



## HISTORY

The concept of “history” first of all refers to what since Aristotle and the classical tradition was imagined as the fundamental link between the whole of what happens and the narration that is made of it. What we call "history" means telling what "really" happened. Even if, as some examples of more recent Italian cinema tell us (Marco Bellocchio's *Esterno notte*, Nanni Moretti's *Il sol dell'avvenire*) in art and cinema history could also be made with "ifs".

We outline below four possible lines of research around this theme.

**History as archaeology.** If the artistic language can choose to investigate history according to its chronological linearity, it can inversely opt to deconstruct its horizontal trend by tackling the latter starting from its deepest stratifications. Archaeologically sinking into history means carrying out a parallel excavation work in time no longer bound to a "forward" movement but free to open up to gestures of superimposition, dilation, condensation that operate on historical eras in an anachronistic sense. It is the arts in general and not just the cinema that realize what Walter Benjamin called «dialectical image», Aby Warburg «Nachleben», Hans-Georg Gadamer «fusion of horizons» (to mention three of the fundamental theories in this regard). In all these reflections the past proves to be able to dialogue with the present by crossing different sensitivities yet able to resonate in a single integration of meaning. Not only Warburg's Atlas, of course, but all the great operations that in Modernism have built through the "montage" anachronistic synthesis of elements of the Western tradition and its history (Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Joyce's *Ulysses*).

**History and stories.** History with a capital letter constantly lends itself, in artistic practice, to intersect with stories with a small "s" (as is clearly visible in Moretti's *Il sol dell'avvenire*).

If there is a traditional historical approach to the study of the official dimension of history, collected from a collective memory that writes its past through a recognized documentality, an alternative way runs through the testimonies of the so-called "anonymous" (on which Foucault and

Rancière reflect), who contribute to the narration starting from marginal perspectives – a «minor literature» (Deleuze and Guattari) – which however, while speaking from a “micro-dimension”, manage to occupy original and often illuminating points of view.

In cinema this happens from the eighties/nineties onwards, when the reuse of archival–institutional but also private – images becomes a progressively massive part of documentary montages. It is often starting from the "collage" (Wees) with the "home movies" that, even in much more recent times, the "minor stories" make their way into the official stories. There are many filmmakers we can name: from Forgács to Perlov, passing through Mekas, Akerman, Sokurov, Loznitsa, Herzog and arriving at an increasingly fruitful local production under this horizon (Marazzi, Bellocchio, Marcello, Nicchiarelli).

**History and fiction.** "Tell me a story". It is evident how this term opens up semantically to meanings that deviate from the meaning of history as "documentary testimony" presenting itself on the contrary as the manipulation of an invented "narrated time" (Ricoeur). In this case, history becomes essentially synonymous with narration and therefore with a creativity placed at the service of the reworking of a real time in fictional terms – from its most essential manifestations (the Aristotelian space-time unity) to the more complex ones (the novel of the nineteenth-twentieth century). In this sense, theater and literature have acted as an "opener", followed by cinema which, if on the one hand grafts into an autonomous “novelistic” form free from pure action (Bazin), on the other draws from literature fictional stories translating them into great audiovisual adaptations (from Coppola to Spielberg, from Visconti to Pasolini, arriving at contemporary filmmakers such as Marcello or Costanzo).

It is interesting how often even the story "of reality" makes use of elements belonging to fairy tales, myths, science fiction, magical realism, making history (even the most chronicle elements of it) become the result of an imaginative elaboration. In these cases it is precisely a certain operation of "falsification" that produces an increase in reality – "aesthetic realism", as Bazin would have defined it – capable of authenticating a historical truth.

**The caesuras of history.** The arts have experienced the greatest transformations almost always in conjunction with the great caesuras of history. If we take cinema into consideration, just think of Neorealism in Italy, or post-9/11 apocalyptic cinema, or even today, post-pandemic cinema.

The bond of a work or, in broader terms, of a genre with a precise historical time necessarily reconnects it to a specific environmental context. So then the great global catastrophes have led the arts and artistic languages (figurative, theatrical, literary, cinematographic) to change. Rooted in a

space (urban or non-urban) conditioned by the turning points of history, the arts have absorbed and reworked this context – the landscape made of rubble, materials and morals, of the war and the post-war period (Otto Dix and the First World War, *Guernica* by Picasso, to cite just two pictorial examples), post-virus dystopian scenarios, etc. The relationship between caesuras of history and transformations of artistic languages and the form of images is, for example, at the center of a capital work such as *Histoire(s) du cinéma* by Jean-Luc Godard.

**Deadline for the submission of the abstract (150 words): September 10, 2023**

**Deadline for the submission of the essay: November 19, 2023**

**Essays should be expressly written for the journal and should strictly respect the following word limit:**

***Focus*: Min 5000 Max 6000 words (including spaces and footnotes)**

***Rifrazioni*: Min 2000 Max 3000 words (including spaces and footnotes)**

**Send to:** [redazionefatamorgana@gmail.com](mailto:redazionefatamorgana@gmail.com)

*Redazioni*: Dipartimento di Storia Antropologia Religioni Arte Spettacolo - Sapienza Università di Roma - Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Roma • Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali - Università della Calabria - Campus di Arcavacata - cubo 17B V piano, 87036 Rende (CS)

*E-mail*: [fatamorgana.rivista@gmail.com](mailto:fatamorgana.rivista@gmail.com) / [redazionefatamorgana@gmail.com](mailto:redazionefatamorgana@gmail.com)