

ABSTRACT IN INGLESE

The Human Is the Spectator. Conversation with Bruno Dumont

edited by Andrea Inzerillo

In the conversation, Bruno Dumont refers several times to concepts such as ‘imperfection’ or ‘lack’. This is something that primarily concerns his characters, whose humanity is something incomplete, not acquired ‘a priori’. Humanity is still to be conquered, or modeled. At the same time, Dumont as a director pursues incompleteness in the creative process too: either by using non-professional actors with their ‘technical’ imperfections, or, more generally, looking for a relationship between the *mise en scène* device and the unexpected, the role of chance and unforeseen. Precisely in its ability to face the unthought, and to embrace the irreducible ambiguity of man, Dumont also identifies the greater strength of cinema when compared to philosophical thought, also referring to his philosophical formation. It is starting from this ‘lack’ – of the characters, of the *mise en scène* – that the spectator is pushed to question himself about the imperfection of humanity that the film puts in front of him. A cathartic process leads him to face both with the ‘heroization of the Evil’ of the first works (e.g. Freddy’s character in *La Vie de Jésus*), and with the tragicomic tones of later ones, together with the sense of sacred which is a constant of Dumont’s work.

Without Any Common Measure. Cinema and the Loss of Centrality of the Human Figure

Raffaello Alberti

From its origins, cinema always distinguished itself from theatre thanks also to the capability of nearing things. Generally speaking, the capability to integrate different dimensions within a single frame and to make them vary from an image to the other was an innovative aspect that could destroy the unity of representation. It is well known that the grammar created to avoid this instability of shapes consider the human figure like the centre and the measure of the visible. By making a hypothesis of a structural homology between this instance and the modern concept of person, the paper wants to investigate the conditions that officiate the constitution of this linguistic normality, to identify in the process of *figuration* the main strategy of cinema to discipline and lead back to unity a group of ‘reality parts’ that are free of a common measure. Finally, the essay addresses what happens when, with

modern cinema, this historically central position could be recalled into question, opening new paths as to the cinematographic composition and as to a redefinition between what is human in the image and what is not.

The Human-Machine Symbiosis and Visual Devices

Simone Arcagni

Digital visual devices tend towards a new relationship ‘human-machine’ in which the viewer is not in front of an image but she is immerse in a, not simply audiovisual, but multisensory universe. Furthermore, artificial intelligence seems to play a fundamental role, placing itself as a complex identity in the role of director (Jan Bot) or actor (*BOB* of Ian Cheng). What remains of ‘human’ in this ‘cinema’ of human-machine symbiosis?

In Front of Orpheus Gaze

Alessandra Romeo

This paper focuses on the character of Eurydice in *Underworld*, relying on the Latin versions of the Orphic myth by Virgil and Ovid. Latin poets depict Orpheus as being unable obey to the ‘prohibition of glance’ imposed by the gods and behaving like a human being rather than a hero. In the Middle Ages, allegorical interpretation prevails. But from Humanism onwards, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice happens to be narrated afresh as a ‘love story’, in which the female protagonist’s profile undergoes a wide range of modifications. Here we take into consideration the dramaturgical and cinematographic reworkings that put at the center the dialectic of couple as a human adventure.

On Human Tracks. The Video-Recording in Post-Humanist Relational Ontology

Anna Luigia De Simone

Posthumanism changed the self-referential concept of being human and his ontological reconfiguration in a multi-determined system, open to the continuous redefinition of the man-nature-technology relationship. Most of the visual and performative experiments produced by Post-human artists has been characterized by the practice of video-recording: the only medium that can follow the evolutionary dynamics of all the extensions of the human

being; a device capable of shaping a dilatable, permeable, reversible and renewable body-technological environment.

The Apology of the Hero: Human Rests in Shyamalan's Superhumanistic Trilogy

Salvatore Finelli

Contemporary movies explore an image of superhero seeping in through the dialogue between a posthumanist theory of the superhuman interpreted as a biological improvement of the human being, and a necessary humanizing process of the Nietzschean *Übermensch*. M. Night Shyamalan, in his own personal superhumanistic trilogy, portrays a new prototypical superhuman in crisis. Superman's crisis operated by Shyamalan reveals an anachronistic return to a different type of humanism in which human weakness is glorified as a source of power. So human rests remain either in the decadence of patriarchy depicted in *Unbreakable*, or in the psychopathological suffering as cause of raising in *Split* and *Glass*. Pain acts as a discerning feature between man and overman, besides it allows to organize the superiority of the *Übermensch* according to an excess of humanity.

Fragile Superheroes. The Tale of the Human in Marvel's Universe

Diego Del Pozzo

The great superhero narrative of the Marvel Cinematic Universe can also be read as a 'tale of the *Human*', in which the characters question their own doubts and neuroses, frailties and imperfections, coherently with the 'formula' of the Marvel comic books which, at the beginning of the Sixties, have renewed the genre thanks to their 'superheroes with superproblems'. In contact with ever faster and more invasive technological progress, Iron Man and Vision, Spider-Man and agent Coulson, like the other protagonists of the Marvel Studios cinecomics, first tell their and our humanity.

Things Under the Skin. Threshold of the Human in Horror Films of the Eighties

Giuseppe Previtali

The essay is devoted to an exploration of the ways in which horror cinema framed the theme of the body during the 1980s. As a matter of fact,

the horror movies produced in the decade seem obsessed by the idea of a mutant, infected and transformative body. This probably derives from a specific attempt of producing a counter-narrative of the ‘hard body’, that was ideologically crucial during the decade. In this sense, the category of ‘human’ seems to be fluid and capable of radical transformations. What is left of the human if its corporeal self starts to change? The essay tries to answer this question through an analysis of quintessential movies such as *The Fly*, *The Thing* and *Society*

Marginal Hence Human. The Aesthetics of Proximity in the Cinema of the Real

Antonio Capocasale

At the heart of contemporary Italian ‘Cinema del reale’, there is often a marginal humanity, outside from institutions and forms of political life. Such humanity is excluded from the Right, or just ‘apart’ from life as citizen. Considering Roberto Minervini’s films and the ones by Gianfranco Rosi or Alberto Fasulo, and relying on the concept of “nuda vita” – as in Giorgio Agamben’s philosophical works – and ‘natural life’, the essay analyzes different marginal human beings in contemporary documentary. The essay also identifies the main characteristics of an ‘aesthetic of proximity’.

What the Po River Has Done of Italian Cinema

Francesco Zucconi

A few months separates two founding contributions of neorealist aesthetics: *Per un film sul fiume Po* (1939) written by Michelangelo Antonioni and *Per un paesaggio italiano* (1941) by Giuseppe De Santis. In these two articles, published in the journal ‘Cinema’, future directors focused on the problematic relationship between man and landscape as a chance for artistic and social renewal. So which films were able to investigate this problem, and contribute to the regeneration of Italian cinema? And why were most of them shot at the mouth of the Po River? Is this just a coincidence? Or is it possible to identify a specific relationship between the form of the landscape and the cinematographic form? This article considers the great river as a protagonist and tries to question what the Po has done to Italian cinema.

The (In)Human Gaze of Bruno Dumont

Alberto Scandola

Since the very beginning of his career, Bruno Dumont focused his attention on the human and especially on its drifts towards the animal, the savage, the beast. Dumont's characters, free to mean nothing more than themselves and their opaque *Dasein*, inhabit places where the visible is nothing but the reflection of the invisible and the image seems to fight against the sound. The aim of this paper is to investigate, through the analysis of the director's work with the actors, both the forms of life and the forms of representation of an apparently inhuman and apathetic humanity: faces without visage, shapeless faces, pure forces.

Unlivable Bodies. Starting from Lynch's *The Elephant Man*

Giancarlo Grossi

The definition of 'human' emerges, in a positivistic horizon, by subtraction, through historical and cultural processes of exclusion of any component of contamination or hybridization from its own identity. In relation to this process, the dimension of monstrosity assumes a specific role: the human monster is in fact the subject whose belonging to the human or animal kingdom as to the sexual genders is undecidable from a juridical point of view. This essay analyses David Lynch's *The Elephant Man* (1980) as a significant artistic path to investigate the visual and cultural definition of the human being from the artificial construction of the monstrous subject. As a matter of facts, David Lynch's poetics exhibits the phenomenological ability of cinema to raise 'a being never created in the world (nor in history), an organism within the cinema, that comes to infect us with its impossible birth' (Jean-Louis Schefer), a body in which our affections cannot dwell but that equally invades our unconscious with its first appearance. The cinematic monster constitutes, in this sense, an anamorphosis of the human world, which is reflected in a series of iconological traditions, belonging to the visual culture of nineteenth-century medicine as to the processes of 'de-figuration' typical of Francis Bacon's art. By following these guidelines, we will seek a phenomenological specificity of the cinematic experience of the monster intended as the appearance and disintegration of an imaginary anthropocentric world.

Wall-E. What Remains of the Human

Raffaele Chiarulli

Animated movies produced a series of features able to cast a light on aspects of human nature with no less depth than the most praised live-action masterpieces. The essay intends to test the expendability – within today's ethical debate and relating to some contemporary authors' thought as well as classic ethical-anthropological trends – of the movie *Wall-E* (Usa 2008). By re-examining it, the essay aims to show how the theme of the movie strikes a universal chord, beyond the historical or sociological context, as to the condition and the nature of the human being in any time.

Iron Men and Living Weapons. The Reification of Humanity in *Tetsuo: The Bullet Man* and *Iron Man 3*

Luciano Attinà

The article analyses how *Tetsuo. The Bullet Man* (Tsukamoto, 2009) and *Iron Man 3* (Black, 2013) rewrite the cyborg's image. Both of them revolve around the concept of a posthuman body crossed with military technology. In Tsukamoto's work the hybridization ends up into a monstrous human de-evolution, seen as a metaphor for the alienation caused by a post-industrial economic system. On the other side, *Iron Man 3* depicts the pop-culture myth of the superman, taking as its point of departure the transhumanist idea that technological body's enhancement is an harbinger of the improvement of human race.

The Feeling that Makes Us Humans. Comodin's *L'estate di Giacomo*

Fabio Alcantara

Clearly treading a line between documentary and fiction, *L'estate di Giacomo* (2011) by Alessandro Comodin arguably epitomizes a specific form of 'filmic humanism'. If, on the one hand, Comodin's formal style is characterised by the refusal of the script's impositions and by the placing of the human being (in particular, of its body in motion) at the core of the filming processes, on the other hand, the film takes its move from Giacomo's disability in order to prompt a reflection on what is essential to the human nature.

Swiss Army Man. What Does It Mean to Be Human?

Salvatore Frisina

Integrating Vogler's theories of the *Hero's Journey* (1999) with the perspectives of interpretative methodology of anthropology, the essay analyzes the relationship among the protagonists of *Swiss Army Man* (Kwan e Schneinert, 2016), a movie about an initiatory journey of a non-human to the world of humans. The essay focuses on the development of the theme through the main turning points, highlighting the ability to be in a relationship and the listening education as the basics of being human (Sclavi, 2003).

A Sort of Beyond-Human Company: Maud Alpi's *Gorge Cœur Ventre*

Jacopo Rasmi

The space of the slaughterhouse represents a fundamental laboratory where what is human is split from what is not. The tradition of *films d'abattoir* (a french expression) indicates a wide and troubled interest for this context within the cinematic creation. *Gorge Cœur Ventre*, first feature movie by Maud Alpi, sketches a peculiar interpretation of this genre seeking a fragile and nervous connection between the human and the animal in the darkness of the slaughterhouse.

Ready Player One: The Human Voice as Easter Egg

Anton Giulio Mancino

Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One*, based on Ernest Cline's novel, transforms the *Easter Egg* sought by the post-human community of video gamers/avatars and placed up for grabs by the late creator of the video game, into a reconnaissance on a key aspect of human beings: the past, private memory, generational tastes, responsibility to others. These different aspects to be revived, of a humanity in crisis on the brink of annulment, find in the film a convergence around the hidden/secreted/coded theme of a cross-generational friendship among filmmakers.