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Viaggio nella dopo-storia

Journey into Post-History

Vincent Dieutre

Producer Stephane Jourdan. **Production company** La Huit Production (Paris, France). **Director** Vincent Dieutre. **Screenplay** Vincent Dieutre. **Director of photography** Arnold Pasquier. **Sound** Benjamin Bober. **Editor** Dominique Auvray. **Mit** Simon Versnel (Alex), Vincent Dieutre (Tom), Emmanuel Pierrat (Emmanuel).

DCP, colour. 80 min. French, English.

Premiere 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

A couple travels to Italy. During their trip, the state of their relationship becomes clear to them: They argue, take different paths and wonder whether to divorce.

Vincent Dieutre has remade *Viaggio in Italia* and adapted it to his own life. Alex and Kate have become Alex and Tom, played by Vincent himself and his partner Simon. This new couple goes to the same places, experiences similar things, but their time in Naples is inevitably not the same. The city has changed, as has the nature of relationships, tourism has become more digital.

As the two become increasingly alienated, Vincent the filmmaker moves through the city with his camera. He talks about how Rossellini's film shaped him. We hear his thoughts about a remake, notes to himself, his discussions with a copyright lawyer. Isabella Rossellini says she doesn't want to be involved.

In Vincent and Simon's world, much like that of Tom and Alex, the procession of the final scene gives way to a football match. What was still sacred back then becomes a riot here. Yet the miracle of Rossellini's film remains, inscribing itself on the bodies of the two men: voices superimposed on to images and images superimposed on to bodies.

Marie Kloos

Rossellini, Naples – remixed

If Pasolini takes the trouble to quote one of his poems to herald the arrival of 'dopo-storia' (after-history rather than post-history) in his film *La Ricotta* (1963), it is perhaps because the Italian Neo-realism he issues from will have been the culminating, enchanted moment of the relationship between cinema and history, between the Italian people and their filmed 'national novel', as Godard affirms – not without sadness – in his *Histoires du Cinéma* (one of the key works of 'dopo-storia'). Rossellini's cinema can only be understood within this relationship to European history, between Marxism and Christianity. Which is what makes it so precious in an era of constant information and the perpetual present. This is why my Rossellinian *Exercice d'Admiration* (EA4) brings the couple from *Viaggio in Italia* (Roberto Rossellini, 1954) into an entirely different Italy, that of 'dopo-storia'. It remains to be seen what survives – of the couple, of Naples, of tourism and of social relations – once everything has been recycled, remixed, sampled and swept away by the wind.

The adaptation of Rossellini's screenplay to the current context almost technically forces us to take into account the profound changes of international tourism, the disappearance of certain sites in Naples, the sudden appearance of the duly married gay couple on the stage of social norms and new forms of 'class consciousness' (less apparent, more relaxed, but violent nonetheless). All these are factors that cloud the mirror my project aims to hold up to Rossellini's film.

Current legislation concerning remakes, moral rights and the right to quote will dictate the film's structure and will be laid out by Maître Emmanuel Pierrat, legal specialist in the abuse of rights owners. Of course it is not a matter of limiting the film to a cunning game of hide-and-seek with the law, which is why I believe it is wise to expose the 'jurisprudence of the movie remake' from the beginning, to better enter the paradox of the Exercise of Admiration: *Viaggio in Italia* is one of the fundamental works that propelled me toward cinema, but does this give me the right to reclaim it for myself and make it my own? I believe so, but the only true answer will be the film, in its very vanity, in its impediment.

Vincent Dieutre

Feeling and History

Alex and Tom are in love, were lovers, got married, are no longer in love, are in love again. They arrive in Naples for a few days of sunshine and vacation away from London and business, perhaps, but it also seems they've inherited a house... Unless they're simply there to try starting over, or get divorced, or end it once and for all, break up, separate, kiss and make up.

Alex and Tom are Simon Versnel and Vincent Dieutre, two real people: old friends and an actual ex-couple who have become 'sex-friends'. At the same time, they are two characters, reflections of the protagonists of an Italian film masterpiece that is reinvented before our eyes: *Voyage to Post-History*. Vincent observes the Italy of today and films it in fragile sepia tones, in English; he films like the act of breathing, hiding nothing, least of all the details, the little nothings of daily life, the seams. The film that gets made will also be the story of what a film mirroring Roberto Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia* (1954) could be. Returning to the traces, understanding what 'fashioned' us, seeing and determining what has changed and what hasn't. Vincent calls this his 'Exercices d'Admiration';

after Kawase, Cocteau and Eustache, this will be his fourth exercise (EA4), a way of filming *within* cinema, of using cinema as a character. Though within his rights, Vincent nevertheless invites Maître Emmanuel Pierrat, well-known lawyer specialising in copy-right issues, to explain the rules of the game.

If *Viaggio in Italia* remains the framework, the title of this new film brings Vincent to Pasolini – *Viaggio nella dopo-storia*. Omnipresent and luminous in the European Rossellini, the feeling of history troubles Pasolini's work, from poetry to politics. Vincent Dieutre is heir to both, in the sense that his poetics always have a firm grip on time, disaster and current events, yet in the form of resistance. The film plunges us into 'dopo-storia', a time Pasolini pronounced beginning in the mid-sixties, a new era of post-history which erases the ghosts of past narratives and provokes the most atrocious levelling of bodies and flesh with no memory, dazed in front of TVs, football, iPads, politics/violence. The rights of remaking reality are negotiated at the price of gold, while the fireflies of hope are extinguished one by one as Vincent Dieutre portrayed in his recent *Orlando Ferito*. To the backdrop of a malfunctioning Europe, the two works converse, and toy with the idea of a new principle/hope, a principle of desire.

Knowing where you are from

The feeling of Post-history in Pasolini is first experienced through a return to a time of pre-history. Vincent returns to his first loves: to Naples, capital of popular and mythical Italy; to the cinema of Rossellini, so fundamental to him; and finally, to the unlikely couple he formed for a time with Simon Versnel. Knowing where you're from to know where you're going...

Because there is no end that holds! Vincent Dieutre does not say things were better before. He says let's not forget what it was like, here's what it has become, what do we do now? What weapon to use, how to act, where to head, where to begin? Vincent Dieutre is anything but resigned or pessimistic, his cinema is a response, and through its particularly modern hybrid form and layered filmic language, it is able to express complexity in order to help us envision it. Because with Vincent Dieutre's cinema, we can no longer distinguish fiction from thought since the formal registers are so interwoven and fade into each other.

The couple of Simon/Alex and Vincent/Tom move through a Naples whose streets, ruins, museum and computer screens are still haunted by the Rossellinian shades of Katherine (Ingrid Bergman) and Alex (Georges Sanders). As the film advances, Vincent's memory becomes reality and he positions his camera in an undecidable in-between, pierced with SMS and Lancôme ads, a particularly pertinent place where fiction, feelings, private journal and critical reflection interact.

In literature it is sometimes said that the novel is the genre of what has no genre, because it can (must) embrace everything. In this, Vincent Dieutre's cinema is highly novelistic; it belongs to that genre which has no genre, a genre that will not be reduced, a whiff of freedom. Is it auto-fiction, an essay, documentary or 'normal' fiction? An homage to one filmmaker by another? Why choose? It is a little of each, and above all a splendid film.

Olivier Steiner



Vincent Dieutre was born in Le Petit-Quevilly, France, in 1960. He studied film at the IDHEC film school in Paris from 1983 to 1986, during which time he made his first short films and videos. Along with making films, Dieutre works as a film journalist, editor and translator.

Films

1984: *Une martyre* (6 min.). 1985: *Wiener Blut* (11 min.). 1986: *Arrière saison* (29 min.). 1988: *Lettres de Berlin* (50 min.). 1995: *Rome désolée* (Berlinale Forum 1996, 70 min.). 2000: *Leçons de ténèbres/Tenebrae Lessons* (Berlinale Forum 2000, 77 min.). 2001: *Entering Difference/Lettre de Chicago* (18 min.). 2001: *Bonne Nouvelle* (60 min.). 2003: *Mon voyage d'hiver/My Winter Journey/Meine Winterreise* (Berlinale Forum 2003, 104 min.). 2003: *Bologna Centrale* (61 min.). 2004: *Les accords d'Alba* (25 min.). 2006: *Fragments sur la grâce* (101 min.). 2007: *Después de la Revolución* (55 min.). 2008: *Ea2: 2ème exercice d'admiration: Jean Eustache* (21 min.). 2010: *Toutes les étoiles tombent* (10 min.). 2010: *Ea3* (45 min.). 2012: *Jaurès* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 83 min.). 2013: *Déchirés/Graves* (82 min.). 2013: *Orlando Ferito – Roland Blessé* (121 min.). 2015: *Viaggio nella dopo-storia / Journey into Post-History*.