-Czechoslovakian, anti-Hiter deputy to the Czechoslovakian Parliament for the German Social Democracy's party.
- 9 Translator's note: "Since then, Adolf Hitler has become the head of state and this year at the Kroll Opera he gave an *exhaustive critique* of his five-year rule of the Third Reich. On this occasion his *sharpest* attack was directed to England and its foreign minister, Anthony Eden, who has stepped down."
- 10 Translator's note: "Harvest Celebration, a celebration of Czech-German cooperation. [...] Minister Spina said: 'We are not only Sudeten German farmers, we are above all citizens of this state.'
10 000 German activists who took part in the merry celebration rejected the irresponsible politics of those who are looking beyond the borders of this state. "

STAYING IN OR GETTING OUT. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CHARACTER IN DANISH AND SWEDISH MULTIPLE VERSION COMEDIES OF THE 1930s

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The multiple version film represents unique material for a comparative aesthetic analysis. This case study is an opportunity to explore different comic character strategies in two multiple version films: *Frk. Møllers Jubilæum* (Miss Møller's Jubilee, 1937, Denmark), and *Julia Jubilerar* (Julia Jubilates, 1938, Sweden).

So as not to mislead my readers, I should start by saying that I shall not be discussing the differences between these films in terms of nationality. Rather, my analysis will be devoted to questions surrounding the comic characters themselves.

Both films were made by Alice O'Fredericks and Lau Lauritzen Jr., the directorial team who in many ways was the personification of modern Danish comedy. The male love interest in the films, Peter/Erik, is in fact played by Lau Lauritzen Jr., who performs similarly in both films. The female love interest (Grete/Gretha), is also very closely matched in terms of character in each version. Finally, the films use the same storyline as well as the same locations.

While there are an abundance of similarities between the films, the title character of Miss Møller/Julia is handled very differently in each film. The Danish film becomes an aggressive, tongue-in-cheek farce as opposed to the Swedish version, which is a much gentler comedy.

Gently Does It

Julia Jubilerar stars Katie Rolfson in the leading role as an old maid accountant, who invites two colleagues on a skiing trip. One is the goofy Mårton, played by popular actor Thor Mondéen. He has repeatedly asked her to marry him over the past twenty years, but received a negative response every time. The other is the parentless Gretha, for whom Julia wants to find a nice young man, so that she won't end up a spinster like herself.

The film's exposition scenes are set up so as to reflect the different sides of Julia. She is shown to be strict, responsible, and unfeminine. Even though the narrative possibilities are slight and only point to a rather crude stereotypical conception of the spinster/accountant, actress Katie Rolfson's performance makes her character believable and at times touching. In clear opposition to her acting style, Mondéen's Mårton is a goofy, one-dimensional stereotype.

When Julia and Mårton discuss Julia's unfulfilled dreams in the beginning of the film, Julia contemplates that she could have married and had a daughter Gretha's age. To this Mårton remarks that he has asked her to marry him many times, but that she has



always refused him. Julia replies that she was young and full of dreams, but that now she is old and it's too late. Mårton comments that it has been good to have remained friends all along, to which Julia retorts: "But it's not enough! Every woman needs a husband and a child." She concludes by proclaiming that they must find a suitable man for Gretha.

Here Rolfson certainly strives for a depth of character as she displays her feelings and the reasons for them. Small things such as her glances and her hesitations, point to a character's inner life and lend conviction to the lines.

Aggressive Characterisation

For the Danish version, Alice O'Fredericks and Lau Lauritzen Jr. cast the reigning queen of the popular revue, Liva Weel, to play Miss Møller. Like her Swedish counterpart, Liva Weel plays a sad woman with no romantic past. In this film, however, the spinster/accountant characterization has been given excessively conceived in order to achieve a comically grotesque quality, rather than to evoke a believable, female stereotype.

The popular entertainer Børge Rosenbaum, who later went on to achieve worldwide fame under the name of Victor Borge, plays her colleague Asmussen.

Weel and Rosenbaum play Miss Møller and Asmussen as pure caricatures, sometimes overplaying the roles to the point of absurdity. They are constantly shown to be incapable of corporeal and vocal control, as is evident in Miss Møller's hysterical giggles, and Asmussen's awkward grunts.

Their acting is underlined by a graphic stylisation of their appearances whereby their stereotypes are virtually drawn on them. Hair, make-up, and costumes give Miss Møller's spinster a look of constant grimness, while Asmussen's goofy and timid bachelor is effectively and relentlessly evoked by a cartoony hairdo and artificially raised eyebrows.

This aggressive characterization may certainly work against any grain of sense and sincerity that might be found in the story, but, as we shall see, it is part of a larger strategy of comic characterization.

In a scene that is parallel to the one with Katie Rolfson discussed earlier, we encounter a shift to a musical number wherein Miss Møller laments her anti-romantic plight. This number is the first of several instances that demonstrates a significant shift in her character's portrayal. As soon as the extra-diegetic music is heard, we witness a change in voice and acting style that signals the film's shift to a poetically stylized version of the old maid. This beautiful, melodramatic song portrays Miss Møller's stereotype with a completely different dramatic resonance of sincerity. In this moment, it is as if light seems to shine on her through a prism that allows us to indulge in another character who is nevertheless the same person.

Liva Weel's character could have never spoken convincingly of lost opportunities as can Katie Rolfson's one, in part because the melancholy of her statements would have simply been lost when played out in caricature. However, the lyricism found in the musical mode allows Weel to reveal the sadder side of her stereotypical portrayal *without* any dependence on realism. In one song, her character symbolically uses the stages of a flower's existence whereby death becomes a surprisingly strong theme: the flower, like herself, was a bud that grew and finally withered. In the second verse, she reminisces about Asmussen's clumsy proposals and how she let him down. The chorus goes: "It's hopeless to wish for past to come back, 'cause we're not young any more. Even though you didn't win my heart, you'll always have me as a friend."

Here, Liva Weel is allowed to use her fictional character to showcase her signature talents as an actual performer. It may be argued that Weel's acknowledgement of the audience during both of her numbers in the film support a non-fictive star performance, although such an acknowledgement is surely a commonplace in comedies.

As soon as the song is over, she falls promptly back into her caricatured performance, which marks a shift in characterization.

Character as Locus for Performance and Spectacle

In the film, Miss Møller and Asmussen are depicted in several grotesque situations. Filmed in fast motion, the actors perform acrobatic stunts with the aid of body doubles, which provides a playfully wild and poetic dis-unity to the characters' dimen-

sion of talent. More precisely, for Miss Møller and Asmussen, *character* serves as a locus for performance and spectacle. In this sense, a unified psychology or identity is secondary.

In the musical skating scene, for example, Weel seems to strive for a continuity between acting and performance. As we see in her close-ups, Weel expertly integrates her giggles and involuntary movements into her singing, making her performance compatible with her caricature. But again the film chooses to challenge her character's unity. In the long shots, we remark what is clearly a body double for a whole new Miss Møller, who is capable of performing artistic figure skating that is perfect to a fault. As we also find in Asmussen's character, there is a discrepancy between his *out of control* caricaturization and a *controlled* body double who elegantly masters the clumsy art of *not* being able to skate.

In this scene Miss Møller's and Asmussen's identities are shells for the performance of stunts. On this comic scale, characterization disappears. This also holds true in the skiing scene that culminates with a shot of a stunt version of Miss Møller whose head is buried in the snow, her legs protruding.

The situation is very different in the Swedish version. In the skating scene stunt doubles are also (presumably) used, but it is striking how invisibly the film transitions between actor and stunt double. The flawless cuts create the illusion that Julia and Mårton are expert skaters which, if performative unity is the goal, makes for a much more satisfying performance.

In terms of aggressive characterization, Thor Mondéen's Mårton in the Swedish version is very much on par with Møller and Asmussen. However, his character has nowhere near the performative diversity of his Danish counterparts.

Both films open with Asmussen/Mårton trying out pianos in the company store-room.

Mondéen uses his clumsy charm, which corresponds with his stereotype, as he pounds away on two pianos. Børge Rosenbaum, for whom the number was designed, delivers a performance of musical precision as he takes on six grand pianos with two deft hands and an office chair. Whereas Mondéen, in the Swedish version, never strays far from character, there is a whole different sense of performance and spectacle in Rosenbaum's playing, thus a greater clash between the expert performer and the nitwit caricature of Asmussen.

Baroque vs. Discrete

In the pivotal roles of the Danish film, we have two comic characters whose extremely different stylistic and performative upstrategies make the characters at times grotesques, at times musically melodramatic. Sometimes the actors' signature talents shine through the fictive characterization. At other times, the antics of anonymous body doubles invade the characters.

Frøken Møller's Jubilæum is a baroque film which pushes its fiction to the limits by constantly revealing the very signs of fiction and genre.

The actors in *Julia Jubilerar* do not change nearly as much as their Danish counterparts. In fact, it seems that they do not stray once they are placed within certain lim-

its of characterization. *Julia Jubilerar* thus becomes a comedy that is closer to a unified norm in which characterization is redundant, whether or not the caricature, albeit stereotyped, has any depth.

The point of this case study has been to explore different approaches to the comic character and to explain the difference these approaches create in two parallel films.

DER KONGREß TANZT: REVISITED*

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“*Congress Dances* Revisited.” Why “revisited?” Our title requires an explanation!

This is not the first time we are looking at *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931, Erik Charell) and its French and English versions *Le Congrès s’amuse* and *Congress Dances* (or rather *Old Vienna* as the film was re-titled, after its re-release in a revised version a few months after its UK-premiere). Approaching the subject from different angles, we previously presented our findings at the 1995 CineGraph-Conference in Hamburg¹ and, the following year, at “The Musicals’ Conference” at the University of Southampton,² focussing this time on the musical traditions in a European context, i.e. the relationship between film, operetta and the emerging American musical. On both occasions, we did not have access to the amount of material we have today, had not been able, for example, to consult the film’s original German and French shooting scripts.³ As new evidence and previously unknown documents emerge and new technologies develop, analysing and writing about film history is a constant process of revisits, re-examinations, and revisions. Taking a bottom-up approach to film-Europe of the early sound period, this presentation constitutes a critical reassessment of our earlier findings – one that is by no means fixed, definite, or final. We would indeed very much welcome critical comments and challenges as we try to reassess the significance of one of the most successful German musical films in the context of efforts by its production company Ufa to maintain and extend its position as a leading player in the global film business at a time when the introduction of sound would appear to drastically limit such aspirations.

Aspects of Ufa’s Production Policy, 1930-31

Since Ufa’s take-over in spring 1927 by Alfred Hugenberg, Germany’s most powerful, ultra conservative newspaper tycoon, rigorous streamlining and money-saving measures were introduced by the Head of the Hugenberg-Group’s Scherl Publishing House Ludwig Klitzsch who later became Ufa’s General Manager. Under his leadership the company severed its links with expensive, individualistic directors (such as Fritz Lang and Joe May) and established financially strictly controlled production units for a small number of prestige films (e.g. under Erich Pommer) and inexpensive *Mittelfilm*-productions (e.g. under Bruno Duday) with individual film budgets of up to 750.000 Reichsmark (RM), respect 200.000 RM. The new regime insisted on strict adherence to long-term production plans that were discussed and tightly controlled by the company’s Board of Directors at their regular meetings twice a week. In early December, 1929,

they allocated a budget of 5.100.000 RM for 15 feature films to be made during 1930/31 (the season for which *Der Kongreß tanzt* had originally been planned). Three of these were to be produced by Pommer in a German and an English version, one costing 500.000 RM, two 750.000 RM each. If made at all, other language versions were to be financed by third parties interested in the films' distribution.⁴

In a further attempt to improve the company's financial situation, Alexander Grau, the Head of Ufa's Cinema Circuit, suggested at the end of January, 1930 to boost the income of Hamburg's Ufa-Palast during the (notoriously slack) summer months by importing successful life theatre productions of plays and operettas from Berlin. Assuming daily operating costs of between four and eight thousand pounds he estimated potential profits to be as high as 15.000 RM a day if performances were sold out – excluding income from films shown during the afternoon.⁵ Shortly afterwards the Theatre Department signed a contract with the ensemble of the former dancer turned choreographer and director Eric Charell,⁶ whose spectacular revue- and operetta-productions had been the talk of Berlin since 1924 when he first began to lease the Großes Schauspielhaus (rescuing Max Reinhardt's theatrical folly from financial disaster).

Though aiming to produce films as economically as possible, Ufa remained the only serious challenge to Hollywood's hegemony on the World Market – and the company was determined not to surrender its position as a leading player. Unable to place its products through links with "partners" in the USA, it began to establish or sign agreements with cinemas in areas with large communities of German descent (e.g. in New York). Of the fifteen films planned for 1930/31, the five big budget films were earmarked for English and German versions, while the remaining ten – all with a budget-allocation of 200.000 RM – were first and foremost destined for distribution at home. Ufa's decision to concentrate on English language versions was clearly prompted by the desire to break into the American market. Thus, shortly after the opening night of *The Blue Angel* (1930, Joseph von Sternberg) the Board of Directors agreed to wait for American reactions and proposals for possible changes before going ahead with further work on its English version (which some considered unsatisfactory at the time).⁷

The main reason for the Board's initial lack of interest in making foreign language versions for France may be traced back to the ideological position of its members. They all were World War I veterans; all, except one, had been officers; all of them adhered more or less strongly to Hugenberg's *deutsch-nationale* (German nationalist) political convictions. They pursued a policy of producing at least one *nationaler Film* a year, i.e. one film with strong national tendencies (which in their understanding should not just appeal to German nationalists but to nationalists of any country). Thus, in summer 1930, they agreed to finance a "first class" film about the liberation of the Rhineland to the tune of 120.000 RM. Six months later, they cancelled a contract to show Fritz Kortner's production of *Danton* (1931, Hans Behrendt) in their cinemas for "reasons of political concern."⁸ Regarding the French as *Erbfeinde* ("hereditary enemies") they also were strictly anti-French. They refused to sign up Abel Gance as potential director on grounds of his nationality, were furious when learning that – without their knowledge – *Sous les toits de Paris* (1930, René Clair) had been shown in its original French in one of their cinemas,¹⁰ and insisted when screening the French version of their own *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* (1930, Wilhelm Thiele) in Berlin's Gloria-Palast that it be made clear beforehand that this was done only for reasons of demonstrating their company's ability to produce foreign language versions.¹¹

However, business came before ideology, once they remembered that France constituted their most important export market and noticed that – because of the vast range of different Spanish dialects – French versions were more successful in Spanish-speaking countries than those addressing audiences in a rarely spoken “national” tongue used in theatre productions (which in many regions caused spectators to burst out in laughter). As early as May, 1930, Ufa’s production plans indicate a shift away from English when the Head of its *Auslandsabteilung* (foreign department) Berthold von Theobald manages to obtain advantageous credit conditions in France for the production of French versions.¹² From then on, Ufa aims to have all its French versions entirely financed with French money. Interest in English versions declines further as the management realises that their French counterparts guarantee safer and better returns than those aimed at English speaking countries already dominated by Hollywood.

The switch of emphasis from English to French versions does not come overnight. Amongst others, this is reflected by the internal debates about signing up French actor Henry Garat. In appearance and popularity, he is “the French equivalent” to Willy Fritsch, one of Ufa’s most popular stars. Having established links with French sources for the finance of French versions, the Board members consider giving him a one-year contract for 6.000 RM a month, but, at the beginning of September, postpone the decision until a clearer picture emerges of how many French versions they will actually produce.¹³ On the very last day of the year, members decide that the number of films involving Fritsch justifies negotiations with Garat on the basis of 80.000 RM for four films.¹⁴ By comparison: Fritsch’s income, which has been steadily rising during this time, is about to reach 192.000 RM.¹⁵ Aware of his value for Ufa’s French business interests, Garat insists – and in the end gets – 100.000 RM as Paramount is also interested in him.¹⁶ The same meeting that authorised signing up the French actor also established that English versions of big budget films such as *Der Kongreß tanzt* can only be made if “certainty can be established that sufficient income can be generated on the English [i.e. the UK!] market.”¹⁷ In other words, Ufa’s prospects for profitable returns from the US are rated so slim, that – in order to justify investing into English versions – it has to rely on income from (European!) Britain. A year later almost to the day, its Head of Distribution Wilhelm Meydam presents the Board with a soul-searching written analysis of the company’s involvement and prospects in the US-market. Asking “Is Ufa able and should it continue to produce English versions, in order to make money in America?” he himself replies: “No, it is too great a risk.” Given the lack of interest in Ufa’s films on the other side of the Atlantic, he even questions if it is worth the effort and investment to launch already existing English versions of *Bomben auf Monte Carlo* (1931, Hanns Schwarz) and *Der Kongreß tanzt* in the States.¹⁸ As a consequence, 1932 sees the production of only four English (in contrast to more than a dozen French) versions before Ufa abandons them altogether in early 1933 – a decision that also relieves the Board of the vexed question of whether the language spoken in these films should be European or American English.

The Film’s Production History

The Board of Directors’ choice of subject matter, genre and creative personnel for

Der Kongreß tanzt was first and foremost guided by financial considerations. In Germany during the late 1920s and early 1930s, “Wien-Filme” (i.e. films set in Vienna, celebrating young, occasionally bitter-sweet love affairs, the city’s melancholy charm and relaxed atmosphere, its wine, and above all its music – usually in form of the waltz) were “flavour of the month.” *In Wien hab’ ich einmal ein Mädel geliebt* (1930, Erich Schönfelder), *Die lustigen Weiber von Wien* (1931, Géza von Bolvary) and *Walzerparadies* (1931, Friedrich Zelnik) are just three examples of the genre, that opened in April, 1931 in Berlin. Though the management took a considerable risk when it agreed to entrust the project to Eric Charell, a newcomer who never before had directed a film, it also banked on the former dancer-turned-choreographer-director’s reputation as Berlin’s undisputed king of spectacular revues and operettas and the “talk of the town.” Frequently sneered at by intellectuals for his colourful but superficial extravaganzas, as leaseholder of the Großes Schauspielhaus since 1924, Charell had turned Max Reinhardt’s loss-making theatrical folly into a goldmine, which subsidised the great director’s theatre ventures. In terms of financial (if not critical) success, his activities matched those of Erich Pommer in the world of film production. Indeed, in May, 1930, the trade press speculated about the two men forming a production company of their own.¹⁹

Charell’s inexperience in the world of filmmaking must have been one of the main reasons for the Board’s long drawn-out debates about the pros and cons of realising *Der Kongreß tanzt*. The idea for the film originated (probably some time in 1929) with Norbert Falk, an established specialist for spectacles set in an historical or oriental environment who, amongst others, had once worked on *Anne Boleyn* (1920, Ernst Lubitsch), *Madame Dubarry* (1919, Ernst Lubitsch) and more recently on *Casanova* (1927, Alexandre Volkoff) and *Secrets of the Orient* (1928, Alexandre Volkoff). In early January, 1930 the management authorises Pommer’s production unit to start script development.²⁰

At the end of February, it agrees to purchase Falk’s ideas for a sum of 20.000 RM on condition that he collaborates with Ufa’s chief *Dramaturg* (literary advisor) Robert Liebmann (with more than eighty film scripts to his credit an even more experienced veteran in the business than Falk) on the development of the treatment and the shooting script.²¹ By early May, it transpires that just the German version will cost at least 1.000.000 RM, and the Board decides to abandon the project. Three weeks later, further negotiations lead to Falk giving Ufa an option on the subject.²² Rumours surfacing at the time that star producer Erich Pommer plans to leave Ufa and join forces with Charell may point towards tensions that might have arisen over the realisation of the film. This impression is reinforced by (a) Charell’s decision to turn *Der Kongreß tanzt* into a revue for the stage, and (b) the Board’s refusal to release its popular star Willy Fritsch (who later will play the male lead in the film) for this production.²³ By early October, Charell has abandoned it as a stage show in favour of the operetta *Im weißen Rössl am Wolfgangsee*, while Ufa takes up the option of acquiring the rights under the conditions negotiated at the beginning of the year. In a complete u-turn of their previous decision not to make the film at all, board-members are now determined to turn it into *the* big film operetta of the 1931/32 season, and underline their intention by considering appointing a composer of the status of Franz Lehár for the music even if this means that they will have to increase the film’s budget by 40.000 RM.²⁴ In the end, they settle for Werner Richard Heymann who, with his music for *Ihre Hoheit befiehlt* (1931,

Hanns Schwarz) and *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* had just demonstrated his knack for creating popular hits.

Though many critics point towards the flimsiness behind the lavish production's outer appearance, opening night of *Im weißen Rössl* on November 8, 1930, in the Großes Schauspielhaus is an overwhelming success. Given that audiences are queuing up to see the show, Ufa is ready to appoint Eric Charell as director of *Der Kongreß tanzt* for the princely sum of 70.000 RM (provided he also supplies the film's costumes from the stores of his theatre).²⁵

At the end of February, 1931 (days before the Board will actually give the go-ahead!), the trade press announces the successful conclusion of the negotiations between Ufa and Charell. Not only will there be three language versions, but in view of the director's reputation for rich and exuberant decors, large sections of the film are also to be shot in colour (though these plans are subsequently abandoned, as film technology is not yet ready for such visual feasts). While there is never any question or discussion about the making of a French version, in mid-March (and in view of its earlier decision that an English version can only be made if this is financially viable, either through guarantees or advances by foreign distributors), the Board decides to go ahead with a version for the English-speaking market, though, for the time being, only within the constraints of the overall budget already approved.²⁶ In anticipation of a success similar to the one in Berlin, this guarded change of mind may have been influenced by the prospect of the impending opening, in early April, of the English production of *Im weißen Rössl* in the London Coliseum. To be certain to repeat Charell's theatre successes on screen, Ufa subsequently signs up Ernst Stern²⁷ whose designs are such an intricate part of Charell's spectacles that, in his review of *White Horse Inn*, the critic of *The Times* totally ignores the director and only refers to Stern's contributions.²⁸ Another member of Charell's team whom Ufa assigns to the film is the co-author (with Charell) of *Im weißen Rössl* Hans Müller.²⁹ Prominent actors and singers from the operetta's original cast who are signed up for the film are Paul Hörbiger (Heurigen-Singer) and Otto Wallburg (Bibikoff).

On May 21, 1931, Ufa's Head of Production Ernst Hugo Correll presents to the Board the film's set and costume designs, shooting script, and an estimated budget of 1.639.950 RM. Though members postpone their comments to the next meeting, they authorise Correll to proceed with set construction and casting for three language versions. Six days later, following discussion of the film's script, designs and casting of foreign language versions, as well as having listened to the music, the Board approves the budget and its allocation of 843.950 RM (German), 408.000 RM (French), and 388.000 (English) to each respective version.³⁰ Shooting starts in early June and runs through to mid-August. Though the final film adheres closely to the script, three changes are made during this time. The first – a spectacular dream sequence set in the Vienna *Hofreitschule* – was almost certainly cut for reasons of cost. The second (in which – following his afternoon-tea-visit to Christel – Uralsky requests never to be sent to her again as the Tsar's Double, because he has fallen in love with her) was probably eliminated because it imbued the slightly simple-minded Uralsky with a romantic touch and human emotions. The most significant alteration involves the ending. In the film, Alexander and Christel disappear from the final ball with an exuberant waltz and end up in a *Heurigen-Lokal* where Bibikoff separates them to take the Tsar back to Moscow. In a bitter-sweet final shot a devastated Christel is left

behind, while the *Heurigersänger* sings “This only happens once in life ... It will never happen again ... Let bygones be bygones.” In the script, Christel and Alexander are dancing when the news of Napoleon’s return reaches them. The Tsar leaves with Bibikoff and a happy Pepi accompanies them to the city borders. Meanwhile a desperate Christel is dragging herself home where she collapses on her bed crying. Suddenly Alexander enters, delighted Christel falls into his arms. Accompanied by the rousing fanfare that signals his entrances throughout the film Alexander exclaims: “Eine Nacht stehl ich der Weltgeschichte!” (“This one night world history has to do without me!”).³¹

Given the film’s subject and setting, Ufa uses *Der Kongreß tanzt* to raise the company’s profile in Austria and stages the world premiere in the Austrian capital in the former home of the Viennese operetta, the Johann Strauss-Theater, which had recently been converted to a cinema with the name of Neue Scala. Prior to the opening night of their most prestigious and expensive film of the season on September 29, Ufa’s money pinching directors argue for more than a week about giving approval to spending 10.000 RM for special arrangements to be made on the occasion – first asking for the sum to be halved, and subsequently suggesting the cancellation of a festive dinner arranged for promotional reasons for Austrian cinema owners. In a “flurry of generosity” they also authorise that invitations be given to two English and two French journalists.³² The Berlin opening night (with an advertising budget of 30.000 RM)³³ takes place on October 23 as a black tie affair in aid of the Berlin Press Association. Premieres in Paris and London follow respectively on October 30 and November 30. While the film is doing well in Germany (where it is the financially most successful film of the 1931/32 season) and France, sluggish business in Britain leads to a request for assistance to improve business. At the beginning of December, the Board agrees to support an advertising campaign to the tune of £ 300 per week, provided exhibitors raise rental payments to thirty-three and a third percent on income exceeding £ 3000.³⁴ This apparently did not improve attendance figure, for the film is subsequently withdrawn from circulation to be re-released in April, 1932 in a re-edited version as *Old Vienna*.

What Are We Looking At?

The German versions of *Der Kongreß tanzt* as seen in Vienna and (following minor revisions) initially in Berlin, must be considered lost, for Ufa submitted the film three times to the censor – the last time eight days after the first screening in the German capital. According to censorship records, the three dates of submission are:³⁵

- September 28, 1931; card nr. B.29993; submitted length: 2773 m, after cuts: 2764 m. Adults only.
Presumably relating to the print shown the following evening at the gala premiere in Vienna
- October 9, 1931; card nr. B.30102; submitted length: 2770 m, after cuts: 2768 m. Adults only.

Presumably relating to the print shown at the Berlin premiere

- October 31, 1931; card nr. B. 30283, submitted length: 2770 m., after cuts: 2754 m.
Open to all.

Presumably relating to the version as it survives today

Of these, only the last censorship card (number: B 30283) seems to have survived in form of an apparently unaltered reissue, dated November 7, 1935.³⁶ In the context of our analytical comparison of the three language versions it served as point of reference to establish the relationship between the film as shown in 1931 and two different German prints in circulation today: one that served as basis for a commercial video issued under the “Ufa Video”-label (running time: 81’15”), and one that was broadcast by stations of the ARD television network in 1995 (running time: 93’52”, in this case, shown on March 16 by NDR). Shorter by approximately 13 minutes and containing no material not found in the “ARD-version,” the different style of its credit sequence



Fig. 1a. Original German title 1931



Fig. 1b. German title 1951

revealed the “Ufa-Video” as a cut-down version of *Der Kongress tanzt* edited during the 1950s which, if shown at a speed of 24 frames per second, would have run for just under 85 minutes. In all probability, the two videos are based on two versions passed by the “Voluntary Censorship Board of the German Film Industry” (FSK) on August 7, 1951 (nr. 03069, length: 2315 m) and on February 10, 1994 (nr. 03069, as video, duration: 94 minutes) [Fig. 1a-1b].

Comparing the “ARD-version” with the information of the censorship card and the dialogues of the German shooting script we reached the conclusion that the print used for this transmission comes close to that seen by the censor on October 31, 1931. This was confirmed by the fact that, except for a longer sequence showing Napoleon’s return from Elba in the French print, the videos of the French and English versions did not contain any visual materials not found in this version. Using the information available to us, the following list gives an idea of the approximate length of the prints that served as basis for our work, figures in brackets () are deductions based on the length of the individual recordings:

	Length (submitted)	Length (after cuts)	Running at 24 fr./sec	Running at 25 fr./sec
Card B. 30283 (dated October 31, 1931)	2770 m ³⁷	2754 m	101'00"	~97'07"
<i>Der Kongreß tanzt</i> "ARD-version" (Murnau-Stiftung) (FSK: February 10, 1994)		(~ 2700 m)	(~98'41")	93'52"
"Ufa-video" (FSK: August, 1951)		(~ 2315 m)	(~84'30")	81'15"
<i>Le Congrès s'amuse</i> (Official length unknown) Commercial video		(~ 2435 m)	(85'30")	~80'00"
<i>Congress Dances</i> ³⁸ Official length: 8288 ft. =		~ 2562 m	~94'10"	~92'20"
<i>Old Vienna</i> Video (source unknown)		(~2100 m)	(~77'00")	74'00"

To ascertain what might have been eliminated from the 1931-version, we also consulted (besides the French and German shooting scripts) Ufa publicity material and film programmes from 1931, production reports in the trade press, reviews, biographies and autobiographies related to people involved in the production. A detailed description of Napoleon's landing in a review by Herbert Ihering in the *Börsen-Courier*, dated October 24, 1931,³⁹ reveals that the full length of this shot as it survives in the French version was actually shown at the Berlin Premiere on October 23, 1931. Its description in the censorship card⁴⁰ (dated October 31, 1931) corresponds to the shorter (by 30 seconds) as contained in the two German versions listed above. Lyrics published in the original Viennese and Berlin film programmes (which frequently had permission to reprint these texts to promote a film's music) indicate that, besides the film's evergreens "Das gibt's nur einmal" and "Das muss ein Stück vom Himmel sein," there once was a third song, "Schön ist das Leben," the elimination of which might account for the remaining two and a half minutes by which the "ARD Version" is shorter than the one related to the surviving censorship card.

Comparison and Analysis

"Except for a number of scenes, and bits and pieces missing due to the ravages of time, there hardly seem to be any differences between the three language versions!" This was our initial reaction after viewing the videos for the first time. Following transcription of the dialogues, the French text appeared a verbatim translation of the original German (a conclusion confirmed later by a comparison with the two shooting scripts). Listening to the *Old Vienna* -dialogues, this observation also applied to the English script. Though there were clearly differences in the interpretation of some of the char-

acters, especially Metternich (Conrad Veidt, Pierre Magnier) and the *Heurigen*sänger (Paul Hörbiger, Tarquini d'Or), plot and main characters appeared to be the same – an impression reinforced by Lilian Harvey (Christel) and Lil Dagover (Young Countess) playing the same parts in all three versions, and the similarities in physical appearance and performance between Willy Fritsch and Henry Garat as Tsar Alexander and his double Uralsky. In addition, a few minor roles (such as an officer flirting with Christel in her shop, or servants serving tea during the “tête-à-tête” between Christel and Uralsky) are also seen throughout in the same roles. To a considerable degree, this feeling of “sameness” is the result of the professionalism of the creative and technical personnel behind the scene. Especially cameraman Carl Hoffman, costume designer Ernst Stern, as well as set designers Robert Herlth and Walter Röhrig count among the best in their respective professions. With rare exceptions that are hardly noticeable, shots, camera movements, positions and angles are identical. This holds true even in those instances where the shooting script suggests a multi-camera set-up. Staging is so precise, that the same shots seemed to have been used in all sequences without dialogues, few or no close-ups, and, above all, in crowd scenes where individual characters cannot be identified. Especially the music with its unifying powers seemed to be the same across the three versions.

Under these circumstances it came as a considerable surprise, when a close scene-by-scene, shot-by-shot examination revealed that not a single shot has been used twice across all three versions, that big musical sequences like the Russian ballet and the festive crowd dancing in the ball room (interrupted by Napoleon's return from Elba) are not only made up of different shots, but (though based on the same melodies) have also been choreographed to different musical arrangements. As a consequence, we stated in our previous analyses that *Der Kongreß tanzt* represents indeed an attempt to create an “international film” which deliberately avoids national characteristics and idiosyncrasies in order to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. Having had yet another, even closer look at the material, we have to qualify our previous conclusions – and, at some point in the future, may possibly have to do so again, should we have an opportunity to examine the three versions in their original 35mm format on a Steenbeck, preferably one which allows a frame-by-frame comparison of two prints.

Practical Considerations and Contractual Obligations

Despite their initial hesitations in going ahead with production for reasons of cost, the politically and financially conservative members of Ufa's Board of Directors must have perceived the Vienna Congress as an ideal background for a musical film for the international market. Its historical context – the attempt by the participants in the historical Congress to suppress liberal tendencies and return to the pre-revolutionary order of a Europe dominated by monarchies – certainly conformed to their *deutsch-nationale* beliefs, which hoped for a return of the Kaiser. More importantly though, the international gathering of Kings, Princes, Ministers of State and their female companions in lavish dresses and costumes offered an opportunity to introduce an assembly of characters from various European Nations in visually impressive surroundings. It also justified the (in the end, barely noticeable) accents of those who, in the foreign versions, had to speak a language that was not their own.

While the spectacle clearly appealed to audiences on the Continent, it flopped in Britain (and apparently in the States as well). Ufa minutes indicate that this might have been partly due to distribution problems on the British Isles (where it was handled by Gaumont) and conflicting contracts preventing worldwide marketing in English speaking countries by one distributor (Paramount).⁴¹ The rather crudely styled, longwinded “Foreword” which precedes *Old Vienna*, however, suggests that, as a historical, socio-political, or cultural event, the Congress of Vienna meant very little to English or American audiences:

In 1815, after the fall of Napoleon, there remained the difficult task of reorganising the world. The hopes of the victorious powers and personal aims of the ambitious represented a confusing medley of conflicting interests.

To find a solution, Kings, Princes and Ambassadors gathered in Vienna. For five months the city became a moving panorama of gaiety and splendour.

This eventful time of magnificence is the background against which is woven the delightful musical romance which we now have the honor to present.

The spelling of ‘honour’ suggests that this information may have been specifically aimed at North American audiences not familiar with the history and politics of early 19th Century Europe. The text was almost certainly written by Carl Winston, who – together with his brother Sam, Josef von Sternberg’s regular editor – had come from the States to Berlin in August, 1929 where he became one of Erich Pommer’s trusted assistants and Ufa’s supervisor of English language versions.⁴² In contrast to Jean Boyer who took responsibility for *Le Congrès s’amuse*, but in the film is only credited as author of the French dialogue and lyrics, Winston is given prominence as “Supervisor” of *Old Vienna*. While such differences are mainly the result of each individual’s contract with Ufa, the placing of stars within the credit sequence reflects audience recognition and their popularity in the countries where these versions were shown. In Germany top credit is given (in that order!) to Lilian Harvey, followed by Willy Fritsch and Conrad Veidt, in France it is Lilian Harvey and Henry Garat, and in Britain it is Conrad Veidt and Lilian Harvey. As director, Charell (who, according to several sources, did not have a clue about film direction, was frequently absent, and left much of the work to cameraman Carl Hoffmann) is given far less prominence in the French than in the other two versions – possibly because he had a name in Berlin, and his English production of *White Horse Inn* was about to open at the time *Congress Dances* resurfaced as *Old Vienna* in London.

Political, Ideological and National Sensitivities

The suggestion that the subject of the Congress of Vienna may have appealed to Ufa’s Board of Directors for ideological reasons is, of course, speculation. However, it can hardly be accidental that, immediately after studio work on *Der Kongreß tanzt* had finished – quasi as counterpart to this light-hearted approach to European politics of the Napoleonic Era – Ufa started production on *York* (1931, Gustav Ucicky) a serious historical film with a nationalist perspective on events leading up to the 1812 “Treaty of Tauroggen.” The latter resulted in an alliance between Prussia and Tsar Alexander’s

Russia against Napoleon and France – a nationalist subject close to the hearts of a management who in its minutes expressed strong anti-French convictions on several occasions. The only film produced by Ufa's Head of Production Ernst-Hugo Correll, *York* was directed by Gustav Ucicky (who subsequently was responsible for *deutsch-nationale* films like *Morgenrot*) with a script by Robert Liebmann and Hans Müller, who had previously worked on *Der Kongreß tanzt*.⁴³ Werner Krauß, who at one point had been announced for a guest appearance as Napoleon in the film operetta, played the title role. The film – which unfortunately is considered lost – received its gala premiere on December 23, 1931 in Berlin's prestigious Ufa-Palast am Zoo (i.e. shortly after *Der Kongreß tanzt* had finished its run). It is in the context of *York* that the cut made to an already brief appearance of Napoleon must be perceived as having been made for ideological reasons – especially as it had already been shown in its full length at two widely celebrated premieres. In both German versions, the shot opens with the bright fireball of the sun in front of which a silhouette of Napoleon standing on the deck of a sailing boat slowly moves into frame from left to right with a musical accompaniment of the opening of the *Marseillaise*. Having passed the sun, the image fades into sea waves. In the French version it continues for the full length of one strophe of the anthem: A sailor ties the boat to the shore, Napoleon leaves the ship as a Tricolore is waved in the background, while two officers come up and, kneeling down, greet him. The Emperor drops his coat, mounts a horse and rides off into the distance. The idea of having to listen (especially in their own cinemas) to the rousing tune of the French national anthem while watching a French soldier waving a clearly discernible French flag was apparently considered too much for German national feelings, so, following its Berlin opening, the shot was cut down from 40 to 12 seconds. In our video of *Old Vienna* it is missing altogether for reasons we were unable to identify. [Fig. 2a-b]

While the reduction of Napoleon's return to France may be regarded as a most obvious and blatant interference for ideological reasons, the handling of historic personalities suggests that authors and translators kept national sensitivities in mind when working on their scripts. Though figures such as Talleyrand and Wellington are minor characters (reduced almost to extras), references to them show interesting variations. In a sequence near the beginning of the film, Metternich secretly listens to conversations in the Diplomats' Chamber, as a speaker says: "Whenever there is an



Fig. 2a. In all versions



Napoleon's landing

Fig. 2b. Cut from German & English versions

important session, we are invited to a new party. Metternich wants to entertain us to keep us away from politics... He is a dangerous man!” In the French version, it is Talleyrand who makes this sharp analysis of the politician’s motives for organising festivities. In the English version, it is an Englishman. A similar example can be found in a scene in which servants in their quarter talk about Wellington. Only the English version contains the line “Wellington is a good soldier.” As this line does not appear in the German and French shooting scripts it must have been added in the course of production. *Old Vienna* also contains what might be regarded as a slight snipe against Napoleon. His name is first mentioned when Metternich is listening to the conversation in the Diplomats’ Chamber: With reference to Napoleon, an Englishman is heard saying diplomats are “better informed in London.” The French and German dialogues follow on with the statement: “Napoleon is in Elba, but he dreams of returning to Paris.” (“Il rêve de rentrer à Paris” - “Er träumt zurück zu gehen nach Paris”) By contrast, in the English version, the English speaker continues: “He is scheming to return to Paris ...”

On the other hand, *Der Kongreß tanzt* also operates with national stereotypes of which the scene in the servants’ quarter offers a further example when the men gossip about Metternich’s affairs with women. One of them tells: “That poor old Metternich pounced on her like an ox. ... And just when he thought he’d won her, what do you think she did? – She sang him the latest most popular song: ‘Why should I worry with Metternich, pray?! My cousin can kiss in a far better way!’” whereupon the rest break into loud laughter. In *Old Vienna*, the servants are shown as a relaxed, motley crowd lounging around a table, while in the German version, they are well groomed in their spotless uniforms; lined up on a bench against a wall they seem to laugh to order and doing so maintain a disciplined, upright body postures as if reacting to commands by an officer on a military exercise field. [Fig. 3a-b]



Fig. 3a. English version



Fig. 3b. German version

Servants gossiping and laughing

Though it certainly was part of the original French version, this scene is missing from the commercial video – not because of the ravages of time, but because a self-appointed moral guardian considered even the slightest reference to the love life of any of the film’s characters offensive.

Censorship, Moral Guardians and Personal Prejudices

At the time of its premieres in Vienna and Berlin, *Der Kongreß tanzt* was banned for exhibition to young people. The short intervals between the film's three submissions to the censor, together with the cuts eventually made, indicate Ufa's determination to get the film released for exhibition not just to adults, but to young people as well. All contentious scenes apparently involved Lilian Harvey in various stages of (from the perspective of 1931) undress. This is indicated by the cuts ordered by the censor before the film was finally given a "clean bill of health" allowing it to be shown to young people. The first two affect the sequence in the glove maker's shop: the image of the young foreign officer looking up Christel's dress as she climbs up a ladder as well as a shot of – in the words of the censor – "the salesgirl opening her legs widely" as she sits on top of it had to go. A short time later, when Christel gets dressed in the morning in anticipation of the Tsar's arrival, a shot of her putting on stockings while in her underwear was considered unsuitable for youngsters, but slipping into two other garments was not. Finally, the lifting of her petticoats was cut after she has been tied to a bench in order to be whipped. From the French video even the shots leading up to these "offensive bits" have disappeared. The foreign officer is allowed to address Christel with pleasant words, but when Pepi enters the shop (and in the German version admonishes the officer for having looked up in the direction of her position on the ladder) his character is simply dropped from the film. The next sequence opens with Christel already dressed, and the preparations for the whipping have been cut altogether, including the young man who is looking forward to the job of having to carry out the punishment.

Already familiar with *Der Kongreß tanzt*, we were convinced after seeing *Le Congrès s'amuse* for the first time that the French version was "sexier" than the German, but after closer examination of the new material had to admit that we had fallen victims to our own preconceived ideas. Automatically assuming that a "French" film is more erotic than a German, and were convinced we had seen shots and scenes that in reality were contained only in the German, but not in the French video. Of course, we realised there were gaps, but we did not associate these with the "sexy bits." Only when we began a detailed analysis did we become aware that far from being more sexually charged, all materials hinting even slightly at sexual aspects had been carefully removed from *Le Congrès s'amuse*, including a totally innocent, singing couple who lie under a bush in the grass while a jubilant Christel (in the film's most famous sequence) passes in the background singing "Das gibt's nur einmal..." [Figg. 4-9]

Numerous splices confirm that these cuts had not been made at the instigation of an official censor. The print used for the production of the French commercial video had at one time fallen into the hands of a local moral guardian who (like the priest in Giuseppe Tornatore's Oscar-winning *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) was set on protecting his fellow citizens from the corrupting images of intimate approaches and relations between human beings of different sexes.

Our initial prejudice that a French version was more sexually charged than its German or English counterparts is not the only example of the danger of prejudices clouding our interpretation of the different versions. Looking at visual references and variations in our first study of the film, we noted the example of an unusually large shadow of a hat on the wall as Bibikoff gives Uralsky his instructions of how to behave when impersonating Alexander during the afternoon tea he is about to have with

Christel and then with the Young Countess. We suggested that the shadow of Napoleon's hat in *Le Congrès s'amuse* had been replaced by that of a Prussian helmet in *Der Kongreß tanzt*. After consulting the script and seeing a qualitatively superior video, we've realised that this is not the case, that the shadow seen in both versions is simply just that – the shadow of the hat worn by Uralsky, the form of which changes slightly as he moves while responding to Bibikoff's orders. What we had seen was yet another

Cut by a French moral guardian:



Fig. 4. Christel on ladder



Fig. 5. An officer looking up her skirt



Fig. 6. Getting dressed



Fig. 7. About to be whipped



Fig. 8. A pile of fighting sales girls



Fig. 9. A couple relaxing in the grass

figment of our (respective *French* and *German*) imagination. Researchers, like any other spectator, also carry a cultural baggage that is not free from national expectations and/or prejudices. Our mistake is a clear example of the extent to which a person's cultural background can colour the reading of film.

Actors and Their Contributions

In an interview he gave to a reporter of the German trade paper *Film-Kurier* when studio work on *Der Kongreß tanzt* was about to come to an end in August, 1931, Eric Charell insisted that the fundamental differences between the German, French, and English versions are to be found in the film's atmosphere and acting.⁴⁵ To create an atmosphere that would appeal to national tastes and expectations, Pommer and Charell deliberately chose actors who in their estimation would be popular with the audiences the different versions aimed to capture. Dressed in a light costume, the popular Austrian actor Paul Hörbiger with his warm, gentle voice, kind face and friendly gestures conveys an atmosphere of good humouredness and sympathy in the German version (and subsequently became the epitome of the Viennese *Heurigensänger*). Tarquini d'Or, by contrast, though he moves in the same way as Hörbiger and uses similar gestures, is more serious, and in his dark outfit refers in the French and English versions to the tradition of the French *chansonnier*. As for the role of Metternich, French actor Pierre Magnier⁴⁶ in *Le Congrès s'amuse* brings to the part of the older statesman the laidback performance of a professional sure of his charm with persons of the opposite sex. A *connoisseur* in every sense of the word, his confident simplicity combined with his obvious pleasure for indulging in the good things in life – he is blissfully enjoying a late breakfast in bed – stands in sharp contrast with Conrad Veidt's far younger, more cynical Metternich in the German and English versions. [Figg. 10a-b]

However, it is in the character of the Tsar's adjutant Bibikoff that the most pronounced differences occur, in the physical appearance of the actors as well as in their interpretation of the role. Otto Wallburg's Bibikoff in the German version is all fun and smiles. An Oliver Hardy-like figure, he draws on his considerable size for comical



Fig. 10a. Pierre Magnier



Fig. 10b. Conrad Veidt

Metternich enjoys breakfast in bed



Bibikoff worried and watching over Uralsky's "tête-à-tête" with Christel

Fig. 11a. Otto Wallburg



Fig. 11b. Armand Bernard



Fig. 12a. Otto Wallburg



Fig. 12b. Armand Bernard

Peeping Tom

effects. Always surrounded by an air of conviviality, he is far more sympathetic towards Christel as she waits for the Tsar, than his French and British counterparts. As an individual, he is much closer to the Tsar than they are – a closeness verging on familiarity. In their outer appearance the French and English Bibikoffs, Armand Bernard and Gibb McLaughlin are the opposite of Wallburg. Their elongated silhouettes and peculiar diction give them a distinction not found in the German actor's performance.

It is open to debate whether the scene showing Bibikoff peeping through the keyhole plays on national stereotypes (i.e. the fat German versus the tall and thin British character) or not. [Fig. 11a-b. 12a-b] However, there is ample evidence that careful consideration on the part of both, the production team and the performing actors was given to both the representation of national characteristics and the specificity of each language. Indeed, the way the actors make use of the specificity of each language to obtain the best effect possible is at times remarkable. For example, the humorous declination of the present tense of the verb *être* in the French exchange between Metternich and Bibikoff (as the latter presents the Austrian politician with an order of merit) is extremely effective when Armand Bernard emphatically repeats Metternich's sour (he does not welcome the gesture) expression of gratitude "Je suis charmé" in the form of

“Excellence, vous êtes charmé, je suis charmé, nous sommes charmés, tout le monde est charmé.” The comical repetitive effect is rendered differently in English, as the same linguistic device cannot be used. Making the most of his peculiar, upper-class mannerisms, Scottish actor Gibb McLaughlin repeats: “Your Excellency is delighted, His Majesty will be delighted. In fact, everyone will be delighted.” Repetitions, but with minute variations in order to obtain the maximum effect in each language, are often used in the film to provoke laughter and such attention to small details is extremely effective.

At this point, it might be worth noting that particularly in productions of the scale of *Der Kongreß tanzt* not every actor is able to contribute what he would consider his best, but that circumstances and pressures beyond his control can seriously affect a performance. In his memoirs, Carl-Heinz Schroth, who plays Pepi in the German version (and is clearly the weakest of three weak performers in a not particularly rewarding role), reports how, as a newcomer to film, he had been hired for very little money on the basis of tests for a different picture. Believing being cast was his big chance, and overawed by the assembly of stars, he did not dare put up any resistance to Eric Charell who – a novice himself in the medium – was not courageous enough to give instructions to his stars, but instead had decided to demonstrate his authority by directing inexperienced actors like Schroth in ways totally unsuited for the screen. His confidence was shattered even further when on one occasion he overheard producer Erich Pommer as he made inquiries about him, and with a look expressing utter disdain, said: “That man can’t be any good. He is much too cheap.” According to Schroth, the experience not only affected his performance, it also put an end to his film-aspirations for a very long time.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Time-consuming – yet thoroughly enjoyable – textual analysis has taught us that research into MLVs not only requires careful handling of the material under investigation but also extreme attention to detail. When analysing appearance and production conditions of films produced at the beginning of the sound film era, data has to be handled with great care when it comes to making generalisations and identifying trends as far as MLVs are concerned. We are talking about practices determined by their historical context, the cultural background and the economic climate of the time, and, perhaps most importantly, by the production background, which includes having to pay attention to individual/specific circumstances and the personalities of individual participants. However tempting (and useful) interpretations may be, they should – at best – be presented as mere suggestions. Arguably, the same goes for generalisations. The assumption that in multiple language versions “crowds and street scenes were generally presented in long shot and used for all versions”⁴⁸ has been widely accepted. Close analysis of one of the most popular films of the 1930s shows otherwise. The standardisation of lavishly expensive productions made to appeal to a wide audience should not be over-emphasised.

The market such productions were aimed at was certainly wide but it was not homogeneous. In our previous studies, we stated that the film’s cross-over appeal was rooted mainly in the genre, and that it was difficult to conclude that *Der Kongreß tanzt* was

particularly German, *Le Congrès s’amuse* particularly French or *Old Vienna* particularly British. During the work in Gradisca there has been much talk of over-determination. However, rather than being over-determined by national – and other – considerations, the different versions seemed not determined enough: A close textual analysis of the prints we have suggests that the film did not have enough determinants as far as national agencies were concerned. Whether intentional or not, differences and subtle adjustments are to be attributed to the various individuals involved in the production, interpretation and, as the cuts show, exhibition of the films. Ultimately, MLVs are determined – and have much to gain by being studied – as much from below as from above.

- * Special thanks are due to all those who on this or on the two previous occasions assisted us by providing materials without which we could not have undertaken this project: Hans-Michael Bock, Guy Borlée, Mathilde Gotthardt, Renate Göthe, Kevin Gough-Yates, Hannelore Grusser, Barbara Schütz, and Lydia Wiehring von Wendrin. We also extend our gratitude to the excellent team of the MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School for their constant support throughout our stay in Gradisca d’Isonzo.
- 1 Published as “Ufa, Frankreich und Versionen,” in Sybille M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgemuth (eds.), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris! Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text + kritik/CineGraph, 1996), pp. 141-154.
- 2 Published as “*Der Kongreß tanzt: Ufa’s Blockbuster Filmoperette for the World Market*,” in Bill Marshall, Robyn Stilwell (eds.), *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond* (Exeter-Portland: Intellect, 2000), pp. 89-97.
- 3 The German shooting script is in the Library of the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg, the French shooting script in the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.
- 4 Minutes of Ufa’s Board of Directors (December 12, 1929).
- 5 Ufa-minutes (January 27, 1930).
- 6 Ufa-minutes (March 1, 1930).
- 7 Ufa-minutes (April 9, 1930).
- 8 Ufa-minutes (January 23, 1931).
- 9 Ufa-minutes (January 4, 1929).
- 10 Ufa-minutes (October 2, 1930).
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Ufa-minutes (April 16, 1930) and (July 1, 1930).
- 13 Ufa-minutes (September 5, 1930).
- 14 Ufa-minutes (December 31, 1930).
- 15 Cf. Ufa-minutes (November 7, 1930), (November 25, 1930) and (January 27, 1931).
- 16 Ufa-minutes (January 20, 1931).
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Discussion paper attached to Ufa-minutes (January 22, 1932).
- 19 “Pommer verläßt Ufa,” *Lichtbild-Bühne* (May 19, 1930).
- 20 Ufa-minutes (January 6, 1930).
- 21 Ufa-minutes (February 26, 1930).
- 22 Ufa-minutes (May 23, 1930).
- 23 Ufa-minutes (July 1, 1930).

- 24 Ufa-minutes (October 7, 1930).
- 25 Ufa-minutes (January 13, 1931).
- 26 Ufa-minutes (March 13, 1931).
- 27 Ufa-minutes (April 24, 1931). Stern received 16.000 RM.
- 28 Review in *The Times* (April 9, 1931).
- 29 Müller's original contract with Ufa actually precedes the opening of *Im weißen Rössl* by more than a month.
- 30 Ufa-minutes (May 27, 1931).
- 31 Shooting script, p. 168, Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen "Konrad Wolf," Potsdam-Babelsberg.
- 32 Cf. Ufa-minutes (September 17, 1931), (September 22, 1931) and (September 25, 1931).
- 33 On October 21, 1931, the Board approves the following strategy plan for the launch and exploitation of the film:
Der Kongreß tanzt opens October 23 at Ufa-Palast am Zoo (2267 seats, Berlin's largest cinema) where it is to run as long as it makes money. From appr. November 21 onwards it will be moved for a one-week exclusive run to the Kammer-Lichtspiele. (Actual run in the Ufa-Palast: 34 days, until November 25). From appr. November 27 until December 3, in addition to its extended run in the Kammerspiele, it will be shown in 7 Ufa cinemas and 20 non-Ufa first-run cinemas. The following week it will continue in the Kammerspiele as well as in 2 Ufa-cinemas, 4 first-run cinemas and 11 non-Ufa secondary cinemas ("Zweitaufführungstheater"). Afterwards it moves into the non-Ufa secondary cinemas, unless its run has reached December 11, in which case the film will be withheld until December 24 so that all non-Ufa cinemas will be able to show it from December 25 onwards.
- 34 Ufa-minutes (December 4, 1931).
- 35 German censorship decisions: <http://www.deutsches-filminstitut.de/filme/fo01564.htm#zensur>. Information in the trade press of the time (and subsequently reprinted in other sources) that the film was open to young people from the start is incorrect. The first two versions submitted to the censor were classified as "adults only."
- 36 NS-legislation passed earlier that year required a reassessment of all older films in circulation. Two years later, the film is one of five on a list banned on October 1, 1937 on the grounds of being an affront to national socialist sensitivities and a threat to public order.
- 37 According to *Paimann's Filmlisten* (1931, p. 111) the print shown in Vienna was 2790 m. long.
- 38 A print of this – the original English – version has not been available to us for analysis. Held by the Library of Congress in form of a 16 mm print, we have only been able to see it once when it was shown at the 2004 Cinema Ritrovato in Bologna. It appeared to use the same materials as *Old Vienna*. The print was in a fairly good condition. Based on its running time, it is approximately 100 meters short of its original length.
- 39 Herbert Ihering, "Meereswogen, Napoleons Schiff und Gestalt als Schatten, Pferd, Fahne, gezückter Degen," *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (October 24, 1931).
- 40 "Das Meer. Man sieht im Nebel ein Schiff, auf dem die Silhouette Napoleons erkennbar ist." *Censorship Card B 30283*.
- 41 Cf. Ufa-minutes (December 4, 1931).
- 42 Biographical information from: Ursula Hardt, *From Caligari to California - Erich Pommer's Life in the International Film Wars* (Providence-Oxford: Berghahn, 1996), p. 122, p. 166.
- 43 Other members of the creative team who had also worked on *Der Kongreß tanzt* include cameraman Carl Hoffmann and set designers Robert Herlth and Walter Röhrig.
- 44 Censorship card B 30283.

- 45 Charlott Serda, "Zum ersten Mal Tonfilmregie," *Film-Kurier* (August 15, 1931).
- 46 Previously, he had already played the part of "the seducer" in *La Roue* (1922, Abel Gance) and in *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1923, Augusto Genina).
- 47 Carl-Heinz Schroth, *Keine Angst vor schlechten Zeiten* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1992), pp. 122-126.
- 48 Ginette Vincendeau, "Hollywood Babel," *Screen*, Vol. 39, no. 2 (Spring 1988), p. 35.

LE MÉPRIS ET SES VERSIONS MULTIPLES.

LE DOUBLAGE JUSQU'À L'ABSURDE.

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Les versions multiples, sont au départ, pour les historiens du cinéma, les versions réalisées en plusieurs langues au moment du passage au parlant. La plupart de ces films appartiennent à cette période de transition entre cinéma muet et cinéma parlant. L'expression désigne des pratiques techniques assez diversifiées, il peut concerner un même scénario mis en scène et enregistré par un ou plusieurs réalisateurs, en deux ou plusieurs langues, avec les mêmes acteurs, ou bien avec des acteurs appartenant à plusieurs nationalités différentes. L'exemple le plus connu est celui de *Die Dreigroschenoper / L'Opéra de quat' sous* (1930/31, Georg Wilhelm Pabst) dans sa version allemande et dans sa version française avec Albert Préjean dans le rôle de Mackie. Les Archives françaises du film (AFF) possèdent à Bois d'Arcy une version française de *M le maudit* (*M. Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*, 1930/31, Fritz Lang) qui n'a pas encore été étudiée. Il existe beaucoup d'autres titres en plusieurs versions nationales dans les collections des cinémathèques européennes qui mériteraient une étude systématique.

La version multiple se distingue du "remake," nouvelle version du même scénario ou du même roman, par exemple *La Femme et le pantin*, roman de Pierre Louys, et ses versions successives par Jacques de Baroncelli, Josef von Sternberg, Julien Duvivier et Luis Buñuel. La version de Baroncelli est elle-même multiple dans un autre sens, car elle possède une version française et une version internationale, avec des plans différents tirés de prises différentes.

Le développement de la pratique de la post-synchronisation selon des pratiques nationales très différentes les unes des autres a provoqué la généralisation des versions doublées, autre variante de la version multiple. La différence majeure entre la version multiple et le remake concerne le temps et l'espace. La version multiple est contemporaine du film source alors que le remake lui est postérieur. Le remake d'*À bout de souffle* (1960, Jean-Luc Godard) a été réalisé aux États-Unis – *Breathless* (1983, Jim Mc Bride) – avec Richard Gere dans le rôle initialement tenu par Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Le Mépris (1963) est le cinquième long métrage réalisé par Jean-Luc Godard et le film est célèbre pour avoir rencontré des gros problèmes lors de sa post-production. Un conflit violent avait alors opposé Godard à ses deux co-producteurs, l'italien Carlo Ponti et l'américain Joseph E. Levine (Joe Levine).

Le Mépris est d'abord l'adaptation, par Godard, d'un roman à succès d'Alberto Moravia, *Il disprezzo*, paru chez Bompiani en 1954 et traduit en français en 1955. Godard, dans ce cas n'a pas du tout improvisé, comme il le fera partiellement en adaptant à sa manière pour *Bande à part* (1964) ou *Pierrot le fou* (1965), deux romans policiers. Pour *Le Mépris*, on a même pu retrouver cinq versions successives du scénario, correspondant à des versions successives développées par Godard, ce qui est évidem-

ment une pratique courante, dans le processus de production de l'époque, mais un peu plus rare dans les habitudes du réalisateur.

Le tournage a eu lieu du 28 avril au 7 juin 1963, principalement à Rome, puis à Capri. Le premier montage est terminé fin août, le film est alors sélectionné pour le festival de Venise. Mais Carlo Ponti et plus encore Joe Levine s'y opposent brutalement et exigent de Godard des scènes supplémentaires, essentiellement des scènes plus "sexys." Cette exigence provient de la présence de la star française Brigitte Bardot dont le cachet correspondait à la moitié du budget du film (250 millions de francs 1963). Carlo Ponti et Joe Levine exigeaient une scène d'amour initiale entre les deux époux, une scène où Bardot (Camille) et Jack Palance (Prokosh) se retrouvaient dans une chambre de la villa de Capri et où Palance regardait Bardot remettre ses vêtements, et enfin des plans de nus, de style "calendrier pour hommes seuls," que Godard intégrera dans la séquence centrale. Ces plans ont d'ailleurs été tournés en septembre comme en témoignent les arbres de la forêt en automne, lorsque l'on voit courir Camille.

Ce conflit va durer plusieurs semaines, pendant les mois de septembre et d'octobre 1963. Godard accepte d'écrire la séquence initiale, mais c'est son assistant Alain Levent qui la tourne en studio à Paris. Le nouveau montage est distribué à partir du 20 décembre 1963, avec 2798 mètres et 105 minutes. Ponti refuse cette version française et faire doubler le film en Italie. Une nouvelle version de 82 minutes sort avec un succès moyen comme d'ailleurs en France. A Paris, le film totalise 234.374 entrées en exclusivité et 143.704 dans les grandes villes de province. C'est la moitié moins de ce que fait Brigitte Bardot avec Roger Vadim à l'époque, pour *Le Repos du guerrier* (1962, Roger Vadim), par exemple.

Quelques éléments sur l'adaptation du roman de Moravia par Godard. La durée du récit dans le roman s'étend sur deux ans. Godard la ramène à deux jours. Il y a une quantité importante de personnages chez Moravia. Godard ne sélectionne que cinq personnages principaux. Chez Moravia, le romancier ne rencontre le réalisateur qu'après plus du tiers du récit. Il a d'abord affaire à d'autres réalisateurs. Godard inverse les prises de position du réalisateur et du producteur quant à la fidélité envers le texte homérique. Chez Moravia les discussions portent sur le scénario avant tournage et chez Godard, il s'agit de remonter un film déjà tourné en lui ajoutant des séquences supplémentaires (ce qui arrivera à son propre film!).

La modification fondamentale concerne la nationalité des protagonistes. Dans le roman d'Alberto Moravia, le narrateur est un scénariste italien nommé Riccardo Molteni, sa femme se prénomme Emilia, le producteur s'appelle Battista, le réalisateur allemand Rheingold. Il n'y a évidemment pas de personnage d'interprète dans le roman initial puisque toutes l'action se déroule en Italie et que le réalisateur allemand parle italien.

Godard renomme les personnages Paul, Camille, Jeremy Prokosh qui, de producteur italien devient américain. Rheingold va prendre le nom de son interprète, Fritz Lang. Et la traductrice, personnage inventé par Godard, est nommée Francesca Vanini.

Dans le film, il y a ceux qui sont polyglottes et ceux qui ne parlent que leur propre langue. Il y a d'un côté Lang et Francesca qui parlent français, allemand, italien et anglais, Camille et Prokosh qui ne parlent que leur langue maternelle (le français pour l'une et l'anglais pour l'autre). Paul est entre les deux, mais il ne parle pas vraiment anglais, s'il semble le comprendre.

Godard a ajouté des références culturelles à Dante, Hölderlin, mais en a supprimé

d'autres, nombreuses chez Moravia (Petrarca, Leopardi, Joyce, O'Neill); il a plus encore ajouté des multiples références cinématographiques; Lang bien sûr, mais aussi Griffith, Chaplin, *M le Maudit*, *Rancho Notorious* (1952, Fritz Lang) et des affiches de films, etc.

Dans la version distribuée en Italie, remontée et doublée par Carlo Ponti, tous les personnages parlent en italien. Prokosh et Lang conservent leur nom propre mais s'expriment en italien. Paul devient Paolo Molteni et Camille redevient Emilia, prénom que lui avait donné Moravia. La traductrice ne sert évidemment plus à rien. Elle devient une secrétaire assistante qui paraphrase, commente ou donne son avis, comme une seconde conscience du producteur américain. Son statut narratif devient nettement plus incertain.

Mais la modification majeure concerne la musique. Celle de Georges Delerue est remplacée par une partition de Piero Piccioni. La grave musique romantique d'un disciple de Brahms, avec un grand orchestre de cordes, devient une musique moderne assez ironique, interprétée à la guitare et à l'orgue électrique. Piero Piccioni collabore régulièrement à l'époque avec Marco Ferreri.

Que produit le conflit Ponti/Levine/Godard en terme de montage? Il faut avouer qu'il n'est pas simple de s'y retrouver.

Il est certain que Godard a ajouté à son premier montage de septembre la séquence prologue, la séquence centrale (10 plans en montage courts avec la voix off de Paul et Camille) et deux séries de montages courts dans le jardin de la villa romaine de Prokosch.

La version italienne de Ponti bouleverse le montage final. Il a inversé l'ordre des séquences 15 (la station service) et 16 la terrasse de la villa de Capri et les plans de fin de tournage.¹ Dans la version italienne, le film se termine par l'accident et par un arrêt sur image sur les corps de Camille et Prokosch. Vingt trois minutes du montage initial ont été coupées puisque le film ne dure plus que 82 minutes.

Si l'on récapitule, on peut distinguer et identifier 6 ou 7 versions, sous réserve d'identifications ultérieures et d'un travail complémentaire sur la version distribuée aux États-Unis par Joe Levine.

- Version 1, le premier montage de Godard avant Venise (sans prologue ni montage court). Il existe une version déposée à la Cinémathèque suisse qui comprend un générique écrit, sans voix off. Celle-ci serait une version 1 bis.

- Version 2, la version distribuée le 27 décembre 1963 en salles, avec le prologue, les montages courts et le montage central.

- Version 3, celle de la réédition par Forum distribution en 1981, à peu près identique, à la différence du tirage nettement plus sombre.

- Versions 4 et 5 correspondants à des passages télévisés, des éditions vidéo ou DVD ultérieures; ces versions varient par le tirage couleur, le format et par la présence ou l'absence des montages courts et du montage central.

- Version 6, la version italienne remontée et doublée par Ponti.

- Version 7, la version américaine doublée par Levine.

La version la plus complète semble être la version distribuée par Cocinor le 27 décembre 1963. Mais rappelons que c'est une version qui résulte d'un compromis entre le réalisateur et les producteurs. Elle comprend le prologue d'une durée de 3 minutes et 7 secondes, le premier montage court (plans 63 à 68, six secondes), le second montage

court (plans 73 à 77, sept secondes) soit 11 images flashes au total, le montage discontinu de la scène centrale (plans 110 à 119, dix plans au centre de la séquence 8, durée une minute 40 secondes).²

La version Ponti (version 6) est raccourcie de 23 minutes. Le doublage a été fait par la firme CDC (“Doppiaggio eseguito con la CDC”). Il ne comprend ni le prologue, ni le second montage court ni le montage de la séquence centrale. Le second montage court a été remplacé par la voix intérieure d’Emilie (évidemment en italien). Les deux séquences finales ont été inversées et de nombreux plans ont été raccourcis.

Plus encore, tout a été postsynchronisé: les sons d’ambiance, les bruits de pas, les sons de moteurs d’automobiles et de bateaux, les clapotis de la mer et même les conversations ou les ordres en italiens lors des séquences de tournage (que Godard avait enregistré en son direct).

Il est alors évident que la version italienne doublée (et sans doute également la version américaine) dénature totalement l’œuvre originale dont le principe même repose sur le multi-linguisme et sur la maîtrise ou la non maîtrise des quatre langues parlées par les personnages dans le film.

La substitution d’une musique ironique et guillerette à la musique grave et romantique de Georges Delerue détruit le ton dramatique du film et son caractère de liturgie sacrée.

La postsynchronisation et le remplacement systématique des “sons directs naturels” par des sons doublés en auditorium et d’un niveau d’intensité beaucoup plus faible transforme la bande sonore du film de Godard en bande sonore académique, respectant les conventions du réalisme du cinéma standard. C’est particulièrement spectaculaire en ce qui concernent les voix des acteurs italiens qui doublent les cinq acteurs choisis par Godard. La voix de l’acteur italien qui double Jack Palance est une voix emphatique d’acteur de péplum populaire. Il en est de même pour la voix italienne que l’on a attribuée à Fritz Lang.

Cette version multiple est donc une abominable défiguration. Il est consternant qu’elle soit encore diffusée par les chaînes de télévision et éditée en cassette VHS ou DVD. Plus que jamais, doubler c’est ici trahir.

1 Nous citons ici les numéros de séquence d’après notre découpage publié dans la collection “Synopsis” en 1989. Michel Marie, *Le Mépris: J.L. Godard* (Paris: Nathan, 1989).

2 *Ibid.*

PRISE, REPRISE, MEPRISE. DU TMOIGNAGE EN CINEMA DIRECT A LA CONSTITUTION D'UNE MEMOIRE SOCIALE

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Il s'agit ici de réfléchir sur la fonction des "versions multiples" d'un même travail sur la mémoire sociale à partir de trois films français. Le premier, originel, date de 1968. Intitulé *La Reprise du travail aux usines Wonder*, c'est un reportage tourné en direct par Pierre Bonneau et Jacques Willemont en juin 1968. Près de trente ans plus tard, en 1996, *La Reprise*, un film documentaire de plus de 3 heures, est réalisé par Hervé Le Roux et Richard Copans en partant des images recueillies alors. Sa diffusion au cinéma est suivie d'un montage documentaire pour la télévision, d'une durée de près d'une heure et quarante-deux minutes, intitulé *Paroles ouvrières, paroles de Wonder*, de Richard Copans, à partir des interviews du précédent film, pour Arte en 1996. Hervé Le Roux a refusé de s'y associer, en considérant que l'esprit de son film n'était pas respecté, et son sens dévoyé, d'où mon terme de "méprise". Pour ces deux derniers films on hésite entre le terme "remake" et celui de "versions multiples", et l'on pourrait poser la question du média de diffusion.

1. Commençons par la "première prise": celle du cinéma-réalité, en 1968, quand deux étudiants de l'IDHEC, école de cinéma d'alors, au beau milieu de ce qu'on appelle les "événements" de mai, veulent aller rendre compte en direct de la grève dans une usine de Saint-Ouen qui fabrique des piles de marque "Wonder" et tournent une bande de 9 minutes à laquelle ils rajoutent au début un commentaire en voix off, indiquant la date (le 10 juin) et le changement de situation: partis pour filmer la grève, les deux étudiants trouvent "la reprise du travail". Ils saisissent dès le début une courte scène, devant le portail d'entrée où, après les semaines de lutte, une jeune ouvrière crie sa colère et son dégoût: elle n'a rien gagné, elle ne rentrera pas. Autour d'elle, plusieurs personnes s'affrontent, et tentent de la convaincre (deux élus CGT de l'union locale, un homme à cravate, un jeune lycéen gauchiste, un barbu...).

Un interview des deux réalisateurs amateurs, Bonneau et Willemont, réalisé pour le film *La Reprise*, suscité en 1996 par cette bande devenue "mythique", marque bien et sa perspective de "départ", et les raisons de son "succès". C'est le produit d'un véritable projet et d'une série de hasards, à replacer à la fois dans un double contexte socio-politique et culturel.

Le mouvement de mai 68 en France: d'abord une révolte étudiante, en liaison avec le mouvement anti-guerre du Vietnam et de l'Internationale situationniste, vite relayée par la grève ouvrière, reprise ensuite en main par les syndicats, peu favorables au développement d'un mouvement mal contrôlé, puis par le politique avec des élections en juin qui maintiennent le pouvoir à droite. Le 13 mai 1968 constitue la date charnière où se réalise la jonction des milieux syndicaux ouvriers et universitaires, lors d'une mani-

festation au lendemain de laquelle éclate l'incendie social. Les occupations d'usines se multiplient et la grève dans les services publics est déclenchée le 17 mai; le 21, l'économie française est quasi paralysée; même la Bourse est en grève! Des commissions sont constituées pour rédiger des cahiers de revendications, faire circuler des revues, des pétitions, des motions, rechercher une autre organisation du travail. Un dialogue forcé s'instaure rue de Grenelle, au Ministère des Affaires sociales, et donne lieu à un "projet de protocole d'accord" (25 mai 1968), qu'aucune organisation syndicale ne signe avant d'en donner connaissance à la base. Devant les résistances des grandes entreprises, dont les travailleurs refusent de cesser la grève, le projet ne sera jamais signé; il entérine néanmoins sur de nombreux points un accord-cadre patronat/syndicats ouvriers et sera suivi d'innombrables accords particuliers et de conventions collectives nombreuses, après la fin des grèves (début juin).

Mais en même temps, le contexte culturel est particulier: les étudiants et les cinéastes cherchent à témoigner du mouvement sous de formes variées, en particulier par des affiches et des "ciné-tracts", tournés sur le vif, collectivement, sans nom d'auteur (mais avec beaucoup de gens déjà connus, comme Chris Marker et Jean-Luc Godard), et devant être utilisés comme "armes politiques", comme continueront à le faire les groupes Mevdevkine après la bagarre, avec des films comme *Classes de lutte* (1969, Besançon Medvedkin Group). On peut mettre en relation ces pratiques avec le cinéma militant, fort ancien, et qui en 68 et dans les quelques années qui suivent manifeste un regain de vitalité, et avec le cinéma direct, développé depuis le début des années soixante grâce à l'allègement du matériel de tournage (pourtant les deux réalisateurs rappellent que dans leur cas, en tant qu'élèves de l'IDHEC, école de cinéma d'alors, ils ne disposent encore que de vieilles caméras assez lourdes, et d'un Nagra pour l'enregistrement).

La réussite de ce travail, non commercial, saluée par la critique militante de l'époque, en fera une bande mythique, que certains tenteront de récupérer, comme le marque un autre entretien avec le responsable de la bande-son, dans le film de 1996. Il faut souligner l'intérêt des angles de prise de vue, la durée des plans, qui donnent l'allure de "cinéma-vérité": *La Reprise du travail* peut être vue comme un témoignage sur la tension entre la "base" ouvrière et les responsables syndicaux et politiques au moment des grèves de 1968, mais aussi sur les hiérarchies dans le monde de l'usine et sur les conditions de travail peu ragoûtantes. Du moins y a-t-il une usine et du travail, si sale et si dur soit-il. D'autre part, la beauté, la vivacité, l'accent populaire ("parigot") de l'ouvrière (si convaincante qu'on peut se demander si elle ne "joue" pas un rôle) donnent au "document" une dimension affective dont l'effet se fera encore sentir longtemps après.

2. Cette jeune femme, justement, suscite une "reprise", titre du film qu'Hervé le Roux filme en 1995 et sort en 1996. Le début du film repart d'une image provenant de la bande de juin 68, dont le statut a changé: il s'agit d'une "photo", d'un photogramme figé dans des journaux de cinéma, présenté sous forme de brefs plans fixes séparés par des noirs et accompagnés d'un commentaire off: non plus une image actuelle, mais une icône, presque un fantôme, qui exige le "devoir de mémoire".

Au début, c'est une photo, dans une revue de cinéma. Un photogramme. L'image d'une femme qui crie. Et puis un titre, La Reprise du travail aux usines Wonder. Cette femme, reprise du travail, comme on dit "repris de justice", et ces usines nommées Wonder... Wonder, Wonderland? Alice à l'usine, l'Usine en Pays des Merveilles. Le film a été tourné par

des étudiants de l'IDHEC le 10 juin 1968, à Saint-Ouen. On y voit des ouvrières qui reprennent le travail après trois semaines de grève. Et cette femme. Qui reste là. Et qui crie. Elle dit qu'elle rentrera pas, qu'elle y foutra plus les pieds dans cette tôle... Les années ont passé. L'usine est fermée. Mais je n'arrive pas à oublier le visage de cette femme. J'ai décidé de la retrouver. Parce qu'elle n'a eu droit qu'à une prise. Et que je lui en dois une deuxième.

On voit ici combien le projet est “subjectif” : “je”, c’est à dire l’auteur, ou l’équipe du film, va essayer de retrouver la jeune femme qui refuse absolument de rentrer après le mouvement de grève et les négociations entre syndicats et patronat. Pour “redonner sa chance” à cette jeune femme, “je” va engager une recherche de “témoins”, de manière à identifier les gens qui sont sur la pellicule, en montrant l’ancien film à des travailleurs de l’époque : syndicalistes, ouvriers, ouvrières, gauchistes venus soutenir les grévistes récalcitrants, etc. Tout au long du film se développe une quête : la structure de *La Reprise* est celle d’une recherche : les réalisateurs retournent, dans la mesure du possible, sur les lieux de l’usine disparue, et par une assez longue enquête, filment longuement les réactions des uns et des autres, dans leurs nouveaux lieux de vie. Reliés par la voix off qui précise les modalités de la quête, et par quelques plans sur les lieux où ils se passent, les interviews (une vingtaine, en moyenne de 10 minutes) sont donnés les uns après les autres, dans leur durée, et si des coupes ont été faites, elles sont marquée par des noirs. Chaque interview dure au moins dix minutes, et souvent plus (voir Yvette, la cégétiste, qui parle pendant 16 minutes) : il s’agit de laisser à chacun (chacune) le temps du “retour de mémoire”, avec ses hésitations ses méandres, ses cheminements, même si, pour aider à la parole l’interviewer pose des questions. Le reportage originel sert donc comme indice de départ pour tenter de découvrir, à partir, et davantage encore, au-delà des images, non seulement l’héroïne de l’histoire (qu’on n’a pas retrouvée), mais aussi la manière dont les ouvrières et les protestataires ont vécu la situation en 1968, comment ils ont vu les causes et les conséquences de la grève, comme celle de la reprise du travail, trente ans plus tôt. Mais pour eux, leur histoire ne s’arrête pas en 1968 et ils racontent aussi la disparition de l’usine, cédée à un “repreneur”, Bernard Tapie, en 1984, et liquidée.

La fin du film marque l’échec de la quête de la jeune femme qui reste une image-fantasma, avec un retour sur le photogramme de départ, suivi par un noir final. Mais en même temps la succession d’entretien des anciens travailleurs a permis à la fois de témoigner sur “ce qu’il sont devenus”, et donc des transformations sociales, et de construire une “image-mémoire” de la classe ouvrière, elle aussi disparue dans le noir final, puisque comme beaucoup d’industries, les usines Wonder ont sombré. Ici, on assiste à la constitution d’une mémoire orale depuis le témoignage visuel “objectif” que voulait être la bande de cinéma-direct. Plus de jeune femme, mais plus non plus de travail ni d’usine : le retour des cinéastes de 1996, accompagnés de ceux de 1968, sur les lieux morts, marquent cruellement la “désindustrialisation de la banlieue parisienne”. Seuls restent les cafés. Le projet n’est plus de “montrer” ce qui n’existe plus, mais de chercher ce qui témoigne encore d’un monde évanoui.

Le premier film voulait montrer et finalement autocommémorer le mouvement de mai, le second cherche et ne trouve qu’une mémoire en cours de constitution, le troisième expose et explique : c’est en effet d’un point de vue très différent que repart la deuxième version du film de 1996, *Paroles ouvrières, paroles de Wonder*, remontée par le co-réalisateur et producteur Richard Copans pour la case documentaire “Grand Format” sur Arte, malgré le refus d’Hervé Le Roux. La fonction cette fois se veut beau-

coup plus “pédagogique”: il s’agit de “retracer l’histoire” de cette usine de Saint-Ouen que fut la maison Wonder. Le sujet n’est plus la fille mais la classe ouvrière.

La présentation du documentaire faite par Arte en témoigne:

En recueillant les propos des anciens de chez Wonder, ce film donne la parole à une classe ouvrière bien réelle, confrontée à de bien réelles conditions de travail. Il s’agit ici de reconstituer une mémoire à partir d’un moment fort, la grève de mai/juin 1968, qui a cristallisé les contradictions dans l’usine et constitué un tournant. Les témoignages rappellent l’amorce de la modernisation de l’entreprise qui se terminera par un fiasco au milieu des années 80, après la reprise et la liquidation de Wonder par Bernard Tapie. Strate par strate, la vérité de l’usine apparaît en même temps que l’histoire de la condition ouvrière durant trois décennies.

La version est beaucoup plus courte (1h 42 min), son point de départ et son ton très différents: le film commence par une série d’images montrant la décrépitude des lieux, l’usine transformée en dépôt pour un “antiquaire”, l’ancienne porte trouée, rouillée, le paysage urbain déstructuré. Surtout, le mode de présentation des interviews tournés pour le film est fondamentalement différent: le montage ici devient l’essentiel, et joue sur la fragmentation et la sérialisation des entretiens. La succession de ces fragments est mise en batterie autour d’un thème, par exemple celui des “conditions de travail” des femmes en usine: ainsi les vingt-cinq premières minutes permettent de présenter plusieurs ouvrières, plus ou moins conscientes de leur sort (et parfois contentes de lui, comme la dame en rose au café), des militantes, comme Yvette, la cégétiste, ou comme Marie-Thérèse, “la sœur ouvrière”, voire des chefs d’ateliers, comme la maigre Marguerite, respectueuse des patrons mais furieuse contre le “repreneur” Tapie.

En même temps qu’une mémoire s’amorce, sans qu’on en suive ni le développement dans le temps, s’esquisse une histoire de la “désindustrialisation” (liquidation de l’usine en 1985). La dimension didactique, le refus de la subjectivité et de la sensualité sensibles dans *La Reprise*, laissent en partie de côté la dimension “féminine”, et l’affectivité, et se présente comme une tentative pour bien faire saisir l’évolution (ou plutôt la disparition) du monde ouvrier. Le film s’achève finalement sur les regrets du passé, avec une certaine nostalgie, voire une certaine amertume, alors que *La Reprise* s’achevait sur l’échec de la quête de la jeune femme (vue alors comme symbole de la classe ouvrière?).

On peut suivre ainsi, à partir de la double version tirée d’une image initiale, prise sur le vif, comment se constituent une mémoire et une tentative d’interprétation des événements. Le “remake” ou la “version multiple” marquent ici les formes du réemploi de matériau documentaire. La première image-source, la plus “authentique” initialement, est loin de parler “toute seule”: il faut près de trois heures de commentaires à son propos pour la transformer cet objet-témoin en une série d’images-mémoire, qui finissent par constituer une sorte de “nouvelle archive” que d’autres vont réutiliser dans une perspective plus didactique et plus démonstrative. C’est le cas du documentaire télévisuel, dont les effets de fragmentation et de sérialisation font penser aux montages de citations que font les historiens, tout en laissant la conclusion finale à des témoins. Ni dans un cas ni dans l’autre les films ne proposent d’ailleurs une interprétation exprimée: ils laissent l’un et l’autre au spectateur la possibilité d’exploiter les “documents”. Bien entendu, on peut imaginer d’autres “remontages” dans d’autres perspectives, construisant autrement le temps du témoignage, celui de la mémoire, ou celui de l’analyse.

Toutes les déclarations d'Hervé Le Roux, les commentaires du film, très bien reçu, et soutenu dans des séances spéciales par ce qui reste des syndicats à la fin du vingtième siècle, insiste sur la valeur du témoignage cinématographique en des termes qui valorisent la mémoire affective, celle qui remet au présent le passé, celle qui efface la distance avec un monde disparu, celle qui "ressuscite les morts", comme voulait le faire Michelet avec les archives de la révolution française, assumant ainsi "le devoir de mémoire" tant prôné aujourd'hui. Au-delà, le film marque la capacité du cinéma à constituer lui-même des "archives" inexistantes, à "redonner la parole" aux muets de l'histoire, les pauvres, ou les femmes, comme ici, tient au désir de faire l'histoire "par le bas". Notons justement la difficulté de construire une histoire sociale des ouvrières: pendant longtemps, les archives des usines n'ont gardé que les fiches masculines, et nous voyons dans les deux films de 1996, à travers les témoignages, la différence de statut entre ouvrières et ouvriers, plus "nobles" (par exemple dans les ateliers de mécanique), plus stables dans leurs emplois, mieux organisés, davantage capables de maîtriser la parole, et occupant les postes de commandement (le directeur du personnel, les syndicalistes, les politiques, et même les réalisateurs). Cette manière de constituer une "mémoire" au cinéma s'est considérablement développée depuis les années 80, avec des films aussi bien sur les camps de concentration – comme le plus fameux d'entre eux, *Shoah* (1985, Claude Lanzman) – que sur les acteurs sociaux considérés comme "marginaux": ainsi en France *Les Gens des baraques* (1995, Robert Bozzi), où le réalisateur interroge d'ancien occupants, portugais pour la plupart, d'un ancien bidonville des Seine Saint-Denis, ou le 3 fois 52 minutes de *Mémoires d'immigrés* (1997, Yamina Benguigui), consacrés respectivement aux "pères", aux "mères" et aux "enfants" venus d'Algérie en France et mal "intégrés".

Après la longue réflexion menée sur les "lieux de mémoire" depuis l'ouvrage dirigé par Jacques Le Goff et Pierre Nora en 1974, on admet que les sources de la mémoire sont vivantes et que le présent lui-même peut témoigner du passé: le cinéma participe de ce mouvement qui amène la confusion entre l'archive (conservée du passé) et le témoignage au présent, qui en est la remémoration, et qui "convertit la mémoire [...] en mode de questionnement historique et d'écriture de l'histoire."¹ Il le fait en jouant à la fois sur le retour aux lieux, fussent-ils méconnaissables, sur la présence insistante du narrateur sous la forme de la voix de l'interviewer et du commentateur autant que par le jeu du montage, et sur une conception de la mémoire qui tend à reconstituer ce qui rend "pensable" le moment dont témoigne l'empreinte laissée par le visage et la voix d'une femme inconnue.

On pourrait énumérer bien d'autres de ces tentatives où il ne s'agit plus seulement de "témoigner" mais de constituer une "mémoire" vivante, qui deviendra à son tour source possible d'une histoire, plus organisée et plus analytique. C'est évidemment à mettre en relation avec le besoin de mémoire qui caractérise actuellement nos sociétés, malencontreusement transformé en "devoir de mémoire", de manière quelque peu autoritaire, par les institutions.

1 François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité, présentisme et expérience du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), p. 158.

NEW STUDIES

ATTORI E RECITAZIONE NEI SOGGETTI DI *BELLISSIMA*

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Deluso dal mondo del cinema che ha scartato al provino suo figlio, ma rincuorato dalla nascita di una nuova amicizia sbocciata all'interno del condominio dove vive, il protagonista sbatte la porta in faccia alla compagnia di guitti teatrali che l'aveva illuso. Così si chiude il primo soggetto della lunga filiera di trame che condurranno fino a *Bellissima* di (1951, Luchino Visconti).

Nonostante i documenti siano consultabili nel fondo dell'Archivio Cesare Zavattini relativo ai "Lavori cinematografici", non è ancora stata fatta un'attenta ricognizione del materiale. Sfogliando il fascicolo *Bellissima* si scopre che finora si sono considerate, delle varie stesure del soggetto originale, solo tre versioni che portano questo titolo: ma fanno parte della lunga gestazione otto documenti, tutti diversi fra loro, battuti a macchina, alcuni contenenti note manoscritte; più una "Scaletta", divisa in punti. La datazione dei documenti resta incerta, perché nessuno dei fogli reca in calce o in testa la data: ma ci sono fondati motivi per ritenere che il soggetto iniziale, schedato come R9a (*Cerchiamo un bambino distinto*) sia precedente o coevo al 1942.¹

Simili complesse e stratificate orditure costituiscono la norma nella lunga avventura cinematografica dello scrittore luzzarese, considerando anche che i film realizzati da suoi soggetti sono di numero di gran lunga inferiore a quelli che non hanno mai visto la luce. I nove documenti del fascicolo *Bellissima* vanno dunque considerate varianti successive di una catena intertestuale che alla fine cambia medium – dalla pagina allo schermo – ma senza passare attraverso l'anello che salda la cesura, dato che la sceneggiatura del film fu scritta da Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Francesco Rosi e Luchino Visconti, ma non da Zavattini.²

Il protagonista di *Cerchiamo un bambino distinto* è un cameriere di spirito, vivace e arguto, uno che tratta alla pari anche gli avventori più ragguardevoli, un comico, anche se la storia lo condurrà verso esiti patetici. Il nome Fabrizio potrebbe indurre a pensare ad Aldo Fabrizi, considerata la rappresentatività dell'onomastica zavattiniana,³ la stima riposta nell'attore fino dal 1940⁴ e soprattutto il debutto nel primo film, *Avanti c'è posto...* (1942, Mario Bonnard) in cui il contributo da parte di Zavattini in sede di sceneggiatura è noto. Negli anni che precedettero il passaggio di Fabrizi al decisivo ruolo drammatico di *Roma città aperta* (1945, Roberto Rossellini),⁵ lo scrittore aveva già idealmente scelto quali sarebbero stati i volti del nuovo cinema italiano.

Quando Fabrizio torna a casa, nel condominio popolare dove abita, trova ad aspettarlo solo suo figlio Enrico. L'uomo è vedovo e ripone nel bambino di sei anni grandi speranze. Perciò risponde subito all'annuncio della casa di produzione Fulgor che cerca "un bambino dai sei ai nove anni dall'aspetto distinto per interpretare un film."⁶ Da questo momento iniziano le peripezie erratiche di padre e figlio come in *Ladri di biciclette*

(1948): *Bellissima*, a livello di intreccio, presenta l'alternativa femminile, in seguito elaborata da Zavattini, della coppia madre-figlia in giro per la città. Quanto alla ricerca del bambino da impiegare nel cast di un film, è l'anticipazione di situazioni reali che precederanno abitualmente la lavorazione dei soggetti scritti da Zavattini per De Sica, da *I bambini ci guardano* (1943) a *Sciuscià* (1946), al già citato *Ladri di biciclette*: la scelta degli interpreti giusti per le parti dei bambini fu essenziale alla riuscita dei film della coppia e ad essa, a differenza della fase delle riprese, anche Zavattini partecipava attivamente con i suoi suggerimenti.⁷ Ma la città di *Cerchiamo un bambino distinto* è diversa da quella che fa da sfondo alla peripezia dei protagonisti del film neorealista, è una raddomantica città dello spettacolo dove si muovono divi e comparse, guitti e direttori di produzione, giovani prime attrici e generici nel contesto di teatrini di periferia, locali per audizioni e salette di proiezione. È la società dello spettacolo che si autorappresenta come in futuro in *Lo sceicco bianco* (1952, Federico Fellini) e *La signora senza camelie* (1953, Michelangelo Antonioni). Quanto alla casa di produzione immaginata nel soggetto di Zavattini, il suo operoso formicolio ha molto in comune con la Cinecittà immortalata da Alfredo Guarini nel prologo di *Siamo donne* (1953), altro ambizioso progetto metacinematografico zavattiniano.⁸ Il soggetto pare anticipare i futuri sviluppi della società italiana osservata dalla prospettiva della microsocietà del cinema che, nelle prefigurazioni di Zavattini, occupa un posto di rilievo nell'immaginario popolare. Come si legge nel soggetto, nella città del cinema "ogni tanto passa qualche divo, Nazzari o De Sica, Isa Miranda o Clara Calamai o Doris Duranti, e tutti si precipitano loro intorno per presentare i figli e chiedere autografi": l'allusione al divismo autarchico riporta indietro le lancette del tempo all'inizio degli anni Quaranta, alla Roma dei telefoni bianchi e dei drammi storici di cui Vittorio De Sica e Amedeo Nazzari - il popolarissimo eroe in costume di *Ginevra degli Almieri* (1935, Goffredo Alessandrini) e de *La cena delle beffe* (1941, Alessandro Blasetti) - sono gli esponenti maschili di spicco.

Dopo aver reagito all'incapacità del figlio tirandogli il primo schiaffo della sua vita - gesto prevaricatore che compirà sia Antonio Ricci con Bruno in *Ladri di biciclette* che in *Bellissima* Maddalena con la piccola Maria - Fabrizio "se ne va col figlio a una rappresentazione di un piccolo teatro di legno della periferia. Si tratta di una compagnia di guitti che agli occhi di Fabrizio sembrano dei grandi attori."⁹ Al posto della Spernanzoni di Visconti, che insegna recitazione alla piccola Maria utilizzando cascami del metodo Stanislavskij,¹⁰ c'è il direttore di una scalagnata compagnia di terz'ordine, di quelle che ancora battevano la provincia e le periferie nell'Italia pre-bellica, "tipo classico di fallito presuntuoso e scroccone."¹¹ Di qui alla fine dell'avventura nel mondo del cinema, Fabrizio verrà tallonato dai guitti che hanno a cuore solo i pasti e i vantaggi materiali che possono venire dall'istruire Enrico. Agli occhi del padre però sono i candidati ideali, dal momento che "il lavoro di cui Enrichetto dovrebbe essere il protagonista, qualora sia prescelto, è un noto lavoro di cui esiste anche il dramma per le scene teatrali"¹² - proprio come accadeva nel cinema italiano del Ventennio. Enrichetto, al provino, si comporta come Maria nel film di Visconti, la sua performance è disastrosa. Ma la causa non è l'improvvisa crisi di pianto: "Il peggiore è Enrichetto per il suo modo lezioso di recitare, proprio come glielo hanno insegnato quei volgari guitti che infestano la sua casa. Quella recitazione indigna o fa ridere",¹³ argomenta Zavattini. Già dalla metà degli anni Trenta sulle riviste teatrali *Comoedia* e *Scenario* era avvertita l'esigenza di una recitazione cinematografica più basso-mimetica, e Zavattini amava gli attori del varietà, del teatro popolare, umilmente al servizio delle platee con numeri comici, meglio se

umoristici, alla Charlot, “mito” che aveva scoperto da spettatore insieme ad Attilio Bertolucci e al critico Pietro Bianchi.¹⁴

L'incursione in questo mondo di attori “cani” e il giudizio pronunciato contro di loro è rafforzato in una nuova versione del soggetto. Nella “soluzione relativa alla protagonista donna”¹⁵ Fabrizio ha una domestica, Anna (solo casualmente il personaggio porta il nome della Magnani?),¹⁶ segretamente amata dal *pater familias* e circuita dal direttore della compagnia che in questa variante assume i tratti che in *Bellissima* saranno dell'Annovazzi di Walter Chiari: “Anna prende parte alle recite, è sempre stato un sogno anche per lei recitare, e il direttore solletica in lei questa passione e le lascia credere di aver anche lei delle doti non comuni. Forse Anna seguirà il direttore nella sua vita di comico vagante”, un po' come accadrà a Carla Del Poggio in *Luci del varietà* (1951, Federico Fellini-Alberto Lattuada); invece alla fine la ragazza apre gli occhi e capisce “chi è il direttore, in quale grottesco e basso mondo stava per entrare.”¹⁷ In entrambi i soggetti un'aspra sentenza morale, siglata dal gesto di Fabrizio che chiude dignitosamente la porta in faccia ai guitti scrocconi, viene pronunciato contro quel mondo di attorucoli e contro le loro interessate promesse di gloria.

Il soggetto successivo, dal titolo *La bambina più bella del mondo*, riparte di qui, dalla versione precedente del testo integrata con la trama di Anna.¹⁸ Il primo dattiloscritto è cioè una copia di *Cerchiamo un bambino distinto* a cui Zavattini ha apportato numerose correzioni a mano. Intanto cambia il nome del protagonista: diventa Riento, cognome del noto attore di varietà passato dalla fine degli anni Trenta al cinema e già nel cast di *Teresa Venerdì* (1941, Vittorio De Sica).¹⁹ Nel ruolo principale, dunque, Zavattini idealmente mantiene un caratterista comico, ma stabilmente affiancato da una protagonista femminile mentre il posto del bambino, Enrico, è preso da una bambina, Mariù. “Anna [...] pettina Mariù in mille modi, le prepara i vestiti, recita con lei”: sembra un'anticipazione delle sequenze girate da Visconti. Un'altra variante riguarda proprio la bambina, che per la verità “reciterebbe benissimo, con grazia e vivacità: ma la concezione del teatro che ha il nostro Riento è terribilmente filodrammatica sicché per lui Mariù non recita secondo le regole.”²⁰ Ne *La bambina più bella del mondo* il suo apprendistato è affidato al “primo attore giovane” della compagnia di guitti, “Avanzi, un tipo classico di fallito presuntuoso e scroccone sulla trentina.”²¹ Come nell'altro soggetto, la parte centrale dell'intreccio è costituita dalle prove della commedia di cui il film costituirà l'adattamento: l'appartamento si trasforma in un palcoscenico, fervono le prove, gigantescono le illusioni, Avanzi corteggia Anna – ma solo per impadronirsi dei suoi miseri risparmi. L'amoralità è la stessa di Annovazzi, anche se il personaggio di Visconti del suo antecedente cartaceo non manterrà la funzione; però nel film sarà proprio un promettente attor giovane (Walter Chiari), anch'esso di formazione irregolare, a dar vita all'ambiguo manegione.

Nel panorama del teatro italiano di fine anni Trenta, i termini “guitto” e “filodrammatico” non erano certo sinonimi: con il primo si designavano attori professionisti, ma di terz'ordine, che si spostavano lungo la penisola su carretti e furgoni come i comici dell'avanspettacolo di Fellini e Lattuada; con il secondo dilettanti che riproponevano sui palcoscenici cittadini i peggiori vizi della recitazione declamatoria dell'Ottocento, aggravati dalla scarsa dimestichezza con le scene e dal recupero infaticabile di vecchi repertori. Guitti e filodrammatici – questi ultimi inseriti anche nella peripezia di Ricci in *Ladri di biciclette*, nelle sequenze dello scantinato – rappresentano, in modo opposto e complementare, le peggiori eredità della recitazione teatrale ottocentesca e delle sue

regole che fatalmente si infrangono contro la mimesi naturalistica richiesta dalla recitazione cinematografica negli anni che precedettero la stagione neorealista, in particolare su *Cinema*. Il sottotesto del soggetto pone cioè in evidenza la concezione che ha Zavattini, orgoglioso detrattore del teatro di prosa fin dalle stroncature giovanili di Pirandello,²² degli attori e della recitazione: per lui sono i comici (gli attori solisti del varietà) e gli attori non progettati (i bambini) le risorse a cui il cinema deve attingere per rinnovarsi, abbandonando al loro destino i lacerti inservibili della tradizione teatrale e decretando così la scomparsa del vecchio cinema italiano, legato a doppio filo – per quanto concerne gli interpreti – al teatro all'antica italiano.

Le versioni successive del soggetto, che porta ormai il nome di *Bellissima*, sono note: rispettivamente due, tre e undici pagine in cui compaiono tutti i principali ingredienti narrativi che costituiscono l'intreccio del film di Visconti.²³ Lo sfondo teatrale si è perso, il suo posto è stato preso dalla fabbrica del cinema che incombe sulla vicenda: c'è la scuola di danza della Ruskaia (parodia del primato artistico conquistato dai balletti russi) e c'è un'attrice, che a Cinecittà fa la comparsa, chiamata da Maddalena per togliere a Maria il suo vizio di pronuncia: non è rimasta traccia della compagnia di guitti. Nel soggetto di undici pagine Zavattini introduce un riferimento metacinematografico e autobiografico a *Prima comunione* (1951, Alessandro Blasetti),²⁴ che va considerato il motivo occulto della presenza del regista nel ruolo di se stesso nel film di Visconti (ma nella sceneggiatura definitiva scomparirà ogni rimando al film in questione, facendo perdere il gioco zavattiniano di *mise en abîme*).²⁵ In più, nel soggetto fanno la loro apparizione, al posto delle dive dei telefoni bianchi, Ingrid Bergman e Roberto Rossellini che attraversano Cinecittà sulla loro automobile, mentre Maddalena è a caccia di un autografo di Silvana Mangano, reduce dal successo popolare di *Riso amaro* (1949, Giuseppe De Santis).²⁶ La citazione del film di Blasetti, in lavorazione nel 1950, permette di datare il documento come appena anteriore alla vendita del soggetto e della sceneggiatura di *Bellissima* da parte di Zavattini:²⁷ nel 1950 il mondo dello spettacolo italiano è profondamente cambiato rispetto a quello pre-bellico presente nei soggetti all'origine della filiera. Sta rinascendo il divismo.²⁸

*Là, nell'immenso teatro numero cinque, il regista ha finalmente cominciato i provini con un collaboratore eccezionale, Aldo Fabrizi, interprete del film. Tutte le candidate devono fare una scena del film con Fabrizi e Maddalena cerca di diventare amica con l'illustre attore colmandolo di elogi; gli fa perfino vento quando le sembra che Fabrizi abbia caldo. Ma Fabrizi la tratta burberamente; Maddalena quasi sviene dal dolore, ma poi Fabrizi accarezza la bambina e questo rianima Maddalena. Chi se non sua figlia sarà la prescelta?*²⁹

Nel 1950 Fabrizi non è certo più l'attore di cui Zavattini intuiva il promettente futuro cinematografico, è diventato un divo che incute soggezione e timore, che riscuote elogi e la cui ruvidezza ha il potere di gettare Maddalena in un profondo sconforto. Guitti e filodrammatici sono stati spazzati via dalla guerra, ma anche le vecchie stelle del cinema italiano hanno lasciato il posto ai protagonisti della stagione neorealista: Rossellini, la Bergman, la Mangano e Fabrizi hanno preso il posto di Clara Calamai e Doris Duranti. Non c'è più alcun motivo per mettere alla berlina uno stile di recitazione ormai tramontato come quello delle compagnie di terz'ordine e dei dilettanti accademici, né per indicare nell'assenza di vizi ereditati dalla tradizione (comici e bambini) la strada da perseguire: dopo la battaglia teorica condotta prevalentemente sulle riviste di settore

fra il 1936 e il 1939, il neorealismo ha definitivamente provveduto a rifondare lo stile della recitazione cinematografica italiana. Saranno Visconti e i suoi collaboratori a trovare, nella parodia del metodo Stanislavskij incarnato da Tilde Speranzoni, il nuovo bersaglio da colpire. Pure la Speranzoni è guitta, intimamente guitta – lo rivelano gli abiti polverosi come vecchi costumi di scena, e in particolare la sequenza dell'uovo rubato dalla credenza di Maddalena (nel primo soggetto era il cibo che spingeva gli attori a introdursi nella casa di Fabrizio): qualcosa delle antiche stesure del soggetto zavattiniano sembra esserle rimasto attaccato addosso nella “lettura critica” di Visconti che ben conosceva il panorama teatrale d'anteguerra.³⁰

La scaletta di *Bellissima*, ultimo documento del fascicolo, può essere considerata successiva agli otto soggetti anche solo per un particolare: il personaggio di Maddalena ha ormai il cognome che porterà nel film, Cecconi, mai apparso prima.³¹ Vengono introdotte nuove varianti: il film per cui si cerca una bambina avrà per protagonista Amedeo Nazzari, Yvonne Sanson vi reciterà il ruolo (assai improbabile, però) della sorella o di sua figlia, il regista sarà Mario Camerini. Al punto 27 del testo compare, nel vuoto domenicale di Cinecittà, mentre Roma è assediata dal derby Roma-Lazio, De Sica che sta per iniziare le riprese di un suo film: riconosce in Maddalena “una faccia scavata piena di significato.”³² Lo sfondo è di nuovo cambiato: lo scenario neorealista si è eclissato lasciando il posto al cinema popolare dei melodrammi di Raffaele Matarazzo che nel 1950 aveva appena firmato il suo primo grande exploit – anche se al suo posto, a dirigere la coppia di *Catene*, nella scaletta è impegnato Mario Camerini: il regista di *Darò un milione* (1935) era stato il primo con cui Zavattini aveva lavorato. Cambiano i tempi, ma i personaggi famosi che recitano nel ruolo di se stessi, nelle varie stesure di *Bellissima*, mantengono un tratto in comune: sono protagonisti del cinema italiano con cui Zavattini aveva lavorato, personaggi “nome e cognome” – come Zavattini amava indicare –, tasselli della sua sterminata autobiografia d'italiano. De Sica appare dunque, in un ideale cameo, impegnato nella parodia di se stesso; è il regista a caccia di volti comuni, di attori-non attori da scoprire e cooptare:

“Le piacerebbe fare una parte nel mio film?” – Maddalena lo guarda un momento, poi non resiste più e scarica i suoi nervi mollando un sonoro ceffone al regista. Poi scappa via trascinandosi dietro la figlia. De Sica rimane, colpito, a considerare la reazione della donna. Conclude col dare ragione a quella donna: “Chissà cosa aveva dentro di sé in quel momento? [...] E uno entra, di prepotenza, nei loro dolori, magari...”³³

La spettacolarizzazione della vita reale è agli albori, la televisione non ha ancora fatto il suo ingresso nelle case degli italiani (al suo posto è la radio che trasmette il bando di concorso lanciato dalla casa di produzione) ma Zavattini, nel suo florilegio di soggetti, continua ad aggiornare al presente – via via che gli anni passano – la scena ideale di quel mondo fatuo e venale che affascina e soggioga le folle; punta il dito contro l'ingenuità popolare e i suoi miti, le false speranze riposte nella fabbrica delle illusioni da coloro a cui quel mondo appare carico di promesse. Da alfiere della modernità cinematografica qual è, Zavattini tematizza, all'interno del suo soggetto in divenire, la macchina-cinema per scrutarvi all'interno, per svelarne il funzionamento fra una passerella di divi e un teatro di posa affollato di aspiranti attori, mentre fa recitare i divi del cinema, siano attori o registi, secondo una prassi del “moderno”, nel ruolo di se stessi. Nella “Scaletta” tutti finiscono fagocitati da quel mondo rutilante: la Speranzoni fa la comparsa, Annovazzi

viene ingaggiato come trovarobe, Maddalena riceve la proposta di De Sica, Camerini vorrebbe scritturare Maria. In questo contesto il ritorno all'ordine prefigurato nel finale – adottato poi dal film di Visconti – appare una conclusione posticcia: l'appartamento di Spartaco e Maddalena è cinto d'assedio dalla società dello spettacolo che preme e vuole entrare. Continuerà a minare la serenità familiare per molti decenni a venire.

- 1 Baldelli, nella sua monografia su Visconti, scrive che “il primo soggetto”, schedato nel fondo come R9f, “venne steso da Zavattini in due paginette (riprendendo uno spunto, quel *La bambina più bella del mondo*, che è addirittura del 1942)”. Pio Baldelli, *Luchino Visconti* (Milano: Mazzotta, 1973), p. 102. Dal momento che i soggetti schedati con il titolo *Cerchiamo un bambino distinto* (R9a, R9b) sono precedenti ai due de *La bambina più bella del mondo* (R9c, R9d), bisogna ritenerli coevi o anteriori al 1942.
- 2 “Cesare Zavattini, come si sa, non partecipò, se non informalmente e occasionalmente al successivo lavoro di trattamento e sceneggiatura; ma è innegabile il grosso debito, non solo a livello del *plot* e della *story*, che ha *Bellissima* nei suoi confronti”. Lino Micciché, *Visconti e il neorealismo*. Ossessione, La terra trema, *Bellissima* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1998), p. 200.
- 3 Sulla trasmigrazione del nome Antonio dal personaggio di Totò a *Ladri di biciclette* (1948, Vittorio De Sica) e *Miracolo a Milano* (1951, Vittorio De Sica) fino a *La veritàaaa* (1982, Cesare Zavattini), si veda: Cristina Jandelli, *La scena pensante. Cesare Zavattini fra teatro e cinema* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2002).
- 4 Su come Zavattini fino dal 1940 avesse caldeggiato il passaggio degli attori del varietà al cinema, soprattutto in una rubrica tenuta sul settimanale *Tempo* di Milano, cfr. *Ivi*, pp. 24-35.
- 5 L'attività di Zavattini recensore del teatro di varietà sul settimanale *Tempo* data dal 1940 al 1941. Nella rubrica dedicata al comico romano, scrive: «La sua faccia stessa, così cinema, mobile – quando canta *Lulù non sei più tu* – subisce la sua immaginazione: gli occhi hanno il morbo di Basedoff e la mascella diventa un primo piano crudo e enorme. Di tutti i comici italiani mi sembra il meno leggiadro e il più sarcastico, un osservatore con i nervi un po' scossi». Cesare Zavattini, “Aldo Fabrizi”, *Tempo*, a. II, n. 42 (1940), corsivo mio. Fabrizi debuttò nel cinema nel 1942, in *Avanti c'è posto...* che riproponeva il personaggio del tranviere che lo aveva reso famoso nel teatro leggero: Zavattini collaborò con Fabrizi e con Fellini al soggetto del film, poi ne firmò con altri la sceneggiatura.
- 6 R9a, p. 3. Nella seconda versione, contrassegnata come R9b, Zavattini apporta solo qualche ritocco a livello formale.
- 7 Questi i ricordi di De Sica a proposito del casting di *Ladri di biciclette*: “Gli interpreti li trovammo in modo avventuroso. Il grande problema fu il bambino. Me ne portarono centinaia: o erano bellini, romantici, lisciati, o erano incapaci. I bambini sono attori per eccellenza: hanno espressione, innocenza, spirito, autenticità, pudore [...]. Ricevevo i bambini candidati ai miei film: si presentavano in lacrime, più di sorpresa che di paura [...]. A un tratto nella fila dei genitori, vidi un operaio che teneva il figlioletto per mano [...]. Era Lamberto Maggiorani [...]. Intanto il bambino non si trovava. Disperato, decisi di cominciare ugualmente il film. Iniziai con la scena di Maggiorani che va in cerca dell'amico che lo aiuti a ritrovare la bicicletta. Si girava in quella specie di teatrino da dopolavoro. Stavo dicendo qualcosa a Maggiorani, quando mi volto infastidito dai curiosi che mi si affollavano intorno e vedo uno strano bambino con una faccia tonda, e un nasone buffo, e stupendi occhi vivissimi. Enzo Staiola. Questo me l'ha mandato San Gennaro, pensai.”

- Quanto a Zavattini, anche a lui capitava di mettere la propria esperienza al servizio della ricerca degli interpreti: “Ci sono state scelte di attori alle quali ho partecipato anch’io. Per esempio, quella del bambino di *Ladri di biciclette*, di cui avevo visto i provini insieme a quelli di tanti altri bambini.” Le dichiarazioni sono riportate in Paolo Nuzzi, Ottavio Iemma, *De Sica & Zavattini. Parliamo tanto di noi* (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1997), pp. 102-3.
- 8 Sul film si veda: Giorgio De Vincenti, “*Siamo donne*: un esempio “neorealista” di coscienza metalinguistica”, *Bianco e nero*, a. LX, n. 3-4 (1999), pp. 137-75. Si vedano anche i documenti recentemente pubblicati: Cesare Zavattini, “La genesi di *Siamo donne* nella corrispondenza con Nino Frank”, *Bianco e nero*, LXIII, n. 6 (2002); Cesare Zavattini, “8 storie inutilizzate”, *Ibidem*; “La sceneggiatura di ‘Concorso 4 Attrici 1 Speranza’”, *Ibidem*.
- 9 R9a, p. 6.
- 10 Cfr. Siro Ferrone, “‘Bellissima’: l’educazione teatrale”, *Drammaturgia*, a. VII, n. 7 (2000), p. 88.
- 11 R9a, p. 7.
- 12 *Ibidem*.
- 13 Ivi, p. 9.
- 14 “Una recitazione, una messinscena più naturale la chiedono tutti: pochi anni dopo saremo anche ufficialmente in piena battaglia contro la commediola sentimentale, intimista.” Sandro Bernardi, “L’attenzione al cinema nelle riviste di critica teatrale: ‘Comoedia’, ‘Scenario’ e altre ancora”, in AA.VV., *Nuovi materiali sul cinema italiano 1929-43*, vol. I, Quaderno Informativo Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema di Pesaro (Pesaro: 1976), p. 154.
- 15 Si trova in coda al documento. R9a, p. 11.
- 16 Zavattini vede anche la Magnani prima sul palcoscenico del teatro di rivista che sullo schermo, e puntualmente ne annota la bravura. L’attrice, giovanissima, è inoltre, con Riento, nel cast di *Teresa Venerdì*, debutto “segreto” della coppia Zavattini-De Sica. Cfr. C. Jandelli, *La scena pensante*, cit., p. 78.
- 17 R9a, p. 11.
- 18 Non sono però le “due paginette” di cui parla Baldelli che riproduce, come già notato, R9f. Sul documento, di dieci pagine, contrassegnato come R9c, Zavattini ha apportato numerose correzioni a mano.
- 19 Nella già citata rubrica dedicata al varietà, Zavattini si dichiara antico estimatore del comico: “Gli abbiamo visto fare – scrive – il maestro d’orchestra con la solita mimica straordinaria, tirava su gli applausi dalla platea come ostriche, il suo guardare dall’alto in basso con gli occhi languidi troncava ogni ritegno.” Cesare Zavattini, “Inaugurazione del Reale”, *Tempo*, a. II, n. 78 (1940).
- 20 R9d, p. 7.
- 21 Ivi, p. 8.
- 22 C. Jandelli, *La scena pensante*, cit., in particolare cap. I.
- 23 Si tratta rispettivamente dei documenti R9f, R9e, R9h, citati come S1, S2 e S3 in L. Micciché, *Visconti e il neorealismo*, cit. pp. 199-200. Secondo Micciché “come molte ‘messe in scena’ viscontiane, questa [di *Bellissima*] è (anche) la ‘lettura critica’ di un testo, il soggetto zavattiano.” *Ivi*, p. 201.
- Sembra dello stesso avviso Zavattini quando scrive, dopo la visione del film: “La storia di *Bellissima* è buona, si vede che è tale, i mutamenti viscontei non l’hanno strutturalmente cambiata.” Cesare Zavattini, *Io. Un’autobiografia* (Torino: Einaudi, 2002), p. 171.
- 24 Soggetto e sceneggiatura del film sono di Cesare Zavattini...
- 25 “Blasetti ha attraversato la regia del cinema italiano per decenni e il regista che fa il Regista,

anzi il regista che fa se stesso, diviene qui momento di consapevolezza sociale del mestiere e della gente di cinema; ma anche prova rispettosa dei sentimenti e delle illusioni involontariamente indotte – nella madre Anna Magnani, una ‘regista’ cialtrona della propria bambina, ovvero della proiezione in lei della fatica e della crudele casualità del successo – dai registi-
incantatori nella nostrana e casereccia fabbrica dei sogni del dopoguerra, prima del boom economico.”

Fabrizio Borin, “L’attore con la macchina da presa”, in Fabrizio Borin, Roberto Ellero (a cura di), *Cinematecnica. Percorsi critici nella fabbrica dell’immaginario* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2001), p. 281.

- 26 “Siccome Maddalena desidera tanto un autografo di Silvana Mangano che sta girando un film al teatro n. 4, Annovazzi ce l’accompagna e riesce a ottenere facilmente dall’attrice l’autografo. Tutto questo incanta Maddalena e la convince che Annovazzi è davvero onnipotente. Per questo Maddalena nella penombra del teatro, mentre guarda con gli occhi lucidi la scena che la Mangano sta girando, non protesta quando Annovazzi le mette una mano sulla spalla”. Rgh, p. 7 e P. Baldelli, *Luchino Visconti*, cit., p. 107.
- 27 “8 agosto 1949, ore 12 – Combinato con D’Angelo soggetto e sceneggiatura *Prima comunione* per cinque milioni”. *Ivi*, p. 162.
- 28 Cfr. Stephen Gundle, “Il divismo nel cinema europeo, 1945-1960”, in Gian Piero Brunetta (a cura di), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, Vol. I, *L’Europa. Miti, luoghi, divi* (Torino: Einaudi, 1999), pp. 759-86.
- 29 Rgh, p. 7 e P. Baldelli, *Luchino Visconti*, cit., p. 107.
- 30 Siro Ferrone, “Bellissima: l’educazione sentimentale”, in *Drammaturgia*, a. VII, n. 7 (2000), pp. 83-95.
- 31 Il documento non ha contrassegno numerico, è semplicemente citato come “Scaletta”. Si tratta di dieci pagine con note manoscritte divise in trentotto punti, corrispondenti ad altrettante descrizioni di macrosequenze narrative. Notiamo per inciso che i caratteri della macchina da scrivere non corrispondono a quelli dei documenti precedenti.
- 32 *Ivi*, p. 9.
- 33 *Ibidem*.

ABSTRACTS & PROJECTS

ANARCHISME ET CINEMA: PANORAMIQUE SUR UNE HISTOIRE DU 7^{ÈME} ART FRANÇAIS VIRÉE AU NOIR

Isabelle Marinone / Ph.D. Thesis Abstract
Université de Paris I

L'anarchisme et le cinéma se fréquentent en France dès la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle et vont se lier durant tout le XX^{ème} siècle à travers beaucoup de mouvements artistiques et de créateurs. En 1895, l'anarchie est à son apogée, elle prédomine alors dans nombre de réflexions sur la société, et séduit beaucoup d'intellectuels et d'artistes. Peintres, photographes, écrivains, de Pissarro à Signac en passant par Courbet, de Nadar à Mallarmé en passant par Mirbeau, tous portent la marque de la révolte libertaire. L'anarchisme, loin de la caricature que l'on a pu en faire, défend plusieurs principes. Ce sont, pour les plus importants, l'anti-autoritarisme, l'anti-militarisme, l'anti-cléricalisme, la valorisation du concept de liberté, le renoncement aux pouvoirs de toutes sortes, et notamment à celui de l'Etat, l'abandon de la notion de propriété privée, le développement de l'éducation. Ce "panoramique sur une histoire du 7^{ème} art français virée au noir" reprend l'idée philosophique, politique et sociale, de l'anarchisme historique, telle qu'elle a été définie par ses théoriciens Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michel Bakounine, Pierre Kropotkine, ou encore Elisée Reclus. Visant à faire ressortir une histoire anarchiste du cinéma à l'intérieur même de l'Histoire officielle du 7^{ème} art, cette recherche entremêle donc deux histoires différentes, celle du cinéma français et celle de l'anarchisme, en soulignant leurs points de convergences à travers des personnalités, cinéastes, scénaristes, dialoguistes, monteurs, acteurs, etc, aux tendances libertaires – comme, Antonin Artaud, Bernard Baissat, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Luis Buñuel, Hélène Chatelain, Emile Cohl, Carl Einstein, Philippe Esnault, Georges Franju, Christophe Karabache, Maria Klonaris et Katerina Thomadaki, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Yves-Marie Mahé, Man Ray, Georges Méliès, Jean Mitry, Albert Paraz, Jacques et Pierre Prévert, Lionel Soukaz, Michel Zimacca – ou à l'inverse, via des militants anarchistes ou des descendants de militants, engagés dans le 7^{ème} art, comme Roger Boussinot, Gustave Cauvin, Elie Faure, Armand Gatti, Armand Guerra, Henri Jeanson, Emile Kress, Maurice Lemaître, Jean Painlevé, Henry Poulaille, Hans Richter, Jean Rollin et Jean Vigo. Cette recherche en histoire et esthétique du cinéma ne développe pas en détail l'histoire de l'anarchisme, chaque personnalité ou courant artistique abordés, et n'analyse pas profondément chaque film ou œuvre évoqués, car tel n'est pas son propos. En revanche, elle tente de souligner, et de mettre en relief, à l'image d'un virage couleur sur une pellicule, les créateurs et les mouvements ayant eu de fortes relations avec la pensée libertaire. La totalité de ces éléments rassemblés dans une sorte de paysage chronologique allant de 1895 à 2004, permet la mise en place d'un large panoramique horizontal décrivant une histoire globale. Tout en adoptant une vue ample, cette étude suit chaque figure ou courant marquant de manière plus détaillée, pour dégager des points de repères plus précis tout au long de ce défilement historique. Ce point de vue, à la fois macroscopique et microscopique, a l'avantage de rendre comp-

te d'une histoire étendue dans le temps, démarquant des contours et des grandes lignes générales à partir des courants artistiques et des créateurs du cinéma plus ou moins connus.

Le "cinéma anarchiste" est constitué de toutes ces individualités, créant seules ou en groupe, et propose ainsi à l'Histoire du cinéma la naissance de sa "première Histoire" avec Emile Kress et son *Historique du Cinématographe* (1912) ainsi que de plusieurs courants dont celui du "cinéma militant et social (Humain)" avec le Cinéma du Peuple, - et ses continuateurs dont Henry Poulaille, Jean Vigo, Carl Einstein, Henri Jeanson, Raymond Cazaux, Philippe Esnault, Bernard Baissat, jusqu'à Hélène Chatelain, Pierre Carles, Richard Prost, Jean-Michel Carré ou Frédéric Godbronn – du cinéma pédagogique avec le "Cinéma Educateur" de Gustave Cauvin, – qui s'est transmise à Célestin Freinet, Jean Painlevé, Yves Allégret, Jean Vigo, Jacques et Pierre Prévert, Jules Celma, Jean-Michel Carré et Bernard Baissat – et de celui des "avant-gardes". Incohérente avec Georges Méliès et Emile Cohl, dadaïste avec Hans Richter, Man Ray et Georges Ribemont Dessaignes, surréaliste avec Luis Buñuel, Antonin Artaud, Man Ray, Michel Zimbarca et Jean-Louis Bédouin, lettriste avec Maurice Lemaître, Isidore Isou, Eric Lombard et Armando Navarro, Fluxus et Panique avec Alejandro Jodorowsky, Fernando Arrabal, Roland Topor ou encore Jean-Jacques Lebel, et expérimentale avec Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Pierre Clémenti, Maria Klonaris et Katerina Thomadaki, Lionel Soukaz, Yves-Marie Mahé, ou encore Christophe Karabache.

Cette recherche tente de comprendre l'une des particularités du "cinéma anarchiste" qui se trouve dans la constance et l'intemporalité des structures cinématographiques, ainsi que dans la "résurgence de la mémoire". Car les anarchistes n'oublient pas l'histoire, le passé, tant le leur que celui des autres. Cette mémoire toujours active dans leur 7^{ème} art, se diffuse pédagogiquement, et tend vers un renouvellement des formes esthétiques qui s'inspire toujours de styles préexistants.

Ainsi l'Incohérence revit chez Cohl et Méliès, passe dans le Surréalisme, s'écoule dans quelques séquences de Vigo, jusqu'à se poursuivre à l'intérieur de Fluxus et Panique. Le Dadaïsme se situe dans Fluxus mais surtout dans le Lettrisme, puis dans l'expérimental. Il y a une forme de permanence, qui bien que passant à travers différentes formes, différents styles et diverses personnalités, subsiste dans le temps. Tous ces créateurs, qu'ils s'exercent dans les formes les plus classiques ou les plus modernes, gardent le même désir de destruction d'un monde pour l'édification d'un autre, plus libre et égalitaire. Face à l'esprit vivant du spectateur, l'esprit créé par l'artiste, mu par le défilement de la pellicule, propose une alternative qui rompt avec le temps et l'espace réel et social. Il offre, comme l'anarchie, une ouverture vers d'autres possibles.

Autour de la problématique du "lien" – lien entre tous les créateurs du 7^{ème} art à tendance anarchiste à travers le temps, lien entre les idéaux anarchistes et la pratique cinématographique, lien entre la structure de pensée des libertaires et des productions réalisées, lien entre les idées politiques et l'esthétique – cette étude dégage les apports de ce 7^{ème} art politique qui ouvre une voie spécifique basée sur la "pédagogie". Ce sont ces divers possibles cinématographiques, dans la variété des disciplines du cinéma, qui inclut le film et s'étend au-delà de lui, que nous avons essayés de découvrir, à travers ce panoramique historique, ce que pouvait être le "cinéma anarchiste" français, "cinéma de la mémoire" en constante projection, qui construit dans le présent les images d'un possible avenir.

VERSIONS OF *CARMEN* IN AMERICAN CINEMA

Gloria Fernández Vilches / Ph.D. Thesis Abstract
Universitat de València (Spain)

This dissertation is a part of the research project “Presencias españolas en el cine norteamericano / Spanish presences in American cinema”, financed by the Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología de España, which is, in turn, the Spanish contribution to the European and US bilateral macro-project, “Film Studies Program Europe/Hollywood: The Europeans in the American Cinema”. This macro-project based on la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme de Paris, studies the influences and contributions of “Old World” countries to the American film production from the invention of the medium until today. This research includes both biographical data about film professionals who migrated to North America (actors, directors, writers, technicians...) and the representation of European stereotypes (characters, myths, types, landscapes...) in Hollywood studio films.

My project focuses on the different versions (explicit adaptations) of the Carmen myth in classical American cinema. This myth deals with Spanish identity and stems from the foundational novel written by Prosper Mérimée. Later on, Georges Bizet re-worked it as an opera. I claim that *Carmen* is particularly suitable for continuous innovations, re-readings and updates. Moreover, it has clearly proven its capacity to connect with the different historical epochs, regardless of the particular socio-cultural coordinates of its first formulation. The main issue I attempt to research is *why* and *how* Carmen has been adapted in the US context throughout the period from 1915 to 1954 (classical cinema).

The first half of this research is divided in the three parts. Firstly, I explain Carmen’s myth in general terms. It is a myth that cannot be separated from the myth of an exotic and sensual Spain. This image of Spain was fundamentally created by a variety of travelers, writers and painters, most of whom were French like Mérimée himself, Gautier or Doré (but also Anglo-Americans such as Washington Irving or George Borrow) during the 19th century. Their works drew an imaginary erotic geography that defined the stereotype of the Andalusian woman (and especially the Gypsy, since she was considered to be more “oriental”) as pure sexual ardor. Carmen is also intimately related to the long-lasting Western cultural archetype of the *femme fatale* initiated by the religious dichotomy that confronts the woman-as-mother with the woman-as-pleasure.

Secondly, I focus on Mérimée’s novel and Bizet’s opera. I utilize these two works as the point of departure for the later film adaptations that compose my field of analysis. Specifically, I study the manner in which they treat the national stereotype (Spanishness), ethnic or racial identity (Gypsiness) and gender/sexuality (*femme fatale*). Lastly, I explore in general terms how the Spanish stereotype is constructed in

American culture throughout history. I bring to the fore the fact the United States is a nation made of immigrants and has had to articulate different views of the “Other” (the European, the black, the Latino...) throughout history.

The second half of my research is chronologically organized according to the most relevant versions of *Carmen* in classical Hollywood cinema. Chapter 1 focuses on *Carmen* (1915, Cecil B. DeMille), since it imported the soprano Geraldine Farrar into the cinematic screen and rivaled in its opening with a now lost version of *Carmen* (1915, Raoul Walsh), starring Theda Bara, the first *vamp* in the history of American cinema. In this section, I also study a parody of DeMille’s film, directed and interpreted by Charles Chaplin. Chapter 2 centers on *Loves of Carmen* (1927, Raoul Walsh), starring Mexican actress Dolores del Rio. Chapter 3 analyzes *The Loves of Carmen* (1948, Charles Vidor), with Rita Hayworth. These last two films are star vehicles for Latino-type actresses, who were believed to be particularly suitable to play the Carmen role. Finally, chapter 4 deals with *Carmen Jones* (1954, Otto Preminger), a musical set not in Spain but in the United States, featuring African-American actors. In addition, this film is an adaptation of a famous Broadway show.

The structure of each of the described chapters is similar, so that the changing dimension of the various aspects analyzed can be more accurately evaluated. Not only do I deal with the textual and aesthetic aspects of the film themselves, but I also examine archival material such as movie reviews, trade and fan magazine editorials and letters, production papers, press books, promotion and advertising materials and censorship files. Therefore, my research relates the films with the Hollywood studios’ cinematic and industrial practices. I also study marketing and promotional strategies, critical and spectatorial reception, and the role of each of the *Carmen* versions in the construction of the star persona of the actresses that perform the lead role in each of the films.

My project also studies the manners in which each of these versions of *Carmen* represents racial and sexual Otherness – a key aspect in the figure of Carmen – from the Latino Carmen (Dolores del Rio) to the African-American (Dorothy Dandridge), and from the silent film *vamp* (Theda Bara) to the *femme fatale* in the 1940s film noir (Rita Hayworth).

Besides, the films analyzed reflect important social processes that take place in the United States from 1915 to 1954, such as the changing immigration landscape, the increasing presence of women at work, the visibility of the New Woman or the first feminist and civil rights movements. I also relate filmmaking with historical discourses dealing with racial, sexual and national identity (i.e. assimilation and nativism theories).

Thus, my study of the versions of *Carmen* in US cinema is based on the combination of a thorough cinematic formal analysis (mise-en-scene, narration, film genres etc.) and other socio-historical discourses. Film texts, like any other text, are symptomatic of the wider cultural milieu in which they come into existence. Films are cultural products that reveal significant aspects of their production context, historical reality and the ideological positioning of those who produce them and those who view them. They do not simply reflect or interpret a particular socio-historical reality; they document it by condensing the tensions and contradictions of a given period of time and social space in a symbolical fashion.

VOIX DELIÉE ET VOIX *OVER* CHEZ ALAIN RESNAIS. CONTRIBUTION A L'ÉTUDE DES RELATIONS ENTRE LA VOIX ET L'IMAGE AU CINÉMA

Alain Boillat / Ph.D. thesis project
Université de Lausanne

Dans ma thèse, j'envisage de problématiser les rapports entre la voix et l'image au cinéma en examinant des configurations particulières qui ne sont pas régies par un synchronisme strict entre l'occurrence vocale et la visualisation d'un locuteur. Je m'intéresserai d'une part à une voix *déliée* qui introduit, grâce à certains procédés qu'il s'agit de définir, un décalage avec l'image; d'autre part, je consacrerai la plus grande partie de mon travail à la voix *over*, procédé courant au cinéma dont l'étude n'a selon moi pas encore envisagé toutes les implications sémiologiques (concernant la nature des interactions entre l'iconique et le linguistique) et sémantiques (au niveau, surtout, du fonctionnement de la co-référentialité iconico-verbale au sein de l'élaboration d'un univers diégétique). Pour analyser ces deux modalités de manifestation verbale et leurs diverses actualisations dans les films, je me baserai essentiellement sur les films d'Alain Resnais, en commençant par *La Pointe courte*, à la réalisation duquel Resnais participa en qualité de monteur. En effet, ce film d'Agnès Varda représente à mon avis un moment décisif de l'émergence d'une certaine "modernité" qui caractérisera la part la plus importante de la production de Resnais durant les années 1960. Par ailleurs, l'œuvre du cinéaste, en procédant dans sa quasi intégralité à une exploitation particulière des interactions entre la voix et l'image (introduction du chant, jeu sur la post-synchronisation, hétérogénéité compositionnelle, usage complexe de la voix *over*), appelle plus qu'aucune autre une réflexion sur l'insertion de la voix dans un film et sur ses implications formelles et esthétiques. En outre, son œuvre comprend aussi bien des documentaires que des fictions, et s'avère de ce fait propice à une interrogation sur les incidences éventuelles d'une telle distinction au niveau de l'utilisation de la voix *over*. Deux aspects fondamentaux retiendront mon attention lorsqu'il s'agira de discuter la fonction et le statut de la voix *over*: les différents modes d'organisation (narratif, descriptif, argumentatif, "poétique", etc.) et la place de la voix dans la structure énonciative du film (ce qui me permettra d'approfondir le modèle de stratification des instances énonciatives proposé dans mon ouvrage *La Fiction au cinéma*).

A un niveau plus général, mon étude de la voix *over* s'articulera autour de deux axes: la voix proprement dite et le *texte* qu'elle véhicule. Cette double orientation permettra de rendre compte des spécificités de la dimension orale tout en prenant en compte la composante scripturale qui occupe une place centrale dans la démarche artistique de Resnais, ce dernier ayant collaboré à de nombreuses reprises avec des écrivains dont il respecta très scrupuleusement le texte. Les considérations sur la fonction de l'écrit m'amèneront à comparer la voix avec les mentions écrites internes aux films (intertitres du muet, cartons d'adresse, texte du générique, etc.) ou côtoyant l'image dans d'autres moyens d'expression, principalement dans la bande dessinée dont s'inspire une partie du travail de Resnais.

Pour ce qui est de la voix déliée, j'effectuerai certains rapprochements avec les films de René Clair qui, considérés sous l'angle du rôle (structurel, narratif, autoréflexif) attribué à la voix – dont l'importance et la productivité chez ce cinéaste sont à mon avis sous-estimées par ses exégètes –, présentent une parenté avec ceux de Resnais. Ce détour par René Clair, cinéaste intéressant dans ma perspective tant pour son travail que pour son discours sur le cinéma (voir ses réserves envers la généralisation du cinéma parlant), est caractéristique de la démarche que je me propose d'adopter, et qui consiste à opérer des rapprochements ponctuels entre des périodes de l'histoire des spectacles audiovisuels traversées par des questionnements relatifs à la voix. C'est pourquoi, dans une première partie historico-théorique, je m'interrogerai sur la modalité vocale dominante au cinéma qu'est le synchronisme de l'image et du son (et plus particulièrement celui de l'image et de la voix qui, contrairement à la musique, a été assez peu étudié dans ce contexte), dont les fondements (techniques, esthétiques, "anthropologiques") me semblent être un point de départ nécessaire à une réflexion plus générale sur certains phénomènes de *déliation*. Cette partie introductive visera à étudier certaines pratiques "pré-cinématographiques" en postulant qu'elles contribuèrent à créer un paradigme culturel qui déterminera, à certains égards, la façon dont on appréhendera les développements technologiques ultérieurs. En optant pour une conception non évolutionniste de l'histoire, je montrerai que certaines pratiques ou réflexions distantes dans le temps peuvent présenter des points de recoupement frappants. J'effectuerai pour cela des allers-retours entre trois périodes de l'histoire du "cinéma" (au sens large), abordées essentiellement au niveau des discours auxquels elles ont donné lieu: celle qui s'étend du "pré-cinéma" (dans laquelle j'inscrirai le phonographe et diverses autres "machines parlantes") au "cinéma des premiers temps", qui connut grâce à la figure-clé du bonimenteur différentes pratiques de ce que j'appellerai le cinéma *parlé*; l'époque de la généralisation du *parlant* (1927-1935); la période couverte par les réalisations d'Alain Resnais qui, dans son dernier film (*Pas sur la bouche*), semble confirmer mon intuition d'une influence des films "parlants et chantants" du début des années 1930, et plus généralement d'une esthétique propre à ce que Noël Burch appelle "l'interrègne", période qui précède une certaine standardisation des utilisations des pratiques sonores au cinéma.

Cette partie liminaire prendra donc comme objet le champ plus vaste des "dispositifs audiovisuels" (conçus comme des articulations spécifiques de la triade machinerie-représentation-spectateur), dont les modes d'intégration de la voix me semblent avoir été jusqu'ici trop peu traités par les théoriciens du cinéma, probablement parce que la voix est sommairement jugée étrangère aux techniques ou aux technologies. Cette relative déconsidération de la voix s'est même accentuée avec une tendance récente à l'évacuer au profit de l'univers sonore non verbal afin de se départir d'une influence supposée de la linguistique qui n'aurait plus de raison d'être à une époque où le "structuralisme" est devenu obsolète. Mon étude vise à réhabiliter ce type d'approche tout en la renforçant par un questionnement d'ordre historique, et en incluant également des paramètres qui ne sont pas liés à la nature linguistique de l'objet (la voix en tant que telle, indépendamment du texte). Il sera ainsi notamment question de la place accordée à la voix dans les discussions engendrées par l'apparition, puis par l'évolution des techniques d'enregistrement et de reproduction des sons. Je montrerai notamment selon quels critères la voix est conçue, tant dans l'imaginaire d'inventeurs, de commentateurs ou de romanciers qu'au sein des technologies qui l'accueillent, comme un facteur d'insertion de "l'humain" dans la machine. Je proposerai en outre, sur la base de certains débats

contemporains de ces innovations technologiques, un cadre théorique dans lequel j'aborderai les divers types de "synchronisme" – c'est-à-dire de relations verticales entre une occurrence sonore et une occurrence visuelle simultanée –, qui ne se limitent pas à la seule "voix synchrone".

Mon analyse de la place de l'oralité au cinéma me conduira à identifier deux pôles qui sont autant de *régimes* vocaux: la *voix-attraction* et la *voix-narration*. La première repose sur la notion "d'attractions" empruntée à Eisenstein par Gaudreault et Gunning. Je montrerai comment cette notion utilisée par les historiens du cinéma des premiers temps pour qualifier un mode spécifique de présentation visuelle peut également s'appliquer à la dimension sonore (à laquelle ces derniers ont d'ailleurs fait de brèves allusions). Dans ce cadre, j'examinerai la fonction du bonimenteur, et plus largement le contexte de la projection des films au début du 20^{ème} siècle. Une comparaison avec l'esthétique attractionnelle du spectacle de vaudeville dont le "cinéma" se fit partiellement l'héritier me permettra d'établir les traits définitoires de la *voix-attraction* (présentation, présentification, modularité) à l'aulne desquels j'examinerai le fonctionnement de la *voix over*, fondamentalement plus proche de la *voix-narration*. Comparativement à ces spectacles dans lesquels intervient un locuteur *live* qui se poursuivent dans le cinéma *parlé*, on peut affirmer que toute voix est, dans le cinéma parlant, fondamentalement *over*. Cette prise en compte du contexte de la réception audiovisuelle offrira un réseau de déterminations qui agissent préalablement au fonctionnement de l'énonciation filmique. La *voix-attraction* me permettra par ailleurs d'effectuer certains liens entre le cinéma des "premiers temps" et le début de la généralisation des productions parlantes (notamment les bandes Vitaphone de la Warner), et de discuter la fonction de la *déliation* dans les premiers longs métrages de René Clair ainsi que dans *On connaît la chanson*, *Pas sur la bouche* et dans d'autres moments chantés des films de Resnais. Afin de comparer les caractéristiques de la *voix-attraction* et celles de la *voix-narration*, et de souligner le caractère graduel de cette bipolarité (opposée aux régimes subordonnés que sont la *voix-action* et la *voix-explication*), je procéderai à l'analyse d'un cas hybride datant de la fin de l'interrègne, *Le Roman d'un tricheur* de Sacha Guitry.

Un examen de certains pans de l'histoire des technologies audiovisuelles et des pratiques spectaculaires devrait permettre, en demeurant centré sur la question des régimes vocaux, d'élaborer des paramètres d'analyse de la *voix over* qui excèdent la seule "immanence" du texte filmique. La *voix over* fait alors office d'entrée privilégiée dans une réflexion sur les relations audiovisuelles. Par ailleurs, j'espère également montrer que l'étude de la voix (*déliée, over*) constitue un accès essentiel à l'économie textuelle de la plupart des films d'Alain Resnais. Ceux-ci fourniront des études de cas qui contribueront à approfondir les hypothèses théoriques, notamment en ce qui concerne la fonction structurante du texte *over*, la transmission d'affects via certaines caractéristiques de la voix et le rôle décisif joué par le verbal dans l'établissement de la temporalité diégétique.

IL FILM A COLORI IN ITALIA: 1932-1959

Federico Pierotti / Ph.D. Thesis Project
Università degli Studi di Firenze

L'introduzione del colore nel cinema segue dinamiche di lungo periodo, caratterizzate da forti elementi di peculiarità e di differenza rispetto ad altre innovazioni tecnologiche come il sonoro e i formati panoramici; partendo da questo presupposto, la ricerca intende proporre una lettura in profondità del caso italiano, prendendo in esame le problematiche specifiche legate alle fasi dell'invenzione, dell'innovazione e della diffusione del film a colori dagli anni trenta alla fine degli anni cinquanta.

Studiare il caso italiano significa confrontarsi con un lungo percorso non lineare, in cui gli insuccessi devono essere misurati con lo stesso metro dei successi. Per questa ragione, risulta poco aderente alle reali esigenze della ricerca la scansione per grandi campiture cronologiche della storiografia tradizionale, che identifica la nascita del film in tricromia con la comparsa del Technicolor Process No. 4 (1932) e indica come successive tappe di sviluppo l'invenzione dell'Agfacolor (1939), primo sistema a negativo unico (*monopack*), e delle altre pellicole da quest'ultimo derivate (Sovcolor e Ansco Color, 1945, Gevacolor, 1947, Ferraniacolor, 1949, Eastman Color, 1951). Al fine di poter offrire una spiegazione storica più articolata del processo di cambiamento tecnologico è necessario assumere un diverso paradigma, fondato sulle acquisizioni di quella che Rick Altman ha definito storiografia della crisi.

Nel corso degli anni Trenta la comparsa dei primi sistemi esteri incentiva anche in Italia le ricerche sulla cinematografia tricroma, sia nel settore industriale, con la Cappelli & Ferrania, principale azienda nazionale di materiale sensibile, sia in campo artigianale, con l'attività di numerosi inventori, che tentano di sfruttare competenze acquisite nel campo dell'ingegneria, dell'ottica e della chimica per proporre le proprie soluzioni personali. Nel quadro di queste ricerche (che sul finire del decennio trovano un nuovo alleato nelle crescenti spinte autarchiche) l'effettiva realizzazione di film a colori resta confinata al momento sperimentale.

L'esito degli eventi bellici conduce nel dopoguerra a un decisivo riposizionamento delle forze in gioco, con il passaggio da un regime monopolistico internazionale incentrato sulla Technicolor a un regime concorrenziale, favorito dalla divulgazione dei brevetti Agfacolor e dagli investimenti delle principali industrie del settore. Il contesto italiano è fortemente determinato dalla presenza della Ferrania, che concretizza la possibilità di una via italiana al colore, aggiornando il vecchio sogno autarchico al nuovo scenario politico e culturale della ricostruzione. L'alleanza strategica tra la società milanese, i settori tecnici e industriali del cinema italiano e i nuovi vertici politici crea le condizioni per un netto incentivo alla produzione nazionale a colori, dapprima nel campo del cortometraggio e subito dopo in quello più impegnativo del lungometraggio. Tuttavia, le manovre della Ferrania per ritagliarsi uno spazio cospicuo all'interno del

mercato nazionale risultano efficaci solo sul breve periodo; alla fine del decennio, il ritiro del negativo Ferraniacolor pone fine ai trentennali tentativi di marcare la differenza dell'esperienza italiana nel campo degli investimenti tecnologici sul colore.

All'interno di questa cornice di riferimento, la ricerca si articola lungo due assi: un primo legato alla fase delle invenzioni, che attraversa tutti gli anni trenta e si prolunga fino all'affermazione del Ferraniacolor, un secondo relativo alla diffusione del film a colori nella produzione nazionale. Per quanto riguarda il primo punto, è stato effettuato il regesto dei brevetti italiani di cinematografia a colori depositati dal 1930 al 1949, attraverso lo spoglio delle pubblicazioni ufficiali *Bollettino della proprietà intellettuale* e *Bollettino dei Brevetti per Invenzioni, Modelli e Marchi*; le informazioni così raccolte, integrate con le notizie reperite attraverso periodici e altre fonti bibliografiche, permettono di ricostruire la storia di quei sistemi per i quali è attestata una effettiva vicenda produttiva. Per la fase successiva, l'oggetto primario dell'indagine è costituito dal variare dei fattori tecnologici ed economici della produzione dal dopoguerra alla fine degli anni Cinquanta; in mancanza di una formalizzazione analoga a quella creata negli Stati Uniti dalla ventennale pratica di set dei *Color Consultants*, la produzione italiana a colori sembra rifiutare categorizzazioni troppo marcate; risulta quindi opportuno indagarne alcune delle possibili configurazioni stilistiche, sulla base di quella tensione che sempre si instaura tra visibilità dell'innovazione tecnologica e suo occultamento nelle pratiche di costruzione del racconto. Per questo secondo asse della ricerca, la principale fonte è costituita dalla pubblicistica periodica coeva (bollettini di categoria, riviste economiche, riviste culturali) e da altre pubblicazioni a carattere tecnico (atti di congressi, manualistica professionale, cataloghi promozionali). Per analizzare gli aspetti più strettamente legati alla produzione sono stati vagliati i documenti di lavorazione di alcuni lungometraggi campione realizzati tra il 1949 e il 1954.

Complessivamente, tra le fonti prese in esame, risulta una bipartizione piuttosto netta tra gli interventi orientati dagli interessi di categoria, legati al doppio filo dell'esigenza di visibilità e della diffusione di un sapere ultraspecialistico, e gli altri contributi a vocazione culturale o divulgativa, nei quali gli aspetti collegati alla novità tecnologica si presentano in forme mediate e discorsivizzate, per andare incontro alle esigenze di leggibilità di un pubblico eterogeneo e non specializzato. Il confronto tra queste tipologie di fonti e tra i diversi interessi che ciascuna di esse chiama in causa contribuisce a far emergere un quadro storiografico più sfumato e più complesso.

Ricerca nazionale interuniversitaria Cofin 2002 ex 40% - La tecnologia del cinema. La tecnologia nel cinema/Technology of the Cinema. Technology in the Cinema

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The introduction of sound divided Film-Europe along its diverse language barriers. *One of the solutions the filmproducers chose was to shoot multilingual versions from the same script, casting different film stars for each national market.*

Extensive Research on this phenomenon of the 1930s began two years ago at the I. MAGIS Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School.

CineFest 2005 - The 2nd International Festival of German Film-heritage – organized by CineGraph Hamburg and Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv Berlin – will present this project in a broader perspective to a popular audience. More than thirty screenings will be complemented by lectures, discussions and workshops.

Afterwards the Festival programme will be screened in Berlin, Vienna and Zurich.

The traditional film history conference of *CineGraph* in Hamburg will cover topics like the better known “back to back” productions of multilingual versions from Babelsberg or Joinville as well as more “exotic” efforts from Sweden, Hungary, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and the Netherlands.

Other topics will include the general development of sound technology and dubbing in the 1930s, co-produced remakes/versions as well as special cases like “multilingual films” e.g. G. W. Pabst’s Franco-German masterpiece *Kameradschaft / La tragédie de la mine* (1931).

In preparation for the festival and conference an internal screening for scholars, students and contributors to the conference will take place in Berlin at the Zeughauskino / Deutsches Historisches Museum from May 5–8, 2005.

Updates on the programming of the festival will be available at www.cinefest.de.

To make suggestions regarding papers and screenings please contact festival@cinagraph.de

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Dead Ends/Impasses (+ The Tactile Screen/Lo schermo tattile),
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Nataša Đurovičová
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Transitions

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(No. 5, Fall 2004, pp. 152)

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