

ABSTRACT IN INGLESE

The Love of Ghosts. A Conversation with Miguel Gomes

edited by Daniele Dottorini

Cinema has always created beings that do not exist in reality, thus materializing our fears and desires: its power is that of evoking ghosts. But if most of the current production strives (often unnecessarily) to make us believe in the “truth” of our images created by special effects, authors like Mizoguchi, Carpenter, Rivette, Weerasethakul remind us how cinema has the power to mix real and imaginary worlds also through the simple use of light, establishing a pact of trust with the viewer. Creating the conditions for this pact, for Gomes, means above all resurrecting the ghost of a disappeared cinema, that of the great season of the silent film, from which it recovers forms and visual effects. Exhibiting the image as an artifice and superimposing the filter of a shared cinematographic memory on the vision of a real space (as for *Tabu*'s Africa), the Lusitanian filmmaker gives life to landscapes and characters that appear at the same time concrete and abstract, mythical and real; and in this way he may require the spectator to suspend their disbelief and to trust, for the duration of a film, the existence of unreal creatures such as ghosts.

The Exhibition of the Invisible. The *Phantasmata* as a Form of the Imagination

Denis Brotto

The recurrence of the *phantasmata* within the iconography of the cinema shows its founding character, as well as the link with visual invention, with the vision that extends beyond the visible, ultimately with the imagination. In the essay *Ballaciner*, Le Clézio defines cinema as “falling from the sky, from cloud to cloud, in the middle of a storm”. The vision becomes a blanket of clouds, vapors, flashes, ghosts through which to pass. In this exhibition of the invisible, the role of technique, medium and form, remains peculiar. They are the true founding factors of the fantasmatic experience given by cinema.

Elsewhere. Derrida and the Actor's Spectrality

Deborah De Rosa

The theme of spectrality is a *leitmotif* of Derrida's work. In his production are well known the occurrences in which the phantasmal dimension becomes the lens through which we can read cinema and TV as deferral devices capable of giving, in a certain sense, life to “ghosts”.

Within the same perspective are the considerations of the French philosopher on a certain type of acting experience: the autobiographical interpretation on the scene. Starting from his/her own experience, s/he performs an important and suggestive philosophical work on the implications of the peculiar acting experiment that consists in interpreting his/her own life and person in a film: a sort of phenomenological description of becoming a character, or of “becoming the actor” of oneself. The essay reconstructs such Derridean path and its genealogy.

Leviathan and Its Ghosts

Nicola Turrini

During the editing of *Leviathan*, Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel began to see mysterious shapes between images: observing the film during the editing allowed to see what was clearly a ghost, images hidden in the body of the film, impossible to see at normal speed. Suspended between slow motion and frame animation, they reveal a universe at the threshold of human perception, an underwater world of aquatic and fluid shapes that appear and disappear *between* the frames. As if the ghost and its coming alive in an image disclosed an interval: between the gaze and its given to see takes shape a vision in which the gaze itself breathes along with its ghosts.

The Phantom of the Style: the Machinic Animism of Pasolini's Cinema

Lia Turtas

Pier Paolo Pasolini's work is haunted by ghosts. Starting from his poetry and theatre, all the way up to *Petrolio*, the author unceasingly doubles himself into images of attraction and repulsion. The continuous creation of specters is in turn tormented by the pursuit of an arch-phantom that encompasses them all, a “whole” at which Pasolini's activity constantly aims: the flow of reality. The paper discusses the significance of the ghost – and particularly, of the ghost of style – in Pasolini's theory of cinema.

The Phantoms of the Machine. Behavioral data and personalized recommendations

Giorgio Avezzi

Recommender systems for VOD platforms use data – both data describing audiovisual content and about the users and their behavior – and also use algorithms of different kinds. The fundamental role of humans behind all this machinery is typically censored. What is purely technical, objective or automatic when someone has to decide what a film is, how it can be properly

described, and when it can be considered as similar or different to another one? And when someone has to decide what is the deep reason behind every spectator's behavior and what is the meaning of liking a movie?

The Disjointed Time of Ghosts: Orphans and Haunted Houses in Contemporary Cinema

Mariano Veliz

The appearance of the ghosts comes from the unburied past and, by challenging the irreversibility of death, generates a temporary mismatch. In *Spectres of Marx* Jacques Derrida explores this power of the phantom to dismantle chronology. Derrida establishes a link between the ghost, a disjointed temporality and the claim of justice. In this article, I propose to study two contemporary figurations of such disjointed time: *The Others* (Amenábar, 2001) and *Sleepy Hollow* (Burton, 1999). The essay analyzes the figures of orphans and haunted houses in both films,.

Stories of Invisibility from the Asian Metropolis

Mariagrazia Costantino

The essay starts from filmic texts in which the literal and symbolic ghost, besides and before being disconcerting, occupies a privileged observation point that helps the "living" understand what defies the physical sight. The ghost is sign and symptom of fluidity and constant mobility of the populations, but above all of people's invisibility: that silent army of fixed and seasonal workers, with or without license, and the new army of consumers. The cities tormented by planning activities and political rivalries are the ideal ground for incursions from an ultramundane world. Postmodern cities are triumphs of invisibility, threshold zones, shadow lines to be seen as a physical and temporal pause, space-time pockets of transition from a phase to the other; the Asian ones (in our case those of East and South-East Asia) are particularly so, because more recent and complex – and coeval with photographic technology – is the economic and political stratification lying on a substratum of legends and superstitions. Besides, East Asia seems to have been long affected by the problem of historical removal, which is the premise for the onset of all the phantasmatic narratives here examined.

To unveil what is hidden behind the shroud of "reality" is the essence of the filmic reflection. Ghosts are the centre of an allegorical system activating a process of unearthing, but also grieving, inasmuch as it evokes a consistent threat of extinction. Hence there originates a narration of the invisible strata of the city by who is him(it)self invisible, as such omniscient, and as omniscient charged with the responsibility to show what remains of the city and its inhabitants, besieged by the dark forces of the periphery.

A Simulator of Fear: Cinematographic Onryō in Japanese Horror Video Games

Francesco Toniolo

Onryō, the Japanese ghosts of revenge, have seen in recent years a revitalization, especially thanks to characters such as Sadako Yamamura (*Ringu*) and Kayako Saeki (*Ju-on*). This essay explores the influences of these ghosts on video game production, not just to make an inventory of the *onryō* in these video games. The primary intent of the essay is rather use the ways of action of *onryō* (especially of their film versions) as a key for the interpretation of gaming experience that characterizes these horror games and their design choices.

Ghosts of Desire. The masochistic instance in Fassbinder's cinema

Rosamaria Salvatore

Within the vast cinematographic production of Rainer W. Fassbinder, the masochistic phantom is constituted as a central device for analyzing the complex human nature and the oppressive logics that animate the cruel battle between lover and loved one, which sees individual figures waving between obedience and unconscious domination over the other. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Effi Briest* (1974), *Martha* (1974), *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* (1978), are the works proposed to start some reflections on how such recurrence strongly embeds his cinema and of how it can also be read modulated by the juxtaposition with portions of psychoanalytic thought.

The Ghost of Anne-Marie. Duras and the Cinema of the Imaginary

Daniela Angelucci

“The art of cinema turns off the text, kills its own offspring: the imaginary. This is its virtue: to close. Blocking the imaginary. This block, this closure is called a film”. These words by Marguerite Duras prelude to the attempt of a new, completely different way of making cinema, experimented by the author since the 1960s. The article focuses on the opening to the imaginary, to the possible, to the ghost, that is the typical opening of the cinematographic works by Duras. Particular reference is made to *India Song* (1975) and to the character of Anne-Marie Stretter, the artist's childhood ghost who reappears in novels and films as a fatal figure.

L'orfanello di Messina. The Phantom of the Earthquake of 1909

Rossella Catanese

In the night of December 28th 1908, the shores of the Strait of Messina witnessed the worst disaster that the young kingdom of Italy had to face: an earthquake followed by a tsunami, occurred at 5:21am, in 37 seconds severely destroyed the cities of Messina and Reggio. Due to the massive loss of human lives and the destruction suffered by hundreds of centres between Calabria and Sicily, the earthquake had a tremendous impact on the coeval public opinion, but also on the historical memory of the country.

L'orfanello di Messina (1909), attributed to Giovanni Vitrotti, who directed the photography, combined an exemplar plot of Christian charity with the emotional power of the catastrophe, and elaborates the themes of loss and mourning through an effective management of superimposition and cross-fading. In this transparency the phantom of a dead little girl takes shape, appearing to her parents and showing them another superimposition: the recent memory of the disaster as a warning of an ethical imperative. The case of the film *L'orfanello di Messina* emblematically places itself into a specific choice of the narrative will, i.e. in re-interpreting the recent memory of trauma as a starting point for a reflection on imagery, emotion, ethics.

Specters of the Past, Memory and Reality in Sjöström's *The Phantom Carriage*

Fabio Pezzetti Tonion

The Phantom Carriage (Sjöström, 1921) presents itself as a model for the representation of a fantastic universe, in which the boundaries between the dimension of the real and that stirred by ghosts come to fall. It is a film that shows how one of the possibilities of cinema is to depart from a merely reproductive realism of naturalistic dynamics. Allowing to represent the evanescence of the ghost, it opens towards a dimension of otherness and makes the coalescence of a plurality of times tangible: those of the present, of the past and of memory.

"The Cinema Is Death at Work". Emidio Greco's *L'invenzione di Morel*

Manlio Piva

Through 1974 Emidio Greco's film, this essay addresses the myth of total cinema, so as the renowned 1946 Bazin's essay foreshadowed, from a dystopian perspective. The plot, which is inspired by 1940 Casares' novel, pictures an island where a science-fictional cinematographic device has given birth to technological ghosts who inhabit the land, a metaphor indeed of an ephemeral and totalitarian society of the spectacle. A world reshaped

in his own spectral representation, which mass-man participate to as a fascinated spectator and an intruder, *voyeur* and “ceremonial body”, inside the temporal coalescence of the Deleuzian crystal-picture.

Cavalo Dinheiro: the Phantoms of History

Samuel Antichi

Contemporary Portuguese cinema contributes to a reflection concerning the country's long colonial past and post-colonial identity. Referring to the trauma studies and the *problem* of the representation of historical *traumas*, the present paper takes into account Pedro Costa's *Horse Money* which sheds a light on the traces of colonial violence. The film consists in a paradigmatic example in order to investigate how trauma wrecks on official and personal memories, reflecting upon how they can be part of how we know history: an experience which has been repressed or unresolved but that still exercises influence in the present.

A Journey Through Ghosts: Laurie Anderson's Heart of a Dog

Fabio Alcantara

The essay focuses on *Heart of a Dog* (2015), the cinema debut by the musician and multimedial artist Laurie Anderson. Through an intimate visual ermetism, Anderson here conjures up the ghostly figures of her own dears who passed away. In the same breath, by establishing an exact correspondence between the content and the filmic form, Anderson's distinctive approach to the filming and editing of different materials (photo, home movies, television pictures, surveillance footage...), turns the film into a spectral formal structure, into a site for a phantasmatic cinematic experience.

The Ghost of Ellis Island: Memory and Media Transmigration

Massimiliano Coviello, Marco Mondino

Since 1892, Ellis Island has been an mandatory crossing point for more than twelve million migrants who tried to reach the United States between the late Nineteenth century and the first half of the Twentieth century. During the great waves of migration to North America, the island was a compulsory passage area, a spatial and biopolitical border in which there was a system of rules and tests that migrants had to overcome in order to be considered eligible to become American citizens. Over the years, the migratory imaginary of Ellis Island has stimulated the interest of photographers, writers and filmmakers. In 2014, JR created *The Ghost of Ellis island*, an intermedial project. Working on archive images, and in particular on the photographs taken by Lewis Wickes Hine between 1903 and 1905, the French artist

manipulated, transformed and affixed some details of these images within the abandoned spaces of Ellis Island. At the same time JR directed a short film, written by Eric Roth and starring Robert de Niro, and made a book in collaboration with the cartoonist Art Spiegelman. The images of immigrants have been dissected, fragmented and still re-framed through an incessant work of remediation that involved also the space. The faces and bodies, reproduced in varying sizes, stick to the surfaces and show their phantasmagorical nature, becoming silent and, at the same time, disturbing presences. At the intersection of historical testimony and aesthetic reactivation, *The Ghost of Ellis Island* becomes an opportunity to reflect on the memory of images and on media transmigration strategies.

The Haunted Town. The Buried Cinema of Dawson City

Lorenzo Rossi

This paper identifies the phantasmatic dimension of cinema through an analysis of Bill Morrison's film *Dawson City: Frozen Time* (2016). The images of old silent movies found in the city of Dawson, which was the geographic epicenter of the Gold Rush in the early Twentieth century, appear today as ghostly apparitions that emanate from bodies in trance. A "survival" that – according to Derrida's reflections on the haunting nature of cinema – leads us to consider cinema as a medium connecting to death, and film as a primitive (physical, tactile) trace of this *phantasme*.

Magnificent Presences

Vito Zagarrio

Starting from the film *The Young Karl Marx* (2017) by Raoul Peck, the essay aims to reflect on the idea of phantom in European cinema and in contemporary Italian film, which suddenly becomes populated with imaginary incorporeal entities, disturbing presences, just imagined or double experiences: think of *Personal Shopper* (2016) by Olivier Assayas, in which the protagonist (played by Kristen Stewart) mysteriously communicates with the soul of her dead brother. But there are also numerous Italian cases: from the phantom protagonist of *Napoli velata* (2017) by Ozpetek to the one that roams in *Hotel Gagarin* (2018) by Simone Spada, up to the protagonist character, halfway between ghost and saint, of *Lazzaro felice* (2018) by Rohrwacher; and then ghosts and double appearances that emerge from lesser-known films of the "outside cinema", such as *Seguimi* (2017) by Claudio Sesieri, or *White Flowers* (in postproduction) by Antonio Di Trapani and Marco De Angelis.