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**C.L. Ragghianti, *Cinematografo Rigoroso***

*Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti's many contributions to Art History and Criticism have been increasingly recognized over the last decade for their continued resonance and validity in modern academia. An understudied area of influence is his contribution to proto-film studies. *Cinematografo Rigoroso*, first written in 1932 and then subsequently republished by the author in 1952 and 1975, presents an early analytical examination of the popular medium of cinema by repositioning it in comparison with classically recognized forms of visual art. Translated for the first time into English, the essay expresses Ragghianti's intuitive intellection of contemporary scholarship and public interest which would feature predominantly throughout his later career.*

### *Introduction. Ragghianti and Proto-Film studies*

Initially published in a 1933 supplementary addition of «Il Convegno», then a highly regarded periodical directed by Enzo Ferrieri, *Cinematografo Rigoroso* was broken into smaller more digestible sections that appeared in the June issue of the journal<sup>1</sup>. In the early 1920s, Ferrieri established «Il Convegno» as a reference point for contemporary visual and literary arts using his platform to publish poetry and prose by young Italian scholars, translations of international texts, and essays written by contemporary artists and art critics. Ferrieri's interest in performing arts began with theater, opening and closing a short-lived theater in Rome, and eventually organizing screenings for films through the Circolo della cinematografia which he initiated in 1926<sup>2</sup>. Having only recently published a section of his thesis in «La Critica», a highly regarded periodical founded by Benedetto Croce, the essay would be one of Ragghianti's first opportunities to establish himself in the academic realm<sup>3</sup>. The analysis of cinema as a figurative art was a relatively new concept and remained important for Ragghianti who republished the essay in his book *Cinema arte figurativa* in 1952, and then later in the first volume of his trilogy *Arti della visione* in 1975<sup>4</sup>. There are several discrepancies between the three versions, including some sentences that are missing entirely from the 1952 reprint. The translation published below uses the 1975 *Arti della visione* version, the closest to the original text but with the addition of a handful of footnotes, added later by the author, which reaffirm his original statements and respond to criticisms after the first publication. This postscript helps to contextualize the era in which the essay was originally

written; therein Ragghianti expands upon and explains some of the specific terminology used in his original analysis. These have been removed from the translation which focuses on the original 1933 essay but are worth examining to better understand the contemporary circumstances surrounding the original publication and the comments added by the author over forty years later.

Ragghianti wrote the essay in 1932 in Pisa and later underlined the disadvantage of working in a “provincial” setting in terms of the availability of relevant international research material. The postscript mentioned above emphasizes the difficulty of finding academic analysis of the artistic methodology of cinematic techniques during the early 1930s<sup>5</sup>. These circumstances, he insists, affected the “near-sighted” vision of Film Studies for which the article was later criticized. According to the author, the essay was met with a great deal of interest from wider academic circles to the shock of the periodical’s director<sup>6</sup>. However, the following issue of «Cine-Convegno» included fervent objections to Ragghianti’s analysis from both Ferrieri and Alberto Consiglio, a journalist, screenwriter, and later member of the Partito Nazionale Monarchico<sup>7</sup>. Consiglio’s major criticism, aside from directly addressing Ragghianti’s insufficient knowledge of contemporary cinematographic bibliography as part of the scathing review, was Ragghianti’s apparent misapplication of Crocian theory. In characteristic form, decades after the publication of these critiques, Ragghianti addressed the response which he deemed “superfluous”, while strengthening his original observations with further bibliography, both predating and contemporary to the original publication of the essay. Notably, in the 1975 postscript he refers to Antonello Gerbi’s 1926 essay *Teorie del cinema*, also published in «Il Convegno», in which the author had closely applied Crocian theory recognizing the importance of the individual handling of technical instruments which reflected the artist’s personality and was perceptible in the final work of art<sup>8</sup>. Ragghianti acknowledges this precedent while underlining the incomplete analysis and generalization that left space for his later observations. However, there is no reference to Gerbi’s essay either in Ragghianti’s original article, or in the 1952 footnote wherein he lists a number of preceding texts which influenced his essay. Apart from those mentioned directly in the postscript, he later added contemporaries Guglielmo Alberti (Pegaso), Giacomo Debendetti, and Massimo Bontempi, each of whom contributed to the creation of a dialogue for analysis of cinema in Italy. According to Ragghianti, they all presented inconclusive findings necessitating further research and unification of a distinctive analytical process comparable to modern Film Studies. Additionally, Ragghianti underlines that despite the

abundance of opportunities Croce himself never criticized the application of his theories in *Cinematografo Rigoroso*<sup>9</sup>.

Furthermore, Ragghianti later considers Gustave Fréjaville's *L'art dans le cinema* published in «Gazette des Beaux-Arts» (January 1921), with which he became familiar only 50 years after its publication<sup>10</sup>. An examination of the article reveals the international discourse in Europe prior to Ragghianti's article, the result of which presents several observations for the reader to consider. Fréjaville, able to witness projections of early films in Paris, distinguished two veins of production still alive today. The first being "industrial" film production catering to a mass audience which, already in the early nineteenth century, commanded a profound economic and communicative power. The second – first argued by Fréjaville, and then by Ragghianti although unaware of this precedent – a nuanced cinematography to be considered as a "fifth art" alongside music, theater, poetry and visual arts<sup>11</sup>. While the latter is considered in detail in *Cinematografo rigoroso*, the former is acknowledged in the accompanying postscript text. The persuasive power of cinema, if not harnessed initially by cultural and political institutions in Italy, was effectively utilized first by the Bolsheviks in Russia and would eventually be adopted by the Italian fascist government as a powerful propagandistic tool. As the author notes, this can be observed in the 1935 bailouts of the Italian film company Cines after a fire destroyed the studio in 1935. This government investment led to the foundation of Cinecittà<sup>12</sup>. The following year, with great pomp and circumstance, Mussolini laid the foundation stone for the new production studio complex, which became the largest in Europe, while in the background the of the symbolic ceremony stood a temporary wall emblazoned with a slogan borrowed from Lenin «Cinema is the most powerful weapon» and an enormous cut out depicting Mussolini operating a movie camera<sup>13</sup>. Despite the totalitarian government, Ragghianti explains that a statistically high number of films depicting dissident ideologies were shown domestically between 1925-1939<sup>14</sup>. Thus, Ragghianti's essay was published in a complex atmosphere of multiple dichotomies: industrial and artistic films, fascist propaganda and dissident productions, and popular versus academic film criticism, all without a clear and distinct language of autonomous criticism for the field.

Ragghianti's personal life at the time of the publication must also be considered. In June 1931 Ragghianti was expelled from the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa; no official reason was provided but his vocal anti-fascist political views undoubtedly affected the decision<sup>15</sup>. His refusal to join the fascist party in 1932, an increasingly dangerous determination not only for his career but his personal safety, caused Ragghianti to lose his position as research assistant to Matteo Marangoni and

prompted his move to Rome to attend the Scuola di Perfezionamento established by Adolfo Venturi to continue his studies. His distaste for Rome, his colleagues, his new academic environment, and its proximity to the fascist regime are well documented. Writing home to his friends in February 1933, he describes his surroundings as «[...] absolutely slimy: intelligent people are harder to find than white coal. There is a general moral and mental platitude: vice of this city ruined by bureaucracy [...]»<sup>16</sup>. His antagonistic attitude towards his new colleagues and the fascist regime should be contextualized when considering the hostile reception of the essay soon after its publication. While the contemporary reaction to Ragghianti's article can be described as "mixed", there have been subsequent reevaluations of his observations predating our own. In 1946, Claudio Varese re-examined Ragghianti's essay both praising his critical observations and lamenting his abandonment of film criticism. Fortunately, unbeknownst to Varese, Ragghianti would continue this vein of study with the *Cinema arte figurativa* and would have already been in the early phases of its preparation. Writing in the immediate post-war period, between 1945-1946, in which Ragghianti was most directly active in politics having just left his position as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Education in the Parri government to follow the party leader to the Movimento della Democrazia Repubblicana, Varese praises Ragghianti's moralistic values and steadfast antifascism in the introduction of the essay. While much of the text is dedicated to reviews of Ragghianti's art criticism as published in «*La Critica d'Arte*», the final passage eloquently summarizes Ragghianti's original text and communicates the core arguments of the essay which would later be emphasized by Ragghianti in his postscript.

The following is the first English translation of one of Ragghianti's many analytical essays, intending to incite further interest in his oeuvre. The absence of any extant English translations is understandable considering the many problems that arise with the etymology, syntax, and cultural references that are often impossible to translate without substantial edits to the original text. Ragghianti's analytical prose, and the highly descriptive language necessary in the study of visual arts, at times digress into a poetic expression entirely his own. The problematic linguistics can be observed beginning with the title of the essay. *Cinematografo*, repeated necessarily throughout the text, denotes both the technical instruments of film making and cinema as a genre of visual arts. To effectively communicate the original intention of the text, *cinematografo* has been translated as both cinematography and cinema depending on the context of its use. While *Rigorouso* could be directly translated as rigorous, the essay itself explores the necessity of a dedicated field of research and language of analysis

for the popular genre of cinema which is more accurately translated as philology. Additionally, there are a series of words used to create a vocabulary that could be easily misconstrued when directly translated if not for the postscript included in the 1975 republication in which the essay, in its entirety, can be found. An example of this, indicated in the second footnote of the translation, is the reference to “figurative” arts, translated throughout for clarity as “visual” arts, closer to the author’s intended meaning. Indeed, Ragghianti paid careful attention to outline the difference between «figurative», representing visual in general, and «figurale», reproducing the human body. Without the additional explanation of the etymological reasoning for the word choice – something that sparked a heated debate in the field at the time the essay was initially written – the translation may seem inaccurate, or the meaning of the original text grossly distorted<sup>17</sup>. The academic Italian used in the essay, combined with the confusion surrounding the invention of an appropriate language for scholarly analysis of the new medium, cannot be underestimated. However, the essay itself is written in a colloquial tone directed not only to the author’s peers, but to a wider audience such as the one that could be expected when considering both the periodical which hosted the text and the popularity of the medium itself. This is evident from very beginning of the essay, which reads more as a conversation than an academic inquiry, and eventually develops into a complex analysis of the technical and emotive characteristics of the medium while maintaining popular reference points to engage a wider audience of readers.

Contextualized with the content of the article chosen for this first translation, the linguistic dilemmas seem entirely appropriate when considering Ragghianti was also struggling to create an appropriate analytical language for the budding field of Film Studies, while validating film as a visual art to be considered on the same level as the traditional media such as painting and sculpture. Writing from a respected position in the twilight of his career, forty years after the original publication, Ragghianti reiterated the ongoing challenges of finding extant primary sources including copies of the earlier essays mentioned above. The issue of availability is something that is still faced in modern academia and has had a particular resonance since last year when libraries, archives, and cultural institutions have become sporadically inaccessible. By creating a scholarly dialogue addressing Film Studies, then largely considered to be in the realm of amateur movie-goers, Ragghianti was able to elevate the status of the medium by applying analytical methodology usually reserved for visual arts. While not unanimously praised by his contemporaries, the essay opened a discussion amongst scholars and critics aiding in the creation of a language specific to

the new field. A macro-vision of Raghianti's career illustrates his multifaceted and interdisciplinary interests, the cross-contamination of which benefited each individual area of study. Even in the early stages of his career Raghianti was aware of the advantages of these overlaps and applied existing techniques of analysis to the new field helping to create proto-film studies in the realm of visual arts. The essay translated below presents a contrasting perspective through which a blossoming medium of visual art, popular with the general public, was analyzed to illustrate the lasting power of expression in film to contemporary academics who had yet to consider its validity in relation to classical media<sup>18</sup>.

### *Philology of Cinema*

Indigna philosophis et infra horizontem eorum.

BAUMGARTEN

There will certainly be someone who will smirk at the "eloquent" words used in this essay for a subject like cinema. It is in fact well known that cinema is not much discussed, but when we do discuss it, it is easy, if not common, to hear all sorts of opinions on its behalf.

And not only amongst "bourgeoisie", which in general seek an honest pastime, sometimes a dash of illusions, an unspoken invitation to dream, an abandonment that takes them out of everyday life, but in a reality that is or seems to be just as credible. It is the same need that makes them avidly search for readings among literary productions commonly found in the train station [newsstands], all based on a taste only for plot and adventure. These attitudes, these feelings are not disturbing, since they are honest, and it may even be considered respectable, if only because one could write literature based on the characters involved.

The serious trouble begins when cinema experts, or supposed cinema experts, start to discuss it: in short, those who deal with it and speak about it for reasons that are not strictly psychological and personal.

It is useless to list before the reader an anthology of opinions of this kind, especially since the search for these, expressed mostly in daily newspapers, would correspond, considering the amount of effort if not the quality of the results, to an archival search. However, it is known – and even recently I have read many writers who complained about it – that for most of those who write about cinematographic art, not only is unclear, but what can and should be understood by cinematographic art is discordant.

It is possible to find the same obscurity, or lack of clarity, in those who try to distill the “aesthetics” of cinema. However, apart from the absurdity, those aesthetics nevertheless contain a positive note in that, by isolating the problem, one is forced at least to focus on the precision of the facts and the observations deriving from the analysis, even if the deductions or interpretations are inexact, arbitrary or wrong.

Luciani’s intelligent and profound little volume (“La Voce”, 1928) is not exempt from these defects [<sup>19</sup>]. In carrying out his considerations on cinema, his volume is heavily affected by the initial approach of interpreting cinema as antitheater. The predominantly polemic function of this confrontation, pursued and developed continuously throughout the book, leads him to avoid an examination of the values and potential of cinema per se, or to be too one-sided, as well as to interpret as essential values of this “new art” those elements and typologies that he finds and schematizes in what he calls Latin or Historical, American, German or Conceptual films, etc.

A starting point that may seem obvious, although it does not seem that it is in general, is the substantially visual value of the cinematographic expression. Visual value not dissimilar, indeed of the same nature, to that of which a work of sculpture or painting is created.

To use an aphorism, it must be affirmed that cinema is certainly “visual art”. No more, no less.

Indeed, what difference is there between a painting, for example, and a film? No matter how much one looks, no matter how much one investigates or nitpicks the minute details, it is not possible to find any other difference between these two artistic expressions, if not at most, a difference of “technique”. The creative process is the same, and those modalities (figurative or visual) are of the same nature, generally understood, through which a state of mind, a particular way of feeling, coagulates into “form”.

Difference at a technical level, i.e., in the material means used by the artist to demonstrate, to concretize or make visible a process of feeling or fantasy. It is therefore understood that here we are talking about technique as an abstract category per se, not about technique which, as a content, is one with art.

In other words, we are talking about strictly material and practical issues, which do not harm either the inspiration or the quality of the inspiration. Since no one comes to mind, in critically reconstructing the artistic activity of a painter, to consider and calculate the sum, the intensity, the degree of mechanical actions of the muscles of the arm, hand, eye and the rest of the body, which have contributed to, and indeed physically conditioned, the spreading of colors on the canvas, the levare of matter from a marble [<sup>20</sup>].



The so-called technical questions of the cinema, which are waved as problems weighing on the critics, can be reduced exactly to the above.

There is no more idle and infertile question, when discussing film as art, than to consider the whole complex of mechanical actions (machines, lenses, optical means, tricks, etc.), all that complicated and a very special, indeed unique and unrivaled series of means belonging to cinema, as if in them is contained the potential and power, of artistic expression.

And in reality, the importance, the complexity and the various refinement of the scientific findings, utilized by cinema, make such an impression that many people tend to mythologize these technical instruments, and to consider them as largely responsible for that particular vein of rich artistic sensations that only film seems to be able to reveal.

It would be giving much importance to this mentality, but since our aim is to clarify, it can be said to justify that it is a typology, resurgent for cinema, of the same old vulgar aesthetic: the one that seeks in nature, and therefore in what is an instrument of the highest power, the very power of art itself.

The problem of the medium considered in itself does not exist and can never exist in a critical context: what would the quality of the marble tell us about a statue, the material quality of the colors used to tell us about a painting? These things have, when they have it, their important aesthetic when they are considered in the artistic activity in which they have become a problem. The fruition of choices, of awareness and likewise contributions to artistic expression. They are determined, and necessary, in the way that the individual quality of the artistic personality applies them.

Thus, in cinema, not considering artistic personality is always a mistake, and it is almost never questioned, except for those who have almost violently recognized it as such. On the other hand, given these premises, we speak in the same ways and with the same indistinction for personalities and for plot with which we then discuss many other films, the results of chance, occasionality, commerce, or other. Basically, of all these, roughly the same generic values of a narrative or psychological are fixed.

What can the deconstructive analysis of its technical elements (for example soft focus or blur, fades, etc., illusion effects, superimpositions, etc., all considered with immediate psychological effects, and relating not to the author, but to the plot, the subject, the narrative context) say about a single film, but also about film in general? Or, even worse, the observation pursued with the competence of a physicist – which I have seen so many times – of the mechanical, optical, chemical procedures that were necessary to achieve

a certain effect? In this sense, does diversity of means not also exist for sculpture and painting? And who would dare to affirm, today, that this fact could legitimize the consideration of a priori qualities which are different in the two visual arts, given the diversity of the practical means that they are not induced to use?

Thus, concerning cinema as compared to other visual arts, what must first of all be held firm and present is its fundamental identity as a visual art. We must not be impressed by the apparent diversity (there is a diversity, and we will see later of what it consists) of a film from a painting, but we must pay attention to the essential, which is precisely in the final result, and not in the medium as an abstract category.

First of all, there is a kind of empirical prejudice to fight. It does not matter that not all films are exhaustively visual (but also, for example, theatrical): a similar phenomenon can be seen in literature and painting, where pure art is very rare.

To return to what we have explained above, impossibility of an aesthetic evaluation of the quality of cinema as artistic expression is clear, based on the particular nature of its technique, taken per se and in its overall diversity with the pictorial technique (to list but one example), since we would be forced, for every painter or for every cinematographer we consider, to return to the absurdity of a specific aesthetic.

In fact, no one poetic expression, nor, consequently, one technique, is ever identified with that of any other painter or cinematographer. That is what we should do when we are faced with different creations, both from the sentimental and technical point of view, indeed even antagonistic, such as those, not to mention others, of Pabst and Chaplin.

The problem is all the more complex, because the prejudice of cinema as a new art is strong and accredited. New art both from the inside and out: new in its particular way of artistically creating fantasy experiences, as new for human and aesthetic experiences contained within that it seems called upon to reveal, the first and only process in the history of art that seems able to give form to particular sensations and certain nuances of feeling, to certain subtle and extraordinary actions (I hear they are called "inedited realities")<sup>[21]</sup> before and until now inexpressible through other means; especially suited to reveal that very special and mythical thing called "modern life" or "modern feeling of life", which one continually idolized, or rather nirvanized.

New art, of course, but as new is substantially every artistic expression, new

in the sense of original and truly poetic. In this sense, we must discuss not of a new art, but of new artists.

The cinematographer is new only in its individualities, as in other forms of artistic expressions, painting or music. In general, and in abstract theory, it is neither new nor old, it simply does not exist. Poetry is always that poem, someone's poetry, and only of that can one talk about, and only in this way can it be understood and assessed. Likewise, in cinema, we merely talk about a matter of technique (and this would correspond, in light of a critical understanding, to talk about lexicon, grammar, logical analysis, prosody and the like, and in another case of colors, chemistry, of the nature of light, of the eye and of its physiological functioning) or, speaking of art, we should continually and necessarily refer to an expression in which precisely that technique has been determined and identified, which by now no longer interests us as such, while instead we are trying to understand the ideal process, the emotional and human activity that it has informed it.

And so, we cannot help but consider, as always when we talk about art, a personality. Our reconstructive and recreating analysis of cinematographic poetry thus unfolds, set and centered on the accent, on the tone, on the style in which it is configured, the complex story of the single author, his attitude in front of reality, his ethical world.

In order not to consider this kind of mobilization of Crocian philosophy useless or overwhelming for the cinematographer, we will try to show how it emerges from critical analysis.

Thus, we see in Pabst, even limiting the analysis to a single well-known film (*Queen of Atlantis*), without wanting to retrace the development of his complex personality, an arrogance, sometimes excessive, of his vast (and with very wide-reaching reverberations) and prevalently cultural and critical education, scarcely and little direct human [experience].

And so his visual culture (a definitive culture, which already in Lang's *The Nibelungs* had realized achievements of extremely refined sensitivity, the resentments of Romanesque Arts, the humid and lightless atmosphere of miniature, and, in the buildings and in the choirs, simplification of indescribably epic masses and movements), which is one of the most subtly chosen and vibrant, and to which a sometimes extraordinarily adaptive and transformative power responds immediately, is the substratum of the magnificent scene of Montmartre's cabaret, the most beautiful of the film. The scene is all set – in its chromatic values, in its movements, in its tonal quality and in its visual selection – on the historical

sensibility that in those costumes and in those environments, and also in that atmosphere of moral life, found its subject: Impressionism.

In a truly epic awakening, Degas, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec return in Pabst to live for us in a fully poetic and historical reality.

The discernment, the intellectual refinement of Pabst did not stop there. Having to put these forms to motion in "time", he recreated in himself the moral sensitivity, the sentimental quality of that history and of those costumes, and he rebuilt it through whoever could most truly bring it to him: Becque, Zola, Goncourt, Maupassant.

Nor has this material remained raw material in his hand, torn and broken limbs of a mature objective analysis. On the contrary we have a very powerful and compact organism, which lives precisely on this saturation, on this wide and sonorous enjoyment of artistic forms, which is then the cultural aspect of the general sensuality that encompasses this work by Pabst, to the point of making it sometimes external, pure savoring of forms, movements, visual patterns, in those cases where the inspiration is broken. Some isolated stumps still remain, as beautiful as one can say, but which denounce, in their fragmentation, the scarcity of human experience, the lack of continuity and ethical gravity, which are typical of others, and, above than all, of Charlie Chaplin.

For example, I notice the wisdom with which they are presented and experienced in *Queen of Atlantis*, through a meticulously calculated succession of perspectives, the Arabs in a circle, absorbed in the monumental exactitude of their poses (all details are carefully avoided, such as faces, gestures, various expressions of movement) as solemn and almost hieratic as the sphynxes in a circle in the Egyptian exedras bathed in the sun. But where Pabst's sensually decadent subtlety comes out is in the fact that he is not content holding the viewer's impression with this mute and faraway solemnity, of an ancient and fabulous flavor, but excites and arouses it, makes it almost distressingly tolerable, through the sharp, cutting opposition, with the other simultaneous motif in the scene: the shapeless and twisted image of the gramophone, in an atrociously liberty style, which roars a vulgar song from a European sidewalk with a brash and shameless and hoarse voice from the Grotesque trumpet. Another refinement of figurative deformation is having styled the actress (B. Helm) as an empress of the Middle Age: small head on large shoulders of a barbarian, the immobile and impenetrable alabaster face wrapped in hair as if from a helmet on which a straight crest of curls that seem metallic, a laminated stylization that is often encountered in portrait sculpture, so geometric in nature, of Roman "decadence". I will quickly recall a single, but very beautiful, movement conceived for this actress, absolutely impassive and anti-mimic, with which the choice of actress is justified. At a certain point she is seized by the fury of

an elementary passion: the director, who knows what he can get from the actress, who is his medium, has her filmed running away from the room, beautiful in the act of losing the balance in her powerful hips, like a young mare. That certainly could not be obtained from a face, much less from that particular face. But that body in motion, in that hyperbolized movement, could realize, as indeed it did, the impression that must be communicated to the spectator. Naturally, if filmed, that is, interpreted, in a suitable way, it is worth saying from a perspective and according to a visual succession such that, while he concentrated his attention on the gesture that he intended to reveal, he accentuated its sonorous meaning to the fullest.

Another scene that cannot be understood well except in all its fervent evocative flavor, is the finale, where a cavalcade that occupies the entire visual field with its sprawling disorder, exasperated by the ardor of the movements and the crossed directions of the wind and of the riders, the speed increases with an extremely communicative crescendo, the complicity, the confusion of the intricate movements, surrounded by and upset by the dense sandstorm. It seems to witness the birth and the elaboration of a sketch by Delacroix, from which we believe Pabst was inspired.

Finally, to show another side, far from the last, of Pabst himself, we will quote a passage from the film *Kameradschaft* (Comradeship) so different from the preceding example, filled with an exalted social sensitivity, completely devoid of actors and without plot, choir, united, as united and coherent as that life style was, how clear was that ideal value that Pabst invested with his lyrical enthusiasm. And even the fact that two films, so exhaustively consistent in themselves and so different one from another, attests to the always profound, grandiose, but irregular form of inspiration of this director. I am alluding to the scene of the departure of the rescue truck from the German village towards the French mine which bursts and collapses due to the underground fire. There is a small woman, mother or sister, slender and disheveled, without any beauty, her body composed of exhausted bones, a pale mask, without voice and without light, in which the long effects of misery and work can be seen. She runs after the cart, carrying a child with her, disfigured by the anxiety of love for death. Where a narrative and not very lyrical director would have taken a characteristic head, with an intense passionate mimicry (perhaps a "diva" specialized in the photogenic passage of psychological expressions) and would have followed her in all the dispersive mobility of gestures and her face, in her physical manifestation of vitality, Pabst summarizes and concentrates all the sentimental value in the "way" with which the camera lens supervised, guided like the development of a line on paper, valorizes, makes

absolute, universalizes in the solid concreteness of the rhythm, that head, that figure long sought [by the director] and capable of that visual expression. And, pay attention, the movement individual to that figure is not direct, or natural: if we could, in some way, in everyday life see some or even all the elements detached one after the other, we would never see that synthesis. This is because that visual whole does not depend on reality or on the real viewer, but depends on a single element, the necessary value of the vision as it has been realized depend on the cut of the screen, on the movement of the truck (as this too is inversely relative to it), to the slipping away of the walls, of the houses, of the passing road, of the vaulted stillness of the sky. Not even the characteristics of that figure would be able to give us an aesthetic sensation, if this were photographed and presented indifferently, as a particularly painful and pathetic type, and instead were not inserted into that rhythmic development, in that particular visual form.

It is necessary to qualify with greater precision, albeit with a nod, the most characteristic rhythmic moment of this scene: the direction in which the young woman moves, whose face we do not see well now (1° moment), is transverse, from the right bottom left top of the screen. (Short interceptions, like refrains, show, as on the other side of an open book, the moving truck, bristling with motionless men, with opposite movement and direction of the previous one).

All the beauty of this first moment, its value of painful evocation, of mirroring, of translation of the struggle of the little desperate soul who does not know and still does not want to resign herself, and is afraid, and does not cry and only knows how to run, is expressed by the way in which, in the general movement of the whole screen, she slowly lowers and raises her head and her fragile body several times, in a fan-like motion, inserting this detached and falling rhythm into the other fuller movement, stronger than all of the things around. It is like a thin note, which rises, trembles and struggles, continuously returning, as if to break the symphonic current, as happens in certain passages by Beethoven. Another aspect of this motif more intensified – because it is less reflective and made to live in a wider series of movements –, is in the second moment of the scene: now we see her face to face, and beside her tumbles, increasing the sense of motion, with curls and fluttering clothes, the child. She advances towards us in full view, again transversely (from top right to bottom left) along the brick wall that quickly slips off with his white slates of mortar. Now we see the person in full, and the tense face with the disheveled hair, and the slender and tired legs that push, one after the other, the moleskin skirt (and the camera lens seems to almost attract this beat, gradually, towards itself). Let us leave out other reasons (like themes) inserted in the development of the scene, i.e. when she offers the child to kiss, still

running, with a leap towards the sky, when her face, like a sudden gasp, emerges in the foreground, with wide eyes fixed, to separate two movements, etc., until the scene closes up and one feels pungently, in the change and rest of the rhythm, the moral and sentimental value of the conclusion. This is achieved by “making the space felt”, that space which “separates”: a space that at that moment feels more compact and solid, more impassable than any barrier: from the still edge of the screen, the truck is seen moving away and the road, which unwinds like a ribbon; then, in another way, once the camera lens is stopped on the little mother and the child in the sun, at the entrance of a dark underpass, we see the space growing between us and them. This kind of chiasmus (a single visual sensation obtained in two ways – with the fixed and the moving cameras) was created so that the viewer could feel that space – the painful, fearful separation – was growing and becoming considerable both for those who stayed and for those who left. This invention served Pabst to signify, in a great synthesis, without any analytical dispersion or physical and psychological evidence, that emotional condition, of such a delicate and profound human significance. And imagine that Pabst has been reprimanded for the “gradual” departure of the truck, here a necessary lyrical element, such that in the unhurried measure of its rhythm makes itself capable of embracing and strengthening the richness of the competing “themes”, because of a realist preconception!

What to say about the luminist values of many scenes in this film that recall, in the way they are built with pure light, Rembrandt’s figures (as well as, in Ruttmann’s *Steel*, some visions of backlight, with beams of sun raining among the masses of a deep black like an etching, recall some of Piranesi’s “prisons” because of their heat of fantastic evocation). What to say about the compositions that recall, in the naturally monumental poses of the workmen doing their jobs, certain gestures and certain attitudes that seduced Millet’s imagination in the same way? Let us note again how sentimental content and visual form are welded together in a characteristic episode (probably derived, as a rhythmic pattern, from Russian films): at the announcement that the mine is on fire, all the miners, resting in the village, run towards the mine. Only the strangers who are not workers, tradesmen, immigrants remain: they stand on the doorstep and have no impulse of affection or fear that could lead them too towards the mine, towards their comrades. Thus, in the general movement of the crowd, a pause, a suspension, which serves, by contrast, to make more acute the impression of the hasty race. At the same time, utilized within that pause, also the moral contrast, the contrast of merchant’s and worker’s lives, made sharp and almost ironic by having placed in the window, next to the hat-maker who is leaning against

it, surrounded by the translucent light of the glass, one of those well-shaved, rosy wax heads, with broadly steady eyes and a smile, tranquil, and perhaps with a monocle: and they represent the boulevard life style and the bystander observing the provincial celebration.

This analytical sketch of some elements of Pabst's art can already serve, if not enough on their own, to characterize his personality. By reconstructing his preferences, retracing the path that these creations followed before reaching expressive clarity, not only we can trace the criticism of this particular artist, but we indirectly show how there is actually no difference between the intellectual process necessary to understand a painting or a statue, and on the other hand, a film. And the fact that this, not yet an analogy, but a demanding critical identity for cinematography and for other visual arts, implies and also demonstrates its fundamental character. Since it could be objectionable to appeal to cinematography for this demonstration which, in our opinion, is saturated with visual experiences (and also literary experiences, but here it is the former that matter), we will analyze another artistic example, facing which has seemed and perhaps will seem to many impossible that we can discuss explicit "visual" imagination and achievement: Chaplin.

Moreover, in addition to realizing the quality of the visual accomplishment in which Chaplin's emotional content is affirmed, it would not be wrong to explore precisely the world of his feelings and images, a world that we see in its unequivocal reality due to its nature of necessity which confers its certain absoluteness of cinematographic achievement.

His first films (the so-called "comedies"), very brief, were realized in that characteristic style of movement, also common to Linder and Keaton, which by the way is the one that possesses the oldest and most illustrious tradition and dates back to the pioneer Griffith. These first films had neither beginning nor end: they were suspended actions, with the unexpected lurking in each scene, a kind of Don Quixote adventures (with which, by the way, Chaplin has many points of contact), in which every break, every pause was a charge for the resumed movement, pressing and continuous, which broke and blurred the relaxing effect of a restful ending with a slip, a jump, a run, a tumble in the mud.

Senza perché seems to be the poetic motif of many of these early Chaplin films: he enters the scene emerging from an unsuspected corner on a deserted street, and we do not know who he is, where he comes from, where he is going, why he is there rather than elsewhere. Then immediately, without preparation, without gradual passage, like a collapse, the adventure. When this seems to



close, you are placated, here is a dive, a pirouette, an escape, which leaves the spectator astonished and in suspense. And while he gets ready to follow, to see what it will lead to, what consequences that unexpected act will have, sometimes really gratuitous, the screen closes abruptly, leaving [the spectator] to savor the disturbance that the unmotivated, the indefinite, the unconcluded brings to the soul.

Why do we feel the value of these actions so pungently, of all these phases, bit by bit, why does the rupture prove so aggressive and abrasive, extremely violent the arbitrariness, the sometimes-licentious freedom of every orientation, of every outcome of the film? What is the force that makes us adhere in such a continuous and integral way to all this variety of plot, without the possibility of detachment, chained to the sequence that unfolds and imposes that precise degree of impressions, which binds and obliges everyone to defined reactions, well characterized and the same, even if sometimes not easy? It is the rhythm, the facial expression of Chaplin that manages to unite, while strengthening, with the movement that is typical of his cinematic vision; rather, in this it is steadied and organized, and utilized in such a way, as to make it only then appear complete, and of an indissoluble aesthetic unity.

All this capillary accuracy of impressions, extremely communicative and extremely themselves, and so much so that it is not possible to escape them in any way, comes from the almost mathematical rigor, from the sure and bare essentiality, from the vigilant calculation in which Chaplin was able to force his expression. And above all an artistic discovery of an exceptional value, a very high lyrical deformation that contains, one can say, initially, all of Chaplin's style: the walk. It is useless to linger to ascertain how far it is, indeed it is firmly opposed to any naturalistic imitation; how much he immediately distances us from photographic and common reality to transport us into the world of rhythm, into an autonomous life which is that of art. The aesthetic genius of Chaplin immediately finds its measure in this fact: having managed to transport into a decorative sphere what appears to be, and is, so immediately and insuperably realistic: the walk. But another idealization and decorative transformation has undergone parallel expression of the gesture and of the face (and this has, as Cecchi rightly noted, certainly benefited the experience of the facial expression, already so abstract and anti-illusory, of the clown), which has lost all occasionality, all momentary freedom, all arbitrariness and at the same time all human habit, to compose itself, organize itself in a series of expressions of rhythmic motion, slowly constructed, extremely aware, and supervised in their elaboration by a presence and an impeccable will. And it is very rare that this coherence and this consistency

break. So much so that Chaplin imposes his own discipline even on the supporting actors and they too, as far as they can, become many little Chaplins: every gesture, every expressive function proper to their role in the film, is carefully stripped of any veristic naturalness, exaggerated, schematized almost in an apparent mechanism of poses, of characteristic movements (see in *The Gold Rush*, *Giacomone*, the dancer, *Jack the conqueror*, etc.; in *The Pilgrim*, the fabricator, the beguines, the chatterbox, and so on) and conformed to the character of Chaplin's movement, which informs all the action.

To show how far away from the individual and from actual reality, how irrelative this stylistic expression is to the practical world, it is sufficient to compare any Chaplinian action with the scene from *The Gold Rush* in which *Giacomone*, out of hunger, sees chicken: and the chicken is precisely *Charlot*. It would be easy to realize how much the quality and the expressive degree of this scene, in which Chaplin's recognizable face is no longer seen and his identity is lost, but only a precious chain of pure rhythms remain afloat (albeit fantastically baroque in its accentuations and hyperbolized until it touches a subtle grotesque taste). They are no different from others where the stylistic accomplishment is entrusted more directly to the expression of the actor's face and gestures.

Another example better confirms the artist's tendency to discover and define motives of rhythm in actions. In the short parody film *Carmen*, at a certain moment, the two rivals meet at the foot of the staircase from which the love interest launches the call of a beaming smile, unequivocally charming. So, the two begin to hit each other, in turn, blow to blow, but at a some point they themselves seem so sincerely struck by the perfect rhythmic sense of their action, that little by little they are dragged to resolve it in the tenuous interplay of "battimano" [22]. To them before us, the naturalness of this passage, of its development, the "decorative" transformation of the actions seems obviously necessary. Thus, through the grotesque antics, the exaggeration (remember that *M[atteo] Maragoni* recognized this medium as a sign of stylization in the visual arts), the stylistic intention becomes clear in Chaplin. A similar solution, in the same *Carmen* is illustrated in the parody of the romantic duel and, in *The Pilgrim*, the fight with the thief that *Charlot*, standing on his shoulders, keeps him away from the drawer full of dollars.

But to further grasp that Chaplin's expression has nothing realistically insinuating and allusive, and that even the smallest scenes are constructed with an iron artistic objectivity, let us recall among the many, and by way of example, another scene of *The Gold Rush*, when *Charlot* shovels the snow accumulated on

the sills of the cabins. Nothing is accidental here. Charlot moves in a rigorously confined space, a field of action, outside of which suggestion and enchantment would be lost. A certain number of his footsteps, slight constant animation in the still frame. He stops. Few confident, angular, curvilinear gestures, which seem to envelop and move the space of the background: he takes a shovel, he does something lively, free, light. More steps, backwards this time, with a pressing return to the original movement. A sure, decisive gesture: and around him, in a series dotted with moves, the white spiral of shoveled snow flies.

Another scene, which demonstrates how strongly Chaplin felt the visual field, as a canvas which limits the spread of actions, and in which each piece is preordained in order to accommodate them, to regulate them with rigorous precision, is the triangular structure of the monument "To Peace and Prosperity", at the beginning of *City Lights*: where if ever, let it be said incidentally, having made this limit too tangible, easy and evident, is perhaps a slight defect. The limit in which the action must be silhouetted is felt with the same force and because of the same aesthetic need that produces the choice of compositional structure of a painting – composition that originates from the same formal necessity of the painting – and has equal value. The dimensional element, in Chaplin's films, far from being a dull scheme or an unplanned environment, strengthens and stimulates the significant succession of actions towards perfect conclusions. Thus in *The Gold Rush* the cabin, or the edge of the table where the classic "dance of sandwiches" takes place and, in *City Lights*, the bank of the river, a severe setting of cubic sequences, which comment by way of contrast, with their resentful immobility, with their inexorable air, the agitated drama of life and death sarcastically noted, in its character of lawless spontaneity, of enthusiasm, of free madness, almost a game of emptiness, thanks to the firmness of opposition of the spatial masses. Therefore, very pure values, and to exemplify again would only lead us to repeat.

Gradually as his art was enriched and became more profound, Chaplin learned to create, with much greater strength and unity than in his first films, larger, more complex and fervent decorative organisms, with refined and more supervised movements and with an increasingly persuasive distribution of the transitions and pauses. In doing so he produced those vast stylistic plots, similar to perfect friezes, such as boxing matches, in *City Lights*, composed and enclosed in an ideal game of symmetries, or the scene of panic inside the cabin suspended over the abyss in *The Gold Rush*, where the balancing motion of the hut on the jutting rocks accentuates and exacerbates the climbing of one on top of the other, they have impeccable and justified motions, despite the violence, like swimming figures. And this motif, both of coordination and alternating responses, of fusion or synthesis of movements, was

always curated by Chaplin who had carried it out, although in a less complex way, in other scenes of *The Gold Rush*. I am referring to the scene in which Charlot and Giacomone, worried about the strange movements of the cabin, who do not know it is balancing over the ravine, test its stability: they cross over each other in the room, with equal steps, and having reached the extremities, they alternate and mix short jumps in place, in a light amoebae song within which suspenseful concern circulates. Or the other scene in which, in the struggle between Giacomone and the bandit, all of Charlot's movements are forced, in a complex chain, extremely rich in fruitful resources, by the imperative axis of the rifle that moves around the room like the needle of a compass gone mad in the void.

These, and other scenes of this kind, are by now far from the somewhat grim and flowing linearity of primitive visual and mimic plots, and while deriving from them, and presupposing them, we now see how much greater the degree of creative power that has been reached by Chaplin, if we think of the truly superior artistic domination that these enlarged movements demand, where values are doubled, added up, expanded and intertwined in vast choral concomitances, in subtle intersections and oppositions, in transverse interventions (i.e. the scene of Charlot as a street-sweeper in *City Lights* in which so many movements opposite in direction and intensity, the pack of mules, the passing elephant, the crowd seem to bump into him), always with the same concentration and calm purity of art. All of this persevering effort of purification, this continuous and steadfast desire to deepen, such as the search for classicism, and the faith in that [classicism] that his art presupposes, are the evidence and the result of the profound seriousness of Chaplinian inspiration.

We have, albeit by small indications, followed Chaplin in the unfolding of a persistent motif in all his works, and which consists mainly in the lyrical exaltation of the familiar movement, although it is sometimes also physically communicative, to Berenson "functional linearism". However, other motifs have come away to enrich his poetic form, especially noticeable in the latest great productions, in which, moved by the preoccupation of expressing a more pathetic and profound humanity, and more consonant with the seriousness of his means, he partly abandoned the exclusive style of expression and of transportation and made the spectator's eye stop and linger on unfortunate things, on environments, on painful or variously significant themes, pushing him to meditate, obliging him to discover the sentiment, to intuit the allusive relationships of the themes. Hence also his now resolute desire not to entertain, not to distract the spectator (something for which in the past he indulged) with the tumbling and dizzying flight of things in front of the camera lens. Thus, the sense of pauses and timing

has grown considerably, and the whole montage has received a more subdued distribution, in order to accommodate the new emotional content.

In the new, more serious, more bare and human style, there are, for example, the endings: still painfully inconclusive and suspended, but due to the more humane and tragic reasons and with the glimmer of hope. Let us consider the endings of *The Circus* and *City Lights*: in the former, a small figure that evaporates in the mists of a great horizon, propelled by a footstep that seems mechanical and unstoppable, until it disappears into it, mixes with it, and he is no longer anything of himself; in the latter the white eyes of the healed fixed outside of the screen at a head, which is no longer seen and is not that of Charlie, but that seen in the dream of the blind woman (1° moment). Nothing could, more than these cinematographic pages, make one feel the desolation of the weak so pungently, of the helpless who abandon and deny themselves. Yet something redeems the sadness of these tragedies, because they are self-aware, fragile. It is an anxiety for redemption, which influences many other scenes in the film, and which is signified by two realities that are fixed in the viewer's mind and provide the value, the reason, something to be held in hand and squeezed tightly, like a priceless treasure, with which the sometimes-vicious misery, the shame, the resigned cowardice of the vanquished, are redeemed. The infinite horizon, which is grand and remains grand even if it absorbs a small man, and then the pity of the blind, true and suffered pity of a soul for another, outside the dream. After all, reality – the blind woman's pity and the return to heaven – gives Charlot more, humanly, than the dream gave him, his solicited dream of struggle, protection, freedom.

In the last few films he firmly insists on extricating richer emotional impressions from situations, concretized thanks to adequate movements and never evasive of the actors and the camera, of a kind that sometimes recalls Dickens, to make the audience perceive the humanity that vibrates in the visual representation, animating and determining it.

Let us note among other things, the meeting with the blind woman – who is no longer one of the usual unnecessary characters per se an excuse for action – when he sees himself esteemed and treated like a lord and, after the surprise, he is ready for the illusion, and even when he has discovered that the girl is blind – which nullifies his feeling, devalues it, uncovers the illusion – he stops and worships ecstatically, with so much grateful offering of himself.

But reality wakes him up with the shower of water from the blind woman, the same one who unconsciously deluded him, unconsciously punishes him. Absurd situation, because it is so naturally turned, and moved past. The fact that Charlie accepts it like this, as a due thing, makes one rebel: a small thing perhaps, but in

that moment and presented in this way, it is experienced as a great offense and great pain.

The detachment from Chaplin's previous films is strongly felt in situations like this. There is a persistence of the old pessimistic motif of acceptance together with the wandering which saves him from unduly rough contacts with life that he tries to avoid, not to face. But the coexistent motif of the illusion, of the typical "candor" of Charlot (note how candidly he accepts the friendship of the nocturnal madman and tries to save him, and how, in parallel, his own foolish illusion, the opportunity gives him the wealth and pleasure, then they are denied to him when he really wants them, when they are necessary to him), another outlet becomes present, another and more serious direction. So, the illusion of love that the blind woman will give him becomes increasingly an obligation, purpose and content to be given to his life without meaning.

The old Charlot has not disappeared and there is still a lot of his invariable life (when he collects the sewage of the city, when he swallows the whistle, the dance in the cabaret, etc.) but it is filled with a force, a direction that transforms it, and this cyclical character, of evolution, of redemption comes to the film: so much so that, in *City Lights*, Charlot released from prison does not go back to being what he was before, as he did already in *The Circus*, but he is abject, he is "another".

And with this, very little has been said about Chaplin's art. It was necessary here only to note the salient qualities of the artist and the particular way of resolving his inspiration in the cinematographic vision.

Having therefore clarified internally, through these analyzes, the intrinsic value of cinema as visual art, the problem remains of realizing what is peculiar to cinematographic expression and not to other forms of visual art, and what differentiates it from these while characterizing it. And in this regard, perhaps it will be useful to think of the specific historical problem of cinematography, a problem which, considered in its globality, contributes to its vulgar definition as "new art".

Let us begin purely and simply with photography. It is evident that, if we look at its properly optical, practical and documentary value, as an instrument, and as an aid of science, as it is a more objective, safer and more perfect tool than the human eye, and a useful tool of memory, the problem of photography does not exist, exactly as a problem of the eye and the lens cannot exist outside the scientific realm. This only happens when photography become a cultural and aesthetic

issue, when it interferes or has contact with the visual arts, that is, when it reveals in its application, in the way we use it, forms of sensitivity and typical “decorative” attitudes, or we consider directly how, using its own tools, to translate or reproduce them (in this sense a history of photography would inform many aspects of the various attitudes of artistic taste and of the prevailing tendencies of morality and culture). But here it is important above all to pay attention to the fact of the historical and ideal contemporaneity of the origin of photography, from its first advancements and significance, with the development of art, especially that of nineteenth-century France, and particularly with the “impressionist” movement. From our point of view, we must not of course consider this contemporaneity accidental but, on the contrary, on a factual level, to affirm that the origin and development of photography are essentially due to the tendencies of taste or artistic culture which conditioned it, which made it possible for it to exist as a problem and which made it truly live and be something.

There is no need to examine now how photography has gradually benefited and has been affected by researches of Delacroix and his dramatic and dense taste for light (Nadar), of those of Degas, who imposed atmospheric and luminous crudities like Vermeer or derived, albeit always with reverence, Ingres’s monumental groupings, down to the extremely varied experiences of the last “impressionists” and their predilection for the occasional, unprepared, free snapshot, which corresponded to their consented preference to capture glimpses and passing realities, fleeting and indeed instantaneous, to their taste for representing mobile and transitory acts, full and vibrant by chance and occasions like life itself felt in its changing flow. Thus, they avoided any compositional, conceptual order, any premeditated composition, at least of the antithetical mold deriving from the “humanistic” culture, ready and vigilant only to surprise the transition, the ephemeral and at the same time profound momentum, reach towards the unfathomable moment, of things in the light and in the air. It is clear, especially if we think by contrast of a Corot and a Degas, not to mention the old classics, that in this apparent negation of time on the contrary is implicit its consideration, indeed the affirmation of its value is palpable. The concept and the sense of time are deeply involved in the elaboration of the works of a Monet, a Pissarro, a Seurat and the like, and the critical consideration of works of this kind is also affected. And it is useless here to warn those trapped as cogs in the machine of these forms of sensitivity with the Bergsonian “duration” and with so many motifs of symbolist and decadent poetry.

A form of sensitivity that becomes openly reflected and critical in later artistic movements, such as cubism and its parallel futurism, which transformed and

dissolved into logical and intellectual premises what had been intuitive spontaneity in the impressionists: simultaneities, decompositions, rhythms of objects in space, the contemporaneity of the relations of volumes, masses, surfaces, direction lines and so on, were, so to speak, visual materializations of these critical constructions (art is not always to be discussed in these [social] movements, which were often exhausted in programs and manifestos: indeed there lies their positive value), in which the need for "time" in its figurative implementation is clear, unveiled. All this is already initially and potentially cinematographic. Or to better explain, given that the meaning of those creations is in the field of the history of taste and art criticism, it shows the conscious, objective side of that historical kind of sensitivity that has conditioned cinematography as it is today: impressionism.

Since it is now clear that one of the inherent elements of cinematographic expression, indeed the characteristic value that differentiates and limits it in the face of other visual arts, such as painting and sculpture, is precisely "time". Generally, and, let's say, methodologically speaking, cinematography has precisely the property of making use of space (figurative values), distributing it, organizing it in a temporal series. Precisely from this graft of space-time, both indispensable and constructive values, those motifs of allusion, evocation, analogy etc. are originated, entrusted to phrasing, returns, alternatives, detachment of the quality of light, of the quality of rhythm, of the visual settings, capable of following and accentuating variously, according to the author's will, the stages of advancement of sentimental content.

Development of formal values over time: this is essentially the peculiar character of cinema. And where the shape and the special quality that visual intuitions acquire in film and the apparent divergence from the rhythmic solutions found, for example, in sculpture and painting. This, therefore, does not prevent us from advancing this last observation as legitimate: that the best propaedeutic to the study and understanding of the cinematography consists, as we believe, in the study and clarification, unfortunately even today so scarce, of the visual arts.

In conclusion, pressed above all to insist on the visual character of cinematography and to reach, through a historic illumination of its problem, to clarify il che e il quale of this artistic expression (as for those who despise it, or do not consider it as much, it is appropriate to reproach the lack of faith in the spirit!). This is an attempt which, like any effort to clarify, will perhaps benefit not only criticism, but art itself.

Rome, April 1933.



*A very special thanks to Linda Bertelli for her careful revision of the translation.*

- 1 C.L. Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, in «Cine-Convegno», 4-5, 1933, pp. 69-92.
- 2 G. Bracco Baratta, *Ferrieri, Enzo*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 47, Roma, 1997 (<[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enzo-ferrieri\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enzo-ferrieri_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/)>, last accessed 8 May 2021).
- 3 Raghianti's thesis was published in May of the same year: C.L. Raghianti, *I Carracci e la critica d'arte nell'età barocca*, in «La Critica», 31, 1933, pp. 65-96.
- 4 C.L. Raghianti, *Cinema arte figurativa*, Torino, 1952; *id.*, *Arti della visione*, vol. I, *Cinema*, Torino, 1975.
- 5 *Id.*, *Precedenti e conseguenti*, in *Arti della visione*, *cit.*, pp. 23-30, p. 25.
- 6 In the 1975 text Raghianti states that Ferrieri «[...] era rimasto impressionato dall'interesse proveniente dall'ambiente universitario e scientifico [...]»: Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, in *Arti della visione*, *cit.*, pp. 23-24.
- 7 A. Consiglio, *Estetica generale ed estetica del cinema*, in «Cine-Convegno», 6, 1933, pp. 102-112.
- 8 Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, *cit.*, p. 24. A. Gerbi, *Teorie del cinema*, in «Il Convegno», 10, 1926, 836-848.
- 9 Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, *cit.*, pp. 24-25.
- 10 G. Fréjaville, *L'art dans le cinema*, in «Gazette des beaux-arts», 712, 1921, pp. 54-72.
- 11 Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, *cit.*, p. 26.
- 12 *Ivi*, p. 30.
- 13 S. Gundle, *Mussolini's Dream Factory: Film Stardom in Fascist Italy*, New York, 2013, p. 19.
- 14 Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, *cit.*, p. 31.
- 15 E. Pellegrini, *Storico dell'Arte e Uomo Politico: profilo biografico di Carlo Ludovico Raghianti*, Pisa, 2018, pp. 36.
- 16 FR, ACLR, *Carteggio generale*, fasc. Enrico Alpino, draft from Raghianti to Alpino, 2 February 1933.
- 17 Raghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, *cit.*, p. 37.
- 18 *Ivi*, p. 30.
- 19 S.A. Luciani, *L'Antiteatro: il cinematografo come arte*, Roma, 1928.
- 20 Here *levare* has been left in Italian because reference to Michelangelo Buonarroti's process of "revealing" sculptures from the block of marble.
- 21 «Realtà inedite».
- 22 Competing to place their respective hands closest to that of the woman of interest soon escalates to violence as their blows become increasingly aggressive. The two begin a clapping game in response to her disapproving gaze.