laboratorio dell'immaginario
issn 1826-6118

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TEMPO E VISIONE FILMICA: ESPERIENZE TEMPORALI DEGLI SPETTATORI

a cura di Stefano Ghislotti e di Elisa Pezzotta

marzo 2016

CAV - Centro Arti Visive
Università degli Studi di Bergamo

Elisa Pezzotta

Time Anxiety in Bourgeois Couples. *Voyage to Italy*, *The Night*, and *Eyes Wide Shut*

Introduction

Voyage to Italy (*Viaggio in Italia*, Roberto Rossellini, 1954), *The Night* (*La notte*, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1961), and *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999) present similar plots because, in a few days of story time, they stage the marital crisis that bourgeois couples have to face. Either one of the spouses or both of them stroll about aimlessly, in search of themselves, and the films end with the protagonists' decision to continue their married life after a life review, namely the pursuit of a meaning that gives them the illusion of linking coherently past choices to future projects.
In this paper I would like to discuss, through a narratological and stylistic analysis of the films, the different time experiences they offer to the viewers thanks to the interaction of story time, plot time, and screen duration with the *auteurs*' style, the object of my discussion being the expressed time, as defined by Daniel Yacavone. The scholar distinguishes among: actual time - external and objective - that corresponds to screen duration according to the terminology adopted by David Bordwell; represented time - the time of the story and the plot; and expressed time - internal and subjective.

> In a cinematic context this expressed time and its affects are undoubtedly occasioned by the direct perception of a film's visual and

> auditory properties, as well as the people, places, and objects 'given' by its representation, but is also felt and intuited (Yacavone 2008: 97).
>
> Yet although the expressed time, as well as space, of a film world intuited by the viewer is not a purely formal property of a work, but is partly articulated through and by its represented characters and situations, the affective relation between them and the viewer is something deeper and broader than a specific identification (emotional or otherwise) with a character's thoughts, feelings, or actions. It is instead a consequence of a shared world–feeling that the film world expresses and which, with respect to representation, may be seen to provide the intuited 'existential' context within which the characters think, feel, and act (98).

Each of the films analysed offers a different expressed time, which is doubly anchored to the protagonists' life review. On one hand, their life review evokes that of everyone of us while, as our life review follows the fluctuations of the socio-historical context, such review, as proposed by the films, seem to represent the transformations with which the middle-class couple had to deal in the second half of the Twentieth Century. These changes also have to do with the variations of the experience and the very idea of time. On the other hand, during the sequences in which the protagonists wander in search of themselves, and are busy conceiving their own life review, the sequential narrative form is substituted by the associative one, as it often happens in art-cinema: the spectators, instead of rearranging the events of the story following a causal logic, are thus free to find analogies among shots and scenes, among other films by the same *auteur* or by other directors, and among different media. If the viewers do not understand or if they reject the passage from one narrative form to the other, they get bored, and their mood will correspond to the first form of boredom, being-bored-by, as defined by Martin Heidegger (Rhym 2012: 484). However, if the spectators understand and accept the transition from one narrative form to the other, their attention will focus on expressed time and on the very concept of time.

Life Review

Life reflection, the flux of conscience about the past, occurs thanks to the interaction of narrative processing and autobiographical reasoning. Through the former process, we account for past events, from single episodes to complete biographies, adopting the main features of canonical narrative, such as familiar plots and archetypal characters, as influenced by the dominant culture. During this process we set in time and space experiences that appear, at first, atemporal. Through autobiographical reasoning we weigh memories to extract inferences that could reveal to us future solutions and goals (Singer and Bluck 2001: 92). The prerequisites of this procedure are: temporal coherence, that is the succession of events in canonical narratives; the cultural concept of biography, namely the knowledge of episodes being included in a life story; thematic coherence, that is the capacity of extrapolating lessons from past experiences; and causal coherence, namely the investigation of the causes of past events. Life review means searching for, and extracting, a meaning that could give our past experiences the illusion of cohesion, and that may be able to guide our future aims: "If we step back from our life and seek a sense of meaning or theme from this life in its entirety we are engaging in life review" (95). Autobiographical memories contain information at three different hierarchical levels of specificity. There are events specific knowledge or nuclear episodes, such as peculiar scenes and details. They constitute a subset of general events, single episodes that contain information from a series of joined autobiographical events. This subset is included in the set of chapters or life time periods, wide segments of autobiographical time (McAdams 2001: 108). When we create our life review, we choose only some of these data, we order them chronologically, and we search for a causal consistency among them, leaving blank spaces among our memories. This mechanism is the theme of many films about personal and memory time,[1] and of the films

[1] Elisa Pezzotta, "Personal/Memory Time" (2014) and "The Magic of Time in *Lolita*" (2015).

discussed in this article.

Voyage to Italy

In *Voyage to Italy* the time of the story is a six day span in the protagonists' life. Alex (George Sanders) and Katherine Joyce (Ingrid Bergman), an English couple, travel to Naples to sell the villa they have inherited from their uncle Michael. During the voyage, alone and away from their daily work commitments, they argue endlessly. Their relationship worsens when the wife confesses that the night before their marriage Charles Luton, a poet and friend of hers, who had been fighting in Italy during the Second World War, would challenge bad weather and critical health conditions, only to greet her for the last time before dying. Katherine, who knows all lines of Charles's poems by heart, decides to visit the natural and artistic beauties of Naples, perhaps in search of the places immortalized in the poet's verses. Out of jealousy, Alex first leaves for Capri where he tries in vain to conquer Maria (Maria Mauban), met during his first night in Naples, then, when he comes back from the island, lets a prostitute (Anna Proclemer) get in his car, but the rendezvous ends in nothing. Katherine and Alex decide to divorce, but they change their mind when, during their visit to Pompeii, a couple, buried during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, is found and unearthed and, finally, when Katherine almost gets lost in the crowd during a procession.
There are several events specific knowledge linked by causal relations that are explicated through dialogue. Among them, Katherine's confession about Charles Luton. Her husband cannot compete with the poet's romantic and tragic death, and his idealized memory: Charles's image will remain sublimated in Katherine's memory because he is dead, and the only weapon in Alex's hands is trying to discredit the poet. But Charles's memory comes lively back in Katherine's present, inspired by the view of the places described in his lines. It is as if the past were relived, evoked, and prevailed over the present. Unable to cope with a ghost from the

Figure 1
From *Voyage to Italy*. Katherine at Naples National Archaeological Museum: Farnese Hercules in foreground, Katherine and the museum guide in middle ground, and Farnese Bull in background.

past, Alex decides to part from his wife, trying to recover his self-confidence through relationships with other women.
Among the general events, we find the couple's discussions and jealousy, Alex's incessant search for another woman, and Katherine's will of giving birth to a child. While Mrs Joyce travels by car, she begins to notice pregnant women and children that foster her maternal desire, her longing for projecting her love story in the future. From the point of view of the female protagonist, life review is omnipresent. When she drives, her medium close-ups are alternated by her point of view shots of pregnant mothers and children, linking present and future. In the last scene she confesses to her husband: "Maybe what is wrong with our marriage is that we didn't have a child".
Past, present, and future are not only linked by story, montage, and dialogue, but also by *mise-en-scène* and camera movements. Characters become part of a glorious past. When Katherine visits Naples National Archaeological Museum, the camera never remains still: it often shots a statue, and pans or tracks to include the protagonist in the frame, too; there are no point of view shots, only camera movements that link the past to the present. For example, the camera tracks around Farnese Hercules, passing from a back to a rear view of the statue, then it tracks backwards till it comprehends, in a high angle shot, Katherine and the museum guide in second plane, and Farnese Bull in background (Figure 1).

Figure 2
From *Voyage to Italy*. Katherine at the cave of Cumaean Sibyl.

Even when the woman is not in frame, the camera rapidly tracks around the statues, highlighting their plasticity and dynamism: scenes from the past come alive. Katherine will comment: "To think that those men lived thousands of years ago, and you feel they were just like the men of today. It's amazing. […] What struck me was the complete lack of modesty with which everything was expressed." She is surprized by the similarities between present and past, and by how provocative and daring art can be. When she visits the cave of Cumaean Sibyl and the Temple of Apollo, Mount Vesuvius, Fontanelle Cemetery, and Pompeii, we can hardly find a point of view shot of hers: in frame we see Katherine and the landscape, or a panning or a tracking that link the woman to the object of her gaze (Figure 2). When she is waiting for Alex to come back from Capri, the sequence opens with a panning to the left of the Gulf of Naples that ends with an extreme long shot of her sitting on a windowsill. After a shot of the husband on board a ferryboat, another panning, now to the right, shows the Gulf of Naples till the lighted up windows of her bedroom. The two panning are complementary: the former from the left, the latter from the right, and both ends on the same window of the villa. Similarly, when Katherine visits Fontanelle Cemetery, a panning to the left, which shows bones and skulls, opens the scene that ends with a complementary panning to the right of the ossuary.
The fast movements of the camera seem to translate Katherine's

vertigo, her excitement of being surrounded by the beauty of art and scenery. The *mise-en-scène*, dominated by a savage, unspoiled natural landscape, by art, and by the features of Neapolitan spirit, together with quick camera movements, determine the expressed time of this film in which past, present, and future are joined. Katherine feels all the charm of the past. When she visits the cave of Cumaean Sibyl, her voice-over recites Charles's lines: "Temple loves the spirit, no longer bodies, but pure, ascetic images". The poet's death becomes symbol of the death found by the people in Pompeii, of all the unknown dead men whose relics are gathered at Fontanelle Cemetery, and of death as our common destiny, that can apparently be overcome through a new life, a child's birth. Katherine bursts into tears when the remains of a couple, buried during the eruption of Vesuvius, are exhumed, and Mr. Burton claims: "Perhaps husband and wife, who knows, may have found death like this together". The recovery of the past gives meaning to the present, and allows imagining the future. Rossellini, in an interview, claimed that he chose Naples because it is the city of very ancient things, projected in the future with an innate, almost unconscious understanding of the truth and eternal values (Rossellini 2006: 105): "it was very important for me to show Italy, Naples, that strange atmosphere so imbued with a very real, very immediate, very deep feeling: the sense of eternal life. It is something that has completely disappeared from the world" (Rossellini 1995: 54). A distant past, the present, and an eternal future are co-present thanks to story, dialogue, editing, *mise-en-scène* and photography.

The Night

In *The Night* the time of the story covers an afternoon and a night. Giovanni Pontano (Marcello Mastroianni) and his wife Lidia (Jeanne Moreau) pay Tommaso (Bernhard Wicki) a visit, a friend of the couple about to die in hospital. Lidia, upset, spends her afternoon wandering aimlessly between Milan and the suburban

area of Sesto San Giovanni. When the spouses meet up again, they decide not to spend the night at home, and go first in a nightclub, and then to a party organized by the entrepreneur and engineer Gherardini (Vincenzo Corbella). In the latter's villa, Lidia remains alone, strolling about and passively observing the guests, till a young man, Roberto (Giorgio Negro), takes her for a ride in his car. She refuses to kiss him, and asks him to drive her back to the villa. In the meantime, Giovanni meets Valentina (Monica Vitti), Gherardini's daughter, he tries to seduce her, and manages to kiss her. At dawn, after a discussion between the Pontanos and Valentina, Lidia and Giovanni remain alone, and begin to talk about their life together. She reads a letter that her husband had written her long ago, and they seem to decide to continue their marriage.

Unlike in *Voyage to Italy*, in this film there are a few nuclear episodes, crucial events that leave a mark and change the protagonists' destiny; also, neither the causes, nor the effects of these episodes are explicitly explained. Past, present, and future are not linked in a causal chain; the present and fleeting events seem to dominate the story. The director himself claimed that he cut all the episodes that enriched the subject and clarified the story, to let the plot develop its own internal flux, and possibly reach an internal suspense dictated by the characters' actions, which corresponded to their thoughts and distresses (Tinazzi 2002: 15). According to Antonioni, stories can be made of unbalanced fragments, just like our life is (Antonioni 1994: XXVI).

Similarly, the general events, which group information from similar episodes, are often ordinary gestures, characterized by absence of action, and frequently the spectators' anticipations and curiosities are frustrated. Lidia's strolling, stopping, and observing have neither explicit causes, nor evident effects, and her behaviour seems to be dominated by chance. The female protagonist of *Voyage to Italy* wanders, but she schedules her trips, asks explanations to tourist guides and residents, and seems to be moved by the desire and curiosity of knowing the past, and discovering the memories contained in her friend's poetries. Whereas Lidia does not seem driven by any explicit reason, she stops when something appears in front of her, unable to choose what to observe. For example, in leaving the meeting room where her husband is launching his new book, she walks and sees a taxi driver. They look at each other, she stops to gaze at him, and takes a step back to observe him better: it could be a prelude to a dialogue or an action, or the man could reappear in the plot; but this shot has no consequences in the development of the story. Similarly, when Giovanni goes back home, the caretaker hands him the mail. While he is exiting the lift, he looks at the letters, and he holds them again when, lying on the sofa of his apartment, opens an envelop to take out a letter, but he does not read it. The subsequent shot shows another place. The insistence with which the letters are shown, would seem to introduce an important message, and the spectators remain baffled. The scene where Lidia and Roberto are in his car is emblematic: they chat and laugh, but the camera remains outside the vehicle, not allowing the viewers to listen to the their dialogue. Not only the spectators' hypotheses about the present and the future are disappointed, but also their curiosity about the past. When the husband reaches his wife in Sesto San Giovanni, he asks her:

> Giovanni: Why come here?
> Lidia: I just happened to come this way.
> Giovanni: It hasn't changed at all.
> Lidia: It will before long.
> […]
> Giovanni: This line was in use when we lived here.[2]

Lidia might have reached this area because long ago she used to

[2] The film has never been dubbed in English. When I quote a dialogue, I write the original English subtitles in the text, and Italian dialogue in note. Giovanni: "Cosa sei venuta a fare qui?" Lidia: "Niente, figurati, passavo per caso." Giovanni: "Vieni. Che strano, non è cambiato niente." Lidia: "Cambierà, cambierà molto presto." [...] Giovanni: "Quando venivamo qui noi questo binario funzionava." Note that in the original Italian version Giovanni's last sentence is "This line was in use when we used to come here", and not "when we lived here", as in the English subtitles.

Figure 3
From *The Night*. Tommaso's hospital room: Giovanni is in foreground, Tommaso is in the second plane, Lidia in the third one, and the patient's mother in background.

go there with Giovanni, but the dialogue does not provide sufficient information.

Two forces dominate Antonioni's narration: on the one hand, there is a boost that builds it, linking and organizing events; on the other hand, there is a push that rarefies the episodes, dissecting and seeping through them, loosening them in time, creating extensions and *temps mort* in the plot (Antonioni 1994: XXV; Tinazzi 2002: 32). It is the expansion that prevails, the attempt to avoid a dramatization obtained through a crescendo of the events, and their organization in an almost constant timeframe (Tinazzi 2002: 37). In this respect, long takes often become fundamental not to leave characters alone when their drama or, at least, the most intense, dramatic consequences of their actions, end (8-9).

On the contrary, sometimes the shots begin before the characters enter in frame, and the camera remains still when they exit the frame. When Giovanni reaches Lidia in Sesto San Giovanni, the shot begins before they enter the frame from the right. A panning to the left accompanies them, but the camera remains still when they exit the frame from the left. In the same way, when they arrive at Gherardini's, they enter the frame from the right, and the camera pans with them to the left. When Lidia is on the terrace and Valentina realises Giovanni is married and she is his wife, Lidia enters and exits the frame, while the camera remains still. Likewise, in the following scene, Lidia enters the frame from the right,

Figure 4
From *The Night*. Tommaso's hospital room: Giovanni, Tommaso, and Lidia in foreground, and the patient's mother in background.

the camera tracks with her and Roberto when they step up the dance floor, and does not move when it starts raining, and they exit the frame from the left. The film ends with a tracking shot to the left that leaves Lidia and Giovanni out of frame. It is as if the camera was no more subordinated to the characters' time, and they were no more dominated by the time, chronology, and duration of their actions.

The numerous high angle shots seem to freeze the characters in their present, too. This effect is highlighted by depth of field, so the characters remain isolated on different planes. During the scene in Tommaso's hospital room, a high angle, diagonal shot delineates four planes: Giovanni is in foreground, Tommaso is in the second plane, Lidia in the third one, and the patient's mother in background (Figure 3). Similarly, before Lidia leaves, another high angle, diagonal shot frames: Giovanni and Tommaso in foreground, Lidia in middle ground, and the mother in background. First Lidia walks towards the mother, and then towards Tommaso (Figure 4), but always inside the quadrilateral delimitated by their positions. Characters seem unable to escape from the composition. In the park of Gherardini's villa, when the couples sit on recliners arranged in a semicircle, a high angle shot shows, in order: Lidia and Giovanni at the bottom of the frame, on the right and on the left respectively, the engineer and his wife on the upper left and right side. In a subsequent, high angle shot, the camera, now ninety-degree ro-

tated, shows: Lidia in the bottom left, Giovanni on the upper left, the engineer on the upper right, and his wife in the bottom right. Characters look entrapped in this semicircle.
These high angle shots echo the distractions due to helicopters, planes, fighters, and rockets. In the hospital room, the characters' attention is caught by the noise of a helicopter, and when Lidia walks alone we listen to noisy fighters before she runs to stare at rockets shot by some boys. The present moment dominates the experiences of characters that remain at its mercy, as if from above, an atemporal cross section of their lives was shown, cut off from any connection to their stories. Valentina lets Giovanni listen to a sound recording of her thoughts in which she underlines how difficult it is to control the present: "I don't want useless sounds, I want to select them. Voices and words. There are so many words I'd rather not hear, but you must resign yourself, like floating on the waves of the sea".[3] In Rossellini's film fast panning and tracking link characters and *mise-en-scène*, joining past and present, while dialogue and montage connect present and future; whereas in Antonioni's film high angle, diagonal shots, depth of field, and shots that begin before the protagonists enter in frame and ends when they are already out of frame, seem to crush characters in their present. The expressed time is a timeless present ruled by chaos and chance.
In the last scene of the film, Lidia reads Giovanni a letter that he wrote her long ago, and the crisis would seem to be overcome thanks to the memory of past emotions:

> Beyond your face I saw a pure, beautiful vision showing us in the perspective of my whole life, all the years to come, even all the years past. That was the most miraculous thing: to feel, for the first time, that you had always been mine. That this night would go on forever united with your warmth, your thought, your will. […] We would always be as we were at that moment bound by stranger ties than time and habit.[4]

[3] "Io non vorrei udire suoni inutili. Vorrei poterli scegliere durante la giornata. E così le voci, le parole. Quante parole non vorrei ascoltare. Non puoi sottrarti, non puoi fare altro che subirle, come subisci le onde del mare quando ti distendi a fare il morto."

The impasse and the difficulties in communicating seem to be overcome, getting free from the prison of present, and embracing a wider point of view that combines past and future. The life review appears only at the end, whereas in *Voyage to Italy* it runs through the whole plot, in dialogue and in Katherine's point of view shots of children and pregnant women: her desires and aims, which link past, present, and future, are unambiguously expressed.

Eyes Wide Shut

In *Eyes Wide Shut* the time of the story covers four days in the protagonists' life. Doctor Bill Harford (Tom Cruise) and his wife Alice (Nicole Kidman) take part in a Christmas party organized by a wealthy patient of Bill, Victor Ziegler (Sydney Pollack). The following night, at home, smoking marijuana, the Harfords begin to discuss about the party. Bill asks his wife what the Hungarian man, Sandor Szavost (Sky du Mont), with whom she had danced, wanted from her, and she confesses that he proposed her to make love. Bill, praising her gorgeousness, claims not to be amazed by the admirer's behaviour. Alice cannot accept that her husband thinks men only have a sexual interest in women, whereas they believe women feel different emotions for men, and she confesses Bill her innermost desires. The previous summer she had seen a Naval Officer, and felt so much aroused by him that, if he had desired her, even for one night only, she would have left her family. This confession evokes that of Katherine about Charles Luton in Rossellini's film. Bill, just like Alex, is shocked. As Katherine, Bill is obsessed by a ghost: just as the dead poet's memory comes alive

[4] "Vedevo te, in una dimensione che comprendeva tutto il mio tempo da vivere, tutti gli anni futuri e anche quelli che ho vissuto prima di conoscerti, ma già preparato a incontrarti. Questo era il piccolo miracolo di un risveglio, sentire per la prima volta che tu mi appartenevi non solo in quel momento, e che la notte si prolungava per sempre accanto a te. [...] Uniti da qualcosa che è più forte del tempo e dell'abitudine."

Figure 5
From *Eyes Wide Shut*. Christmas party at Zieglers': Bill and Nick are interrupted by a man at Victor's service.

in Katherine's present, excited by the sight of the places described in his lines, the image of Alice making love to the Officer torments Bill's imagination. Whilst in *Voyage to Italy* the past, relived and evoked, influences the present, in *Eyes Wide Shut* it is the fantasy that oppresses the protagonist. Immediately after the confession, Bill is summoned by the family of one of his clients, Lou Nathanson (Kevin Connealy), who just died, and his night odyssey begins: several women offer themselves to him, or are made available to him, and the climax is reached in a lavish villa where an orgy takes place. The protagonist, unable to cope with an imaginary rival, distances himself from his wife, seeking confirmation of his masculinity in other women, just like Alex in *Voyage to Italy* and Giovanni in *The Night*. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, when the doctor is unmasked as an intruder in the orgy villa, he is ordered to take off his mask and clothes, but a woman (Abigail Good) offers to sacrifice herself on his behalf. Back home, he wakes up Alice who is laughing and dreaming: she tells him her nightmare, uncanny *mise en abyme* of the orgy. The day after, Bill goes back to all the places visited during the previous night, trying to understand the secrets of the orgy and to understand what has happened to the woman who saved him. Victor Ziegler invites him to his villa, and confesses having attended the orgy, but his explanations are not complete.

Figure 6
From *Eyes Wide Shut*. Christmas party at Zieglers': Bill, Gayle and Nuala are interrupted by a man at Victor's service.

When Bill gets back home, he bursts into tears and tells everything to his wife. In a toyshop, while their daughter Helena (Madison Eginton) is looking for her Christmas presents, the Hardfords reconcile and agree to continue their marriage.

In this Kubrickian film, the events specific knowledge, that change and leave a mark in the protagonists' destiny, are numerous, as in *Voyage to Italy*, however they are not linked by causal relations, as in *The Night*. Just like in all the last six films of Kubrick (from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968), in *Eyes Wide Shut* the plot is constituted by juxtaposed episodes, *tableaux vivants*, that is by sequences separated by ellipses and not joined by a cause and effect chain. Causal links are further weakened by the numerous mysteries that remain unsolved (Pezzotta 2013: 34-55), and by the interruptions in the characters' dialogue and actions.

For example, during the Christmas party, when Bill speaks with the pianist Nick Nightingale (Todd Field), a former University colleague of his, a man at Victor's service (Michael Doven) interrupts them, summoning the pianist (Figure 5). This same man orders Bill to follow him while he is speaking with Gayle (Louise J. Taylor) and Nuala (Stewart Thorndike), two models who propose him to go "where the rainbow ends" (Figure 6). The subsequent night, while

quarrelling, the Hardfords are interrupted by a call announcing the doctor Lou Nathanson's death. Again, when Marion (Marie Richardson), Nathanson's daughter, reveals Bill that she is in love with him, the confession is interrupted by the arrival of Carl (Thomas Gibson), her fiancée. Similarly, when the protagonist is in the prostitute Domino (Vinessa Shaw)'s bedroom, Alice calls him on his mobile, and the meeting with the woman ends with no consequences. Finally, in the orgy villa, the protagonist is interrupted more than once. A woman (Abigail Good) tries to warn him that he is in danger, but another man accompanies her away. When a second woman approaches him, and proposes him to go in a more private place, the first woman reappears leading the protagonist in another room. Bill's wandering through the villa, definitely ends when a man accompanies him in front of other masked men, ready to condemn him. These events seem to happen by chance, and weaken the cause and effect links among sequences, breaking the climaxes. The scenes that follow often introduce other suspense elements, thus the spectators, almost forgetting the action and the dialogue in the previous sequences, pay attention to the subsequent events. Just like Antonioni in his film, Kubrick often frustrates his viewers' hypotheses.

This effect is emphasized by editing. Before the protagonist arrives in the room where the main action takes place, he crosses other rooms and corridors, but as soon as the action finishes, the sequence ends with a cut or a dissolve, and the spectators are shown the shot of a street or Bill walking along a road or in another interior. It is as if the sequences remain suspended.

Dissolves are not only adopted to suggest the passage of time during the protagonist's wanderings, they also seem, in a number of cases, to expand time like during the Christmas party and the orgy. This feature is highlighted by camera movements and long takes. During the party, when Alice dances either with Bill or Sandor, the Steadicam, through long takes, rotates around them who

turn around themselves while dancing (77-78). Similarly, in the orgy villa, when the rite is staged during which eleven women are arranged in a circle, and a masked man with a purple cloak and hood moves inside it hitting the ground with a sceptre and twirling a thurible, the camera turns around the circle in a counter-clockwise direction. When Bill finds himself in this same room, surrounded by other masked men ready to judge him, the camera swirls again around them in a counter-clockwise direction. The choice of this direction seems to emphasize the interruption of time. On the other hand, when the protagonist walks along the corridors of the villa, a Steadicam tracks forward following him, and the shots are linked by fades in and out (62-64, 77). These techniques, circular movements, long takes, and fades in and out, all contribute to expand time.

The time is further extended and slowed down by dialogue. If *Voyage to Italy* is dominated by discussions that make causal relations explicit, and *The Night* is characterized by silences that withhold the cause and effect chain, in *Eyes Wide Shut* the slow, repetitive dialogue seems to give spectators the illusion of comprehending causal links, only to contradict them out of the blue. The protagonist, instead of communicating with the other characters, often repeats their sentences and words: the signified remains uncertain, overwhelmed by the signifier. On the one hand, language seems to become music (111-114), on the other, symbol of incommunicability. Also, the other characters almost stammer, they seem to look for words without finding them and, when they feel uncomfortable, they grow stern and are left painfully in frame. Spectators keep waiting for sentences that could solve the mysteries, but words lose their signifieds. It is a waiting time that will never be satisfied. For example, when Marion confesses her love to Bill, a long take seems not to give her a break, paralyzing her (Figure 7). The same happens when Bill asks the prostitute Domino her fee and what she offers: "What would you recommend?" A

Figure 7
From *Eyes Wide Shut*. At Marion's: before she kisses Bill.

long take leaves Domino in frame while, stammering, she answers slowly: "I'd rather not put it down in words". Meaningfully, the prostitute reassures him claiming: "Don't worry, I don't keep track of the time" (Figure 8). Even when the protagonist questions the Gillespie's waitress (Carmela Marner) and the hotel concierge (Alan Cumming) to understand what happened to the pianist his friend, the dialogue is slow, and the characters are left in frame for a long time. When Bill, in the orgy villa, is asked the password of the house, he is left again in frame without words, alone with his embarrassment. On the contrary, the orgy guests seem to share a language in which words and passwords have univocal meanings, incomprehensible to those who are not part of their entourage.
The last dialogue between the Hardfords, one that should constitute their life review, is a symbol of their incapacity to communicate:

> Bill: Alice, what do you think we should do?
> Alice: What do I think we should do? What do I think? I don't know. I mean, maybe I… maybe I think we should be grateful. Grateful that we've managed to survive through all of our adventures, whether they were real or only a dream.

Figure 8
From *Eyes Wide Shut*. At Domino's: when the prostitute and Bill should decide what to do.

> Bill: Are you, are you sure of that?
> Alice: Am I sure? Only as sure as I am that the reality of one night, let alone that of a whole lifetime, can ever be the whole truth.
> Bill: And no dream is ever just a dream.
> Alice: The important thing is we're awake now and hopefully for a long time to come.
> Bill: Forever.
> Alice: Forever?
> Bill: Forever.
> Alice: Let's not use that word. You know? It frightens me. But I do love you and you know there is something very important that we need to do as soon as possible.
> Bill: What's that?
> Alice: Fuck.

Alice believes that the night experienced by Bill can represent the whole truth about him, and that her husband can be the man who revealed himself during the night odyssey; on his side, Bill thinks his wife's dream unveils how she would like to act. The crisis seems to be solved with a "fuck", thus the life review remains suspended. If, in the epilogue of *The Night* the spouses overcome their crisis freeing themselves from the prison of the present, and sharing a point of view that joins past and future, in *Eyes Wide*

Shut the life review does not present solutions and is reduced to a simple survival, always haunted by the fear of not being able to stay awake and of falling again in a dreamy dimension. Not a recovery of the past to build a future, running away from the prison of the present, but a clinging on the present not to remain entrapped in the atemporality of a dream.

The expressed time of *Eyes Wide Shut* is expanded, suspended, as in *The Night*, but unlike in Antonioni's film, where there are a few events specific knowledge and general events, Kubrick seems to manage to stop time even if he shots actions and dialogue. The *tableaux vivants*, separated by ellipses and unlinked by a cause and effect chain, are rich in mysteries that remain unsolved, and full of random interruptions that break the suspense, and the montage contributes to arrest the climaxes. The circular tracking of the Steadicam, long takes, and fades in and out, the repetitions of sentences and words, and the slowness of dialogue, extend the time of the scenes. It is the time of the nightmares, both expanded and compressed: events follow one another, without a causal logic, are interrupted leaving enigmas, but seem almost prolonged to wrap up the dreamer, as do the circular movements of the Steadicam and the long takes. *Eyes Wide Shut* does not seem to be Bill's dream,[5] but the spectators' and the protagonist's time experience evokes that of their dreams. In *The Night* it is as if the camera were no longer subordinated to the characters' time, and they were no longer subjected to the duration and chronology of their actions. Instead, in *Eyes Wide Shut*, the camera seems to torment the characters, immobilizing them when they try in vain to speak, or turning around them in long takes, entrapping them. Present time is expanded in both films, but if Antonioni underlines atemporality, Kubrick emphasizes the dreamy dimension. If in Rossellini's film, thanks to fast panning and tracking that link in a single shot the *mise-en-scène* and the characters, these become part of a glorious past; if in Antonioni's film the diagonal, high angle shots, together with the camera that often remains still waiting for the characters to enter and exit the frame, freeze them in a timeless present; in Kubrick's film the editing, long takes, and the circular tracking entrap the characters in a dreamy world. This atmosphere, not only of this Kubrickian film, but also of *A Clockwork Orange*, (1971), *Barry Lyndon* (1975), and *The Shining* (1980), is also emphasized by the similarities among *tableaux vivants* and single shots, which disrupt the order of the plot and the *mise-en-scène*. This occurs because scenes and shots, recalling and foretelling previous and subsequent sequences and images, produce a *déjà vu* effect. These features help create protagonists who are often only passive spectators, wanderers in a world in which they are unable to determine the succession of events that overwhelm them. This passivity towards the diegetic world reminds us of the dreamer and her own dream (Pezzotta 2013: 115-119).

[5] As in the interpretations of Flavio De Bernardinis (1999) and Larry Gross (1999).

Time Experience in Bourgeois Couples

The protagonists of the films analysed are middle-class couples of the first half of the 1950s (*Voyage to Italy*), of the beginning of the 1960s (*The Night*), and of the end of the 1990s (*Eyes Wide Shut*). The films can be viewed as examples of how the couple's relationships changed during the second half of the Twentieth Century.

In all of the three films, the couple is presented as a small company. This is how Rossellini describes the Joyces:

> I think it is a fairly normal thing in modern society that many marriages are limited companies under another name. […] And the couple in *Viaggio in Italia* are that kind of couple – people who have nothing to say to each other outside of their work, their job, their daily routine. A vacation, more than anything else, is the death of them. Owning a lovely villa in one of the most beautiful places in the world counts for nothing, because they no longer know what to say to each other: if they don't talk about quotations on the stock exchange or making this or that deal, their relationship is finished (Aprà

and Ponzi 2015).

In *The Night,* Giovanni is a writer, but he does not earn enough money. When the engineer Gherardini offers him to write the story of his factory, with the promise to hire him as a manager, he hints that it is Lidia, coming from a wealthy family, the one who ensures their living standards. During the last discussion between the Pontanos, Lidia, referring to the job offer, claims: "Why not? It's a good opportunity. Your life would be your own at last".[6] In *Eyes Wide Shut* Bill is a doctor. Alice tells the Hungarian man that she used to run an art gallery in Soho, though it went bankrupt, and now she takes care of her daughter, and accompanies Bill, maintaining good relationships with his clients, not unlike Katherine. Re-examining the life review of these small companies, the bourgeois couple of the first half of the 1950s seems linked to the past and to share future projects. The crisis breaks out when Alex and Katherine leave the U.K. and their daily activities, but they manage to reconcile.[7] The couple, at the beginning of the 1960s, seems to slip in a deeper crisis. The intellectual Giovanni is both criticized and praised for his job, but as the entrepreneur Gherardini and Lidia point out, he is not economically independent, thus he does not comply with the expectations of the society in which he lives. These differences between the dynamics of the Pontanos and the ideals shared by the Gherardinis and their guests seem to be among the causes of the incommunicability; and the atemporal present in which the spouses are represented highlights their isolation. Nevertheless, at the end of the film, the past seems to be recovered, allowing a life review and the idea of a future. The couple at the end of the 1990s lives in a dreamy atmosphere, in a present mixed with dreams, in which the past, the blue scenes of

6 "E' una buona occasione. Tutto sommato potresti avere una vita più tua".

7 Rossellini underlines the difference between: the Nordic world, represented by the Joyces, that he defines "cuciti" ("sewn"), because they have to sew animals skins to survive and, thus, are more efficient; and the Latin world, populated by "drappeggiati" ("draped"), who are always wrapped up in a toga with which they continue to morally dress themselves, and who face life in a more relaxed way (Rossellini 2006: 193).

Figure 9
From *Voyage to Italy*. Katherine and Alex embrace at the end of the film.

the Naval Officer, appears only as the ghost of a repressed desire and the menace of a betrayal and of the dissolution of the marriage, and in which the future and word "forever" are unthinkable, much like the life review that is reduced to a "fuck". The couple cannot communicate, pressed by unrealizable desires and dreams. It is isolated in a society that is strictly divided into classes and, among them, the leading one is anonymous, masked, with mysterious rites and an incomprehensible language.[8]
In the films, the spouses remain together to cope with a deeper turmoil, that they would not be able to overcome alone (Figure 9). The Roman director claims that in the end:

> There were these two great big figures with a lot of little figures around them, all of them smaller still because they were kneeling down. What the finale shows is sudden, total isolation. […] It struck me that the only way a rapprochement could come about was through the couple finding themselves complete strangers to everyone else. You feel a terrible stranger in every way when you find yourself alone in a sea of people of a different height. It's as if you were naked. It's logical that someone who finds himself naked should try to cover himself up (Aprà and Ponzi 2015).

8 For a discussion of this sociological aspect: Tim Kreider (2000) and Marcello Walter Bruno (2000).

Figure 10
From *Eyes Wide Shut*. At the orgy villa: Bill had to take off his mask, and is ordered to undress.

Similarly, in *Eyes Wide Shut* Bill is ordered to take off his mask and undress: nakedness as the symbol of the condemnation to loneliness (Figure 10). In the last, long shot of *The Night*, the Pontanos kiss each other, while laying on the grass, almost concealed in the landscape, before a tracking to the left leaves them out of frame (Figure 11). The reconciliation comes to apparently contrast the solitude, and the incapacity to adapt the subjective experience of time to the continuous, overwhelming flux of time of men's history.

Boredom in Associative Narrative Form

According to Torben Grodal, the spectators' time experience is linked to the form of the narrative processes, too. Canonical narrative (i.e. "a narrative which cues the experience of sequences of acts, emotions, and perceptions of living beings." And in which "The events are represented by a straight-forward temporal progression, and the living beings are able to perform voluntary mental or physical acts" (1997: 283)) is usually characterized by a sequential narrative form. When the narrative process changes its form from sequential to associative, the linear aspect of time may be substituted by timeless experiences. For example, "Certain

Figure 11
From *The Night*. Lidia and Giovanni kiss each other, laying on the grass, at the end of the film.

types of stream-of-consciousness in lyrical films or in music video […] have an associative and 'perceptual', 'achronic', many-dimensional time-experience" that activates in the spectators both long- and short-term memory. Similarly, Roman Jackobson claimed: "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (Grodal 1997: 148).

In art-cinema, the associative narrative form often substitutes the sequential one, and the viewers are left free to interpret the complexity of the films following analogies among shots and scenes. The films analysed in this article share the main features of art-cinema, as the objective and subjective verisimilitude, and the over narrational commentary. Even if art-cinema fully developed in the late 1950s and in the 1960s (Bordwell 1985: 206-213), *Voyage to Italy* and *Eyes Wide Shut*[9] can be interpreted in the context of this movement. Gianni Rondolino, discussing Rossellini's trilogy of loneliness - *Stromboli* (*Stromboli terra di Dio*, 1950), *Europe 51* (*Europa '51*, 1952), and *Voyage to Italy*) - claims that the routine, ordinary images, *temps mort*, and long takes of landscape are signs and symbols of a behavioural analysis. Thanks to the numerous long takes, in *Voyage to Italy* the director farther simplifies his style freeing the dramatic content of the action from every dramaturgical emphasis (2006: 200). The film is open-ended, it does not obey to classi-

[9] For a discussion of the kubrickian film: Pezzotta 2013: 154-161.

cal dramaturgical rules, and creates its own rules derived from a deep structure that shapes itself through a natural germination; this technique encourages the viewers' observations and interpretations (204-205). This idea of cinema as an essay influenced modern cinema starting from the French New Wave (200-201, 204-205). Similarly, Antonioni was not afraid of shooting literary, representational films (Antonioni 1994: XXIX), and his style was defined "Antoniennui"[10] because of his films being open-ended, as modern novels and dramas were (Chatman and Duncan 2008: 30). According to Giorgio Tinazzi, sometimes Antonioni's cinema is non-fictional, other times it is poetic because images are linked by analogy, thanks to their power of suggestion and cross-references (2002: 38), as in Jackobson's poetic function. In Antonioni's trilogy of alienation - *L'avventura* (1960), *The Night*, and *L'eclisse* (1962) - as in Rossellini's trilogy of loneliness, thanks to the actors' improvisation and long takes, the scenes are joined by analogy, and the narration breaks up in sequences that are not united in a causal chain, so that the spectators are lead to the analysis of behaviours, a trend of art-cinema (Tinazzi 2002: 32; Chatman and Duncan 2008: 35, 37). The objections raised to Antonioni regarded the complexity of his films (Tinazzi 2002: 36), and their incapacity of living up to the viewer's expectations (50).

When Katherine in *Voyage to Italy* visits the natural and artistic beauties of Naples, when Lidia in *The Night* wanders in Milan or in Gherardini's villa, when Bill in *Eyes Wide Shut* walks along the streets of Greenwich Village, the corridors and rooms of the orgy villa, or when he and the other characters are left in frame while trying in vain to communicate, the narrative form is associative. The characters' gestures, and the situations they are involved in, are staged with no clear aim and causal relation, and the protagonists' fluxes of conscience are not translated through dialogue, therefore the spectators do not have to order the events of the plot in a causal and chronological order that leads to a logic, unambiguous conclusion of the story: they will rather need to look for relations among sequences and scenes.

[10] The first to coin the word "Antoniennui" was Andrew Sarris in 1966. According to John Rhyme this epithet is an indication of how much boredom has always been associated to the director's films (Rhym 2012: 477).

Heidegger claims that there are three forms of boredom. The first, becoming-bored-by, can be experienced, for example, when we are waiting at the station for a train that is hours late, and we keep watching the time. Our inability to pass the time increases our sense of becoming bored (Rhym 2012: 484). The hypothesis that I would like to propose is that the first form of boredom, becoming-bored-by, is experienced by the viewers if they remain anchored to a sequential narrative form, feeling the passage of time unlinked to any other mental activity. If the spectators, while watching the film, do not understand the transition from a narrative form to the other, or are unwilling to move to the associative form, or for personal preferences would either choose the sequential form, they will probably keep watching the time waiting for the film to end. Similarly, William J. Friedman claims that, if the attention is focused on the passage of time, there is an increase in the registration of the passage of time, and this is what we experience when we get bored (1990: 21-22).

As discussed during the analysis of the films, the fact that the protagonists are busy in a stream-of-consciousness is made explicit through their aimlessly wanderings, governed by chance, and through style, *mise-en-scène*, photography, and montage that often foreground elements that do not sequentially develop the narration. The protagonists' thoughts and their life reviews are not unambiguously told the spectators through dialogue, especially in the case of *The Night* and *Eyes Wide Shut*, unless at the end of the films. But, if the viewers understand that the characters are involved in a flux of conscience, and accept the passage to the associative narrative form, then their attention gets more focused on the style than on the reconstruction of the story, and concentrates upon the expressed time. The characters' life review, centred on time, on the musings in the present about the past and the future, becomes a mirror of the spectators' meditation on the very idea of time proposed by the *auteurs*.

Murray Smith claims:

> that fictional narrations elicit three levels of imaginative *engagement* with characters, distinct types of responses normally conflated under the term "identification". Together, these levels of engagement comprise a structure of sympathy. Most basically, spectators construct characters (a process I refer to as recognition). Spectators are also provided with visual and aural information more or less congruent with that available to characters and so are placed in a certain structure of alignment with characters (1994: 35).

Alignment is analysed through *spatial attachment* (i.e., "the capacity of the narration to restrict itself to the actions of a single character or to move more freely among the spatio-temporal paths of two or more characters"); and *subjective access* (i.e., "the degree of access we have to the subjectivity of characters, a function that may vary from character to character within a narrative" (41)). In the films analysed there is spatial attachment, that is the narrative is focused on the actions of a single character, as in the case of Bill in *Eyes Wide Shut*, or follows the spatio-temporal movements of more than one character, as in the case of the Joyces in *Voyage to Italy* and the Pontanos in *The Night*. However, there is no subjective access because the protagonists' cogitations are withheld. On the one hand, the viewers are lead to identify with the characters thanks to spatial attachment, to the camera following their wanderings, on the other hand, engagement is denied by the absence of subjective access. Paraphrasing Yacavone's quote, reported at the beginning of the article, it is not about identification with characters' thoughts, feelings, or actions, but about something deeper and wider.

> The objective/subjective duality marking the viewer's experience of a film's world, with respect to the apprehension of its *actual, represented,* and *expressed* time, in some cases mirrors the duality between objective and subjective time *within* its represented or fictional world, that is, time as it is experienced by its characters (Yacavone 2008: 98).

The viewers share with the protagonists the effort of a meditation about time: as well as the characters are busy in their life review, the spectators reflect on expressed time and on the very concept of time.

John Rhym adapts Heidegger's idea of profound boredom to interpret the last scene of *L'eclisse*. The German philosopher claims that what is revealed in and through boredom is the feeling of time and, in the third form of boredom, called profound, clock loses all meaning. Profound boredom is not linked either to a particular subject, as the first form of boredom is, or to a peculiar event, "in the being-left-empty of profound boredom we 'find ourselves in the midst of beings as a whole, i.e., in the whole of this indifference'" (Rhym 2012: 485). According to Rhym this latter boredom dominates the last scene of *L'eclisse*:

> the temporality that functions here cannot be understood by reference to a linear succession of nows but, rather, by its withdrawal into an unarticulated unity – one that blurs the distinctions not only between present, past, and future but also between the temporal horizon of the film's diegesis and that of the film's viewer (495).

When the spectators understand and accept the transition to an associative narrative form, they experience time as a continuous, indivisible flux of relations among sequences, films of the same director and of different filmmakers, and among different media, too. In the films analysed, in which the expressed time is foregrounded and the diegetic time appears expanded, the viewers would seem to experience profound boredom. However, in the last scene of *L'eclisse*, the protagonists are not present and, according to Heidegger, profound boredom is not linked either to a subject or to an event, whereas in the films analysed spatial attachment connects viewers to protagonists. Therefore we had better not speak of profound boredom, but discuss the spectators' musings on expressed time and the very idea of time.

Henri Bergson distinguishes between: the time that is spazialized,

homogeneous, constituted by parts that can be juxtaposed as a succession of distinct parts, with one causing the other; from real, internal duration. In our consciousness there exists the continuous and not decomposable flux of psychic states, even if the intellect is unable to comprehend it, and tries to conceive it as a spatial phenomenon, subdividing it in fixed, consecutive units. It can be claimed that when the narrative form becomes associative, and the spectators are busy looking for correlations, they experience duration. Gilles Deleuze states that with Italian Neo-realism and French New Wave the direct time-image emerges, i.e. an image of time that does no longer depend on action-image, and motion becomes a dependent phenomenon, a shadow cast by time. Through the direct time-image in our time experience, a new depth is revealed, a crystalline structure in which images are multiplied. The moment we are living is present, but it is also slipping into the past, thus it is present and past, actual and virtual. Two streams of time diverge from the moment in which we are living: in a flux the present is the actual process of the passage, in the other it is something that has always already passed, and is virtual (Deleuze 2003: 81-82).

In *The Night*, thanks to *mise-en-scène* and photography, the characters appear entrapped in the present, and the time experience becomes pure, atemporal. It is the director himself that speaks about a totality that cannot be partitioned, and is part of a duration that penetrates it and determines its essence (Antonioni 1994: XXIX). Tinazzi claims that the characters' planning meets the refractoriness of time, and the latter disappears as lived time, becoming suspended, empty (2002: 46). Whereas time experience in *Voyage to Italy* is a continuous flux among past, present, and future, among a past evoked by art and by the figure of the poet, and Katherine's present and future, in *Eyes Wide Shut* this time experience seems to remain entrapped in a dreamy atmosphere. It is our perception of the relentless stream of time and consciousness, of our incapacity to conceive it, and of our need to spatialize, subdivide, and order it.

Conclusion

The life review that the couples come up with at the end of the films evokes that of every one of us. As our reflections vary when the socio-cultural conditions change, the life review proposed in the films represents how the bourgeois couple's relationships changed through the second half of the Twentieth Century. These fluctuations are also linked to the changes in time experience and in the conception of time, which can be discussed through the analysis of the expressed time. In *Voyage to Italy*, the couple lives in a present constantly linked to past, and finds the solution to their crisis projecting their purposes in the future. In *The Night* the protagonists are entrapped in a timeless present, and recover their enthusiasm for the future only at the end of the film, evoking the past. In *Eyes Wide Shut* the couple lives in a present haunted by a dreamy dimension, and escapes both from the past and the future. In all the films the life review seems to portray the tragedy of man's loneliness, who is unable to conceive duration and the present without the help of the past, future, or dream, and who needs to deceive himself, find a life meaning and share it with somebody else.

In the films one of the spouses or both of them wander to find themselves. As it often happens in art-cinema, during these scenes, the associative narrative form replaces the sequential one. If the spectators do not comprehend the transition from one form to the other, or do not accept it, their boredom corresponds to the first form of boredom, becoming-bored-by, as defined by Heidegger: the viewers keep watching the time waiting for the film to end. On the other hand, if the spectators pass from the sequential narrative form to the associative one, if they look for relations among scenes and shots, among films of the same author and others by different filmmakers, and among different media, they perceive duration, time as a continuous, not partitioned stream of relations.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Prof. Stefano Ghislotti for having given me the opportunity to co-edit this issue of Elephant & Castle. Thank to my friend Romina Rota who patiently checked my English, she is clever, humble, and kind, qualities that can rarely be found together.

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