

Representation of the Past in Films: Between Historicity and Authenticity¹

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The genre of the 'historical film', or 'history film', is protean to such a degree that it is possible to grasp its true nature only by studying the relationships it entertains with history, which is the sole common denominator capable of validating it and of providing an angle of attack for dealing with questions (such as 'Does this film conform to historical reality?' and 'Is it a faithful reconstruction?') that have more to do with movie-buff criticism or erudition than with a process of reasoning properly seeking to establish a semi-otics of the cinematographic representation of history.

In a text from 1987 entitled 'Is there a cinematic representation of history?', Marco Ferro proposes a 'global classification of films in their relation to history'.² Across the top of a double-entry table he lists four types of 'societal discourse' that a work of art may convey: (1) the discourse of institutionalized ideology, i.e., the official discourse; (2) the discourse of opposition, which is sometimes able to express a counter-history; (3) the discourse of 'social and historical memory'; and (4) the discourse of an original and independent interpretation. And down the side of the table he places four types of approach to which the work may correspond in its relation to history: (1) the top-down approach, which 'focuses on those in power and the instances of their authority'; (2) the bottom-up approach, where socio-historical problems are portrayed by the masses, the people, a peasant, etc.; (3) the approach from within, where the author is 'truly committed to his point of view', exhibiting a certain auto-reflexivity; and (4) the external approach, which goes about reconstructing an ideological context, or 'constructing models'.³

Another, equally effective, classification of 'historical films' is possible, this time according not to the *type of the relationship* they have with history but to the *degree* to which, and the *nature* by which, history *participates* in them. This means classifying historical films not according to the nature of their historical message and the way in which this is elaborated and transmitted, but by considering history as an entity, on which basis alone the question of the nature and degree of its participation is possible. Thus it is no longer a question of the way in which these films recount history, but of the way in which history is enrolled by them. In other words, Marc Ferro examined how these films *account for* history, whereas I for my part shall examine how they *take charge* of history. This alternative classification derives from the properly creative act that gives rise to the cinematic work, that is to say, from the choices made by its main authors that are the scriptwriter and the director.

To tackle history cinematographically, the author must position himself in a personal relationship with it and from this position must decide (a) whether history is to constitute

only a dramatic pretext, or (b) whether the film should have, in addition, a teleological intention; i.e., an intention that constitutes a historical aim.

A basic difference between historical films appears when we take history as an argument: either (a) the narrative uses history as a pretext for its own elaboration, or (ab) on the contrary, when it is not only a setting justifying a narrative, history takes on board a cause that transcends that of the story being told and that of the diegesis.⁴ The author thus involves himself in a process of connecting past and present. His contemporaneity is bound up with his consciousness of a historical (or mythical) past, which is thus thoroughly characterized by a sense of responsibility. This kind of film projects more than history itself and goes beyond 'mere' historical reconstruction by establishing a connection of intention between past and present that enables a bygone age to find a spiritual and ideological perspective, or at least to aim towards one. In this way, history is able to accommodate stories that denounce, enrich, reflect or break apart the historical moment that serves them as backdrop. *Day of Wrath*, Dreyer's essential 1943 film-oratorio, put on trial the intolerance of the doctrinaire system of the seventeenth century as a way of referring to the Nazi occupation of Denmark. In *Visiteurs du Soir* the previous year, Marcel Carné mocked the fascist regime and covered his tracks by immersing his *poetic realism* in the Middle Ages with its atmosphere of legends and dreams. Echoing the extremely tense political context that followed the Second World War, *The Seventh Seal* is also a product of this surpassing of history, a fact that Bergman, with his characteristic eschatological awareness, did not fail to insist upon when his film was presented at the Cannes festival in 1957: 'It is precisely people's fear at the prospect of atomic war that I have evoked, the same fear that people faced with the plague in the Middle Ages.'⁵ Finally, in the last third of the twentieth century, Andrei Tarkovsky's films are probably some of the most significant as regards this ethical commitment of being-in-the-world. Tarkovsky has never stopped trying to answer the question of whether 'the human being [has] a hope of survival in spite of the obvious symptoms of apocalyptic silence smothering him'⁶: from *Ivan's Childhood* in 1962 right up to (the testamentary) *The Sacrifice* in 1986 (for which he received the Special Jury's Prize for its 'poetic vision of a menaced world'), via *Andrei Roublev* in 1966 and *Stalker* in 1979.⁸

On the other hand, whether a film (a) serves history or (ab) uses it, the author can choose either (i) to develop a story within history or (ii) to present a moment from it. In the first case, history is a matter of context. It justifies and makes possible the story's verisimilitude. *The Seventh Seal* and *The Virgin Spring* fall into this category. The second case involves portraying a moment of history by means of, for example, a historical personality. Patrice Chéreau's *La Reine Margot* and Ridley Scott's *1492* are exemplary in this regard. Consequently, either the author goes forth to meet history or he comes away from it. Yet the movement is generally two-way, so that it is often a matter of combining these terms, as is the case in Bertrand Tavernier's *La Passion Béatrice*, Roland Joffe's *The Mission*, Jean-Jacques Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* or Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*.⁹

This two-fold typology calls for two remarks to be made.

It would appear that, although no rule exists to ratify the phenomenon, 'factual' and/or 'visual historicity'¹⁰ (which depends *a priori* on the degree of historical participation) is often more developed in films in which history is a matter of pretext than in films in which it has a polemical value. In so far as this assertion can be proved only if the terms

of the comparison have the same origin (in the shape of the author, but also of the set designer) and the same framework (the Middle Ages for instance), Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* and *The Virgin Spring*¹¹ are fitting examples. In the first of these films, history is the vehicle of an ontological discourse; in the second, it merely carries the narration. For *The Seventh Seal* depicts a problem peculiar to contemporary Western society, whereas *The Source* is exemplary in depicting an ageless human problem (as are *Rashomon* for the theme of truth, and *La Passion Béatrice* for the theme of incest) – even though, in each of these films, the film-maker draws on the Middle Ages for a distancing power that enables him, on the one hand, to tackle contemporary metaphysical questions in the form of an allegory without lapsing into the ridiculous (*The Seventh Seal*) and, on the other, to tackle the question of crime from a purely critical angle (*The Source*).

Bergman's two films, given their respective qualities, represent the past in two different ways, with varying historical fidelity. *The Seventh Seal* depicts the Middle Ages in a global and substantial way, not seeking to produce a replicate of Swedish life at the time. Historical realism is not a major concern of the film, as the story brings together the plague epidemic that ravaged Sweden in the middle of the fourteenth century, and a knight with his squire returning from the Crusades, which can be dated to around the end of the thirteenth century at the latest. What is more, the religious context has a Lutheran character, and the apocalyptic atmosphere is the direct upshot of nineteenth-century historiography (Michelet's in particular) in its depiction of 'the great plague' and 'its carnivals of despair', the groans of which can be felt to rise onto the screen like a collective sermon enunciated for the edification of the spectator. *The Virgin Spring* on the other hand is more faithful to the historical reality of the Middle Ages, even though it is impossible to fix the date it depicts exactly. Because its factual historicity is easily established in virtue of the rural and self-sufficient nature of its diegesis, and is therefore not a cause for surprise, the visual historicity of *The Virgin Spring*, in contrast to *The Seventh Seal*, is all the more surprising.

Correlatively, and while there is no rule here either, it appears that the use of history (either as 'pretext' or as 'argument') affects the degree of attention that authors give to events and to their material world. In any case, it certainly affects the reception of the spectator attentive to both the intellectual qualities and the historical nature of the context of the film.¹² The film is implicitly pardoned by the spectator, depending on the role given to history: it is as though the ideological implications of a film compensate for the lack of historicity (we may recall that the anachronisms of *The Seventh Seal* do not detract from the value of the film); and conversely, it is as though the historicist concern of a film and its ensuing reification of history compensate for the absence of ideological intention, even to the point of making the latter discrepant with respect to the film (we may recall *La Passion Béatrice*, a masterpiece if only in virtue of its description of the Middle Ages:¹³ no matter how many its critics, its strictly historical character has never been called into question).

The model spectator's positive reception of a history film thus focuses on its intentions. The spectator does not demand that Ridley Scott's *1492* have reflective and critical import, no more than he does Patrice Chéreau's *La Reine Margot* or Jean-Jacques Annaud's *The Name of the Rose*. To hold this indigence against these films is to fail to catch their primary interest. A sustained ideological import in such films would be inappropriate and no more than a history lesson, a clumsy demonstration, when all that seems required

is the realization of the medieval universe or the portrayal of an original destiny – provided, however, that thanks to the means that large productions have at their disposal, the film is well directed and skilfully rigged out. If *Andrei Roublev* did not exist, one would even be entitled to doubt whether a compatibility between the two approaches were possible: *Andrei Roublev* reaches a summit of achievement by its scale and by the concurrence of its historical concern and the ‘seriousness of its intention’.¹⁴

Film-makers avail themselves of certain ‘strategies’ to call forth history, by way of particular procedures of aesthetics or marginal types of representation. Whatever the nature of these strategies, they always contain two concomitant variables: historicity and authenticity.

The historicity of a film can legitimately be measured by external criteria: costumes, set and language. However, it should not be confused with the rarer impression of authenticity, which is not dependent on what does or does not conform to the original. ‘Authenticity’ has no relationship with historical accuracy. It is neither its cause nor its consequence, and should instead be understood as the character of that which expresses a profound truth about man. One should not let oneself be deluded into believing that the only way for the past to come back to life on the screen be through strategies of fidelity, for the apparent is too deceptive of the past’s inner truth, or soul. Misled by films given to historical reconstruction, critics sometimes vituperate those that do not conform to the principle of similitude. In so doing, they blind themselves to all other well-conducted representations of the past. In fact, directors have sometimes seen history and its representation under the sole angle of ‘reality’.

Carl Theodor Dreyer’s ‘psychological realism’

Because realism is not in itself art, and because at the same time the authenticity of feelings and the authenticity of things have to correspond, I endeavour to make realities fit into a simplified and abridged form in order to attain what I will call a psychological realism.¹⁵

Carl Theodor Dreyer

When rigorously applied in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, this line of research did not meet with the enthusiasm or the understanding of the critics who in 1928, in the grip of the fantasy of ostentation, reproached the film for its plastic asceticism (which borders on an almost complete abstraction of the sets) and its lack of historicity, conspicuous in the horn-rimmed spectacles (fashionable during the ‘30s) worn by a monk, and in the English helmets from the First World War whose shape vaguely resembles that of fifteenth century sallets (one-piece helmets with a pronounced neck-piece). The critics’ disapproval manifests the extent to which the originality of the approach was set at nought. They did not notice the deliberate analogy with the aesthetics of the medieval miniature: the function of the sets, which are often minimal, is to suggest a space, to specify the nature of the settings (a room with furniture, arches, or a tree), and the background is there to outline the figures, constructing a depth running from it to the spectator. The sparse items of scenery painted in white thus serve to bring out the objects and actors in the film.

‘We strove for the truth’, said Dreyer. In *Day of Wrath*, this meant avoiding ‘false exaggeration’¹⁶ and sacrificing ‘beautification’,¹⁷ pursuing the ‘same principle’¹⁸ as in *The*

Passion of Joan of Arc. However, despite their underpinning validity, the results of these principles of stylized suggestion and 'psychological realism'¹⁹ were regarded as flaws:

I was conscious in advance of the particular demands of this project. Treating the subject in the manner of costume films might have enabled us to describe the fifteenth century and its cultural environment, but that would only have ended up provoking a comparison with other periods. On the contrary, it was a matter of going about in such a way that the spectator would be absorbed into the past...²⁰

Thus the only thing that mattered to the film-maker for 'interpreting a hymn to the soul's triumph over life', and this only a few years after the canonization of the Maid of Orleans, was to absorb the spectator into the past. He studied the events (by turning to the sources), but none of the 'costumes and other characteristics of the period', as he wished to remain true to the conception that art must describe the *inner* life, not the *external*,²¹ and thereby naturalism and purely imitative art found themselves condemned. For Dreyer, whilst this expurgation not only gives more life to the faces in a film, and soul and dramatic significance to accessories and costumes, which thus become 'psychological witnesses' to the characters, it in no way undermines the 'truth' of the film's reality. In the interests of the spiritual import of the film, Dreyer leaves out only the affects and the emblematic indices of an epoch.²² He films history using a complex aesthetics, authenticating reality through interiorization; and this interiorization imbues his images..

In Dreyer's work, there are two phenomena that pull together to 'realize' the historical diegesis, that is to say, to impart an impression of reality. The first phenomenon is the 'disappearance' of the camera; the second, a certain 'blotting out' of History, a certain elision of the 'historicity' of the diegesis. In *Day of Wrath*, we eventually have no 'sensation' of the camera and we no longer 'perceive' the seventeenth century through the mentality out of which the narrative is constructed.

The 'disappearance' of the camera is brought about by the exactness of visual response. It comes about through the rhythm and the relationships the camera has with its subjects. The visual satisfaction experienced by the spectator opens up the filmed space, which is thus regenerated and reconstituted in its entirety. A scene no longer appears calculated, or painstakingly prepared: the cinematic procedure takes leave, so to speak, of the process of communication. Since the presence of the camera constitutes an anachronism in the historical film – in contrast to the contemporary film in which, according to the *doxa* of an 'alternative cinema', the camera exists on the same level as the filmed space – one might think that the historical film would invariably reject the camera, like a foreign body that, moreover, is in the process of killing its host. However, in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, the camera twice departs from the 'window on history' principle. It makes its presence felt by its 'shaking', and in penetrating the cinematic space it surrounds itself with it. In the episode where the apostles are eating fruit on the Sabbath, the camera remains very mobile without being associated with a subjectivity, as happens in the sequence where, through the eyes of Peter skulking in the crowd, we see the false witnesses publicly condemn Jesus before the Sanhedrin. And yet, the intrusion of the camera-eye into the historical space does not bring about, as one might imagine, a rupture in the illusion of reality, a rupture in the 'willing suspension of disbelief'. On the contrary, at least as far as *The Gospel* is concerned, the presence of the

camera cancels the distance imposed on the past by the present: as in Rossellini, a bygone world is filmed *somewhere*. In most action-oriented historical films, the camera likewise surrounds itself with cinematic space, right inside the pandemonium. But it does not thereby become a 'presence'. It is an immaterial portal eye. It does not seek, as in *The Gospel*, to evince or expose the real. It is positioned with the sole aim of momentarily catching the spectator in the spot-light, of trapping him in the event, of banking him in the action, but not of placing him in historical space proper. Here the aesthetics is motivated by the spectacular. To return to Dreyer, and to *Day of Wrath* in particular, let us note also that, by satisfying the spectator's desire-to-see, the editing and the 'dramatic correlation of the dimensions of the shots' certainly open up the cinematic space to the real, but that, through the slowing effect brought about by the frequent use of sequence shots, this reality is freely made to answer to the paintings of the seventeenth-century Intimists (Chardin, Boilly), and we are thus given time to *see*. Our gaze wanders over things, instead of things being passed before it. The frame is enlarged, no longer imposing a whole or its details on the spectator. The images with depth allow penetration, and attention to particular things: a hand that under a kiss clenches the sheets; a carafe of fresh water on a low table through which the daylight streams . . . The pictorial character of the images activates a world of shadows and silences, which adds to the authenticity of the austere atmosphere of the burial, of the inquisition's cross-examinations and of the family scenes, fraught and cold, in the house of Absalom.

The 'blotting out' of history largely hinges on the film's 'psychological realism', which can be described as a kind of Brechtian *gestus* that expresses an interiority whose emotive charge turns our attention away from its activity of comparing the present time with the past. History comes to life only on the condition that it is kept out of mind. The representation of the past is *realized* when it can no longer be submitted for comparison, either, as here, by turning attention away from it, or, as in Pasolini, by rendering comparisons impossible. The represented past is experienced as a reality when it is no longer made up entirely of appearances, when it is no longer controlled by them as if by evidence and proofs, which inevitably would betray and overwhelm it. Sole concern for appearances seldom fails to contravene history, sending it off into cinematic make-believe.

Pier Paolo Pasolini's Reinvention of the Past

I did not want to reconstruct anything in the archaeological or philological sense. I didn't read [. . .] any critical or historical texts [. . .] about this Greek 'Middle Ages' in which I wanted to set the story. I've invented everything.²³

Pier Paolo Pasolini

With the same intention as Dreyer of absorbing the spectator, Pasolini, however, gives a very different treatment of history. Besides often favouring a mythological approach, his artistic programme consists in making the past spring to life through a *reinvention* of it. Pasolini creates an experience of historical alterity. Far from any sense of fidelity, or any attempt at reconstruction that would aim to reproduce artificially the most conformal image of the period in question, Pasolini brings an epoch into flower through a measured use of vestiges, of the persisting remains of the past (*y*),²⁴ and also through syncretism

and an amalgamation of cultural aesthetics (z).²⁵ In other words, recovering 'the spirit of the times' is no longer the task, as it was for Dreyer, of the effects of disciplined and symbolic suggestion, but of those of a baroque, cosmopolitan, eccentric, composition (z) and the emotional recovery of the tangible testimony of the past (y). This 'spirit of the times' can never be resuscitated in a film whose visual historicity alone is responsible for the rendering of a landscape, an old town, or the ordinariness of a disregarded woman.²⁶

In *The Decameron* (y)²⁷, for example: the setting of the old preserved Naples, the vibration of its suspended and endlessly filtered light, the simple environment of the 'lazzarone', the adoption of a vernacular and obsolescent tongue – all these give the film a particular expressiveness generally lacking in the cinematic representation of history, even if Pasolini 'never had the ambition of representing a bygone age . . .'²⁸

The same goes for *Medea* (z), from which springs a primitive force born of the anti-theatrical construction of two ancient societies (one Dionysian, the other Apollonian), of the choice of costumes breaking with neo-classicism (made up of borrowings from the immense diversity of traditional African, Near-Eastern and South American costumes) and of fragments of reharmonized sounds drawing from the musical inheritance of every continent, as in *Oedipus Rex* three years earlier. This world is also given a new life through the reinvention of its geography. In *Medea*, Colchis and Corinth are displaced to Italy (Trieste and Pisa), Syria (Alep) and Turkey (Cappadocia) . . .

In *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (y), this time the apostolic age is reincarnated on the screen in virtue of the symbolic pregnancy of the neo-testamentary text and of the refocillation of everything concrete. Nothing could be less of a reconstruction. Judea is reinvented and repopulated. Italy becomes another Holy Land. In the grandeur of the immaculate bodies and of the faces presented with an almost sacred immanence, we apprehend the reality of a people remote from everything modern. By a completely different route, liberated from reconstruction and creating a reality foreign to realism, *The Gospel* also attains authenticity.²⁹ Pasolini *reterritorializes* History.

Intimacy in History in Roberto Rossellini

A greater curiosity about individuals. [. . .] Also a sincere need to see men such as they are with humility, without resorting to the ploy of inventing the extraordinary. [. . .] And lastly, a desire to shed light on ourselves and not to ignore reality . . . What mattered for us was the search for truth, the correspondence with the real.³⁰

Roberto Rossellini

Given his neo-realist designs, Rossellini's primary interest lies with the realities of the world.³¹ This time, in order to obtain 'authenticity', the representation of history is not made to depend on a 'strategy' developed for the sake of the historical film. The reality found or recovered is not the result of a particular aesthetics, for it is in the midst of a general aesthetics, applicable to his contemporary films, that its formal and ethical specificity originates. The past steps out of the screen in *Flowers of St Francis* (1950) not because it is present in the historical accuracy of the monks' appearance³² or in the events recounted in a historical context,³³ but because it is carried by the *humanity* presented in the film, by a timelessness that links the spectator to the characters. Moreover, the free

adaptation of the events of St Francis' life and the infidelities regarding visual historicity (the grotesque armour of the tyrant Nicholas and the inconsistencies in the military costumes) in no way detract from the effect of the past's being *present*. It is the unaffected exhibition of everyday life that achieves so truthful a presentation of a few stages in the formation of the Franciscan order.

What Rossellini is concerned with are the moods of a human community: how John 'the simpleton' wanted to follow Francis and imitate him in everything he did, how brother Ginepro cut the trotter off a pig to feed a fellow brother who was sick, etc. This community is part of history. But the recognition of the types of behaviour it portrays refers the spectator back to himself. He identifies the feelings portrayed with his own. This *intimacy*, because it is one of the principal modes of our existence, has the effect of beating down the distance between the spectator and what he sees. Both in *Flowers of St Francis* and in *Andrei Rublev* there is an exquisite attentiveness, an acute vigilance, which makes the early thirteenth century appear as familiar to us as the street we live in.

Rossellini records what is in the process of becoming, he films within the present. He does not give an account of history in the way of 'what happened'. He gives neither a reading nor a rereading of history. We remain on the level of its actualization. The world produces itself as if nothing, no filmic agent, were making it happen. It is performative, for it accomplishes itself in its own expression of itself. This approach produces an effect of autonomous reality. The image shows men unaware of their place within the past: they are the blind, fleeting flesh of a captured present, just like us, ever cradled in the existing moment; they are perfectly individual, taking part in a collective history of which only we are aware.

Within the parts of the film, the impression of a continuous present and of a reality *in situ* is partly produced by the transparency of the delivery – the dismantling of the expressive mechanisms found in classical narratives. It substitutes in us a time in progress for a time gone by (which would be reproduced and then animated). It breaks down further the distance of the past, from which history is usually approached, as if it were impossible to deal with it in the flesh, and which is already reduced through *intimacy*, by the realist nature of the fiction. Further, the impression of the nearness of the past is also due to the geographical treatment of historical time. Rossellini tackles historical time in the same way in which he does space, though this is of course not a procedure elaborated specially for the historical film, since it is part of a logic of ethics.³⁴ We are given the impression that Rossellini went somewhere and, once in place, observed the inhabitants from day to day, filming their everyday existence without flourishes, and only retaining the noteworthy events and the most edifying scenes for the film, in the style of the documentary or the medieval *exempla*.

This 'ethical logic', which goes far beyond neo-realism, leads the work towards reality:

it is the possibility of stating things as they are, in any domain, whether it be a movement of a spiritual [or] a moral nature . . . In this way, we can get close to everything . . . Whether it be a costume film or not is of no importance whatsoever.³⁵

Although the remark predates his Versailles film by eight years and comes nine years after *Flowers of St Francis*, Rossellini gives the most striking example of this 'logic' in 1966 in the *Rise of Louis XIV*. For this film, which he judged to be 'of absolute historical

rigour',³⁶ he proceeds in the same way as he did for *Flowers of St Francis*.³⁷ Nothing is dramatized. The emotional content of the film is not under our control, nor does it control us, for it is to be found by observation rather than produced by the narrative. The significant features of the film are not organized by structures: the actor, the editing, or the script. However, any effect of reality is discharged by the lighting, the artificial quality of the costumes and the commanding sway of an enacted text. The theatricality of the film bleeds it, as a beam of light, filtering into a darkened room, renders everything opaque. Yet the attention given to singular or small things nevertheless returns an exact measure of man: 'He is small, lost, stupid, naïve. And he does great things.' So well do we fit this 'double-edged' definition of ourselves contained in a 'heroic sense of life'³⁸ that a strange proximity, a time regained, substitutes itself for the distancing of the past.

'Time is out of joint'

This phrase of Shakespeare's declares that historical time, the time dictated by the passions and by the character of the world, cannot be restored. It declares that once events have taken place, time escapes from them and unfolds of itself, 'instead of things unfolding within it'.³⁹ This evacuation of time at the heart of things makes them historical for us, who are carried off and away by time. Conversely, things in the process of becoming are by definition not foreseeable in the present. In both directions, there is a failure to restore time's living matter.

All representations are historical and cultural. Whatever the efforts of anamnesis undertaken in the domains of art, literature or the historical sciences, neither words nor images will ever yield an exact representation of the past. We will always interpret it through the content of 'conceptual and sensual categories'⁴⁰ connected to the semantic system of our age. The thesis of the incommunicability of cultures – proposed by Oswald Spengler,⁴¹ often repeated less unconditionally, and accepted today as a condition of rather than as a limit to, the practice of history – also applies to the art of film, which is elaborated even more than history on the basis of typical representational schemata. Art gives preference to its myths as a means of embracing history. It is communicated to us at a symbolic level, and not as something present, which is factual in nature. It is always written and received with a reassessment of meaning. It only communicates with, through and in relation to this meaning.

In order to write and produce a 'historical film', it is necessary to build up a network of knowledge, a 'system' that will enable one to imagine the physical setting associated with a given culture and, if needs be, to make it as coherent, as mentally complete, as our own reality. This is the basic exertion required, for in order to be able to justify a 'reality', the writer has to have gone through a mental exercise of representing to himself the complete physical world of the period. A historian, on the other hand, in writing history and directing it in his own way, can dispense with such an exercise, thus remaining at quite another level of elaboration – even if visualizing his object, casting it ahead of his writing to inspire his words, can be no more than a satisfying experience.

This 'system' will always be constructed out of other 'systems', set up by individuals who have themselves developed their representations in reference to preceding ones. In literature, for example, certain words and phrases have the power to conjure up mentally

an epoch, to create an atmosphere, as Tania Van Hemelryck⁴² invites us to notice in her quotation of two lines from *La Légende des siècles*: 'No longer do we see braves hurling themselves into exploits/Like whirlwinds of impetuous souls.'⁴³ Even the historian, in his rigorous analysis of history, accepts the power of the imagination: 'At the end of the tenth century or in the first half of the eleventh, a crucified Christ weeps in Orleans, thus heralding a great fire.'⁴⁴

As for the cinema, it uses visual signals in order to evoke an epoch. More often than not, history will be received as historical if these signals find an echo in the collective imagination – that is to say, if they correspond to models of representation that precede the film. In 'The Romans in films', Roland Barthes shows that 'Roman-ness' can be established by a few strong, synecdochical signs: locks, drapery, classic profiles.⁴⁵ We exploit the sign in order to represent. And we often heed non-historical models in order to historicize. In *Barry Lyndon*, Stanley Kubrick goes to a lot of trouble to reproduce the settings, lighting effects and costumes of the works of the eighteenth-century English painters,⁴⁶ such as Hogarth and Constable; Fritz Lang drew his inspiration for *The Nibelungen* from Scandinavian Romantic painting, which is fantastical to say the least;⁴⁷ and Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St Matthew* recruits the artists of the quattrocento (Masaccio, Piero della Francesca).⁴⁸

Anachronistic and ahistorical models end up identifying and authenticating historical periods. Imaginary representations supplement historical reality, to the point where their presence becomes the condition of historicity. The formal means of the cinema have thus often been used to serve a false historicity.

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Though film-makers have been able to bring the past back to life in many diverse ways, as regards form as well as content, they have succeeded to do this only by favouring an evocative semiotics or by defining a historical notation to the detriment or exclusion of other such means. The rendering of historical time has only been possible by 'shaking up' the past to make it 'visible anew', not 'visible again' (a second time). In fact, film-makers make a virtue of, and turn to their advantage, the failure to represent the past in its entirety. In the end, they have sought more to construct than to reconstruct a reality.

But if we sit astride history and look at the aspects of it that appear essential to the authors – historicity on the one hand and authenticity on the other – we notice that the shadow of a 'temporal idiom' lies over all these films. Dreyer seeks to give expression to a 'psychology experienced as *other*',⁴⁹ but the means he employs make all verisimilitude impossible. Pasolini reinvents a past in order to get at its truth, yet the very nature of his approach rules out all historical fidelity. While *Flowers of St Francis* preserves its medieval religious specificity, the period is annulled by the film's realism and by the emphasis placed on the human condition, as is also the case for Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*. The context of each of these latter two films is strictured, their diegesis is considerably circumscribed, and the observation of reality is done on a small scale, in the intimacy of the world. Lastly, Joffé, Scott, Annaud and Chéreau, each in his own way, all focus on the epic dimensions, the depth, and the quality of phenomena in order that the omnipresence and the expressiveness of their representations of the past succeed in reproducing the abundance and extreme precision of reality – yet *The Mission*'s aesthetic seduction as well as its dramatic devices clothe history in a dress it never wore; the polished reality, the singular

scenery (the Argentine-Brazilian jungle) and the behaviourism of the *Actors' Studio*, which seduce the spectator, end up transcending a reality that, as a result, becomes estranged from itself. In *The Name of the Rose*, we are told a story that does not tell itself, from the midst of a reality that extends beyond the narrative: as if nothing pre-existed it, the story opens at the start of the film and closes with the final image. Historical reality, although represented with care, is a frame for the narrative, and the narrative is tightly constructed, dismissing the entire world when it is resolved. The dramatic structure invests the reality, retaining from the early fourteenth century only the almost Romantic stylization of its representation. And finally, as in all these films of appearance, the star system also positions cinema across from itself rather than in front of a reality.

As regards Andrei Tarkovsky, in *Andrei Roublev* he simply wanted to 'recreate the universe' of fifteenth-century Russia:

It was a question of imagining a setting in which the spectator would in no way get the impression of a monument or of a museum: neither from the costumes, nor from the words, nor from the behaviour, nor from the architecture. [...] Convention was nevertheless unavoidable, but quite unlike that of animated paintings at any rate. This is because we live in our own times and no longer are equipped with the material of six hundred years ago.⁵⁰

This humility and this ambition in the face of history result in giving the film a material setting that almost entirely agrees with historical reality, thus slightly reducing the impossibility of restoring the appearance of the past. 'In order to reach this truth of direct observation,' said Tarkovsky, 'its *psychological truth* one might say, it was even necessary to deviate sometimes from archaeological or ethnographic truth'; but, one might add, in a way that is deeply realist because invisible and indistinct, a way peculiar to the restoration of an old master canvas, whose subject might have been effaced in places but which acute observation, a meticulous study of chromatics and a natural understanding of the reality of the models enable to repaint, so that the condition of the composition on the day it was finished, centuries earlier, can be rediscovered. In aiming for nothing less than the representation of life,⁵¹ Tarkovsky managed to reconcile visual historicity, the psychological dimension, intimism and panorama in a lyricism peculiar to his work. 'Authenticity' is attained. Yet the film, though faithful to the mentalities of the monastic milieu of the period (evangelical love, the initiatory passage), nevertheless fractures the perfection of its representation of history, for by wanting to transgress history in developing the thesis of the persecution of the Russian people and denouncing the spiritual misery of the contemporary world, the film makes history strictly exemplificatory.

Sometimes history remains *distant* in spite of an evident desire for reconstruction and the quality of the latter's realization. In the diptych *Jeanne la Pucelle*, directed by Jacques Rivette with dialogue scripted by Pascal Bonitzer, history remains close to life without ever entering into it, or even coming close to a silent expression of itself in faces, bodies or words. History is flatly represented, without existence (in the sense in which Bataille understood it) becoming *communication*. This distance imposes itself regardless of the film's narrative character, of its division into chapters and of the way it is told through the transitions that lead up to events or through the lulls that follow them. It is a distance maintained with respect to 'authenticity', and has to do with Rivette's aesthetics being more precisely brought about by the historicist and didactic intention of the film.⁵² This

intention is so perfectly adjusted, moreover, that the film almost leaves the realm of fiction altogether. But as soon as this goal becomes manifest, it takes on a great importance and gives value to the film, while at the same time legitimizing the 'distance'. And therefore, in order for the film to remain perfectly true to its historical objective, its visual historicity has to correspond to the degree of historicity of the events it recounts, or at any rate these co-ordinates must be consistent enough to be able to be taken as points of reference. Now from this perspective the film is very uneven, as two examples will demonstrate. (1) The coronation of Charles VII is filmed in real time, giving it a documentary character. It is displayed in all its pomp, scrupulous respect being shown for everything, even unto the most insignificant shoe. Yet during the fighting, Joan wears a *woollen* coat of mail under her armour and on her head. (2) In virtue of its special lacunar structure, based on the development of its interludes, the film cleverly avoids shooting the deployment of troops, royal entrances, organised battles, scenes at high altitudes and especially any wide shots of these, such a construction providing a way of getting round scenes that would need a sizeable budget in order to be made to conform to historical reality. But on several occasions the film goes against its own salutary principle, notably in the Orleans episode. Carried out by a handful of men, the fighting is meagre and artificial. The characters journey and develop within history but do not belong to it: the historical places are just as we would visit them today, deserted and prepared, not as they might have been – these are but my impressions, of course.

Other Places and Other Times

What could offer us the experience of the past better than the cinema? Already in these few pages, time and space have been naturally brought together, and the past has been compared to an elsewhere. This comparison is more than just metaphorical, for it reveals an economy of reception characteristic of historical films, as is testified by the title given to a television series, *'The Camera Explores the Past'*,⁵³ not to mention the many similar allusions used by critics in discussing the historical film.

In order to describe a new experience we have recourse to what we know. A certain experience of the past, made possible by film, demands that we try to express it in common experience, which is the experience of place. Jean-Marie Le Clézio gives this comment on Fellini's *Satyricon*: 'Once out of the film's magical grip [. . .], we want to recall what happened, give names. But in vain. At the very most there remains the memory of a *journey* that was not illusory, made in another time and in another place . . .'⁵⁴ And Fellini claims at the end of the screenplay that 'a stunning journey to a historical dimension' is now drawing to a close.⁵⁵

However, the comparison between the experience of the past and the experience of another place runs deeper than this, and works reciprocally. Alberto Moravia, whose literary work is intimately linked to the cinema, describes his experience of travelling in these words:

. . . So, in reality, the journey [to the Sahara] [. . .]: where I travel not in space but in time, or, if you prefer, in history. For me, travelling to the United States is to travel into the future; going to certain Arab countries is to return to a medieval past; visiting London or Paris is to dive into the atmosphere of the second half of the nineteenth century. . .⁵⁶

Moravia is able to describe his experience of space only by comparing it to a dive into the past, by identifying it with a journey in time. The feelings induced in us by other places and by the past are so similar that we invoke either one to explain the other. Sometimes the elsewhere can be so disorientating that we mistake its epoch or become incapable of determining it at all. *Shadows of our Ancestors* (1965) by Sergei Paradzhanov represents the rural life of the Carpathians in the nineteenth century. But without prior knowledge of this traditional environment it is impossible give it a date, to determine the period of the film. It might just as well represent the sixteenth century.

Such is the disorientation furnished by the cinematic experience of the past that we readily speak of science fiction, as though science fiction made history timeless and reversible: 'science fiction in reverse exploring the past instead of the future'.⁵⁷ This comparison of the historical film (in this case *Satyricon*) with science fiction, which is characterised by the combination of another time with another place, derives from what the two genres have in common: 'We are trying to create', said Kubrick, 'something that does not exist'.⁵⁸ Timelessness gives the past access to a geography, and the elsewhere access to a bygone age. It is not by chance that Tarkovsky, each time with the same message, panned out the representation of the past in 1966, with *Andrei Roublev*, and then the representation of the future, with *Solaris* in 1972 and *Stalker* in 1979, stopping off with a work on the present in 1974, *The Mirror*.

Furthermore, these experiences of dimension will be lived to the full by the spectator only if the world represented is given as *presence*. For whatever their position regarding history, the scriptwriter (with his writing) and the director (with his images) are attempting to reinstate a moment of the past by twisting its spatio-temporal dimensions into a here-and-now (which is mental for the scriptwriter and cinematic for the director).

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So as a rule, films reconstituting a moment in history are called 'historical films' or 'history films'. It is immediately supposed that these are films presenting a historical reality. However, the appellations prove inappropriate as soon as they are examined. They really only apply if their meaning is limited to designating films whose diegesis is *relative* to history, or to the past. Their ordinary meaning is soon compromised insofar as: (a) if the story is set within history, it cannot have history as its object; and (b) if the story is relating history, the latter can be accommodated only within the limits, or via the *strategies*, discussed above and as a result of which it could only constitute an approach to history or even a deliberate betrayal of it the better to evoke it. The life of a moment of history matters more than historical realism for those who betray its appearance or context. Historicity is linked to an archaeological objective, and is the search for an environment of life, whereas 'authenticity' is the search for the life of this environment, which is a truly anthropological approach.⁵⁹

Whether they be considered reconstructions or reinventions, historical fictions are representations of the past, in which in the end only the presence that emerges from them matters. This implies that the essence of the representation of a reality is not in its formal fidelity: this latter supports or discredits the reality of the representation depending on whether or not it corresponds to a logic of representation, but the 'authenticity' of the past results from the transfiguration of the representation. For Bertold Brecht, the *gestus*, the singing and the choreography all have 'realist roles to play'. These strategies work

together towards *realizing* a space-time. In this sense, they are strategies placed in the service of a reproduction that does not imitate reality, but makes it felt:

It is a modern error to believe [that they have] no role to play in the reproduction of 'men as they really are'. If art reflects life, it does so using special mirrors. Art does not become non-realist when it makes changes to propositions, but only when it changes them in such a way that the public, if it were to use these illustrations practically to gain insights and impetus, would flunk when faced with reality.⁶⁰

Likewise, it is of no account if cinematographic strategies should choose to reproduce the seasons of a here or the present moment of a place, for we are essentially derealized with respect to them. In seeking to distance his object, the dramatist understands that his art has to transubstantiate reality in order to represent it authentically.

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The debate has focused on the distinction between the 'authenticity' of the represented past and the historicity of the representation. Yet these aspects are in no way opposed. Instead, they maintain a fundamental connection between the impossibility of representing history and the possibility of making it live. This connection is one of perfect complementarity, with the reservation that 'authenticity' can redeem a lack of historicity, but not the reverse.⁶¹ It appears, therefore, that in films the way facts are apprehended takes precedence over the facts themselves.

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(translated from the French by Isabella Palin)

Notes

1. I wish to thank Rena Fakhouri and Fabien S. Gérard for their useful suggestions. For editorial reasons, the number of end-notes has been reduced, the references to connected studies omitted, and references sometimes grouped together. The *terminus ad quem* of this study is Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle* (1995), and the Middle Ages is the privileged period.
2. M. Ferro, 'Y a-t-il une vision filmique de l'histoire?', in *Cinéma et Histoire, nouvelle édition refondue* (Paris: Gallimard, Folio Histoire, 55), 1993, pp. 217–226.
3. A given film may of course correspond to several criteria in the same row or column. This is the case for *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, which contains an official discourse (1 across) – Joan is beatified in 1909, canonized in 1920 – and also gives an innovative image of 'la Pucelle' through a personal reading of documents from the sentencing trial of 1431 and the annulment trial of 1456, the so-called rehabilitation trial (4 across). We may also note that, some years before Marc Ferro, Claude Billard distinguished three types of relation to history in films, which parallel the 'historical ages': aesthetic history, relevant to the 'theological age' (A. Comte); 'pragmatic history' (Hegel), relevant to the 'metaphysical age'; and critical or 'reflective history' (Hegel), relative to the 'positivist age'. See Billard, C., 'Cinéma et philosophie de l'histoire', in J. Baldizzone and P. Guibbert (eds), in *Cinéma et Histoire, Histoire du cinéma, Les cahiers de la cinémathèque*, 1982, 35–36, pp. 19–36.
4. The *diegesis* is the universe, or the pseudo-world, that frames the *story*, which, 'told' in films by images, becomes a *narrative*.
5. See E. Grandgeorges, *Le Septième sceaue, Ingmar Bergman: étude critique* (Paris: Nathan, Synopsis, 12), 1992, p. 96.

6. A. Tarkovsky, *Le Temps scellé*, translated from the Russian by A. Kichilov and C.H. de Brantes (Paris: Editions de l'Etoile/Cahiers du cinéma, 1989), p. 210.
7. See A. Tarkovsky, *Le Sacrifice, Livre du film*, with photographs by Sven Nykvist (Munich and Paris: Schirmer/Mosel, 1987).
8. At our century's end, this set of themes is still with us. In 1995, Albert Jacquard prefaced Theodore Monod's *Le chercheur d'Absolu* with these words: 'The Christian era will not have a third millennium: it ended on 6 August, 1945'; and 'We are no longer in the era when the conditions for the survival of our species have to be fundamentally rethought.' Cf. T. Monod, *Le chercheur d'Absolu* (Paris: Le cherche-midi éditeur, 1997), p. 7 (Paris: Gallimard-folio, 1998, p. 9).
9. The classification of historical films according to their accommodation of history is thus the following: in relation to the *nature* of the participation of history within a film, (a) history acts as a 'pretext', or (b) history acts as an 'argument'; and in relation to the *degree* of the participation of history within a film, (i) there is a story within history, or (ii) there is a story of history. The nature and the degree of the accommodation can be combined: strictly to give a-i, a-ii, a-b-i and a-b-ii; and relative to the relationship i/ii to give a-b-i-ii and a-i-ii.
10. We should distinguish between 'historicity', as that which conforms to historical reality (e.g., the 'brown', not black, colour of the Franciscan habits; the restoration of a judicial building; or particular table manners), and "historicity", as that which belongs to history (e.g., the words of the monk William of Occam; the Châtelet in Paris; or the *Psaultier de saint Louis*); where the latter does not necessarily guarantee the former.
11. P.A. Lundgren was the set designer of both films.
12. I shall call such a spectator the 'model spectator'.
13. Bertrand Tavernier's depiction of the Middle Ages appeared authentic to J. Le Goff, notably in virtue of the 'story's being inserted in history'. Cf. *Le Monde*, 12 November 1987, p. 11.
14. V. Jankélévitch broaches the subject of this 'moral supernaturality' of the artist as well as of his feeling of duty in expression. See, for example, V. Jankélévitch, *Le sérieux de l'intention, Traité des vertus I* (Paris: Flammarion, Champs, 1983).
15. C.T. Dreyer to Karl Roos (23 October 1950), 'Ma seule grande passion', in *Réflexions sur mon métier*, prefaced by C. Tesson, Cahiers du cinéma (Petite bibliothèque des cahiers du cinéma), 1983, p. 77 (*Politiken*, 28 October 1951).
16. C.T. Dreyer, 'Au sujet du style cinématographique', in *Réflexions sur mon métier*, op. cit., p. 70 (*Politiken*, 2 December 1943).
17. C.T. Dreyer, 'La mystique réalisée', in *Réflexions sur mon métier*, op. cit., p. 41.
18. C.T. Dreyer to Karl Roos (23 October 1950), 'Ma seule grande passion', op. cit., p. 77.
19. These two poles ('a certain stylization' and 'a scrupulous realism') are also brought to the fore by P. Parrain. Cf. P. Parrain, 'Dreyer, cadres et mouvements', in *Etudes cinématographiques*, Paris, 1967, 53–56, pp. 13 sq.
20. C.T. Dreyer, 'La mystique réalisée', in *Réflexions sur mon métier*, op. cit., p. 41. The next two quotes refer to the same.
21. C.T. Dreyer, 'Imagination et couleur', in *Réflexions sur mon métier*, op. cit., pp. 104–105 (*Politiken*, 30 August 1955). The next two quotes refer to p. 106 of the same.
22. For Dreyer, rigorous historical reality is a secondary preoccupation. The twenty-nine interrogations were reduced to just one, taking place on the day of her death, 30 May, 1431, in just one place, the Palais de Justice in Rouen. On the economy of the film, cf. J. Sémoulé, "'Douleur, noblesse unique", La Passion chez Carl Dreyer', in *Etudes cinématographiques, Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, Paris, Autumn 1962, 18–19, pp. 151–163.
23. Pier Paolo Pasolini to J.-A. Fieschi, on *Oedipus Rex*. Cf. J.-A. Fieschi, 'Entretien avec Pasolini', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, Paris, November 1967, 195, p. 13.
24. P.P. Pasolini, in *Cinema nuovo*, May–June 1970, 205, p. 172. Quoted in A.M. Boyer, *Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Lyons: La Manufacture, 23, 1987), p. 207.
25. Pasolini confesses this in several interviews, notably in B. Bertolucci, and J.-L. Comolli, 'Le cinéma selon Pasolini', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, August, 1965, 169, p. 77, col. 1: 'the principle of contamination, of a stylistic melting-pot.' In light of this, the dream-like but nevertheless realist aesthetics of *Satyricon* becomes

- appreciably Pasolinian. Moreover, Alberto Moravia uses the same terms in his definition of it: 'the contamination of styles'. Cf. F. Fellini, *Fellini Satyricon* (Bologna: Cappelli, 'Dal soggetto al film', 38), 1969, p. 71.
26. It should be mentioned that in Ingmar Bergman's *The Source*, it is not the film's 'visual historicity' (which is, however, present), but the importance given to the body, to human relationships and to the material aspects of life, as well as the closed structure of the scenario, its treatment and its direction, that lend the film such a disturbing truthful character. See below, *Intimacy in History in Roberto Rossellini*.
 27. The letters 'y' and 'z' within parentheses indicate dominance of the characteristic.
 28. P.P. Pasolini, 'Il sentimento della storia', in *Cinema Nuovo*, Genoa-Florence, May-June, 1970, 205, p. 172. Quoted in F.S. Gérard, *Pasolini, ou le mythe de la barbarie* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, Arguments et Documents, 1981), p. 70.
 29. On the importance of History in Pasolini's work, see R. Escobar, 'Pasolini, il passato e il futuro', in *Quaderni medievali*, Bari, Dedalo libri, 1977, 3, pp. 155–173.
 30. Roberto Rossellini to Mario Verdone, in 'Colloquio sul neo-realismo', in *Bianco e nero*, February, 1952. Quoted in M. Verdone, *Roberto Rossellini*, presented by M. Verdone, with a choice of texts and comments by R. Rossellini, (Paris: Seghers, 1963), pp. 25–26.
 31. Roberto Rossellini to Mario Verdone, in 'Colloquio sul neo-realismo', *op. cit.*, p. 26.
 32. Rossellini employed real Franciscans as actors.
 33. The *Flowers* refer to the *Fioretti*, a collection of fifty-three legendary stories about St Francis of Assisi and his companions, written in Latin (*Florentum*) and translated into Tuscan around 1390. The *Fioretti* were translated into French in 1953 by A. Masseron, and published by Seuil (Point Sagesse), 1994.
 34. Roberto Rossellini to Mario Verdone, in 'Colloquio sul neo-realismo', *op. cit.*, p. 28.
 35. Roberto Rossellini to F. Bardet, A. Buholzer, A. Kohler and J. Rial, in *Film Klub*, Geneva-Zurich, October, 1958. Quoted in M. Verdone, *Roberto Rossellini*, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
 36. Claude-Jean Philippe to Roberto Rossellini, in A. Bergala (ed.), *Roberto Rossellini, Le cinéma révéélé*, texts compiled and prefaced by A. Bergala (Paris: Flammarion, Champs Contre-Champs, 1984), p. 129 (*Cahiers du cinéma*, October, 1966, 183).
 37. Claude-Jean Philippe to Roberto Rossellini: 'You have the same approach to Louis XIV as you did to Saint Francis of Assisi,' *ibid.*, p. 130.
 38. Roberto Rossellini to Claude-Jean Philippe, *ibid.*, pp. 130 and 131.
 39. G. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, Epiméthée, 1968), p. 120.
 40. A.J. Gourevitch, *Les catégories de la culture médiévale*, translated from the Russian by H. Courtin and N. Godneff, with a preface by G. Duby (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque des Histoires, 1983), p. 20.
 41. Cf. O. Spengler, *Le déclin de l'Occident: esquisse d'une morphologie de l'histoire universelle*, translated from the German by M. Trazerout (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque des Idées, 1931–1933): 'Universal validity is an inference from the self to the other that is always false', First Part, 'Forme et réalité', p. 52.
 42. T. Van Hemelryck, 'Où sont les "Neuf Preux"? Variations sur un thème médiéval', in *Studi Francesi*, January–April, 1998, 124, fasc. 1, p. 52.
 43. V. Hugo, *La Légende des siècles*, text edited and annotated by Jacques Truchet (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), p. 405, ll. 24–25.
 44. J.-M. Sansterre, 'Attitudes occidentales à l'égard des miracles d'images dans le Haut Moyen Age', in *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, November–December, 1998, 6, p. 1219.
 45. R. Barthes, 'Les Romains au Cinéma', in *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, Tel Quel), pp. 27–30. Discussing J.L. Mankiewicz's *Julius Caesar* (1953).
 46. Stanley Kubrick to Michel Ciment, in *L'Express*, 30 August 1976, p. 21, col. 2.
 47. Cf. E. Leiser, 'Film – Die Kunst unserer Zeit', in *Film und Fernsehen*, Berlin, RDA, 1983, fasc. 8, p. 40: 'We began by constructing a forest of very tall, very straight tree-trunks. We were influenced by Böcklin's painting, *Silence in the Forest* . . .'. Conversation from 2 and 3 April 1964. Quoted by G. Strum, *Fritz Lang. Films-textes-références* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1990), p. 60.
 48. P.P. Pasolini, 'Le cinéma selon Pasolini', in B. Bertolucci and J.-L. Comolli, *op. cit.*, p. 77, col. 1.
 49. H. Martin, *Mentalités Médiévales, XIe-XVe siècle*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, Nouvelle Cléo, l'histoire et ses problèmes, 1996), p. 3.
 50. A. Tarkovsky, *Le Temps Scellé*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–73.
 51. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

52. The credits reflect this intention, thanking the 'craftsmen' and listing the names of the researcher and the ecclesiastical adviser and the historical references: Georges and André Duby, Régine Pernoud, and the Editions Klincksieck, publishers of the texts of the trials.
53. See G. Thuillier and J. Tulard, *Le marché de l'Histoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), p. 81. My italics.
54. J.-M.G. Le Clézio, 'L'extra-terrestre', in *L'Arc*, 1971, 45, p. 28. My italics.
55. F. Fellini, *Fellini Satyricon*, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
56. A. Moravia, 'La Pista', in *Lettere dal Sahara* (Milan: Bompiani, 1981), p. 67.
57. Peter Nichols to Federico Fellini, in F. Fellini, *Fellini Satyricon*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
58. Stanley Kubrick to Michel Ciment, in *L'Express*, 30 August 1976, p. 18, col. 1.
59. Charles Jouhaut claims that the historical film, in virtue of the intrinsic possibilities of cinematographic narration, 'is closer to modern historiographical process than the popularizing book is, for it too has replaced the *real presence* of history in the text with the illustration of the past in its intelligibility.' In J. Baldizzone and P. Guibbert (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.
60. B. Brecht, *Petit organon pour le théâtre* (Paris: L'Arche, 1990), p. 98, § 73. § 74 invites 'all the sibling arts of dramatic art' to listen to one other.
61. On the occasion of *L'Orestie* staged by Barrault, Roland Barthes put the question of 'reconstruction' (the archaeological temptation) versus 'transposition' (choice of alternative strategies), whose correlatives (on the level of the outcome) bear a singular resemblance to the notions, respectively, of 'historicity' and of 'authenticity' developed here. He arrives at the same indeterminate conclusion. Cf. R. Barthes, 'Comment représenter l'antique', in *Essais critiques* (Paris: Seuil, Tel Quel, 1964), pp. 71–79 (Points Essais, 1981, pp. 71–79).