

## English summary

Laurent Véray

*J'accuse (1918, 1937, 1956): WWI Trilogy by Abel Gance*

The essay analyses Abel Gance's *J'accuse*, in its three versions, respectively from 1918, 1937 and 1956. In its original version, the film represents a complex mixing of melodrama and war film. On the one hand, it is sheer patriotism, and on the other an attempt to come to terms with the breathtaking bloodshed that had just took place. The essay starts reconstructing the whole context of Gance's relationship with the Great War, even before he started to work on *J'accuse*. The sound edition of 1937 drastically reconfigured the ideological content of the movie, turning a mildly nationalistic story into a straightforward anti-war narrative, in tune with the pacifist film production of those years. In 1956, Gance went back again to his silent work, this time in order to update not its political content, but its technology, thanks to *polyvision*, a technique of multiple projection that the director had already experimented with his other silent masterpiece *Napoleon* (1928).

Key words: Abel Gance; mourning; nationalism; pacifism; sound; technology.

Martin Baumeister

*"Le modèle du genre"? Westfront 1918, an (anti)war Film  
by Georg Wilhelm Pabst (1930)*

The article deals with *Westfront 1918*, one of the first German sound films and the most important German film about World War One, released in 1930, an adaptation of an anti-war novel by Ernst Johannsen by one of the most prominent directors of Weimar cinema, G.W. Pabst. The film is analyzed in the context of media representations of the war, which represented a crucial element of public memory and a central factor in defining the political meanings of the war in post-war societies. The paper discusses the structure of the film plot, its reception in the German and international press and finally the film's relationship with Johannsen's novel as well as with its much better known American counterpart, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, released almost simultaneously with Pabst's film. For its aesthetic achievements, and for the debate it caused about the political ambivalences

of media “war realism”, *Westfront 1918* merits to be reconsidered with regard to the “canon”.

Key words: Weimar cinema; Georg W. Pabst; Ernst Johannsen; war realism.

Gian Piero Piretto

*A Pacifist in Stalinist Cinema: Okraina by Boris Barnet (1933)*

In the Soviet Union, the switch from silent to sound cinema was not just a technological revolution, but also a chance, for the Communist Party leadership, to get rid of the ideologically suspicious avant-garde cinema of the twenties. The years of the transition to sound, from 1930 to 1934, are sort of a long dissolve, where the old “poetic” montage cinema coexists with the new “prose” of Socialist Realism. Boris Barnet’s *Okraina* is right in the middle of this complex phenomenon. On the one hand, the film tells a story typical of propaganda Soviet cinema: the origins (in World War One) and the outbreak of the October Revolution. But the style and the point of view chosen by Barnet are totally uncommon. Barnet tells a story of “little people”, lost somewhere in the immense Russian countryside, far from Saint Petersburg and the Winter Palace (*Okraina* means “province”). Moreover, *Okraina* tells this story in a light, almost comic style. It is precisely this “Chekhov approach” that made Party critics very distrustful toward this film. The essay analyzes *Okraina*, and traces the history of its reception, from the coldness of the thirties, to the late rediscovery during the Khrushchev years, and then during the Perestroika.

Key words: Boris Barnet; internationalism; October Revolution; pacifism; post-Stalinism; Socialist Realism.

Giaime Alonge

*Paths of Glory and the War Cinema Canon (1957)*

Stanley Kubrick’s *Paths of Glory* (1957) is the first relevant American film on World War I after Howard Hawks’ *Sergeant York* (1941). Inevitably, World War Two, and the subsequent Cold War (with its “hot moment” in Korea), totally re-orientated the war movie genre, that in the thirties had flourished mainly on the memory – mediated by the “war books boom” of the late twenties – of the Great War. When he chooses to go back to the 1914-18 conflict, Kubrick deliberately goes back to the pre-World War Two canon, epitomized by Lewis Milestone’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930). But at the same time, *Paths of Glory* represents the beginning of a new canon. Telling the story of a grotesque court-martial trial in a first line French infantry division, Kubrick depicts the Great War as the quintessence of every possible mass mechanized conflict, posing the founding stones of a canon which is still productive today.

Key words: adaptation; Stanley Kubrick; militarism; pacifism; war movie; war novel.

Barbara Bracco  
*La grande guerra* by Mario Monicelli.  
*The Italian Cinema Facing WWI (1959)*

Mario Monicelli's *La grande guerra* is the most well known (and probably most beloved) Italian film on World War One. Released in 1959, and awarded with the Best Film prize at the Venice Film Festival (along with Roberto Rossellini's *Il generale Della Rovere*), *La grande guerra* has greatly contributed in changing the traditional Italian canon of the war epic, both in the movies and in other cultural domains, a canon that dated back to the fascist era. Relying on a vast corpus of war memoirs, and on a huge international film tradition, the director and his screenwriters created the first realistic representation of the experience of the Italian soldiers in the trenches. Monicelli's choice of mixing tragedy and comedy, in order to tell the story of two "yellow heroes", was object of debate, not just among film critics, but more generally in the public sphere. In the context of the Italian economic boom of the sixties, with its deep cultural and political transformations, this debate marked a watershed in the collective memory of the wars fought by the Italians during the first part of the Twentieth century.

Key words: Mario Monicelli; Italian war experience; tragedy; comedy; economic boom.

Ian F. W. Beckett  
*Film, History and Gallipoli (1981)*

The landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) at 'Anzac Cove' at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 became symbolic of a new Australian national identity, and crucial in what has become characterised as the Anzac myth. The myth had it that Australians sacrificed to the incompetence of British military leadership, not least in the attack of Australian Light Horse on the 'Nek' on 7 August 1915. The myth is still alive and well. Crucially part of that process was the role of Australian cinema, from the first quasi-documentary in 1915 to Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* in 1981. The latter in particular has recast the myth for a new generation. Gallipoli has continued to inspire filmmakers with British, New Zealand and even Turkish productions in more recent years displaying other agendas. The essay examines the cinematic history of the Gallipoli campaign in the context of contrasting myths and realities.

Key words: myth; memory; national identity; Gallipoli; historical accuracy; inter-media storytelling.

Noemi Crain Merz  
*Women's Suffrage and Gender Equality in Piero Gobetti*

The article analyses the attitude towards the political rights of women in Piero Gobetti's articles, mainly in the journals *Energie Nove* and *La Rivoluzione Liberale*, which he edited in the years 1918-1920 and 1922-1925. While supporting women's suffrage in principal, Gobetti's stance towards gender equality was ambivalent; his journals rarely touched upon the issue of women's right to vote, even when the question was eagerly debated in parliament. Although he strongly advocated women's intellectual education, he was far from promoting a change in traditional gender roles. The article likewise examines the ambiguous attitude of the young women in Gobetti's circle, who were ambitious in pursuing their goals in education and in their professional lives but were nonetheless averse to committing to the suffragist battle.

Key words: Piero Gobetti; *La Rivoluzione Liberale*; Italy; women's suffrage; gender equality; antifascism.

Ilenia Rossini  
*"Sons of a bitch" Becoming "Fifteen-year-olds torn to pieces by spring".  
 The "boys of Salò" and Italian Politics*

Immediately after the Second World War and the end of the Italian Civil War, Italy was interested by a phenomenon of "divided memories". On the one hand there was the official public memory, which denied combatant qualification to soldiers who had fought in the army of the fascist Italian Social Republic (*Repubblica sociale italiana*, RSI) and condemned their experience; on the other hand there was the neo-fascist memory which inherited the political, cultural and ideological values of RSI soldiers and put all the efforts to legitimize them through their inclusion in public memory. Over the decades, this neo-fascist struggle over memory has had partial success: the negative image of the Italian Social Republic soldiers went weakening and the previously disparagingly labelled "repubblichini" became the subjects of moving and romantic songs, movies and fictions. Now called "ragazzi di Salò" ("Salò boys"), they were integrated in the Italian collective memory and started to be represented as people who made choices in good faith to defend their homeland and honour. Although the attempts to legislatively equate the fascist and anti-fascist (partisans) fighters as combatants have not been successful, the new rhetoric about "Salò boys" has penetrated deeply into Italian collective memory. Key words: Italian Social Republic; RSI Military Formation; Italian Civil War; fascist legacy; memory politics; veterans.

Mariangela Palmieri  
*The Propaganda Documentaries of the Dc and the Pci  
in the Years of the Cold War*

The article offers an overview of propaganda films of the Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party, made between 1948 and 1964. These works, up to this moment neglected by historians, in the years of the Cold War and confrontation strong in Italy between Catholics and Communists, have helped spread ideology and the different readings of reality given by the two parties. The path analysis of documentaries focuses on language and propaganda aspects, mentality underlying them, representations and identity exhibited of Catholics and Communists. Furthermore, the examination of movies allows to show the dynamics of the clash between the two parties. The research is based on the methodological approach dictated by the New History, which demonstrated the validity of the use of audio-visual material for the study of the past, in particular for the analysis of mentality. Key words: documentary film; movie; propaganda; Christian Democrats; Italian Communist Party; Cold War.