

Abstracts

ALESSANDRA CALANCHI, Guido Fink and American Film Studies: The Early Years (1952-1953)

This essay focuses on the early years in the career of scholar and film critic Guido Fink (1935-), one of the most influential intellectuals in his generation and a passionate pioneer in the field of American culture and cinema. By concentrating on Fink's juvenile articles, which he published in the early 1950s in the local journal *La nuova scintilla* and in the national newspaper *L'Unità*, the essay aims to highlight the extraordinary elements of innovation and insight they contain. Fink was in fact experimenting with interdisciplinarity, matching theory with historical and cultural reflection, and analyzing cinema in its interconnections with literature, theater, and society at a time when nobody else did. All this would later not only become characteristic of his personal methodology of research, but also prove essential to the development of film studies and cultural studies in the international arena.

MARIO DEL PERO, "We Are All Harrisburg": Three Mile Island and the Ultimate Indivisibility of the Atom

The article discusses the evolution of civilian nuclear policies in Cold War America and the impact upon them of the incident at the reactor of Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in March 1979. It examines three interrelated issues: the inescapable connection between the civilian and the military dimensions of nuclear power; the effective mobilization from below against nuclear energy in 1970s' America, and the ability of anti-nuclear groups to appeal across the political and cultural spectrum; and how the political and cultural transformations of the 1970s challenged the certainties of the previous decades and hindered the development of nuclear energy. The article is divided in three parts, dealing respectively with the intrinsic contradictions of nuclear power, the increasing difficulties of the nuclear industry in the 1970s and, finally, the impact of Three Mile Island.

RAFFAELLA MALANDRINO, "Authorizing for oneself a place in the world": Coming of Age in Jhumpa Lahiri's and Mira Nair's *The Namesake*

Jhumpa Lahiri's 2003 novel *The Namesake* unfolds as the *Bildungsroman* of Gogol, the child of Bengali immigrant parents who is torn between his

American upbringing and his Indian ancestry. Fraught with the most intimate aspects of the intergenerational conflict of immigrant lives in America, Lahiri's narrative is reframed in a 2006 movie by the director Mira Nair. Nair's *The Namesake* emerges as a collectivizing work, aiming at establishing a spatial and an emotional continuity between India and America. This article discusses how the narrative dissonances and the communicative voids that mold the protagonist's angst in the novel are rendered by the power of the camera. By reinserting the Indian American second generation in a web of collective fruition, Mira Nair's gaze illuminates the protagonist's existential transformation, and at the same time grounds the South Asian diasporic experience onto an American, as well as a global realm of recognition.

MARIA ANITA STEFANELLI, Permanence and Transience in Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides*

Adapted from Jeffrey Eugenides' 1993 novel of the same title, *The Virgin Suicides* by Sofia Coppola (1999), cinematography by Ed Lachman, screenplay by Coppola, concerns the demise of the five adolescent Lisbon sisters in Detroit's suburbia of the seventies with the elm-trees dying and a serious environmental concern setting in. A group of schoolboys, strongly attracted by the beautiful creatures, watch them closely to spy on their personal moments trying to make sense of the mystery and ambiguities surrounding their life, and end up being the object of the girls' and the spectators' gaze. Events and states-of-mind in the film are associated with famous paintings of the past stored in the collective memory with the effect of producing some form of dialogue between cinema and painting, while the tropes of transience and permanence at work in life, art, and Nature sanction the inevitability of vanishing, but also the continuity, of cinema itself.

VITO ZAGARRIO, "The true story that inspired the movie": Cinema, Literature and History in the Digital Age

This essay maps some of the most important developments in film theory concerning the complex relationship of cinema with history and literature in the context of the digital age. It addresses some of the questions raised through the analysis of exemplary case studies and finally focuses on Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper*, a 2014 film based on a real life narration, the autobiography of Chris Kyle.