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1226 N Salsipuedes Unit C 1(805)704-5994 |https://hollywoodglee.com Larry@HollywoodGlee.com



CINEMA RITROVATO 2017: PROJECTIONS OF THE FEMALE BODY IN THE EARLY CINEMA

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Cineflilia Ritrovata

Exhibition, concealment: the oscillation between these two poles gives an account of the adversarial manner in which the female body flows on the earliest silent films. Last night in Pasolini Piazzetta a cinema of attractions was screened by Nikolaus Wostry (Filmarchiv Austria) with a rare example of a projector crank,. *Die Kleine Veronika* (1930), was introduced by the Austrian archivist and projected from the historic lantern coal by Stefano Bognar.

Evanescent and impalpable, the female body assumes all the typical cultural imaginary forms of *fin de siÃ¨cle.* At the center of the fragile images, in which the color on the film merges with the prism of the light beam emitted by the crank projector coupled with a specimen lenses created perfect angles to the formats of the first decade of the twentieth century (and already in disuse since the twenties). And although the dominant figure is that of femininity, as was the case for much of the visual history, it is the first object (not the subject) of the vision. These fragments of early cinema has felt the creep of change, a scopic potential â?? the eye of women.

It *Les Trois phase de la lune* (1905) prior to a moon of honey, then butter, mustard finally depicts the evolution of a couple from marital bliss to the double argument. The female figure is that of the classic wife, in which civilian clothes and facial expressions of the grotesque comedy play on the stereotypes of the spouse who eventually becomes tame through surliness and petulance. Yet, the position of the body, supporting actor versus her husband, and the look that shows no signs of fall are already the first timid signs of a new way of being in the world.

If *La FÃ©e aux Pigeons* (1906) recovers the fairytale topos of the fairy as purely ornativo tool, yet of great scenic impact (wonder to behold the lightness of pigeon feathers and peacock, as well as the delicate blend of pastel chromatic notes). The last two sketches to induce a more complete reflection on the perception of the female body. Die *Zaubereien des Mandarins* (1907) is registrable in an interstitial place between a playful kind of entertainment and pornography: a male character, oriental dress, the appearance and disappearance of a few, half-naked, girls through a silk umbrella. Here the nudity is pure surface, pure onstration, pure objectification: the very absence of a minimum voyeuristic gander though (which would imply a vision in some forbidden way, transgressive, hidden) argues in favor of an interpretation in key pornographic terms, yielding emptiness from within their own pure charge of desire resulting in a patina on the film.

Much more ambiguous *Das Eitle StubenmÃ¤dchen* (1907), where a maid, busy dusting a study in which stands a statue of a naked young woman begins a dialogue with its double-stone, until some sort of identification opens the door to for her to undress entirely and simulate the same pose. The arrival of the owner abruptly interrupts the act of liberation, and the girl runs away scared from the owner-satyr. If this last scene winks to male desire, the stripping is the result of a spontaneous choice, awareness, a desire to exit from a subordinate role (that of the maid, characterized by a certain type of clothing) to one outside of the schemes, as the gesture is also loaded with a decidedly disturbing potential (the theme of the double, the metamorphosis almost pigmalionic, the medusiforme look that petrifies).

But if here nudity seems to suggest a possibility of liberation from social role, it not as happens in *Die Kleine Veronika* , where the female identity is told through the use of a dichotomous paradigm: on the one hand, the young country girl, pure and innocent, and carefree that runs in the middle of nature; on the other, the aunt, Viennese by adoption, whose wealth is soon discovered to be the result of prostitution. The theme of perverting cities against women is typical of a certain way by which the European modernism has given an account of the complex process of empowerment of women. The film then declines sharply, pedagogical, and very (too) predictable.

However, also because of the experimental musical accompaniment and sometimes *noise* guitarist, it can be interesting to watch the movie as a small womenâ??s fashion sense and imaginary construction. The first sign that Veronika receives an impending trip to Vienna is the dress sent by the Aunt: a white dress, modern, soft lines, far away from clothing with which she arrives at the station (oversize sweater, plaid skirt). They are the auntâ??s clothes to fascinate Veronika, clothes from the Art Nouveau patterns with showy pearls and fine underwear. The body skin changes, and this change, however, alludes, by contrast, to nudity (never performed) alluded to in continuation, experienced by the same Veronika, then causing the protagonist in a nearly fatal disturbance. We are in 1930, the Roaring Twenties are coming to an end: and the body of women is still far from not being made the subject of conditioning, of coercive and with guilty nudity.

â??- Beatrice Seligardi



(Source: ilcinemaritrovato.it)

Category

1. Il Cinema Ritrovato

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Author
hollywoodglee