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PRESENTACIÓ

Teniu a les mans les actes del **10è Seminari internacional sobre els antecedents i orígens del cinema**, que es va celebrar a Girona els dies 9 i 10 d'abril de 2015, organitzat pel Museu del Cinema, el Departament d'Història i d'Història de l'Art de la Universitat de Girona, el Grup de recerca consolidat en Teories de l'Art contemporani de la Universitat de Girona i el *Proyecto del Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad "La construcción del imaginario bélico en las actiualidades de la Primera Guerra Mundial"*. La temàtica d'aquesta edició ha estat *La Gran Guerra 1914-1918. La primera guerra de les imatges*.

El Seminari arriba a la seva desena edició. Una xifra rodona que permet tenir prou perspectiva per a valorar la feina feta i els objectius assolits. Des de 1999, s'ha dut a terme aquest Seminari puntualment, amb rigor organitzatiu i de contingut. Aquesta constància ha donat els seus fruits: 10 volums d'actes publicades, 2.575 pàgines que inclouen 50 ponències i 139 comunicacions sobre el precinema i el cinema dels orígens. Tot plegat conforma un espai de reflexió i de divulgació únic en aquesta temàtica a tot l'Estat Espanyol i dels pocs que hi ha a nivell europeu. Vull destacar, en primer lloc, aquesta perseverança al llarg dels anys, que ha fet possible que projectes inicialment modestos, acabin tenint un relliu i una potència molt notable. Aquest és el cas del Seminari.

També vull posar en relleu l'esforç conjunt fet pel Museu del Cinema i la Universitat de Girona (Facultat d'Història i Història de l'Art), concretament, pel grup de recerca de la UdG liderat pel professor Àngel Quintana. Ambdues institucions, Museu i Universitat, col·laboren en un projecte concret, que potencia i desenvolupa uns objectius i unes finalitats comparatides. Difícilment, cap dels dos per separat podria tirar endavant, durant tants anys, una iniciativa com la del Seminari. Aquesta col·laboració és un exemple més de la necessitat mútua que tenen els museus i les universitats de cooperar per a impulsar objectius comuns.

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“Dream little boy, dream of war! Children, dreams and imaginary war scenery in Italian fiction cinema of WWI”

Silvio Alovisio and Luca Mazzei¹

1. Four small dreams of war and toys

Over time, the discussion of Italian films produced during WWI has covered various aspects of film production. After an initial phase during the 1990s which involved, above all, the role of fiction films in constructing the interventionist position², we have moved on to studying how the experience of WWI, in its radical divergence from preceding conflicts, interacted with the structure of Italian war movies, transforming it from the roots up³. Most recently, the discussion has been broadened to include documentary films as well, with an increasing number of studies about live shooting in that era⁴ and the edited films which, during the war period and afterward,

1. This essay has been discussed, planned and organized collectively by the two authors. In particular, Luca Mazzei wrote the first and second sections; Silvio Alovisio, the third and fourth sections.
2. See M. Isnenghi, *L'immagine cinematografica della Grande Guerra*, “Rivista di Storia Contemporanea”, VII, 3, 1978, pp. 341-353; G. P. Brunetta, *La guerra lontana*, in D. Leoni, C. Zadra (eds.), *La Grande Guerra. Esperienza, memoria, immagini*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1986, pp. 801-812; Vittorio Martinelli, *Il cinema italiano in armi*, in R. Redi (ed.), *Sperduto nel buio. Il cinema muto italiano e il suo tempo (1905-1930)*, Cappelli, Bologna 1990; V. Martinelli, *I sogni di Momi. Il cinema italiano e la Grande Guerra*, “Cinegrafie”, II, 4, 1991, pp. 127-133. pp. 37-42; G. P. Brunetta, *Il cinema muto italiano*, Laterza, Bari 2008, pp. 257-264; Id., *Cinema e prima guerra mondiale*, in G. P. Brunetta (ed.), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, v. I. t. II, *Miti, luoghi, divi*, Einaudi, Torino 1999, pp. 263-272; V. Martinelli, *I sogni di Momi. Il cinema italiano e la Grande Guerra*, “Cinegrafie”, II, 4, 1991, pp. 127-133.
3. See: G. Alonge, *Cinema e guerra. Il film, la grande guerra e l'immaginario bellico del Novecento*, UTET, Torino 2001; A. Faccioli, *Il cinema italiano e la Grande Guerra. Rovine, eroi, fantasmi*, in A. Faccioli and A. Scandola (ed.), *A fuoco l'obiettivo! Il cinema e la fotografia raccontano la grande guerra*, AIRSC Persiani, Roma – Bologna, 2014, 14-31.
4. See: L. Fabi, *Doppio sguardo sulla Grande Guerra: i “dal vero” del 1915-18 tra cinema, guerra e propaganda*, La Cineteca del Friuli, Gemona 2006; S. Berruti, “Acciaio parlante tra i muti ac-

were its offshoot⁵. Another important factor was research into Italian war films produced just before 1915, in order to highlight lines of continuity⁶. However, a number of aspects of war-military productions made between 1915 and 1919 remain to be studied. There is a dearth of film studies that focus on the knowledge, narrative themes and iconographic figures which, in those years, horizontally traversed both the military and the civilian world, permeating the average Italian's image of the war. In particular, in view of research, now mature, conducted in other, scientific sectors, only a small sampling has been conducted to analyze the relationship between war films from WWI and childhood⁷, and absolutely no research has concentrated on the relationship between the nascent psychological culture and war movie imagery, a world which, we believe, was instead linked right from the start with the figure of the child as an ideal character to give form to broadly circulating, psychological processes. Thus, taking into consideration the psychological culture of the era, our paper aims to analyze a

ciai. *Gli esperimenti italiani di fotografia e di cinematografia scientifico-militare fino alla Grande Guerra*, "Immagine", 6, 2012, pp. 55-86; S. Pesenti Campagnoni, *WWI. La guerra sepolta. I film girati al fronte tra documentazione, attualità e spettacolo*, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Fondo di studi "Parini-Chirio", Università di Torino, 2013; Id. *Lo spettacolo dell'attualità al servizio della propaganda bellica*, e L. Fabi, *Doppio sguardo sulla Grande Guerra: un approccio didattico e divulgativo ai "dal vero" del conflitto*, in A. Faccioli, *A fuoco l'obiettivo!* cit., pp. 46-57 and pp.106-115; S. Pesenti Campagnoni *L'invisibilità della guerra dal vero: Film, Esercito, Propaganda*, "Segno Cinema", XXXIV, 190, 2014.

5. A. Faccioli, *Il mito montato. Costruzione della memoria e manipolazione audiovisiva nei documentari di montaggio sulla Grande Guerra*, "Bianco e Nero", LXXI, 567, 2010, pp. 45-46.
6. V. Festinese, *Immagini dalla Libia (1911-1912)*, e L. Mazzei, *La celluloido e il museo. Un esperimento di "cineteca" militare all'ombra della prima Guerra di Libia (1911-1912)*, "Bianco e Nero", LXXII, 571 2011, pp. 52-63, 66-85; L. Mazzei, S. Berruti, "Il giornale mi lascia freddo": i "dal vero" dalla Libia del 1911-'12 e il pubblico italiano, "Immagine", n.s., n. 3, 2011, pp. 53-103; M. A. Pimpinelli, M. Seregini, "Il cielo in un globo di fumo". *I film "dal vero" nella guerra italo-turca: il caso Cines*, and S. Berruti, S. Pesenti Campagnoni, *Luca Comerio in Libia: documenti non ufficiali di una pagina di storia*, "Immagine", n.s, n. 4, 2011, pp. 31- 68, e 69-94; L. Mazzei, S. Berruti, *The Silent War. "Newsreels" and "Cinema Postcards" from a country at war*, in A. Quintana, J. Pons (eds.), *La construcció del l'actualitat en el cinema del orígens*, Fundació Museu del Cinema-Col·lecció Tomàs Mallol / Ajuntament de Girona, Girona, 2012, pp. 261-276.
7. See: G. Alonge, *Giocando con i soldatini. La guerra e il sogno di Momi tra propaganda e mercato*, "Il Nuovo Spettatore", 1, 1997, pp. 167-178; A. Meneghelli, *Il sogno di Momi, una guerra senza Patria*, "Bianco e Nero", LXV, 548, 2004, pp. 47-52; M. Veronesi, *A Woman Wishes to "Make a New World". "Umanità"*, in S. Bull and A. Söderbergh Widding (eds.), *Not So Silent. Women in Cinema before Sound*, Sofia Bull, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholm 2010 pp. 67-79; D. Lotti, *Sogni di bimbo a passo uno. L'animazione nel film muto italiano di propaganda bellica*, "Cabiria", XLIV, 177, 2014, pp. 41-54; L. Mazzei, "Babbo, tu compri solo divise e armi per te". *Bambini, sogni e armi giocattolo nel cinema italiano della IGM*, in *A fuoco l'obiettivo!*, cit., pp. 168-192.



Fig. 1. "The Soldier's Dream of Home", lithograph, Currier and Ives, 1862 ca.



Fig. 2. "Sogni di Guerra", Italian Postcard, 1912.

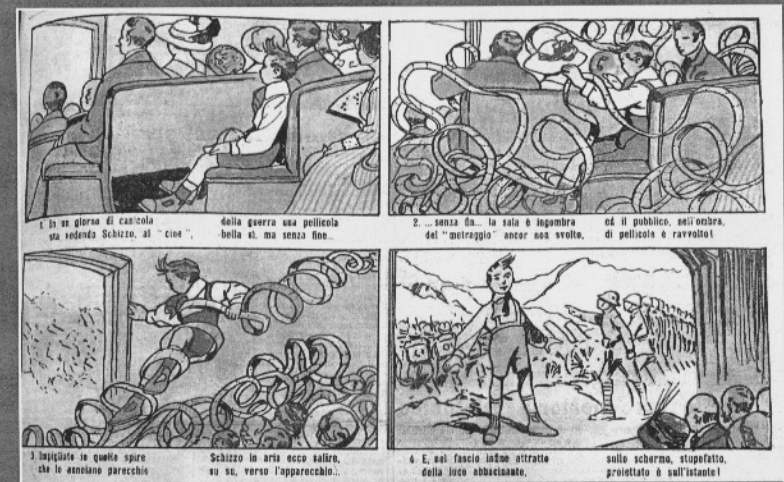


Fig. 3. "Schizzo", Comic strip, "Corriere dei piccoli" (Milan), IX, 24, 17 giugno 1917.

specific corpus of Italian movies about the First World War which featured children as protagonists. The ultimate aim is to observe the role of cinema in nurturing, performing and relaunching (or sometimes conserving, through opposition to innovations) themes and iconographies that are traditionally tied to infancy but whose origin is actually external to the world of childhood itself.

To this end, we will concentrate on four films:

– *Il Sogno patriottico di Cinessino*, by Gennaro Righelli (Cines, Rome, 1915)

– *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia*, by Riccardo Cassano (Cines, Rome, 1915)

– *La guerra e il sogno di Momi*, by Segundo de Chomón (Itala Film, Turin, 1917)

– *Umanità*, by Elvira Giallanella (Liana Film, Milan, 1919)

These four films share a common theme: the war as envisioned by children. As depicted in these examples, the viewing is never direct; it is always narrated through dreams.

In the first two cases, the protagonist is the same: Eraldo Giunchi, the comic star from the film studio Cines, a child prodigy who performed under the stage name Cinessino. The plots are similar, albeit with a few differences. In both cases, Cinessino, a middle-class child, falls asleep or drowns and dreams of war; but the wars he dreams about are different. In the first film, *Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino*, released on May 1, 1915, the Libyan War is the stage. The conflict was still ongoing at that time, even though, following the 1912 armistice signed with Turkey, it had turned into a colonial battle against the rebels. In the second film, *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia*, released in September 1915, the subject is the First World War, which began for Italy on May 24th of that year. One might be tempted to say that *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia* is a remake of *Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino*, adapted to the new political situation, and perhaps even its completion. But this is not the case.

Let us see how the two films differ. *Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino* shows the child protagonist dreaming of leaving for Libya to find his father, who has left to fight the war there. Before leaving, Cinessino, dressed like a soldier, says his goodbyes to his stuffed animal, as though highlighting a farewell to childhood which is too precocious to be possible, thus creating a comical effect and amplifying the film's dreamlike setting. Once at the North African front, Cinessino engages in battle, side by side with his father – who is wounded but alive.

Instead, *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia* begins as Cinessino's father departs for the front. The child comforts his mother, telling her that his father will return victorious. After a short sequence on the war front, where the father

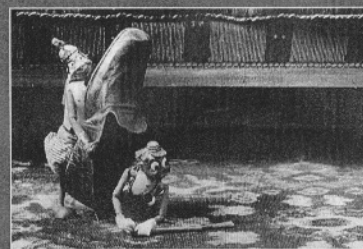


Fig. 4. “*Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino*”, screenshot, directed by Gennaro Righelli, Cines production (1915)



Fig. 5. “*La guerra e il sogno di Momi*”, screenshot, directed by Segundo de Chomón, Itala Film production (1917)

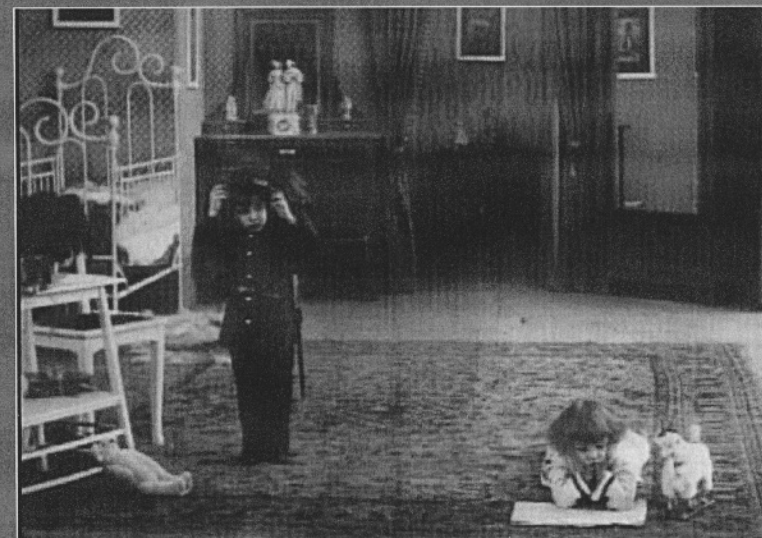


Fig. 6. *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia*, poster, directed by Riccardo Cassano, Cines production (1915)

is seen fighting heroically, the film returns to Cinessino at home: here, we see the child falling asleep in front of his toy soldiers. In the dream sequence that follows, the toy soldiers fight a war among themselves. At one point, however, the toy soldiers turn into real soldiers. It is a victorious war for Italy. Cinessino awakens from the dream with a prophecy which he instantly shares with his mother: his father is wounded but he'll soon be back. And in fact, the father returns home, wounded but safe. The prophecy was accurate.

In *La guerra e il sogno di Momi* by Segundo de Chomòn, produced by Giovanni Pastrone's Itala Film, the structure is more complex. In the first part of the film, the little boy Momi is in the family living room listening as the news his father has sent to his family is read aloud. The account immediately transforms into images: it is a war tale set in the mountains, where a mother is threatened by enemy troops and her child is bravely searching for Italian soldiers. They eventually appear, led by Momi's father, to save the woman. The letter has affected Momi and he identifies with the child hero in the story. When the reading is over, Momi falls asleep on the sofa next to a children's book about a war between Trick and Track, two anthropomorphic cricket soldiers that represent an Italian and a German. In the dream, the two puppets come to life and start quarreling. The book opens up and comes to life, and out of it come soldiers from different armies, first made of paper, then of cork. In the dream, they equip themselves with weapons that are increasingly technological: enormous cannons, airships, poison gas. The two cricket soldiers are still fighting with each other when Momi, thinking he has been pricked by one of the bayonets (but actually it is a rose thorn), wakes up distressed and is soon comforted by his mother. As if to suggest the dream was a positive premonition, a subtitle reads: "Pax Vittoriosa".

Instead, *Umanità* is a film from the postwar period; it is adapted from a tale in rhymes by Vittorio Emanuele Bravetta⁸, a writer and screenwriter, and is illustrated with drawings by a famous illustrator of the time, Golia. In this case, there are two children: Tranquillino and Sirenetta. While the parents – who are never seen in the film – are asleep, the two children take control of the adults' spaces (the living room, the bedroom) and their objects (cigarettes, the newspaper). Tranquillino, who has a gnome doll on his bedside table, falls asleep and starts dreaming. In this case the child doesn't dream of war, since it is over, but of the world after the battles have ended. It is a desolate land inhabited only by himself, his sister, and the gnome, which has transformed itself into a flesh and blood creature and is their spiritual guide. The remains of the conflict are everywhere: bayonets, rifles, bombs, airplanes, abandoned boots, rubble... In this land without

8. V. E. Bravetta, *Tranquillino dopo la guerra vuol creare il mondo... nuovo. Album per i ragazzi*, Treves, Milano 1915.

rules, Tranquillino experiences a mounting cruelty which doesn't appease him. He is saved by divine intervention. Tranquillino is called up into heaven by God, and from there he has a didactic and educational vision of Earth restored to peace and reborn, thanks to the solidarity and industriousness that follow the universal conflict. In this new world, the children, envisioned as following in the footsteps of Christ, clearly have a regenerating role. Therefore, there is no awakening and the child never leaves the dream. The reality of that vision has substituted the horrific reality of war.

2. A thematic and iconographic methodology

This is the body of work. How should these four films be analyzed? A first method could be to study their thematic and iconographic phylogenesis. One can see how the themes seem to pursue and inspire each other. At the outbreak of the First World War in Europe, stop motion animation of toys that come to life in children's dreams had already been experimented in a number of international films: *Dreamland Adventures* (1907) by W.R. Booth Company, *Dolls in Dreamland* (1907) by F.A. Dobson (produced by American Mutoscope & Biograph), *Dreams of Toyland* (1908), directed by Arthur Melbourne Cooper, and produced by Alpha Trading Company production *Sogno di Natale* (1910) by Milano Film, *Le bazar mysterieux* (1913) by Pathé, and *Hänschens Soldaten* (1913) directed by Margarete Steiff and produced by Messter are only a few examples. They are not war films, but films set in wartime, with children as their protagonists. Children are the target audience of these films, which deal with various European conflicts from 1910 on. *Bebé au Maroc* by Gaumont, for example, became *Bebè a Tripoli* in 1912 for the Italian market; *Leroica fanciulla di Derna* (1912) by Gennaro Righelli is another film based on the theme of a boy (in this case, a little girl) running away from Italy to join his father.

It is easy to say that the need to democratize (and banalize) the vision of war⁹ ultimately fuses the two currents. Toy soldiers, in fantastic visions and dreams, are fighting a war instead of real soldiers in films like *Les soldats de Jack au Maroc* (Pathé 1910), *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia*, *Les petits soldats de plomb* (by Pierre Brassol, Selecta Films, 1916), the above-mentioned *La guerra e il sogno di Momi* (1916), or in *Napoleoncina* by Lucio d'Ambra (Do.Re.Mi. 1917)¹⁰. In a number of cases, as in *Les soldats du Petit Bob* (Pathé 1913), the depiction of war assumes a tone of cruelty¹¹, which will be the dominant trait of *La guerra e il sogno di Momi* and of *Umanità*.

9. G. L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, Oxford University Press, New York 1990.

10. See: L. Mazzei, *Napoleoncina di Lucio d'Ambra. La sceneggiatura*, Udine, Cerc 2015.

11. See: *I soldatini del piccolo Bob*, "Rivista Pathé", a. I, n. 118, 20 luglio 1913, p. 16

And it is easily demonstrated how this context of filmmaking was influenced by journalism and illustrated tales for children¹². The newspapers often featured articles about children running off to the front during the Libyan war¹³ as in First World War¹⁴. The connection between children's dreams and war was also illustrated in publications for children¹⁵. Above all, Schizzo (Drawing), a character created by Attilio Mussino, was clearly inspired by Little Nemo, the famous comic book character designed by Winsor McKay. Schizzo became the main character in the children's journal "Il Corriere dei Piccoli" in numerous dreams set before and during the Italian-Turkish war; then in the Balkan wars, and lastly on the Italian front during the First World War¹⁶. In many instances, these children's illustrations influenced the above-mentioned films. The dream sequence in *La guerra e il sogno di Momi*, for example, draws from an illustrated book similar to other children's books of the time¹⁷; there are also many similarities with the illustrated stories of Corlino and his obtuse teutonic enemies Otto and Kartoffel, published in "Il Corriere dei Piccoli." Connections with the world of children's illustrations can also

12. See: W. Fochesato, *La guerra nei libri per ragazzi*, Milano, Mondadori 1996; A. Gibelli, *All'armi siam bambini. La mobilitazione dell'infanzia nella Grande Guerra*, in *La guerra nella testa, Arte Popolare, esperienza e memoria nel Primo Conflitto Mondiale*, Trieste, Lint 1998; M. Colin, *La grande guerre vue par les livres pour les enfants (1914-1919)*, "Chronique Italiennes", 17, 2010, <http://chroniquesitaliennes.univ-paris3.fr/numeros/Web17.html>; M. Mondini, *La guerra italiana. Partire, raccontare, tornare 1914-18*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2014, pp. 232-243.
13. See i.e.: *Due quindicenni fuggono da casa per andare a Tripoli*, "Giornale d'Italia", 6 dicembre 1911, p. 2; *La scoletta della guerra. Tre "bebés" che vogliono andare a Tripoli*, "L'Avanti", 17 novembre 1911, p. 2. And see also the strips of *Pinocchio alla guerra* (by Sirti), in "Il Piccolo Pinocchio" 15 ottobre 1911 - 24 dicembre 1911 e *Nello* (by Italo Mussio) in "Il Corriere dei Piccoli" 17 marzo 1912 - 18 agosto 1912. On 'Nello' see also: F. Loparco, *I bambini e la guerra. Il "Corriere dei piccoli" e il primo conflitto mondiale (1915-1918)*, Nerbini, Firenze 2011, pp. 60-63.
14. See: Antonio Gibelli, *All'armi siam bambini*, cit., pp. 35.
15. See, i.e.: *Il sogno di Pinocchio*, in «Il Piccolo Pinocchio», a. I, n. 42, 29 ottobre 1911, p. 1; *Teresah, Il romanzo di Pasqualino*, Firenze, Bemporad, 1917; and O. M., *Sogno d'un bimbo*, "Il giocattolo", a. I, n. 3, 1 marzo 1918, p. 21. On this particular topic see also: A. Gibelli, *All'armi siam bambini*, cit, p. 37; Id. *Il popolo bambino. Infanzia e nazione dalla Grande Guerra a Salò*, Torino Einaudi 2005, pp. 137; and S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *La guerre des enfants 1914-1918*, Colin, Paris, 1994, [ill. n. 13].
16. See: C. Carabba, *Corrierino, Corrierona. La politica illustrata del «Corriere della sera»*, Guaraldi, Firenze 1976, pp. 39-40; J. Meda, *Il "Corriere" va alla guerra. L'immaginario del "Corriere dei Piccoli" e le guerre del Novecento (1912-1945)* in "Storia e Documenti", n. 6, 2001; F. Loparco, *I bambini e la guerra*, cit., pp. 64-107.
17. See i.e.: E. Armes, *An ABC for Baby Patriots*, Dean and Son, London, 1899; *I giocattoli viventi o un sogno curioso*, Bemporad, Firenze 1911; C. Debussy e A. Hellé, *La boîte à Joux*, Durand, Paris 1913; A. Hellé, *Alphabet de la Grande Guerre 1914-1916*, Berger-Levrault 1915; *Golia* [Eugenio Colmo] *ABCdario di guerra*, Lattes, Torino, 1915.

be noted in *Umanità*, which is based on a children's poem in verses¹⁸. Also, the character Tranquillino appeared in other stories, together with his sister, in "Il Corriere dei Piccoli." *Umanità* reflects other influences, as wells: some of its themes were already explored in the *Nutcracker* by Hoffman¹⁹ (here, too, the characters never leave the dream state) and there are also analogies with the stories of *Schizzo*, whose war dreams often feature divine intervention. The divinities, often animated, had more or less pacifist tones during the time of neutrality and after the armistice.

It is of further interest to compare these films with the then-ongoing transformation of the Italian middle-class family. In three of the four films, the war dream is created by a boy, an only child with a room of his own. This element is historically new in the reality of Italy and it is very interesting. As is known, only in the 19th century did children become social figures²⁰ and during the Great War they assumed a completely new role: above and beyond their exploitation for propaganda purposes (for war bonds, and more), they became socially-recognized subjects in their own right. Children were the active element of a family that needed protection, and they were also a metaphor for the whole country sharing in the soldiers' sacrifice.

Lastly, in these four Italian films, toys play an important role, more so than in other films of the time (European films, as well). In the years prior to 1915, the few toys present in middle-class Italian families came from Germany, which at the time was the largest producer of this merchandise²¹. The enlistment of toys - which began to be produced in Italy - for the national cause, was particularly heartfelt.

18. See: M. Veronesi, *A Woman Wishes to "Make a New World"*. "Umanità", cit.
19. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Nußknacker und Mäusekönig*, in Id. *Die Serapionisbrüder*, Berlin, 1816.
20. See: F. Cambi, S. Olivieri, *Storia dell'infanzia nell'età liberale*, La Nuova Italia, Scandicci 1988; M. d'Amelia, *Figli*, in P. Melograni (ed.) *La famiglia italiana dall'ottocento a oggi*, Laterza, Bari 1988, pp. 465-519; A. Fava, *Alle origini di nuove immagini dell'infanzia: gli anni della Grande Guerra*, in M. C. Giuntella, I. Nardi, *Il bambino nella Storia*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Pisa 1993, pp. 145-200; M. Pignot, *Les enfants*, in J.J. Becker, S. Audoin-Rouzeau (eds.), *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre 1914-1918*, Bayard, Paris, 2004, A. Gibelli, *Il popolo bambino*, cit. pp. 39-176.
21. See: M. Calò, *Guerra senza sangue. Per la nostra indipendenza economica*, Bemporad, Firenze 1915, p. 9; A. Errera, *Un'esposizione di giocattoli Italiani*, Stabilimento Tipografico Unione Cooperativa, Milano 1916; R. Majetti, *Il programma?*, «Il Giocattolo», I, 1, 1918, p. 2; *I Balocattoli italiani*, «Il Giocattolo», I, 5, 1918, p. 38. On first toys (in Germany and in Italy) see also: W. Benjamin, *Storia culturale del giocattolo*, in Id. *Figure dell'infanzia. Educazione, letteratura, immaginario*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2012, pp. 159-163; P. Franzini, *Come giocavamo*, in P. Bonato, P. Franzini, M. Tosa (eds.), *Come giocavamo. Giochi e giocattoli 1750/1960*, Alinari, Firenze, 1984 pp. 8-14; V. Linfante, P. Bertola, *Il giocattolo italiano nella prima metà del novecento*, 24 Ore Cultura, Milano, 2013, pp. 11-20.

Above all, what seems to be most relevant in these films is the use of dream sequences.

The connection between dreams and war was an iconographic stereotype throughout the 19th century: it can be found in prints, in popular illustrations, on painted glass and on magic lanterns. At the beginning of the 20th century, above all with WWI, this relationship assumed much broader proportions thanks to the diffusion of illustrated postcards²². In these images, soldiers are the ones who are primarily depicted dreaming, but so are wives, girlfriends and, above all, children. Military men and civilians dream of each other within an identical visual structure: the dreamer is represented in the lower part of the image, often sleeping but also with eyes open; the content of the dream is in the upper part of the image. Thus, the dream iconography is based on the presence of both the dreamer and his dream inside the same scene, a recurrent principle in Western painting tradition.

These visual structures suggest that cinematographic dreams of war during the 1910s should be considered as the interaction between two registers of an image that lead to the creation of a new environment: a *device* that has its own ecology of space and time, constituted by the relationship between the dreamer and his dream²³. The dreamer is no longer “a dream-

22. On iconography of Italian postcards in Libyan War and in First World War, see: B. Cadioli and Aldo Cecchi, *La posta militare italiana nella prima guerra mondiale*, Roma, Ufficio Storico SME 1978; M. Isnenghi, *Cartoline di guerra. Per un catalogo*, in L. Scorrano, M. Melica (eds.), *La guerra in cartolina. Cartoline della grande guerra 1914-1918*, Editrice Salentina, Galatina, 1982, pp. 9-20; W. Fochesato, *E nella nursery arrivò la Grande Guerra. Le “cartoline per l’assistenza ai bambini in tempo di guerra”*, in *Leggere correre giocare*, Feguagiskia studios, Genova 1994; P. Callegari, E. Sturani (eds.), *L’Italia in posa. Cento anni di cartoline illustrate*, Electa, Napoli, 1997; M. Franzinelli, *Il volto religioso della guerra. Santini e immaginette per i soldati*, Faenza, Edizioni Faenza, 2003; E. Sturani (ed.) *La donna del soldato. L’immagine della donna nella cartolina italiana*, Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra, Rovereto, 2005; E. Sturani, “Un saluto da Tripoli italiana!”. *Le cartoline della Guerra di Libia 1911-’12*, in G. Bassi, N. Labanca, E. Sturani, *Libia. Una guerra coloniale italiana*, Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra, Rovereto, 2011. For the French context: Marie-Monique Huss, *Histoires de famille: cartes postales et culture de guerre*, Noesis, Paris 2000.

23. On the dreams in early cinema see: E. Dagrada, *The Inner Gaze*, in Id., *Between the Eye and the World. The Emergence of the Point-of-View Shot*, P.I.E.-Peter Lang, Bruxelles 2013; L. Marinelli, *Screening Wish Theories: Dream Psychologies and Early Cinema*, “Science in Context”, XIX, 1, 2006, pp. 87-110; F. Jost, *Métaphysique de l’apparition dans le cinéma des premiers temps*, in Id., *Le temps d’un regard*, Klincksieck, Paris 1998, pp. 60-71; M. Tortajada, *Modalités du rêve au cinéma. Dispositif cinématographique et image mentale, rapports et mutations*, in V. Barras (ed.) *Visions du rêve*, Georg, Genève 2002, pp. 123-141. On historical mutations of dreams in films, see: L. Halpern, *Dreams on Film. The Cinematic Struggle Between Art and Science*, McFarland, Jefferson 2003; A. Costa, *Incertitudes, ou le cinéma au plus proche du rêve*, “Sociétés & Représentations”, 23, 2007, p. 231-239. M. Martin, L. Schifano (eds.), *Rêve et cinéma. Mouvements théoriques autour d’un champ créatif*, Presses universitaires de Paris Ouest, Paris, 2012; L. Gamwell (ed.), *Dreams 1900-2000. Science, Art and the Unconscious Mind*, State University of New York, New York 2000.

ing mind” but also “a body” and the dream is not just an imaginary entity but a physical one as well.

3. An ecology of the dreamlike scene

This leads to further questions. The first regards the spatial dimension of these representations.

Does the relationship between the dream imagery of war and the domestic and middle-class reality of the sleeping child constitute a new space or not?

From the perspective of spatial relationships, there are two possibilities:

1) In one scenario, the imagery of the dreams develops inside a space of its own, different from reality, and is often introduced by a cross-fade and sometimes a subtitle, as in *Il sogno del bimbo d’Italia* and *Umanità*.

2) In another scenario, potentially more interesting and definitely more characteristic of the times, the imagery of war interacts with the reality of the domestic space, as in *Il Sogno patriottico di Cinessino* and *La Guerra e il sogno di Momi*.

There are two ways the dreaming child’s dream becomes visible.

a) The first is based on *surcadrage*. The dream is in a section of the visualised image (as in illustrated postcards). Sometimes it is on a screen that appears on an empty wall, as in *Piccolo Garibaldino* (Cines 1910), a film set during the wars of the Risorgimento and which can surely be considered a precursor to the body of films considered here.

b) The second is based on *substitution*. The war dream appears pervasively, almost aggressively, inside the space of reality and substitutes it entirely for a given time. This happens in *Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino* and *La guerra e il sogno di Momi*.

These considerations of the relationship between spaces in the dream sequences bring us to a second question.

What relationship does the child create with the imagery of war?

1) Firstly, the dream and the dreamer can interrelate through **mutual exclusion**. In this case, the child is merely a spectator of his own dream (as in *La guerra e il sogno di Momi* and *Il sogno del bimbo d’Italia*, where the children “observe” the toy soldiers’ war).

2) Conversely, *the child enters his own dream and influences it*, as in *Umanità*. This can also happen through a *splitting* of the child’s body and

his dream self, which occurs in *Il sogno patriotico di Cinessino*. This splitting strategy was influenced by the popular literature on sleepwalking. But it was also the portrayal of ancient beliefs that were still widespread in popular culture and literature about spiritism. According to Tertullian²⁴ - and to the spiritist philosopher Allan Kardec²⁵, who was widely read at the time - sleep was a sort of temporary death, during which the soul separates from the body. As Jay Winter pointed out, the death of millions of soldiers during the course of WWI led many families to consider spiritism a way to see their loved ones again²⁶. The distance between father and child imposed by the war, moreover, was the major cause of mental stress for children. In this context, splitting visually delivers one of the most interesting characteristics of children's dreams in film: the *omnipresence* of the dreamer, able to be *contemporaneously* present in two different and distant spaces.

This very concept of contemporaneity, as just evoked, raises a final question.

What is the temporal relationship between the dreamer's reality and the dream reality?

Here, the time of sleep does indeed occasionally intertwine with the time of dreams. In *La Guerra e il sogno di Momi*, the camera records the sleeping boy, as if to remind us of a synchronicity that will later be revealed more fully in the conclusion, when the tip of the bayonet turns into a real rose thorn; while in the final part of *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia*, during the live action sequences the dreaming child "sees" scenes of war that will later be revealed as happening at almost the same time as in the dream. In *Umanità*, on the other hand, there are no explicit temporal relationships. This is intentional, since, as mentioned, there is no return to reality in this film. The dream establishes a new time in its own right, and the children will never leave the final, almost mystical setting.

The ecology of the dream scene depicted in these films is established not only within a deep-seated traditional iconography but - in conjunction with it - also in the dream theories of the era, which in Italy were still distant from Freud's theories²⁷.

24. See Tertulliano, *De anima*, edited by Martino Menghi, Marsilio, Venezia 1988, p. 43.

25. See A. Kardec, *Le ciel et l'enfer. La justice divine selon le spiritisme*, Paris, 1865.

26. See J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995.

27. On difficult and late diffusion of Freudian theories in Italy, see M. David, *La psicoanalisi nella cultura italiana*, Boringhieri, Torino 1966; Sadi Marhaba, *Lineamenti della psicologia italiana, 1870-1945*, Giunti, Firenze, 1981; L. Mecacci, *Psicologia e psicoanalisi nella cultura italiana del Novecento*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1998.

In synthesis, we can state that between the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, three main ways of interpreting the cause of dreams held sway:

1) Exogenous theories. In these, *the dream is a place of visions* inspired by external forces (gods, demons, the deceased, beloved or distant people, etc.). Even if these mythical, religious and esoteric theories were scientifically discredited, they were still widely popular in Italy at this time. The increasing attention paid to the study of telepathy, typical of positivist culture, represented an updating of exogenous theories. In this case, dreams were often interpreted as the product of telepathic contact activated in the mind of the dreamer by a beloved person who was far away or dead. The influence of these theories grew with the Libyan war and, especially, with WWI.

2) Psychogenic theories. According to these theories, *dreams are an activity of the mind*, which continues to function during sleep²⁸. In psychogenic theories, the personality of the dreamer is taken into careful consideration. The concept of the unconscious is crucial and, to be absolutely clear, it pre-existed Freud²⁹.

3) Physiological theories. According to these theories, *dreams are a product of physical stimuli* that can be *internal* (respiration, muscles, circulation, digestion, etc.) or *external* (sources of light, smell, touch, temperature, sounds³⁰ etc.) and *affect the organism during sleep*. Physiological theories also focus on the sources of physical stimuli that generate the dream imagery: these include a number of nervous alterations caused by the viewing of a film or the reading of a book, for instance, or the consumption of substances such as alcohol and hallucinogens. Just like psychogenic theories, these, too, consider sleep almost like a state of *mental impairment*, or at the least - in pre-Freudian terms - as a condition of *instinctual regression*. According to these theories, the dream of an adult in an altered state (opium, alcohol, etc.) is to be considered on equal terms with that of

28. On Italian psychological (but not Freudian) literature on dream at the beginning of the twentieth century, see i.e.: S. De Sanctis, *I sogni: studi clinici e psicologici di un alienista*, Bocca, Torino 1899; G. Pontiggia, *L'interruzione del sogno*, "Rivista di filosofia e scienze affini", 3, 1901, pp. 393-410; A. Aliotta, *Il pensiero e la personalità nei sogni*, Lastrucci, Firenze 1905; D. Provenzal, *Sonno e sogni. Note di psicologia introspettiva*, "Rivista di psicologia", VIII, 3, 1912, pp. 207-224.

29. On the pre-Freudian and not-Freudian unconscious, see: M. Gauchet, *L'inconscient cérébral*, Seuil, Paris, 1992; F. Tallis, *Hidden Minds: A History of the Unconscious*, Arcade Publishing, New York 2002. On the pre-Freudian Italian debate, see: A. Tagliavini, *Verso l'inconscio: il dibattito tra '800 e '900*, in F. M. Ferro (ed.), *Passioni delle mente e della storia*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1989.

30. See i.e.: G. Stepanow, *Sogni indotti. Studio sperimentale sull'influenza degli stimoli acustici sul sogno*, Stab. Tip. Aldino, Firenze 1915.

an overly-stimulated child - a subject who is still neurologically fragile and influenceable.

4. Dreams are films that match our desires

Thus, all three theories are involved in some way in how war was depicted in the dreams and visions that characterize the films dealt with in this paper.

The role of exogenous theories was, in fact, very influential in these film dreams about war, as solutions that allude to the telepathic or even prophetic potential of dreams³¹ (we use the term prophetic in a mystical-religious sense: in two films, for example, the role of a child's prayer is fundamental, before or after the dream itself). Cinessino, in the Libyan war, wakes up saying that his father is wounded but alive and will return; and the WWI Cinessino even sees his prophecy come true. Momi, upon awakening from his miniature war, does not allude to it but his desire for peace transfers directly to an external instance, which the spectator can only interpret prophetically: the final subtitle which reads "Pax Vittoriosa." On the other hand, Tranquillino follows an almost Dantesque model (that of the prophetic "miraculous vision"), achieving, through a one-way journey, an apotheosis, an authentic telekinesis: from one world to a different, future world. After all, as mentioned, the Italian front was not wide and to Italy's civilians, war was the drama of being separated from their loved ones. It was a faraway conflict, and movies, like dreams, attempted to connect, if only emotionally, the distant families.

But physiological theories are also very common. Not only in the obvious case of Momi's rose thorn becoming a bayonet, but also and above all in the suggestive role of reading. In three of the four films considered, the spark that generates the war dream is induced by the nervous turmoil of reading (or listening to an adult read). Actually, reading also plays an important role in the fourth film, *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia*, but it is more filtered: while Cinessino plays with his toy soldiers, his mother reads and reacts emotionally to a newspaper article that describes the heroic deeds of Italian soldiers. Immediately afterward, Cinessino falls asleep and dreams of the war. This juxtaposition is interesting: it suggests, as Jung was beginning to formulate in those very same years³², that children's dreams are

conditioned by the world of adults, and that they thematize the subconscious fears and desires of their parents. This hypothesis opens the analyzed films to an indirect confrontation with psychogenic theories, already existing at this time but not yet adopted in Italy. It is no coincidence that three of these four films depict a child disobeying an adult's rule before the dream begins: instead of obeying their mother's order that they go to sleep, the children play with their toys or read news articles about wars and revolutions. What is interesting is that the disobedience is not punished later on by the adults, on the contrary: the dream facilitates the reconciliation of the relationship between children and adults, and dramatizes in positive – and, above, all resolute – terms a desire to regain family unity (and for the war to end) that they share with their mothers – who might, in their conscious life, deny or express these desires in more rational and controlled ways. But if the relationship between filmic vision and child's dream vision is so strong, can it be rightly asserted that the mindset of the time placed them on equal terms? Not really.

The two devices, no matter how often they are confronted (as if in a sophisticated game of mirrors), still preserve undeniably unique attributes. This is also demonstrated by the Schizzo comic strip published in "Il Corriere dei Piccoli" on June 17, 1917³³. Here, Schizzo falls asleep and dreams, not in his own bed but at the movie theatre during the screening of a war newsreel. The boring documentary is followed by a dream, lasting until the boy awakens, which revisits the newsreel in a heroic vein: Schizzo enters the film and becomes a hero, as well as the anguished protagonist of a war made of emotions and victories. But this dream is also silent, almost as if the victory – at the same moment it occurs – already sounds false.

Mussino/Schizzo, anticipating the contrary of Godard/Mourlet³⁴, seems to be telling us that dreams are films which perfectly match our desires and (most likely herein lay its fascination for the public of the times) our unconfessed fears.

Abstract

Somia, noiet, somnia la guerra! Infants, somnis i paisatges bèl·lics imaginaris en el cinema italià de ficció de la Primera Guerra Mundial

Aquest article investiga el sorgiment i el desenvolupament de la relació entre guerra i somnis infantils en el cinema italià de la Primera Guerra Mundial a través de l'estudi de quatre pel·lícules de 1915-1919: *Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino* (1915) de Gennaro Righelli, *Il sogno del Bimbo*

31. On the dream as prophecy in the Italian spiritist debate, see, i.e.: E. Bozzano, *Dei fenomeni premonitori: presentimenti, sogni profetici, chiaroveggenza nel futuro*, Luce e Ombra, Roma 1914.

32. C. G. Jung, *Analytische Psychologie und Erziehung*, Kampmann, Heidelberg, 1926 (Italian translation: *Psicologia analitica ed educazione*, in *Opere di C.G. Jung*, XVII, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1991, p. 53).

33. [Attilio Mussino], *In un giorno di canicola, della guerra una pellicola*, "Il Corriere dei Piccoli", IX, 24 giugno 1917, p. 1.

34. Michel Mourlet, *Sur un art ignoré*, «Cahiers du cinéma», IX, 98, 1959, p. 34.

d'Italia (1915) de Riccardo Cassano, *La guerra il sogno di Momi* (1917) de Segundo de Chomon i *Umanità* (1919) d'Elvira Giallanella. En primer lloc, fa un recorregut per la filogènesi narrativa de les fonts que van inspirar aquests films, el pròsper món de la il·lustració, la creixent indústria nacional de la juguina, i altres produccions cinematogràfiques italianes i d'arreu d'Europa d'abans de la guerra. A continuació, passa a explorar les icones generades, que s'originaren i es desenvoluparen en paral·lel amb la manera en què la psicologia de l'època (encara prefreudiana) interpretava la imatgeria involuntària creada en la ment del subjecte.

Sueña, muchachito, ¡sueña la guerra! Niños, sueños y paisajes bélicos imaginarios en el cine italiano de ficción de la Primera Guerra Mundial

Este artículo investiga el surgimiento y desarrollo de la relación entre guerra y sueños infantiles en el cine italiano de la Primera Guerra Mundial a través del estudio de cuatro películas de 1915-1919: *Il sogno patriottico di Cinessino* (1915) de Gennaro Righelli, *Il sogno del Bimbo d'Italia* (1915) de Riccardo Cassano, *La guerra il sogno di Momi* (1917) de Segundo de Chomon y *Umanità* (1919) de Elvira Giallanella. En primer lugar, hace un recorrido por la filogénesis narrativa de las fuentes que inspiraron dichos films, el próspero mundo de la ilustración, la creciente industria nacional del juguete, y otras producciones cinematográficas italianas y de Europa anteriores a la guerra. A continuación, pasa a explorar los iconos generados, que se originaron y se desarrollaron en paralelo a la manera en que la psicología de la época (todavía prefreudiana) interpretaba la imatgeria involuntaria creada en la mente del sujeto.

“Vorrei dirvi quali sono i quadri più notevoli”¹ La Vita Cinematografica y la Primera Guerra Mundial. Apuntes de una batalla artística e industrial.²

Marcello Seregni

Introducción

Con solo dos decenios de vida a sus espaldas, el cinematógrafo representó durante el período de la Gran Guerra y en la mayor parte de los países europeos, el medio a través del cual la realidad de las trincheras y de los soldados entraba de manera imborrable en la mente y en los ojos de gran parte de la población civil, convertida de manera inconsciente en espectadora de los acontecimientos bélicos en las oscuras salas de cine. El aumento de público en los espectáculos cinematográficos durante el período de la Primera Guerra Mundial es un dato, además de económico, también sintomático de la supuesta veracidad que el cine adquiere. Ir a ver los últimos acontecimientos era también intentar “entrar” a través de aquellas imágenes en los campos de batalla y observar como vivían nuestros seres queridos. Que estas películas sean claramente propagandísticas o reportajes del frente, no impide que la población abarrote las salas ya sea por distracción o para informarse. Las productoras nacionales en Italia, que en los primeros meses del conflicto bajaron la producción y los negocios, volvieron a pleno ritmo trabajando para redefinir los catálogos, esto condujo

1. “*Querria deciros cuales son los cuadros más importantes*”. Pier da Castello, *La nostra critica, Patria, La Vita Cinematografica*, 7 - 15 marzo 1916, Año VII, nº 9 - 10, p. 117.

2. El presente estudio tiene el objetivo de promover un breve excursión en las páginas de la revista *La Vita Cinematografica* durante los años del primer conflicto mundial. La revista se encuentra en algunas de las importantes bibliotecas y archivos italianos y en su edición completa solo en el archivo interno de la *Fondazione Cineteca Italiana* en Milán. En estas páginas nos detendremos en los números publicados entre el 1914 y el 1916 ya que, como veremos, en ese período la revista desarrolló un discurso recurrente a través de editoriales y artículos tomando en consideración no solamente el ámbito puramente estético del producto cinematográfico sino también realizando lo que hoy en día definiríamos como estudios de mercado y de la industria cinematográfica nacional.