Elizabeth Bowen: Feminist Discourse and the Italian Neorealism

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Abstract

This paper will analyze the relationship between Elizabeth Bowen's *Eva Trout* and the theoretical tenets of Italian neorealist cinematography. The exchange between the novel and neorealism can be found in the concept of time-image that builds upon an evolution from doer to seer, and in the use of so far marginalised figures, namely that of a child and of a woman. Bodily movement does not lead towards a conclusion, but rather a multiplication within the mental range of subjective, somewhat tiresome narratives. As such, there is another time within the subject which constitutes a kind of propelling power to delineate reality. The character must labour to comprehend the images/visions, and these very endeavours or 'concatenations' become the embedding time-space. Time is indeterminate and multiple as the subject upon which it hinges.

The fluid and constant intertwining of life and art always fascinated Elizabeth Bowen's imagination. To her, the language of aesthetic creation merged with the witchcraft and magic of film, creating fictions not confined to gender limitations and free from rigid cultural entanglements. In such realizations of art, Bowen could concede the subject a greater participation in the process of creation (from a feminist perspective, by opening onto the affective powers of otherness and agency). By the same token, it was at the crossroads of cinema and literature that she, I believe, found her definition of a female new voice.

The fluid and constant intertwining of life and art always fascinated Elizabeth Bowen's imagination, to whom the language of aesthetic creation merged with witchcraft and magic. Illusions, to Bowen, were art, and she believed that the feeling person only managed to live through art. What is more, one was bound to appreciate the value of illusion, since it succeeded in containing a dynamic and sparkling content beneath the cracking identitarian surface. Experiencing aesthetic creation was the sole emotion one remained faithful to as it unfolded

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through the multiple experiences of selfhood and otherness. In the ability to translate signs given to one in somebody else's point of view lay a way of "deciphering ... meaning" (Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur* 1) of life in general. The "shortest route to the self [happened] through the other (…)" (Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur* 2), and through the other's work. Thus, the self "return[ed] to itself after numerous hermeneutic detours through the language of others to find itself enlarged and enriched by the journey."[1] (Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur* 2). Art and illusions were undeniable parts of human existence ready to be found everywhere in the immediate involvement with reality and with oneself. As the great advocate of art, Virginia Woolf wrote to her artist sister Vanessa Bell: "One should be a painter. As a writer, I feel the beauty, which is almost entirely colour, very subtle, very changeable, running over my pen, as if you poured a jug of champagne over a hairpin" (qtd. in Goldman 233-234). Writers, according to Woolf, did not attend art exhibitions to understand the problems of the painter's art. They were after "something that may be helpful to themselves" (qtd. in Goldman 139) in the translation from visual to verbal semiotic signs.

Elizabeth Bowen also saw the possibility of an undeniably enriching dialogue between the visual and verbal arts. To her, genius and truth could be encoded in many vehicles, one of them being the cinematographic art that she considered an "interesting study for the novelist" (Bowen, *Preface to The Demon Lover* 42). Cinema could tell the truth because it was both, as Byatt would put it, "encumbered by either time or conventions" (Byatt 11) as well as fit for attesting to the veracity of facts. It possessed a certain childlike quality, when

> all susceptibility belong[ed] to the age of magic, the Eden where fact and fiction were the same; the imaginative writer was the imaginative child (...) It could lead to madness to look back and back for the true primary impression and sensation. (Bowen, "Out of a book" 53)

Film was full of beautiful trickery and "any trick [was] justified if it add[ed] a statement" (Bowen, "Notes on writing a novel" 54), admitted Bowen right after the Second World War had ended, and around the time when Italian neorealism was gaining force. She referred in these terms to cinema, which to her had the capacity to dig deep into the subject's cracking self. She described films as wonderfully versatile artifacts that possessed vocabulary enough to see the subject in its multiplicity: in her "Notes on Writing a Novel", Bowen said that, "in a good film, the camera's movement, angle and distance have all worked towards one thing, the fullest possible realization of the director's idea, the completest possible surrounding of the subject" (Bowen, "Notes on writing a novel" 43). The big screen was thought to offer a new gaze upon the construction of the self, thanks to its time-image technique. The camera eye observed the subject in his/her geographic reality, and characters partook in a narrative adventure that forced complex time and space perceptions into them, and excavated their subjectivity. Characters experienced their temporality, and the process led to a painful reflexive awareness of bodies and their ties to a universe in which time, allied to the materiality of the immanent world, reigned supreme in all its unpredictability. Hence, the body is construed as the developer of time, containing in the same instant 'the before' and 'the after'. In a screen presentation, action-image, signifying both movement and perception, is intricately conjoined into an organic unity. In time-image, the part and the whole become dispersive but more productive, insofar as the character must labour to comprehend the image, and this very event of labour becomes the embedding time-space. Further, in time-image the character cannot absorb the situation or synthesize a total understanding of it, but rather experience a laborious continuity of being without reaching a climax or conclusion, but rather a constant becoming. This, however, offers a womb-like, *choraic* peacefulness, as in Bowen's last novel *Eva Trout*,

> Did this make her traitorous to the years with Jeremy? – the inaudible years? His and her cinematographic existence, with no sound-track, in successive American cities made still more similar by their continuous manner of being in them, had had a sufficiency which was perfect. Sublimated monotony had cocooned the two of them, making them near as twins in a womb. (Bowen, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* 188)

Usually not conforming to the norms, Bowen was not afraid to ask blunt questions about the (en)gendered nature of the camera eye (questions that could also reflect her intellectual steadfastness, and her somewhat arrogant assumption of authority). "Where is the camera eye to be located?", she asked herself, "was it in the breast or brow of the succession of characters?". Bowen agreed that the focalizing authority knew no gender divisions and belonged to the female and the male eyes equally. The division, if it ever existed, was made between the seen and the unseen that combine in the diversity and span of the androgynous eye. What is more, the seen and the unseen were not divided by gender, as the fixation of the camera lens did not depend on the breast (female) or the brow (male). Rather, the division fell upon the concept of performativity, whereby both the agent and object of the gaze needed to be aware of narrative reciprocity and *jouissance* – "becom[ing] a witness … lean[ing] sideways, to see from another angle" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 185). The camera eye was just enough to confer power to the one that wielded it.

If cinema recreated space for the dialectic of the gaze and the power it produced, then Italian neorealism enhanced the subject's participation in the process of creation and reception of the body's affects that are like "eternity …walking beside" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 181). In Bowen, the perceptions it afforded tied together her undeniable feminist thinking with an acute depiction of reality and agency, "cast[ing] away everything" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 185) that was seen through the eyes of the subject that knew no division between male and female.

After all, mind, according to Bowen, was wonderfully just and kaleidoscopic. She wrote that "time, inside Eva's mind lay about like various pieces of a fragmented picture" (Bowen *Eva Trout* 46) – she saw and remembered "disjectedly" (46). In Deleuzian kaleidoscopic time, the world was "no longer a motor extension which is established" (Deleuze 4) between subject and reality, "but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs. It is as if action floated in the situation, rather than bringing it to a conclusion or strengthening it" (4). Mental processing – "this pattern-arriving-at" (Bowen *Eva Trout* 47) – is both "absorbing, as in a kindergarten game" (47), and has "a predominant colour", which makes thinking a distinctively ocular and phenomenological experience. In every instance, it is of a circular character: "a dividing going-and-coming adown the aisle" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 125), punctuated by a time-image silence of latent comprehension. If the visuality of neorealism seemed predicated on an internal structure of endlessly flowing particles – "particles of transience" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 181) – such particles could be attached to a female focalizer, "fixedly looking ahead" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 180). Bowen's feminism and neorealism went hand in hand with regard to attesting to the new dynamics of femininity, and acknowledging the non-exclusive nature of gender identities.

The post-war period produced a reality to which no one knew how to react; as Bowen liked to write, populations became dislocated in a more profound way than human geography might suggest. In the aftermath of the war, the body, rather than undergoing movement, seems to become a 'developer' of a time that shows through in tiredness, loneliness and waitings – "a string of shudders – fatigue, rage, frustration, nervous despair" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 97). It becomes a developer and the filter of the new time images, a machine compensating for life's lost vivacity and dynamics. Tiredness and waiting with "great, anti-climactic yawns" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 255), even despair,

are now the idioms of the body. There is to be no method: the interior is told through nonsensical behaviour, and no longer the experience of a categorically ordered reality. The narrative depicts "what remained of past experiences" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 124) and "what came afterwards, when everything had been said" (123), drawing on the multiple attitudes and postures of the body. However the new illusions were not the product of a madman, nor a madwoman for that matter, but seemed rather to assimilate a slackening of sensory-motor connections towards a "nullity of speed, the nullity of height" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 125) of "the no-hour" (125). The external world was filtered through the subject, accumulated in disjointed images and then purged out again – as if one "had vomited" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 97). As such, it produced another kind of movement which resisted the phallocentric and linear emplotment. One was prey to a vision; one recorded rather than reacted, as if hooked upon odd memories and fantasies in an "airborne" 'interim': "an unreal torpor of the pressurized air, when bodies abandon themselves to daylit slumber in contorted attitudes of death" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 125).

Neorealism formed a network of resistant points, the evolution of which centred on a transition[2] from the *doer* to the *seer*. Deleuze discusses how Italian neorealism, understood as the proponent of an epistemologically impoverished but very open gaze, became both directed outwards upon the world and internalized, as characters attempted to reconcile the difficult thoughts just generated with the tired emotional investments of their bodies. The deserted space from which the characters had been emptied (as in the metaphor of deaf and dumb Jeremy who lives outside the world) referred back to the lost gaze of somebody absent from the world as much as from himself or herself. That somebody was also a by-product of the forces alienating her from the 'terrible onus', while working on life's precarious nature, prohibiting the characters "to ever go[ne] out for … no one." (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 180). Simply witnessing others

at play, as in Eva's seeing Jeremy and Henry playing cat's cradle inside a swerving taxi, was unbearable to her in its reality, especially because she was only able to see and experience the world from the outside. The world existed in Eva's mind only as an image of "fiery particles of transience" (181). As long as Eva managed to maintain this vision "Nothing [is] at an end, so nothing stand[s] still." (181).

The narrative time-image itself became a system of relationships between its elements, "a set of relationships of time from which the variable present only fl[ew]" (Deleuze xii). It made apparent the multiple relations of time underlying it that could not be seen in the present whereas "the eternity was the more real" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 180). In such an image, the real was no longer represented but aimed at, and said to be elliptical, wavering, dispersive, and ambiguous – "bridges the punt slid under, raindrops spattering the Cam with vanishing circles shivered reflections echoes evaporating, shadows metamorphosizing at a whim of the sun" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 181). When deciphered it produced an additional reality, an extension to the dominant forms of an equally heterogeneous subject, a "living eternity" (181). That subject's multiplicity stemmed from the internal conflicts rather than the external scenarios, all in all becoming its subjective *kairos* "roll[ing] like some blind indefectible" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 179) planet, now swamped inside Eva's mind by her "isolating misery of the savage" (181).

Henceforth, if we continue taking Elizabeth Bowen's last novel *Eva Trout* as an example, we can see how neorealist tools make room for the production of a new kind of fiction. In *Eva Trout* moving is subordinated to the book's eponymous character; it is like film watching – "this further movie. At this hour, it exhausted the resources of Technicolor, and exceeded them" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 204). With the new concept of time-image – "pictures'. Images" (Bowen, 1999c, 195) there appears another time within the subject, constituting a kind of propelling power to delineate reality between the androgynous margin and the centre. Time is indeterminate and multiple as the subject upon which it hinges; it

does "not seem to disconnect" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 201) from oneself like words. Hamlet could have been the hero of this *other* time; like him, Eva Trout is all of us. Time is out of 'joint'[3] – the linear joints becoming overtly subjective. If *Eva Trout*'s feminist time-image ends in death there is another time that will propel itself forward; a time that does not end with demise, but rather continues with the laughter of a death's head, or "a cavernous, groaning yawn" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 97) distending the "rib-cage to cracking-point" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 109).

Even though *Eva Trout* is neither politically committed nor bears witness to the desiccation of reality after the Second World War, it can be seen to support an argument for a possible transference of features proper to Italian neorealism onto its text, along with intersections of the verbal, non-verbal and visual. *Eva Trout* was published long after the heyday of neorealism, not having accompanied its rise as much as, for instance, Bowen's war-time novel *The Heat of the Day* – published in 1949, only a year after Vittorio de Sica's famous *Bicycle Thieves* (1948). *Bicycle Thieves* was a film that gained de Sica instant critical acclaim and worldwide recognition by introducing a full palette of neorealist inflections into current film practices, ranging from the idea of the new time-imagery, an involvement of the liminal, the passive, the sensory and the child's point of view. Again, as Deleuze wrote in his *Cinema 2*, in the new neorealist art

> Time ceases to be derived from the movement, it appears in itself and itself gives rise to false movements. Hence the importance of false continuity in modern cinema: the images are no longer linked by rational cuts and continuity, but are relinked by means of false continuity and irrational cuts. Even the body is no longer exactly what moves; subject of movement or the instrument of action, it becomes rather the developer (révélateur) of time, it shows time through its tirednesses and waitings (Deleuze xi).

In light of this, there seem to be some uncanny resemblances to neorealist art in cinema and the narrative of *Eva Trout*. The figure that belongs to the

liminal – *Eva Trout* as an extra/non- and intra-diagetic experience – is capable, like Ricci in *Bicycle Thieves*, of bringing different worlds together into her hermaphroditical, intersectional form, belonging "in some other category. "Girl" never fitted Eva." (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 243). She welds together the world of men and women, and lives with her son Jeremy through a "cinematographic existence, with no sound-track" (188). Away from the "ghostly give-off from civilization" (82), Eva is an outcast, a monster, "cycling zigzag head-on", drinking "gulps of water straight from the tap", from whom even the "mesh bags, empty, lightheartedly" (83) flow away. She moves constantly from stability to instability. She stays out of ordinary routines every day, until an intriguing moment when she, herself, 'obtains' a bicycle that enables her to visit different spaces and places, different cities, houses and hotels.

It may be said that the plot presents two feminist ideas: the first involves the search for language, meaning, the child and the mother; the second, an escape from the father, the guardian, the mother, and the possible snatcher of Eva's adoptive son, Jeremy. However, much of the change seems overtly passive in character, taking Eva from one liminal space to another, from one hotel to another, from one white telephone conversation to another. Even Eva's grasp of memories and time is 'disjected', possibly linear but lacking many pieces. Like the neorealist paratactic text, it is impoverished but not essentially disordered and illogical. Time is, at times, a discordant experience and the narrative becomes a polyphony of voices not necessarily in connection with one another, and yet giving agency to the subject: "They were their own. Wasted civilization extended round them as might acres of cannibalized cars. Only they moved. They were within a story to which they imparted the only sense" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 189).

Time is, therefore, derived simultaneously from a strange motion and the lack of it, a connection and disconnection between sender and receiver. One comes to "distinguish little between what [goes] on inside and what [goes] on

outside the diurnal movies." (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 189). At the end of the novel, Eva moves from being a passive observer to playing the role of an agent and dies, which in Italian neorealism is metaphorical of the futility of life and of wasted time. If life itself is meaningless in Italian neorealism, it is utopian in Theodor Adorno's understanding. Despite the absence of a felicitous resolution, *Eva Trout* provides a manifesto for the process undergone by a female subject towards a fulfilment of her life. Eva's narrative, even though ending in her death, retains the idea of open-endedness, which invites the readers to a more active participation. Kristeva writes about the utopian herethics – a feminine discourse: "Herethics, is perhaps no more than that which in life makes bonds, thoughts, and therefore the thought of death, bearable: herethics is undeath (a-mort), love" (Kristeva 185).

Even if on Eva's death the utopia ceases to be utopian, it proves the pre-existence of a female discourse to which we have to respond now with adequate and meaningful mourning. After all, the overt emphasis in neorealism on the depth of focus is also a means of mourning for the specters of pre-wartime history. Here, feminism, and then more narrowly utopian feminism, suggests alternative truths, realities and values even though, as in neorealist cinema, it resists the idea of perfection. As Drucilla Cornell writes in *Beyond Accomodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction and the Law*, "The necessary utopian moment in feminism lies precisely in our opening up to the possible through the metaphoric transformation" (Cornell 168). To Cornell, "utopian thinking demonstrates the continual exploration and re-exploration of the possible and yet also the unrepresentable" (Cornell 169). Thanks to utopian thinking, feminism manages to avoid "ensnar[ing] in the system of gender identity that devalues the feminine" (Cornell 169). Attestation of difference comes with evocation of what can be found beyond the margins.

Eva herself is a common person, an untrained actor, as would be the case in Italian neorealism, which avoids the intricate and complex. In fact, she is an untrained speaker of the father's *parole* and a subject from the periphery of discourse – a woman. As a somewhat hybrid being, Eva is not only, and if partially, female but she is also a child: a Deleuzian little girl. Entrapped in this infantile stage, she can be as especially adequate for an equation with neorealism, that portrays the contemporary condition of life as well as the simplicity and unembellishment of the particular being. In neorealism the child unwraps itself from visual and sound nakedness. However, its sensory-motor schemata remain unestablished and non-automatic, contrary to the world of adults. The imagery that the child constructs includes the sensory-motor descriptions now controlled by the optical and sound ones, even if almost undecipherable through its unmoulded discursive capacities. Deleuze writes in his *Cinema 2* about the child and its place within such discourses:

> In neorealism the sensory-motor connections are now valid only by virtue of the upsets that affect, loosen, unbalance, or uncouple them: the crisis of an action-image. No longer being induces by an action, any more than it is extended into one, the optical and sound situation is, therefore, neither an index nor a synsign. … And clearly these new signs refer to very varied images – sometimes everyday banality, sometimes exceptional or limit-circumstances – but, above all, subjective images, memories of childhood, sound and visual dreams or fantasies, …. (Deleuze 6).

As in the plots of Italian neorealism, which obviously are difficult to transfer onto other semiotic signs, the story of the literary text here continues to germinate into the unconscious of its audience. The story/the telling in *Eva Trout* seems concluded, yet what is told is not resolved – the proposed problems lack any form of resolution. Similarly to the finitude of life expressed by St Augustine and Heidegger, Eva's narrative has a clear-cut beginning and an end, and yet the

message of the text, the battle between the hegemonic and the revolutionary remains unresolved – it is distended into others' narratives.

It must be said that in Bowen we feel time. Although her characters are often inarticulate, and her discourse an awkward attempt at expressing existential disquiet, the bodies in Bowen's fiction speak out loud. Through their relation to their environment, and under the camera's relentless gaze, the subject's real powerlessness is shown. The viewer must now *read* the body as positioned in space, seeking to think through its movements and ponder what kind of thought might be running through it. Could anything be exterior to the body – "and could anything be so and yet exist?" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 189).

In Bowen, the female body gives in to its perceptuality and newly attained motility. She gives herself to the flux of appearances. Embodiment and subjectification give the subject transcendence because he or she is able to transcend any given situation or perceptual presentation, this being a futural aspect of transcendence. I am able to live toward the future in such a way that the world remains an open projection of significance. Time-image is, by definition, perceptual; should the audience fail to name it, one resorts to thinking it anew. The omnitemporality of the thinking consciousness has no absolute linear existence, hence the time it creates through phenomenological experience is disrupted, random but circular too – "society revolv[ing] at a distance from them like a ferris wheel" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 189).

Equally, in feminism, time hinges on the female subject constructing female agency; as in the time-image, a hermeneutical circle of experiences – the phenomenological movement of reflection. Through juggling of the kaleidoscopic imaging one may, to a certain extent, rework the power distribution between the feminine and the masculine. From the 'ruins of representation' – a failure of Cartesian *mimesis*, - from the ruins of hierarchically ordered time and space, a more fluid ontology can be created. The female body, here, becomes the only

viable site and temporal frame of identification. Crucial to understanding Bowen's fiction is the idea of a 'transtemporal subjectivity' assimilating itself to a destabilized I that exists in "a fluid realm comprised simultaneously of past (memory), present (experience) and future (expectation)" (Birrer 2008): "The future, as we know, will resemble the past in being the result, largely, of a concatenation of circumstances" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 268). Women in their plurality can strive towards a more complete construction of identity. According to Bowen, the novelist must allot "psychological space" to his or her characters (Bowen, "Notes on Writing a Novel" 38). Otherwise, the character becomes passive and 'flat' – "What E.M. Forster has called the flat character has no alternatives at all" (38). The subject is entitled to multiplicity and, as such, to "the portrayal of … alternatives, to time and space" (38). It is a new female gaze through the omnipresent temporality of the body. The bodily chronotope changes into the Bowenesque "burgeoning discourse" as already used in literature (Backus 49). Bowen's novels problematize a "repression of crude material techniques of surveillance and physical coercion" which "correspond to Foucault's earlier emphasis on discipline and punish" (Backus 49). Almost like Richardsonian characters, Bowen's characters experience suffering which commences with unusual "decrease of the power of acting, experienced as a decrease of the effort of existing" (Ricoeur 320). And in corporeality it is through the body that passivity of existence is transformed into active participation in the world, a new (however subjective and relational) feminine agency.

Bowenesque female time revolves around themes that were equally important for neorealism. This highlights the significance of the subjective roving eye that encounters and watches the other. The very incident of active watching commences in the phenomenological experience of suffering that brings time back to the subject. This new subjective time begins with disappointment, as Simon Critchley writes: "philosophy begins with these experiences of

disappointment: a disappointment at the level of what I would think of as "meaning" (Critchley 2003). Critchley argues for a cultivation of the low, the common and the near – the everyday, as in neorealism – Bowen chooses to write about cultivation of the material – the house, the furniture, as well as the personal. Childhood and the child focalizer, who encompasses the present, may be taken as neorealist tools. Also narcissism is a means of boundary-crossing between the self and the other in a constant search for an ego-ideal. Instead of being tantamount to a withdrawal from reality, it becomes a driving force (*Eros/Thanatos*) behind a pursuit for the mother or a succession of substitutes that can take her place. Caught up in their narcissism, as Italian neorealism would have it, and staring into their own reflections the characters see not only their own image but the image of the other as well. Moreover, through the dynamics of narrative identity, where identity unfolds as the plot unfolds, we may see a cinema-like presentation of how minds are shaped. As film narrative, identity becomes a hybrid of elements moulded in accordance with the seer and the seen through a palimpsest of unadorned techniques and a naturalistic view of life.

In both Bowen's fiction and Italian neorealism a subjective understanding of time stabilizes the subject's ability to master space through the observational rather than transformative capacities of the self – through the "encircling will of a monster" (92). There is no peaceful gender or other normative transcendence, since subjectivity and the new gaze are a field of ambivalence and infelicity.

This idea can capture tension and a deeply felt tragedy of the self who interacts with both the quotidian and the material. If post-war Italian neorealism is based on an epistemologically impoverished but very open gaze, in literature it highlights the richness of the subjective vision, bearing on the very interior and exterior 'reality' the subject inhabits. Suggesting the existence of deserted spaces from which characters have been emptied, it also posits that these spaces need

to repopulated, or rather, reinhabited by other personal narratives, new though parallel discourses. If gender operations undo and redo us through various discursive practices, we need to see how and in what way we remain resistant to them. It is of utmost importance to understand the mutual dependence and the operations of power between selfhood and otherness. "It is unlikely that any vision or aspiration is sustained in isolation from others" (Sperry 2005). We may argue after Birrer that "Bowen's psychological realism and representations of transtemporal subjectivity comprise a vision of the human subject that, though not necessarily comfortable, offers increased scope for human agency in a radically destabilised social world" (Birrer 2008).

The *I* is not lost in Bowen's fiction, and the "I-saving strategies" (Bowen, *Preface* to *The Demon Lover* 98) are imprinted on the material, germinating into unedited "received impressions of happening things; impressions that stored themselves up and acquired force without being analyzed and considered" (Bowen, *Preface* to *The Demon Lover* 99). If the subject is understood as absent from the world as much as from himself/herself, the possibility is now of reintroducing the broader horizon of interpretation, even if that should mean female literary witchcraft of rooms "coming alight … angry gas-cooker[s]" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 82-83), or the "impulsive movements of fantasy" (Bowen, *Preface* to *The Demon Lover* 98) and "abysmal contentment" (Bowen, *Eva Trout* 82).

Notes

[1] As Ricoeur writes in his *De l'Interprétation: essai sur Freud*, "expressivity of the world comes to language through the symbol as double meaning" (Ricoeur, 1965 in Kearney, 1998, 151). There, "language produces composite signs where the meaning, not content to designate something directly, points to another meaning which can only be reached (indirectly) by means of this

designation" (Ricoeur, 1965 in Richard Kearney *Poetic of Imagining: Modern to Postmodern*. *Perspectives in Continental Philosophy.* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 151)

[2] According to Deleuze in *Cinema 2: The Time Image* the Italian neorealism introduces the time-image cinema innovative in its social context and cinematic language. Italian neorealism makes unstable the distinction between the subject and the object of the narrative field. The mental and physical spaces overlay one another rather than merely correspond to one another. (Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1989). London: Continuum, 2004.

[3] Here I paraphrase the famous quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet:* "Time is out of joint – O cursed spite" (Shakespeare 186–190).

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