

ABSTRACT IN INGLESE

The Visual Power of the Rite. A Conversation with Francesco Faeta

Edited by Alessia Cervini and Carmelo Marabello

The starting point of the conversation is that the notion of the rite needs to regain its original and somehow harsh meaning. Moreover, the rite needs to be redefined in relation to those human practices which, although not being 'rites' in the strict sense of the word, are built upon and involve some kind of 'ritual' forms and attitudes. As an example, the notion of visual power, which represents a key element in many rites, lends itself to comparisons with forms of visual representation such as photography and cinema. This is just one of the possible overlapping fields of investigation between anthropology and film studies.

The Re-made Subject. The Hypnotic Device and Cultural Construction of the Cinematic Rite

Ruggero Eugeni

The essay investigates on the subtle and strong bond that links, since its origin, cinema to hypnosis. The starting point is that cinematic representation of hypnosis often implies a certain degree of explication of the cinematic device and hence the figurative expression of a cinematic theory. More precisely, films representing hypnosis establish theories of cinematic spectatorship as a specific cultural form of life experience.

***Ex Voto Suscepto*: Sharing Personal Images on the Web**

Martina Panelli

In Dal Lago and Giordano's analysis of the *ex votos* a semblance of *grace* and consciousness is recognized both in the 'organic vulgarity' (Didi-Huberman) of the exposition of single *ex-votos* (silver reproductions of hearts, livers, breasts, limbs etc. traditionally hung on a church's wall), and in the apparent 'naiveté' of Marian sanctuaries' display cases exhibiting fetishes of happened 'miracles' (packets of cigarettes, helmets, *roulettes* that will not spin any longer). Such semblance is regarded as so unique that the

authors compare this typically religious phenomenon (the *ex voto*) to artistic practices as the *ready made* or to some conceptual art's works. Starting from their analysis this essay wants to move forward the investigation on practices of exposition, collection and sharing of personal images on the net in order to verify how and if the *social network*'s space could represent a sacral *setting* where, on the one hand, images of the Self function as 'devotional' forms and, on the other, rituals of Self's expropriation are carried out in order to acquire the *status of grace* required to survive in the *social network*'s community.

Cinema and the Rituals of Seance

Alessandro Cappabianca

The article examines the proximity between cinema and the evocation of ghosts, hence with the rituals involved in a seance (a seance in which ghosts reveal themselves through images, and in which they are even able to talk, but not to answer to any kind of question). This kind of practice, which involves a sort of necrophiliac evocation of phantoms and ghosts, represents precisely what 'institutionalized' cinema itself refused to be, while instead deploying its means towards the storytelling, i.e. narration of fictional plots. The article hence stresses the stabilizing effect and balancing function of rites - especially of non 'institutional' ones, i.e. those involving some kind of participation.

Rituality and Re-enactment

Franco Marineo

Analyzing the narrative forms of re-enactment means, arguably, to speculate on that kind of enchantment – of obsessive repetition of the identical – which characterizes our times. A time in which historical perspectives struggle to frame new (visual) events and when a new (even spectral) perception of time emerges. This article explores a various number of cinematic rituals involving re-enactment, going from the experiences of some contemporaries artists to the cinematic experimentations of Watkins, Pintilie, Haneke and others.

'I Love You So Much That I Have to Kill You!'. Functions of the Rite in the Arts

Giovanni Festa

The essay examines a particular type of rite: the sacrifice. Since its origin, the sacrifice emerged as an act of both potency and repair, whose focus has been the regeneration of the body and the earth - resulting from a violent act staged in three phases: 'Waste Land', 'Disruption' and 'Final Repair'. The 'Warburghian' Table of illustrations is composed by single pictures-frames divided into sequences and combined each other either following Eisenstein's montage of attractions, or according to the surrealist modes of association of dissimilar terms.

The Hybrid Rite of Violence

Carlo Fanelli

This essay wants to demonstrate how, on approaching contemporaneity, the theatre has itself removed in some of its forms the ritual logics from its processes of representation. On the contrary, the mere evocation of the ritual act on the scene, deprived of its cultural and sacred elements, has been made functional to the analytic representation of violence through obsessive and mimetic repetition of gestures and actions. In other words, the rite is performed as an evocation of violence. The violent act is ritualized by the theatre as an expression of political, sociological and aesthetic issues, rather than being a liturgical practice.

Consecrating September 11: *Here is New York. A Democracy of Photographs*

Emanuele Crescimanno

The attack to the WTC on September 11 was a world shocking event; clearly, the people of New York were the most involved as their city lost one of its symbols. The exhibition *Here is New York. A Democracy of Photographs* was one of the many events organized to help people overcoming the trauma caused by the attack; to help them develop, without removing the trauma and while not giving up against terror, a 'consciousness' of the event. The exhibition of photographs on September 11 was a collective ritual act of the city; an affirmation of solidarity and of the desire to live through the aftermath of the attack.

The Rite (of the) Unfinished: Jess Franco and the Obsession with Sade

Nicola Apicella

This article addresses the mechanical ritualization of desire between Sade's literature and Jess Franco's cinematic bulimia. For more than fifty years, ideally following Sade (of whom he is an avid reader), Franco has been deconstructing cinematic genres and ambitions by implementing a machine of production and reproduction of images – erotic but not just – that, through repetition, aim to reconcile with the undifferentiation of *jouissance*. The article puts forward a reflection on the rite and on its therapeutic ability which, through illusion, points towards a return to the neutrality, to the quietness, of the origin – in other words, to the image that precedes all images.

Jocus in Fabula or the Bold Sacred in Monteiro's cinema

Francesco Giarusso

This essay will address the element of play and ritual in João César Monteiro's cinema and the visual and verbal structures that characterize it. On the one hand, the organisation of a strongly geometrized space in which Monteiro officiates feminine ceremonies, revealing a precise eidetic figuration, will be observed. On the other, a few examples where such balance is disturbed by the formal composition of semantic subversion will be analyzed. Such practice will be considered as directing towards the modification of the usual distinction between the sacred and the profane, thus offering different 'views on the world' and various 'forms of verbal interpretation'. The analysis put forward in this article, far from offering a comprehensive view of the spatio-temporal dimensions of hieratic images that Monteiro builds up throughout his work, tries to question the strategies through which Monteiro violates the sacred and, through such violation, gives rise to practices such as that of *jocus* and *ludus*.

The Technique and the Magic. Fellini, the Rite of the Set and the 'Italian Way to See'

Andrea Minuz

This article explores the notion of the rite in light of Fellini's films, with particular attention to Fellini's shaping of his own public figure. In Fellini we appreciate the making of the ritual out of the film set and the director's

gestures – so that cinema comes to belong to a blurry space between the *technique* and the *magic*. Such ritual is performed in order to celebrate his own artistic myth (the ‘wizard’, the ‘magician’, the ‘charmer’, the ‘maestro’, according to the most common *tropoi* of Fellinian exegesis). By tracing back the concepts of rite, technique and magic, as they are defined in Walter Benjamin’s famous *Work of Art* essay, this article aims to demonstrate how Fellini’s rituals can be considered as the enlightening display of wider issues concerning traits of Italian modernity, as well as of its ‘visual ideology’.

Trance and Enchantment. The Triviality of the Rite in Good Morning, Night

Dario Tomasello

There is something like an insisting and ineffable *basso continuo* in Marco Bellocchio’s *Good Morning, Night* (2003): it is the necessity to remark, by means of obsessive rituals, the convulsed phases of the Moro case and its social and psychological implications. The film follows different, but equally alienating, trajectories, characterized by a hallucinated oneirism as well as by a slavish attempt to reproduce the events.

On the Threshold of the Rite. Notes on a Filmic Corpus by Jean Rouch

Carmelo Marabello

In 1949, on his way back from Niger, Jean Rouch carried with him notes, photos as well as three filmic documentaries: *Les magiciens de Wanzerbé* (1948), *La Circoincision* (1949) and *Initiation à la danse des possédés* (1949). These latter are three visual pads representing a filmic *corpus* on the rite which will define Rouch’s further investigation between the fields of ethnological and cinematic studies.

Cinema that Will Come. Modernity and Archetypes in The Mad Masters

Saverio Zumbo

1954’s *The Mad Masters* by Jean Rouch gives us an opportunity to reflect on what the director described with the term ‘cine-trance’. The reflexivity, linked to the critical and self-conscious use of the cinematic medium, and

the ‘psychic depth’ of images, along with their deep symbolic resonance, are the two sides of the same coin. A Jungian and enunciative approach appears to be a suitable analytical tool to define the distinctive ‘modernity’ of Rouchian cinema. Likewise, the notion of modern cinema itself can be reconsidered in the light of ‘cine-trance’.

Vertov’s Cinema at the Origin of the Cult of Lenin

Dunja Dogo

This article argues how the representation of V.I. Lenin in a consistent part of the silent production by Dziga Vertov took on the shape of what we could define as a cinematic image of the rite. The investigation opens with the analysis of some specific frames of the 21st *Kinopravda* (1925) – one of the first ‘documentary’ films to be specifically thought to provide a visual account of the turning of Lenin into a political icon comparable to the typology of a saint. The aim of the investigation is to give evidence of how this particular work could be reasonably considered as one of the first acts performed by the Soviet power in order to generate an almost religious aura around Lenin.

Cinematic Rites in Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of Will*

Antioco Floris

In Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of Will* (1935), the ritual element is revealed not only through the documentaristic representation of the *Parteitag*, but also through the cinematic representation which enhances the existing rituals and liturgies of the congress while creating new ones through shots selection and montage. As an example, the end of the first narrative segment (3rd sequence), shows the symbolic passage from pre-Nazi to Nazi Germany, anticipating the coming of the millennial *Reich*. The combination of shots and music creates a liturgic context and a rite of passage, emphasising the hallowing potential of cinema.

Repetition and Difference: the Staging of the Rite in Ford’s *How Green Was My Valley*

Massimo Olivero

Through the analysis of *How green was my valley* (1941), the article

wants to make evident the use of rituals in John Ford's *mise en scène* – as their importance in maintaining the social order – while also stressing the necessity of their renewal and their reinvention in previously unexpressed forms. It will be shown how the ritual characterizes itself in the movie as a nostalgic moment of a now lost past, but also as the evidence of a needed change for the survival of the community.

Ponza's 'Savages' and De-ritualization. An Un-filmed Scene of *The Adventure*

Federico Vitella

Among the narrative ideas of the plot of *The Adventure (The Island)*, which were later eliminated in the process of production, a scene set in Ponza in which the protagonists come across the celebration of a religious festival is of particular interest. The scene of the rite – the commemoration of the ascension of Virgin Mary – leads to reconsider the relationship entertained by Antonioni with the anthropological culture of his time, and helps to shed new light on one of the most enigmatic scenes of the movie, such as the mass mobilization of Messina for the prostitute-aspiring starlet Gloria Perkins. The religious fury of people in Ponza resembles the erotic fury of people in Messina which are instead officiants of another kind of rite: the modern cult of film stardom.

The Rituality of Gaming and the Experimentation of the Sacred. Jacques Demy's *La Baie des Anges*

Katia Paroniti

La Baie des Anges was filmed by Jacques Demy after a period spent in Cannes in which he got in contact for the first time with the rituals of gambling. The film unravels a physical and 'spiritual' journey by Jackie and Jean, the two main characters, who experience gambling as a kind of religious belief; as an unrefearable and unconsciously fascinating experience which produces a certain kind of behaviour, through rituals and myths, able to re-read and re-new the experience of the sacred. Jackie and Jean let themselves be driven by the overwhelming passion of gambling and by the stormily and temporary living in the sacred space that is the Côte d'Azur. The existence of the two protagonists is subdued to the whims of fate and such ritual subjection becomes a way of life.

The Rite Between Seduction and Sacrifice: Carmelo Bene's *Don Giovanni*

Gianluca Pulsoni

The article investigates over aspects concerning the role of the rite in *Don Giovanni* (1970), a film by the Italian 'total artist' Carmelo Bene. In this film, the rite is defined within a theoretical framework comprised by a logic of seduction, in the terms described by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, and the practice of sacrifice – a creative and stagy metaphor representing the necessary counterpart of seduction and making the latter's strategies effective.

***The Exorcist* and the Rite**

Antonio Catolfi

The paper analyzes William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973), a cult film that became a worldwide phenomenon. The film is one of the most controversial works of the 70s; a masterpiece which remains the greatest success in the history of film on demoniac possession. Its evocative power is still intact after almost forty years and it is closely connected to the 'rite' – precisely a 'ritual' exorcism of purification and transition – as the only way to release humanity from evil.

Returnances. On the Origin, on the Rite, on Trance in Artavazd Pelešjan's Cinema

Patrizia Fantozzi

By relating back to Eisenstein's basic idea of 'cinématisme', which sees cinema as a device able to redraw time in the ritual formulas of acceleration, slow motion and inversion, this essay wants first of all to be a consideration on film language as a form of trance, of rhythm, of return, as well as a quite peculiar form of the rite. By considering some *passages* – the most *symptomatic* in such direction – in the work of the Armenian poet-director *Artavazd Pelešjan*, the essay will address a specific cinematic practice of re-writing which carries within itself intrinsic metamorphic potentialities, acting through continual transgressions and being able to express itself through an *image-event*. The contingency embodied in such specific practice through figures of *repetition*, *spiral* and *rime*, seems to celebrate a real 'ritual of the opening': an epiphany of a 'distant' image apt to give itself

‘to presence’ only through its *aura*.

Bonds of Blood. The Rite, Tragedy and the Impossibility of History in Abel Ferrara’s *The Funeral*

Fabio Pezzetti Tonion

Over the course of his career, Abel Ferrara’s efforts have been aimed at giving films a tragic value in an era which has seen the demise of the ‘tragic’. The gloomy ritualistic dimension upon which *The Funeral* (1996) is constructed – where the funeral becomes a catalyst exploding the hidden tensions of the family – also becomes the instrument for portraying a circular temporality, which is closed in on itself and able to isolate the protagonists from history. In this manner, Ferrara turns them into figures that are able to pose questions about the nature of Evil, the presence (or the absence) of God, and the nihilistic dimension of human existence.

Cosmologies of Mimesis and Rituals of Minorities: Patricio Guzmàn’s *Nostalgia de la Luz*

Beatrice Buzi

The ‘unheard paradox’ is that ‘we are able to trace things and people who existed thousands of years ago but we cannot trace those who disappeared during the *golpe*’. The starting point of Patricio Guzmàn’s investigation on Pinochet’s dictatorship is the need to know one’s own past which the power, in all its forms, always tends to destroy. That performed by the winners is always a ‘rite without memory’, which is the opposite of the ‘will to remember’ of those who have lost. *Nostalgia de la Luz* (2010) is hence a film about the critical consciousness of a society facing the risk to see the evidence of its own past vanishing.

Being Contemporary. Notes on Alessandro Piva’s *Pasta Nera*

Ivana Margarese

The essay addresses the film *Pasta nera* (2011) by Alessandro Piva, trying to develop a new reading of the ‘ritual’ while opening to original meanings of ‘being contemporary’. ‘Being a contemporary’, according to Giorgio Agamben, means to seize one’s own time by trying to perceive beyond the appearances, so as to be able to transform the present by relating it to the past.

Cinema, and especially ‘archival’ cinema, retrieves apparently vanished or forgotten memories by working with details that hold significant meaning. The archive – which has become central in visual art – manifests itself in the form of traces, and potentially contains in itself the strength of memory (of the past) while pointing towards transformation (of the present); it is, in other words, an archive for the future. In this sense, if the ritual is a node between different times - by being an action, a gesture that was already designed to be as such - it plays a major role in our being contemporaries. From this perspective the essay analyzes *Pasta Nera*, a historical documentary film taken from the book *The Train to Happiness* by Giovanni Rinaldi.

Beyond Cinematic Rituality. Tsai Ming-liang’s *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*

Francesca Ferrara

The article analyzes the film *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (2003) by the Taiwanese director Tsai Ming-liang. Completely set in a movie theatre that screens his last show, *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* depicts with irony and lyricism the decline of the spectatorial ritual in cinema as well as the decline of cinema as a symbolical and imaginary space. The film shows the farewell of cinema to cinema; the slow disappearance of its hobbling (in)existence – which ghosts inhabiting the movie theatre are the evidence of.

The Rituality of Gestures: Weerasethakul’s *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*

Clio Nicastro

On the background of a modern, anonymous and detached from reality world, the life of the farmer Boonmee – the main character of Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010) – is instead organized according to magic and ancestral bond with humans, animals and nature. The circular time of the rite marks the last days of Boonmee, who is affected by an incurable disease. This time defined by gesture and reiteration is able to destroy and re-enact symbolic spaces of reality.