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Introduction

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This special issue of *Studia UBB. Dramatica* aims to highlight, on the one hand, Patrizia Lombardo's contribution to the study of emotions and affectivity in cinema and performing arts, and on the other hand, the deep connection of the former Professor from the University of Geneva with Romania. We will return to the first aspect below, briefly outlining her conceptions of affectivity in art and her fascinating ideas about film. As for the Romanian connection, it should be emphasized that, by virtue of the partnership between the Babeș-Bolyai University and the University of Geneva, Patrizia Lombardo has received and tutored numerous Romanian students in the Master's program *Littérature et culture. Littérature et esthétique* (coordinated together with Professor Laurent Jenny), or in the PhD program. These students came not only from Cluj, but also from other university centers in Romania. Over the years, Patrizia Lombardo has traveled several times to Bucharest, she has also made a stopover in Cluj, but above all she has been involved with the expertise acquired in various international university contexts in the process of building and editing publications such as *Studia UBB. Dramatica* and *Ekphrasis: Images, Cinema, Theory, Media*. She was, moreover, also present in the pages of these journals, and one of those articles is reprinted in this special issue, with whose thematic it is perfectly harmonized.

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I will not attempt here a portrait of Patrizia Lombardo, because many others have done it, in texts whose literary quality I cannot hope to reach. Some of these texts are published for the first time right here in this issue of *Studia*. I will simply mark a huge intellectual debt, both in terms of understanding art and in terms of knowing the human being. Patrizia Lombardo was a person of uncommon generosity, always intellectually mobile, open to discussion and controversy, rarely tired in her passion for research and for questioning overly ossified certainties, qualities that she communicated to many of those who came into contact with her. Patrizia had a lively, dynamic, sparkling intelligence, a sense of humor grounded in an irony of rare subtlety, a compassionate understanding of all human weaknesses except stupidity and stubbornness. Patrizia gave much to everybody without thinking too much of herself and her own comfort or self-interest. She was equally generous with material things, which she did not take much care of, but also with research ideas or solutions to difficult problems, often getting her collaborators in various projects, doctoral researchers, and students out of deadlock. For many of those who worked under her guidance, she was more than just a Professor, managing to be both a friend and what is called in French a "maître à penser". Thinking back on her now, I tend to consider that nothing human was foreign to her... Perhaps it was precisely because she knew how to be such a perfect human being that Patrizia was able to understand human emotions so well. Perhaps it is precisely because she herself so well blended tenderness and generosity with irony that she wrote such memorable pages about Stendhal. Perhaps precisely because she was so keen and penetrating in her self-analysis, that she managed to understand and love the art of film and the arts in general as few others have been able to do, with a passion for the beautiful worthy of her great predecessors, from whom she claimed to be indebted: Stendhal, Balzac, Baudelaire, André Bazin, Roland Barthes.

Indeed, a good part of Patrizia Lombardo's academic and intellectual career at the University of Geneva has been devoted to the study of emotions in the arts, both individually and within the Swiss Center for Affective Studies (CISA). Around this theme, she has published numerous articles, given lectures and organized colloquia, appeared in the media with interviews, and has tried to bridge the gap between the way the arts represent emotions and what

contemporary neuroscience tells us about our affective universe. On the one hand, Patrizia was fond of an Anglo-Irish philosophical tradition, represented by Hume, Shaftesbury, Hazlitt, and on the other hand, she was interested in the way novelists such as Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert and especially Musil described emotions. On these two pillars, Patrizia founded a rejection of the Kantian tradition with its clear separation between passion and reason, and an attempt to reconcile emotion and cognition. Cinema seemed to occupy a privileged place in this reconciliation, for the fact that film arouses the emotions in the most direct and violent way is almost a universal popular perception. From a neurological point of view, Patrizia argued, cinema appeals to and brings out the passions by pushing the identification of the audience with the emotions of the characters depicted on screen. On the other hand, beyond showing affective states, cinematography builds edifices of aesthetic emotions that go beyond simple and banal identification. Patrizia focused on the circumscription and nuanced description of these aesthetic emotions in some of her most memorable writings.

What impressed everyone in Patrizia Lombardo was a spiritual independence rarely found among intellectuals, an independence asserted with dignity, tact, but also with a firmness that knew how to put the most appropriate accents in their place. Knowing how to give to Caesar what was Caesar's, Patrizia did not give in to fads and fashions, constraints or ideological imperatives that were not based on authentic knowledge. If she abhorred stupidity, what bothered her most was sufficiency, intellectual limitation, the inability of the interlocutor to break out of pre-set and comfortable frameworks. In a world in which literature and the arts were not under as much pressure as they are nowadays from a leveling universal correctness, in a world that had not yet spread the overwhelming mechanisms of *cancel culture* on a planetary scale, Patrizia Lombardo was already making a singular act of resistance. She was resisting in the name of authenticity, of literary quality, of the need to assert the existence of a value in works of art that should not be reduced to their circumstantial, documentary, or political dimension. Moreover, Patrizia had a particular way of asserting that high-class aesthetic experience is, after all, the strongest and most effective way of resisting ideological pressures or the universal domination of consumption in contemporary society. Her words,

often spoken at lectures and seminars in various forms, have fortunately remained written down and will always echo in our memory:

> "It is probably time to rethink the whole problem of aesthetic value and stop being afraid of evaluating works of art as good or bad, even if, of course, in the free-market society under capitalism the art-object circulates like any other product [...]. If production affects aesthetics, this does not mean that the appreciation of aesthetic values has to be completely condemned. High quality aesthetic experience calls for a type of attention that resists the absolutism of consumption."[1]

With regard to the above quote, I think an anecdote illustrates its spirit quite well. In the winter semester of the academic year 2003-2004, in the Comparative Literature program at the University of Geneva, Patrizia and I proposed to the students a course and seminar entitled *Londres et Paris, 1830-1870: culture littéraire et artistique*. Through a comparative analysis of literary and philosophical texts, pictorial works and architectural styles, the course and seminar aimed to trace the emergence of modernity in the Western cultural space. We questioned the underlying reasons that guide and determine the aesthetic choices of human beings, related artistic products to social movements, and interpreted the ambiguous relationship between past, present and future. We tried to follow and decipher the lively, vigorous and disturbing dialogue between the teeming modern city and the work of art which, from the 1830s-1840s onwards, reproduced its structures, functions, levels, tensions, vices and virtues in a paradoxical new mimesis. While Patrizia's course had a broader philosophical and literary perspective, in the seminar I only studied two emblematic novels, *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* by Balzac and *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray. In addition to the in-depth mirror analysis of the two novels, I also worked with the students on some readings from critical texts or on comparative studies of the film adaptations of the two novels. It just so happened that in 2004 the movie *Vanity Fair* by Mira Nair was released. I proposed it as a comparative study

[1] Patrizia Lombardo, *Cities, Words and Images. From Poe to Scorsese* (Houndmills : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 175.

topic for students, but – after Patrizia and I watched it together in a movie theater – she said to me: "Ioan, tu ne peux pas faire travailler les étudiants sur un mauvais film." I argued, of course, that critical taste and critical spirit are formed even in this way, but over the years her particular tone, which implied a simple and profoundly true aesthetic judgment, has remained strongly etched in my memory. For indeed, Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair* is and always will be a "mauvais film"!

But, as I have marked here the way she cut with a scalpel's precision the poor aesthetic quality or pretentious works of art, it must be said that Patrizia Lombardo's universe of cinematographic references had its own dynamics. It was interwoven with recent films that she was eager to discover, although she preferred to select her directors with great care, but also with classics, to which she turned with passion, always constructing new interpretations from perspectives that shed light on the most hidden aspects of film construction. Some films Patrizia Lombardo analyzed dozens of times, in her lectures and articles, but almost never repeating things that had already been said by her or others, which she preferred to avoid with grace. Patrizia always found new ways of analyzing art, she knew how to change perspectives, to nuance interpretations, to deepen the understanding of cinematographic masterpieces to which she returned with a passion that she communicated like a contagion to those who listened to her or read her texts. Sometimes she was interested in the rhythm of a cinematic sequence, showing how it imposes a specific affective state on the audience, forcing it into that "suspension of disbelief" (one of the expressions Patrizia quoted most frequently). At other times, she focused on the emotions of the characters and the complex way in which they develop in the autonomous world of the movie, in complex webs of interactions. The ideological, social, political, and historical aspects involved in the construction of the film did not escape her attention, although she always privileged aesthetic emotion in relation to them. She was very attentive to questions of cinematographic technique, but especially to the way in which choices of *technè* can be defining for an author's personal style.

Patrizia Lombardo's tastes in cinema were very personal, precise, defended with an unmistakable vivacity and with well-reasoned arguments. They could be summarized as follows. Patrizia Lombardo adored American

cinema, some mainstream directors such as Hitchcock, Scorsese and Brian de Palma, but above all the marginal, independent, unclassifiable (even if some of them became great classics): Orson Welles, David Lynch, Jim Jarmusch, Gus Van Sant. Add to this her deep interest in Italian neorealism, especially Rossellini, whom she preferred to all the others, and her cult of the French New Wave, whose qualities of frankness, directness, and freshness she saw embodied without equal in François Truffaut. Just as in literature, she disliked grandiloquence, pretentious things, false mysticism, and misapplied psychology. At the antipodes of these defects was the rigorous, Janseninst style of Robert Bresson, whose films of great pictorial and emotional quality she frequently invoked. Perhaps starting with the masterpiece *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966), the donkey became Patrizia's favorite animal. Certainly, in the structure of Patrizia Lombardo's cinematic tastes, one could guess the influence of the magazine *Cahiers du cinéma* and of the mentor of the group of critics who later became the New Wave filmmakers, André Bazin. From his work, Patrizia kept coming back to the article "Pour un cinéma impur", which she rightly considered the most subtle interrogation of the complex, non-linear relationship between film and literature, in the sense that film seemed to her to be able and obliged to borrow not only the plot of adapted novels but also profoundly novelistic procedures.

Those who have followed her courses in cinema and comparative literature, or have carefully read her writings, know the rhapsodic way in which she knew how to return to fundamental literary fragments from the works of Stendhal, Coleridge, Poe, or Baudelaire, or to certain film sequences, which she would deeply explore, with a dynamism of thought, speech and body that was unique to her. Certain sequences in *Citizen Kane* (1941) held her attention because of the multiple layers of meaning she discovered and revealed to others. In the banquet sequence, when Charlie Kane asks everybody whether they should "declare war on Spain" or not, Patrizia saw a *mise-en-abyme* of the entire history of cinema, summoned through photography, the circulation of information in modern society, the use of the metaphor of the mirror and the staging of a revue and entertainment show. Commenting on "The Magic Mirror Maze" in Orson Welles' *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947), Patrizia Lombardo pointed out that it is a perfect summary of 2000 years of

visual culture, with its subtle dialectic between appearance and essence, between reality and its mirroring. I personally enjoyed the lines in this scene, especially one in which Michael (Orson Welles) reproachfully repeats something Rosalie Bannister (Rita Hayworth) had said earlier: “"One who follows his nature keeps his original nature in the end." But, haven’t you ever heard of somethin’ better to follow?” As for the beginning of Orson Welles’ *Touch of Evil* (1958), Patrizia emphasized like no one else the complexity and perfection of the realization of the long take, in which there is an extraordinary synchronization of movements and an impeccable blending of sound and image. In Welles, Patrizia Lombardo found the spirit of modernity perfectly illustrated, with some of the features already revealed by Baudelaire. His essay, *The Painter of Modern Life*, was also recommended by Patrizia as “a crucial text for understanding cinema”.

Patrizia was particularly interested in the materiality of the objects represented in the cinematic image, buildings, streets, man-made things, but also in the presence of materials in the Bachelardian sense, especially water, stone, and fire. Her comments on Rossellini’s *Stromboli* (1950) were legendary, both in terms of the imagery of the sea and the overwhelming affective presence of stone in the fishermen’s village where Karen (Ingrid Bergman), a Lithuanian refugee, arrived as a result of her marriage of convenience to Antonio. The way Karen stretches out on the arid, almost black earth on her way to the flaming volcano was, in Patrizia’s eyes, capable of communicating extreme tactile anguish to the audience. The visit to the Naples Antiquities Museum in Rossellini’s *Viaggio in Italia* (1954) was interpreted by Patrizia in the light of the same oppressive presence of the stone, but also in the sense in which cinema can construct tactile sensations and muti-dimensional spaces through the simple movement of the camera. The shifting points of view in the sequence was meant, in Patrizia’s eyes, to bring to life the statues in the museum, from the busts of Roman emperors to the huge statue of Hercules Farnese.

François Truffaut was one of Patrizia’s favorite directors. She had a special affinity with him, marked by the director’s taste for literature and for creative adaptations of literary works, but especially by the way Truffaut explored the depth of human emotions in his films. If the beginning of *Les 400 coups*

was seen by Patrizia as a piece of cinema realized in the purest Bazinian style, the end, with the long take of Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud) heading out to sea, seemed to her an affirmation of the most genuine desire for freedom. The character's final return to the camera, his immobilization in the form of a photograph, and the scrutinizing look he throws us straight in the eye make us ask a lot of questions about life and search, while we still can, for that child in us, ready to go on making merry with the freshness of kids 13-14 years old. Patrizia illustrated the subtleties of Truffauldian amorous emotion with two films that often recurred in her examples: *Jules and Jim* (1962) and *Les Deux Anglaises et le continent* (1971), both adapted with great grace from novels by Henri-Pierre Roché.

Without being at all fond of horror movies, she liked a few films inspired by Poe, but – above all – she was fascinated by the way in which David Lynch, one of the major American filmmakers, knew how to let the supernatural, the incomprehensible, the monstrous, infiltrate the most banal everyday life. Her analysis of the opening sequence of *Blue Velvet* (1986), which alternated between kitsch images of happy, secure American life and the unexpected irruption of a man's death as he drenches his lawn in a parodic transcription of the Lumière Brothers' *L'Arroseur arrosé*, was a real delight. She loved the movement of the camera as it moved from the texture of leaves of grass going underground into a world of decay and voracious insects, very illustrative of what Lynch wants to convey through his movies. In fact, Lynch's aim was to turn the audience's preconceptions, their representations of the world and life upside down, a movement Patrizia called with one of her favorite French words, "chambarder". In *Mulholland Drive* (2001), she retained a plot sequence at Club Silencio, where Betty and Rita arrive on their journey in search of their own identities and of the truth. The devilish announcer who comes from behind the curtain and begins his speech with the legendary formula *No hay banda*, then shows that everything is recorded, the melancholy song *Llorando*, which continues after the singer collapses on the floor, were for Patrizia a perfect illustration of how art produces genuine emotions using illusory representations. These ideas, formulated from Lynch's movie sequence in so many lectures, have fortunately been written down:

> "As in cinema and television, everything is recorded. However, the fiction is powerful and seizes *in reality* the bodies and the souls of both the artists and the viewer: Rebekah really faints and falls down on the floor; Betty and Rita tremble, shake and are really in tears. What could be a more radical theory on the artists' and spectators' hallucinatory participation in the fictions of art?"[2]

Patrizia was also particularly fond of a sequence from Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990), the one in which Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) narrates in voice over one of his busiest and most intense days[3]. With a lot on his plate, both in terms of his criminal business and his family life, Henry takes heavy doses of cocaine and embarks on a race against the clock that is one of the masterpieces of cinematic speed, at a nervous, fragmented pace. The sequence is punctuated by snippets of songs by Harry Nilsson, The Rolling Stones, Muddy Waters, which speak of drug-induced hallucinations and the mad rhythm of life. The characters completely absorbed in the action were for Patrizia a clear sign that gangster movies can reach great psychological intensities.

Patrizia Lombardo had a very particular way of bringing fragments of film into real-life discourse, through bits of dialogue or images. Her numerous travels were interwoven with so many more or less famous film journeys by train, plane or car. Her desire for ice cream, which she loved (but not chocolate ice cream), was often accompanied by the phrase chanted in a tone of revolt by the prisoners in Jim Jarmusch's *Down by Law* (1986): "I scream, you scream, we all scream for I scream." From time to time, and very rarely, when she felt too tired or fascinated or powerless in the face of unusual, shocking or sublime movie sequences, she would resolve to let them do all the talking, but even then she helped them to some extent: "On va laisser les images parler."

And, indeed, the images spoke for her, in moments of weariness, discouragement, contagious enthusiasm, aesthetic revelation, painful questions about human nature. They spoke for her and about her, for not infrequently

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[2] Patrizia Lombardo, *Memory and Imagination in Film : Scorsese, Lynch, Jarmusch, Van Sant* (Houndmills : Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 193.

[3] Patrizia Lombardo, *Memory and Imagination in Film*, 88.

I heard her commenting on the voice-over opening of Brian de Palma's *Carlito's Way* (1993): "Somebody's pulling me close to the ground.... I can sense, but I can't see." Who would have thought that these words, spoken by a character on the brink of death, would become a reality for Patrizia much too soon? Who would have thought that all of us who had the privilege of knowing her would be able to recall them thinking of her, because we no longer see her, but we still feel her with us? Patrizia is gone, but we are left with her images, so many and so deeply rooted in us that we can do nothing but let them speak!