

ABSTRACT IN INGLESE

Giving Credit to the Gaze. A Conversation with Marie-José Mondzain edited by Daniele Dottorini

Starting from the difference between ‘having credulity’ and ‘having belief’ in images - addressed in the opening paragraphs of the conversation with Marie-José Mondzain - it is possible to recognize in Christianity a distinctive feature which makes it different from every other monotheistic religions: that of not having provided the image with a (true or false) relationship with the real, but rather with truth itself. The development of the discourse on the image, starting from the paradigm of Christianity, brings to rethinking the notion of power of the image in a twofold way: not only there is a power *on* images, which is exercised through their control, but also a not entirely controllable power *of* images – an inherent power that itself becomes the way to measure the world. Opposed to the forms of power that dominate but do not survive images (‘images remain even when the power that they have served is no more’, Mondzain says) are other forms – such as cinema –, whose birth is closely linked with the inherent (and free) power of the image. The spectator gives credit to the image, but its truth depends on the freedom of the spectator’s gaze: the relationship between the producer and the viewer of images always centres on a continuous movement between the action of ‘making believe’ (fiction) and that of ‘letting know’ (documentary).

Credit Money and Cinematic Perception

Morgan Adamson

This essay intends to analyze some fundamental passages from Deleuze’s writings on cinema, in order to understand how film theory has attempted to come to terms with a thought on cinematic perception adequate to the politics of life under finance capitalism, in connection with Marx’s theory of ‘credit-money’. In particular, the following investigation is directed to theorize cinema’s internalized relationship with money, and thus with the process of financialization as such. The shift from Vertov’s ‘camera-eye’ to the rise of the time-image (the ‘brain-screen’) could tell us a lot about a similar passage in monetary representation at the end of the twentieth century: namely, the one concerning the collapse of the gold standard. The task of understanding the function of visual economies in our present must

take into account the immanent relationship between cinema and money, and the financial logics that structure this relationship.

Cinema and Hysteria: the Incredulous Gaze

Arianna Salatino

This paper wants to shed light onto the strong relationship between cinema and hysteria over the last century. Such two enormous phenomena of belief have many points in common concerning fiction, simulation, illusion, credit and truth, as well as the exhibition of their respective apparatus. Cinema and hysteria both deal with the question of representation and *mise-en-scène*, and they have always helped one another to create their own aesthetical, clinical and figurative models.

To Profane the Host. Jean Louis Schefer, Perceval (and Cinema)

Enrico Camporesi

In some of his writings on cinema, Jean Louis Schefer evokes a scene from Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval*. Precisely, he recalls the moment in which the main character sees the portrait of Blanche fleur appearing in the snow. The portrait is generated by three drops of blood, left there by a wounded wild goose after being hurt by a falcon. What is then the *credit* of such image? That is to say: why can it be considered as a paradigm of the moving image? The aim of this essay is hence to explore this link and to investigate over the value of the image taken from *Perceval* in Schefer's writings on film.

'Who Do You Say I Am?'. C.T. Dreyer's *Jesus*

Alessio Scarlato

This essay investigates over C.T. Dreyer's famous project to realize a film on Jesus, which he abandoned after working on it for about 30 years. The screenplay the Danish director wrote was based on a large documentation, for the most part inspired by Joseph Klausner's studies, which considered Jesus as a product of the Jewish culture. The interpretation of the Gospel put forward by Dreyer shows an insurmountable circularity between the belief, that is the risk of trusting something invisible, and the credit grounded on philological and historical basis, which tries to reconstruct the narration of Jesus' life based on incontrovertible facts.

The Image and Its Credit

Francesco Ceraolo

This essay addresses Marcuse's notion of art and the way it affects contemporary cinematic aesthetics, especially in the context of new Marxists and postmodern trends, both in Italy and worldwide. On the one hand in fact, leftist thought has historically looked at Italian 'cinema di impegno' either through Gramscian historicism or, more recently, through postmodernist takes which deny the possibility for cinematic narratives to redefine the socio-cultural structures of reality. On the other, the presence of Marcuse's aesthetics has been crucial in those dialectical approaches to cinema, such as Jameson's, which put forward a redefinition of the notion of 'credit' within the relationship between the image and social reality itself.

The Ethics of the World Viewed: Cinema, Language and Credence

Simona Busni

More than thirty years after the publication of *The World Viewed* (1979), this essay aims at analyzing some fundamental passages from Stanley Cavell's work, in order to verify the actual living significance of his reflections as well as to frame them within the theoretical matter of the credit - here meaning 'credence'. From Plato to Bazin, going through Kant and Wittgenstein, *The World Viewed* makes an amazing theoretical point in attempting to outline hypothesis for an ethics of cinematic images.

The Living Eye is Better Than the One Portrayed

Giovanni Festa

This short essay explores the possibility to give credit to images, or rather to believe in their reality through separating them into two classes: the image-reality and image-operative. The first embodies the 'three-dimensional level' of the image, the second its 'deep two-dimensional level'. In other words: from testimony we pass into presence, from intensity into cavity and its recesses. The two parts of the essay offer an 'itinerarium mentis', through three 'operative sets': a Table, a Ritual Scene, and the Alteration of a Support. As iconographic material, a particular 'Warburghian Table' is used, like those created for the Atlas Mnemosyne, working through the assembly of heterogeneous images.

The Credibility of Surrealist Images

Stefania Schibeci

It may sound paradoxical to talk about images produced by the Surrealist movement in terms of ‘credibility’, since they are, by definition, ‘surreal’. They seem to be visual hallucinations, lacking any logical connection. Yet, as it appears from surrealists theoretical texts about cinema, as well as from the analysis of the structure of *Un Chien Andalou*, the reason why spectators trust and give credit to what is shown on the screen is because they are aware of being confronted with a series of fragmented and surreal images, that intend to reproduce the mechanisms of dreams and the dynamics of thought, through a sapient use of editing techniques. From such perspective, surrealist images are conveying to spectators a truthful and believable rendition of oneiric reality, besides being, according to André Breton’s expression, ‘veritable[s] photographie[s] de la pensée’.

Author’s Aporias

Veronica Gaia di Orio

The essay aims to underline the changes occurred in the author’s practise from the Fifties till now, through the study of credits in cinema and art. The analysis of Saul Bass’s works illustrates the perspective of a modernist author, whilst the analysis of Francesco Vezzoli’s works shows the practise of post-production as theorized by Nicolas Bourriaud.

Gambling Cinema

Adriano D’Aloia

The fundamental thesis of this essay is that modalities of the film viewer’s cognitive activity and emotional involvement, when confronted with a crucial narrative turn or a character’s dilemma, are similar to the psychological dynamics that characterize gambling. Built upon the notions of *innervation* (Benjamin), *action* (Goffman) and *ilinx* (Caillois), the model of cinematic participation put forward in this essay highlights the psychophysical disposition of the viewers to seek gambling-like experiences that allow to test their senses and regain the ‘stake’ of their own identity.

The Casino as a Metaphor

Marco Grosoli

As a film director often making allegorical points about macro-economical situations, Steven Soderbergh built his *Ocean's Eleven* around a blatant allegory of the marginalization of industrial capitalism in our era ruled by financial capital. This essay aims to retrace this process, in relation to a broader one which points at the marginalization of traditionally-conceived Hollywood cinema (an exact epitome of the former 'Fordist' kind of capitalism) in a world ruled by corporations and by their forms of horizontal integration, which affect the show business as well. In both cases, what is at stake is the deep mutation of the role covered by the credit, in both its financial sense and in that (derived from the Greek term *pistis*) regarding belief, faith. Two strictly interrelated notions indeed.

In *Ocean's Eleven*, this all is symbolized by the casino intended as a sort of Stock Exchange – which allows a significant confrontation with Martin Scorsese's *Casino*, another film centred on the deep mutation of America's facing the financial turn of capitalism.

Upon the Crisis of the Cartographic Reason of Cinema

Giorgio Avezzi

This essay tries to test, within a cinematic context, the concept of 'crisis of cartographic reason', which Franco Farinelli describes as a typical phenomenon of the contemporary episteme. Considering how geographical maps are represented in some recent films (like *Alexander* [O. Stone, 2004], *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* [T.L. Jones, 2006] and *The Adjustment Bureau* [G. Nolfi, 2011]) a systematic crisis of the credit traditionally assigned to maps can be traced. This represents also, and above all, a comment on the primitive geographical vocation of cinema.

John Grierson: Freedom of Cinema and Confinement of the Real

Matteo Pollone

The shift that the English documentary genre (born in 1929 due to John Grierson) undergoes in the Thirties, is, above all, the story of a modification of the reliance that film audiences and even filmmakers have been willing to attribute to the cinematic image. This story also tells of a transition from an irregular but powerful elaboration of the cinematic imagery – made possible

thanks to the belief in a truth rooted in the cinematic images of the world - to a more regimented type of production inspired by social commentary, which is forerunner of future television forms.

Aesthetics and Politics of Poor Life

Nicola Perugini and Francesco Zucconi

If photographers and videomakers who work in the so-called ‘zones of emergency’ can experience a *‘testimony debt’*, it is as well undeniable that materials they produce play a crucial role in the system of moral and *economic credit* characterizing the contemporary humanitarian circuits. By articulating the category of credit/debt in relation to the representation of suffering, and by finding in Renzo Martens’ documentary *Enjoy Poverty* (2008) an exemplary place of elaboration of such problematic, our essay develops a critical approach to humanitarian communications and their political and economic horizons.

The Credit of Truth

Daniele Dottorini

By moving from a series of theoretical thematizations (Derrida, Mondzain, Deleuze) of the relationship between the image and belief, between faith and credit, this essay explores some of the complex ways in which the recognition of a credit of the image (of an image that has to do with the truth) emerges in contemporary cinema. In particular, it investigates how this occurs in the cinema of the real – i.e. in the form of documentary cinema – which plays a central role in the radical rethinking of cinematic forms. Through a journey that explores forms of the coming into visibility within the image of space and places, of subjects and stories that are filmed, this essay puts forward a possible interpretation of reality cinema as a place of contemporary theoretical thinking, using examples from films by Kawase, Herzog, Wiseman, Depardon, Kossakovski, David Perlov, Andres Di Tella, Jay Rosenblatt.

Journey to Italy. The Belief Beyond Illusion

Roberto De Gaetano

Journey to Italy (R. Rossellini, 1954) is one of the founding films of modern cinema as it puts forward not only the problem of the breakdown

of the bonds between the Subject and the world, as well as of the perception of reality released from active feedback (Deleuze's pure optical and sound images), but more profoundly because it focuses on a crucial issue: that of the belief in the world. Such belief (and the crisis that comes first) applies in the film to the intimate relationships of a bourgeois couple and to the strength of their marriage bond.

'Istant film' and strategies of Authentication in *Love in the City*

Federico Vitella

Love in the City (M. Antonioni, F. Fellini, A. Lattuada, C. Lizzani, F. Maselli, D. Risi, 1953) is of continuing importance and interest today, especially for its being a sort of 'neorealist laboratory' – a safe place for the experimentation of the most advanced theories by Cesare Zavattini. This paper aims to study the film in the light of the long introductory prologue, which invites the viewer to apply a 'documentary reading' to the ambiguous materials which it presents, on the basis of the alleged similarities between cinema (neorealism) and photojournalism.

'Nearing Truth'. Epstein's *Finis Terrae*

Chiara Tognolotti

Jean Epstein's cinema apparently seems to assign a strong credit of truth to the cinematic image, because of its natural adherence to reality; starting with the films of the so-called 'Matter of Britain', and in particular with *Finis terrae* (1929), the director initiates a renewed aesthetics that includes non-professional actors, long and documentary-like sequences, a loose plot, the lack of set design and costumes. But his cinema is much more ambiguous than it seems, and images end up by going beyond the real: their credit of truth lays in their symbolism, in their ability to reveal the deep essence of reality itself.

The Decentred Origin of the Sense

Alessandra Merlo

This essay puts forward the exercise of observing a photograph dating back to the Forties and taken in a Latin American country. Going beyond the search for clues, this photo offers an occasion to recognize to what extent it displays

a *mise-en-scene* of reality. The latter is indeed not a static entity, lying outside a wide-open window onto the world; but rather what is signified within its outer border. Such an *image-act* – if this is how we could refer to the act of making sense of reality – is possible, in this case, thanks to an unsuspected, and seemingly out of place, cinematic element that occupies its centre.

The Necessity of the Credit: Peter Watkins' *The War Game*

Elisa Mandelli

In *The War Game* Peter Watkins represents the 'here and now' of a hypothetical nuclear war, by using a documentary style in order to depict an admittedly fictional event. This essay shows how this short-circuit is able to call into question the mainstream media's credibility. Spectators are thus asked to give credit to a discourse that explicitly stands out of the coordinates of verisimilitude that have got them accustomed to.

Carmelo Bene: The Dis-credit of Cinema

Massimo Canepa

The essay examines Carmelo Bene's first film, *Hermitage* (1967) – a famous medium-length film based on the foreword-narration to a literary text by Bene himself titled *Credito italiano V.E.R.D.I.*. Building upon the meagre references to the film contained in his later autobiographical texts, this essay attempts to define the role that cinema played within Bene's wider aesthetic project. The essay highlights the paradoxical character of Bene's notion of the cinematic image that, through excess, calls into question its own visibility and credibility as a witness to the world; while also, manifesting as a powerful and death-driven force absorbing the subject, establishes the latter's decay within a multitude of meanings.

In the Trace of Marker's *Immemory*

Anna Caterina Dalmasso

Current debates often address the difference between the analogic and digital regime as an alternative between a paradigm of likeness and authenticity which is opposed to the numeric unindexical sphere, within which something of the image – its *aura*? – seems to be lost. Already in 1983, with *Sunless*, Chris Marker had been one of the first directors to have used electronic and digital

images in his cinema, and meant his art as an exploration of such ‘sunless’ images. Marker’s questioning of the ontological status of images, of their credibility and reputation, of their ethic and political significance, concerns some of the most actual issues about our present experience of virtual images.

Still Life: Death Nature with Banknote

Marco Dalla Gassa

By starting from the analysis of two shots from Jia Zhang-ke’s *Still Life* (one depicting a worker observing the Bay of the Three Gorges from a nearby panoramic viewpoint, the other reproducing the Bay on a ten Yuan bill that the worker holds in his hand), this essay wants to put forward a reflection upon the relation between the giving ‘credit’ and ‘credence’ to images, by specifically examining the forms of transfiguration of landscape and national identity caused by the State Authorities - and of the corresponding ways of resilience and interrelationship enacted by those affected by these processes.

Person of Interest and the Praise of the Doubt

Miriam Visalli

Surveillance cameras stand out in urban crossroads as totems of a new civil religion of control. Ubiquitous devices of interception and localization are able to trace any citizen as a ‘person of interest’. The recent series written by Jonathan Nolan and showrunner Greg Plageman, and produced by J.J. Abrams, shows a peculiar visual system based on a deconstructed look that comes back to the spectator in dissembled gazes. There is a possible totemic condition (as read by Durkheim) that works as an apotropaic object; while the same totem acts as a receptor of the acquired pulses, it makes problematic the relation between the observer and the observed. A sacred scenery in which observers move like invisible emissaries that attract the spectators’ eye to see what they usually do not see, calling for a ‘pact of trust’ on the truthful nature of these images.

Images That Affect Us. Cave of Forgotten Dreams

Massimiliano Coviello

Cave of Forgotten Dreams (2010) is the first Werner Herzog’s documentary to use 3D technology. But, most importantly, it is the first documentary

in which a camera reveals the paintings hidden for thousands of years in the Chauvet cave in southern France. In this adventure, Herzog shows to the audience the aesthetic value of this figurative heritage and describes its links with the history of cinema. By tracing the origin of the illusion of movement to these primordial figurative experiments, Herzog tests the trust of the spectator and shows the importance of cinema in the construction of the imaginary.