



Digital platform dedicated to  
education for European cinema

# IL POSTO

## ERMANNO OLMI

TEACHING NOTES



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## CINED: A FILM COLLECTION FOR CINEMA EDUCATION. (2142 S.)

CinEd's mission is to propagate the seventh art as a cultural entity and an aid to understanding the world. For this purpose, it has developed a common teaching method based on a collection of films produced by the European countries that are partners in the project. The approach adapts to our present day world, with its rapid and increasingly great changes in the way that images seen on a vast range of screens are seen, received, spread and produced: from giant cinema screens to tiny smartphones, and of course televisions, computers and tablets. The cinema is relatively new art, and although its death has been predicted more than once, it is obvious that it is very much alive.

These changes impact on the cinema, and its diffusion must take particular account of the increasingly fragmented ways in which a variety of screens are used for viewing. CinEd publications offer and support a sensitive and inductive teaching method, which is both interactive and intuitive, and provides information, analytical tools and offers the possibility of a dialogue between the images and the films. The films are analysed on different levels and in their entirety, as well as in sections and looking at different aspects: frames, shots, and sequences.

The teaching materials (booklets) enable a free and flexible approach to the films. One major challenge is to enter into contact with the cinema image on different levels: description is the essential basis for any kind of analytical approach, the ability to extract and select the images to classify and compare – both from the film in question and from other, involving all the representational and narrative arts (photography, literature, painting, theatre, comics ...). The aim is for the images not to escape, but for them to have a meaning. In this way, the cinema is a particularly synthesizing valuable art for building and consolidating young people's views.

## The author

Vincenzo Ardito, with marketing and communication studies, graduated from the Academy of Cinema for Youth of Enzitetto (Bari), is a director, filmmaker and educator, among many collaborations including Save the Children Italy, Ministry of Education, Authority Commissioner for children and adolescents, the Department for development and economic cohesion and Confindustria Italy.

## Thanks to

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# IL POSTO

IL POSTO is an example, typically Italian, of a duality between cinema and movies as well as exists between literature and the book and painting and portrayed.

The movie "Il Posto" is fully embedded in a semiotic perspective of respect because the concrete units of speech are fully satisfied. The semantic axis of the film narration is pertinent to the Italian style of the time and still fully valid today. The filmic meaning of iconic narration is clear and perceptible in an educational perspective that seeks the orientation of the cinematic gaze. The profound unity of the film is authentic and supported by the unfolding of events that demonstrate the veracity of every sequence. In the movie "Il Posto" the cinematographic fact exists and is manifested in high language levels as well as the film language requires. And being consistent the cinematographic fact the communicative function is broken down into different elements that the director articulated in cinematic discourse.

The movie "Il Posto", already contains many elements typical of the cinema of Olmi that would make him famous first in Italy and then in the world: his preference for rural and suburban settings, the praise of simplicity, the individual's difficult impact with society, young love. These fundamental elements of daily life are described by the

Olmi's hand through his seemingly objective film style but full of an iconic research of considerable thickness.

Olmi follows a young man, Domenico, from the peaceful countryside to the frenetic big city, where the economic miracles bringing far-reaching social changes.

Olmi's calmly penetrating camera observes and explores the world of adolescents, contrasting Domenico's pathological shyness with the dynamism of Antoinette-Magali; he examines the offices and endless corridors without condemning the pyramid-like company hierarchy.

IL POSTO is one of the first Italian freefilms and tells a story of people caught between tradition and modernity. IL POSTO is clearly the "job" that Domenico obtains in a big company, and Olmi depicts the grotesque and melancholy job application process.

The film has the extraordinary characteristic and uniqueness, to own and anticipate modern references beginning of this millennium, linked to current Italian and European situation regarding the search for a job by the younger generations. The specific film portrays, in a clear and decisive, the personal and professional ambitions of the young protagonist. The expressive line chosen from Olmi to outline the subjective growth of the protagonist is authentic visual research suggested by the precise knowledge of the

social and urban, from provincial to the big city with the difficult comparison between very different places.

The expressionist use of dialect, the non-professional actors, the sense of the grotesque and the excellent collocation of the characters in the urban environment make IL POSTO an "excellence" of the Italian cinema, a product of the best school: based on tradition, but at the same time able to transcend national borders and time frames.

It is a wide-ranging narrative film that marks the times according to the time rhythms and shows a film developing reality that lends itself to an understandable language interpretation thanks to the linear cinematographic style of Olmi. The cinematic representation of history has high and low points, but for the duration of the story events, thanks to realist imprint of the director keeps his gaze without delay.

The protagonist is featured with very realistic mode that shows off the character and shows the human characteristics he possesses and that the cinematographic means exalts without major effects.

## CREDITS

Original title	Il Posto
Produced in	Italy
Released (Italy)	1961
Running time	93 min
Colour b/w	Audio sound
Genre	drama
Directed and Written by	Ermanno Olmi
Screenplay	Ermanno Olmi
Produced by	Alberto Soffientini
Production company	Titanus, The 24 Horses
Distributed by (Italy)	Titanus
Cinematography	Lamberto Caimi
Edited by	Carla Colombo
Music	Pier Emilio Bassi
Scenographer	Ettore Lombardi
Actors and characters	

- Loredana Detto: Antonietta Masetti
- Sandro Panzeri: Domenico Cantoni
- Tullio Kezich: psychologist
- Mara Revel: canteen lady

### Awards

- Critics' award at the Venice International Film Festival
- David di Donatello 1962: Best Director
- Seminci 1962: Espiga de oro



CZECH POSTER



GERMAN POSTERS



<---ITALIAN POSTER

SOCIAL CHANGE

JOB ALIENATION

WOMEN

THE COUPLE

GEOMETRY

ARCHITECTURE



## SOCIAL CHANGE

The film is set in 1961, the year it was released, and shows the economic boom that was bringing radical change to Italian society. It deals with the experience of moving from a rural and agricultural context to the industrialized cities, in this case Milan, and the search for "il posto" (a job) in the new expanding factories. In the case of *Il Posto*, it's not industrial work but in an office activity, which symbolized a new step of modernity after agricultural or industrial activities.

## JOB ALIENATION

The long empty corridor, which is overlooked by so many doors of many rooms full of people who work, and Domenico tiny little into the other end of the corridor make us think of alienation at work result of the economic boom.

At the time of the film, many Italians wanted to find work in factories to improve their economic conditions, and many became completely absorbed and alienated by their work. The film deals with this aspect of society, and this is the main theme in Domenico's story.

## THE COUPLE

Domenico and Antonietta-Magali are a very young couple, but are neither engaged nor married. In the film, they experience the first stage of their love affair, as they fall tenderly and sweetly in love through looks and clumsy gestures. Their affair does not become a real relationship because of Domenico's shyness, and because the general context does not make it possible for them to take the relationship to the next stage.

## ARCHITECTURE \ GEOMETRY

The architecture of the factory buildings and the way they are framed by the camera emphasizes their towering squareness, underlining the changes taking place in this period of Italian history.

## WOMEN

Women emerge in this film as emancipated figures, especially Magali, Domenico's mother, and the dynamic women at the New Year's Eve party. It's contrary to the traditional schema, a sign of the modernity

## SYNOPSIS

The film opens in Meda, near Milan, during a winter in the early 1960s. It is a special day for the Cantoni family: father, mother and two children. Domenico, the eldest son, is going to attend a job selection for a big company in Milan. There is an economic boom in Milan, Lombardy's main city, with building work in progress everywhere and heavy traffic. In the waiting room, job applicants with anonymous faces scrutinize each other with respect and fear. During the breaks between tests, the shy Domenico meets Antonietta, known as Magali, who is applying for a job as secretary. They have a coffee, chat together and get to know each other a little among the crowd; after the tests, they take a walk among the shop windows in the city centre and then say goodbye at the train station. Domenico is successful at the job selection, which means that he starts his adult life; he buys a new coat (the one that Magali liked), enters the company, walks in long corridors of offices, has an interview with the chief engineer and is hired as an office boy.

Domenico listens to the senior usher's advice as he sits at lunch. He looks out for Magali and waits for her in vain at the end of the day. The next day, wearing his office boy's uniform, he meets Magali by chance in the corridor; she has been hired as a typist and invites him to celebrate New Year's Eve with her.

On the evening of 31st December, Domenico goes alone to the party and waits for Magali with a bottle of spumante; meanwhile he meets an elderly couple, and accepts an invitation to dance, carried away for the first time by the festive and unfamiliar atmosphere. But Magali never arrives at the party.

Back at the office, a crucial event happens: a fellow employee dies, so Domenico replaces him at the last desk in the room, in the darkest corner. For him, the New Year marks a beginning full of questions and hopes.



## CONTEXT: THE CHANGES OF ITALIAN SOCIETY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 60'S.

At the beginning of 1960 a wild and fast industrial development transformed the way of living in Italy, the habits of population, the look of the city and the landscape. It was the so-called "economic boom", which showed a radical changing of Italian economic, social and productive fabric. Italy changed from being a nation based



on agriculture to a new European industrial power, getting closer to Germany, England and France. This transformation was possible because manpower was higher than the demand: people went from the poor South to North, where new factories began to rise, and from the countryside to the city which very soon started to grow in size.

The most dynamic sectors were the ones that received consistent help during the year of the reconstruction: metallurgical, mechanical and chemical. The products of these industries had a good quality and competitive prices, so they were massively exported. Two cities were at the centre of this cultural, social and mostly industrial change, Milan and Turin.

Turin was the location of FIAT (Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino, lit. 'Italian Automobiles Factory, Turin'), the biggest Italian automobiles factory. The automobile was one of the symbols of this economic boom, the "500" produced by Fiat crowded Italian streets, subverting the way Italians travelled.

Milan represented the capital city of the economic boom: employment increased, between 1951 and 1961, from 545.000 to 841.000 units, that is to say 54%. No wonder a famous 1952 film is called "Miracle in Milan", directed by De Sica and Zavattini.

Turin was also protagonist of a migration phenomenon, because of the high demand of manpower, along with the flux of workers coming from the depressed countryside of Piemonte, the city absorbed a high percentage of immigrants

(from 1951 to 1957 it went from 719.000 to 1.125.000 inhabitants) so that it became the third "southern" city in Italy after Naples and Palermo, together with a lot of integration problems.

Southerners found a widespread hostile and even racist attitude, that showed for one thing through the real estate listings, which specified: <<we don't rent out to southerners>>.

"Il posto" tells about one of these stories of passage and transformation because Domenico, the protagonist of the film, lives this change and instead of continuing his father's work in the countryside and living the everyday life of his small town, he decides to go to live in a big city, Milan, in search of a work in a company.

## SOCIAL CHANGES ACCOMPANIED BY THE CINEMA

IL POSTO is strongly affected by the Italian neorealist cinema movement that developed during World War II and afterwards.

Neorealism was born after the War and the end of Fascism and the regime of Mussolini, whose cultural politic was orient to the repression of dissent through censorship with a previous check of all publications and the suppression of the freedom of expression through judicial persecution and physical aggression of the opponents.

Neorealism can't be defined as a cultural or literary movement with a well-defined manifesto (as in the Futurism with Marinetti) or with common features (as the 30's Hermeticism), but more as a tendency and an overall cultural and narrative "climate" of Italy in the 40's and the 50's.

Italo Calvino, in the 1964 preface to his debut novel, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (The Path to the Nest of Spiders), explains that Neorealism "was not a school, but an ensemble of voices, mostly marginal, a multiple discovery of different Italies, especially of the most unknown Italies of literature". So we can speak about an orientation of different authors to a renovation of themes, contents and language of literature and of the "making of" literature. This need for a change corresponds to all the changings of Italian political situation, with the passage from Fascism to Republic, through the dramatic experience of World War II and the Italian Freedom war.

The neorealist production is characterized by a whole new attempt to describe contemporary reality of a country in front of an historic turning-point; the study of reality (and the rediscovery of the small regional and local worlds, before opposed by the regime propaganda) joins the intent to an ethical and civil testimony through novel and narrative instruments.

From the 50's, we attend the gradual obsolescence of neorealist poetry, that has now extended to the cinema.

Neorealist films were usually shot using non-professional actors; scenes were almost always filmed out of doors, mostly in the city suburbs and countryside; daily life was recounted using the faces and stories of common people, without any filters.

The local dialects denigrated by Fascism now reappeared alongside realism. The greatest Italian neorealist films are in several languages: German, Italian, English and local dialect in the masterpieces of Rossellini (*Roma città aperta*, *Paisà*), De Sica & Zavattini (*Sciuscià*, *Ladri di biciclette*) and Visconti (*La terra trema*). For the first time in the history of Italian cinema, local dialects were as important as Italian and other languages and not inferior (dialect even appeared in film titles, e.g. *Sciuscià* and *Paisà*). However, neorealism and its linguistic approach did not survive long, because it came up against the serial standardization of the industrial cinema.

Besides the very greatest exponents of neorealism there were also several other minor exponents who contributed to its success, often with just one film; some of these would go on to become great film directors. They included Aldo Vergano, Luigi Zampa, Carlo Lizzani, Giuseppe De Santis, Gianni Puccini - director of *Il carroarmato dell'8 settembre* (1960) and *I sette fratelli Cervi* (1968) - together with Gillo Pontecorvo, Antonio Lattuada, Pietro Germi, Renato Castellani, Michelangelo Antonioni, Francesco "Citto" Maselli, Curzio Malaparte and Francesco Rosi.



## ERMANNO OLMI AND NEW FILMMAKERS IN THE EARLY 1960S

From the mid-1950s, a new current of filmmakers began to flourish as Italian cinema began to diverge from the neorealism dealing with purely existential themes, filmed with a different style and points of view, often more introspective than descriptive.

One who stands out is Michelangelo Antonioni; his trilogy consisting of *L'avventura* (1960), *La notte* (1961) and *L'eclissi* (1962) shows his skill in changing the usual narration of the cinema, displacing spectators' habits with images conveying inexpressible moods. Between 1960 and 1962, Titanus, the principal production company, invested in young filmmakers and gave them the chance to make low-budget films in relative freedom. In the rest of the world, the authors of the new international cinema were influenced by the *nouvelle vague*, whereas in Italy this artistic ferment was stimulated by the producers. The number of cinema debutants increased, allowing young directors to emerge and to change the rules, leading to an important expressive innovation in Italy. Among the most significant there are *Il tempo si è fermato* (1960) and *Il Posto* (1961) by Ermanno Olmi, while other important filmmakers of this period are Pierpaolo Pasolini, Marco Ferreri, Elio Petri, Lina Wertmüller and Giuliano Montaldo.

## THE AUTHOR

Ermanno Olmi was born in Bergamo in 1931, in a farmer and catholic family. In 1933 his parents moved to Milan because his father was a railway worker, who died during the Second World War. Since he was very young he wanted to study dramatic art and he found a job at Edison, where his mother was already working, to support himself. There he had to organize the recreational activities of the employees and report the industrial production, so he founded the cinema section at Edison Volta and produced about thirty technological-industrial documentaries.

The period at Edison influenced his first fictional movies for their contents, but mostly because of the involvement of non-professional actors and because of his neorealist point of view that he poured in his works, by giving narrative a well-defined point of view.

An example of these style of storytelling is "Il Posto", as the movie historic Gianpiero Brunetta says: <<Olmi observes the gestures and the faces of the protagonists almost as he had a magnifying glass, so that he makes us feel the sense of loss, the difficulty to adhere to the new rules of Italian transformation during the boom, the sense of death, but also of rebirth to a new life. His look has the ability to represent man as the measure of all things>>.

"Il Posto" is welcomed by critics and the public, winning OCIC prize and Italian Film Critics Award at Venice Film festival.

The attention given to everyday life, to every small thing is reaffirmed in "I fidanzati" (1963), a story about labouring environment tinged with intimism. Then there is "...E venne un uomo" (1965), a careful and participating biopic of Giovanni XXIII, to whom he feel very connected because of their common roots (they were both from Bergamo), a story free from usual hagiographic representations.

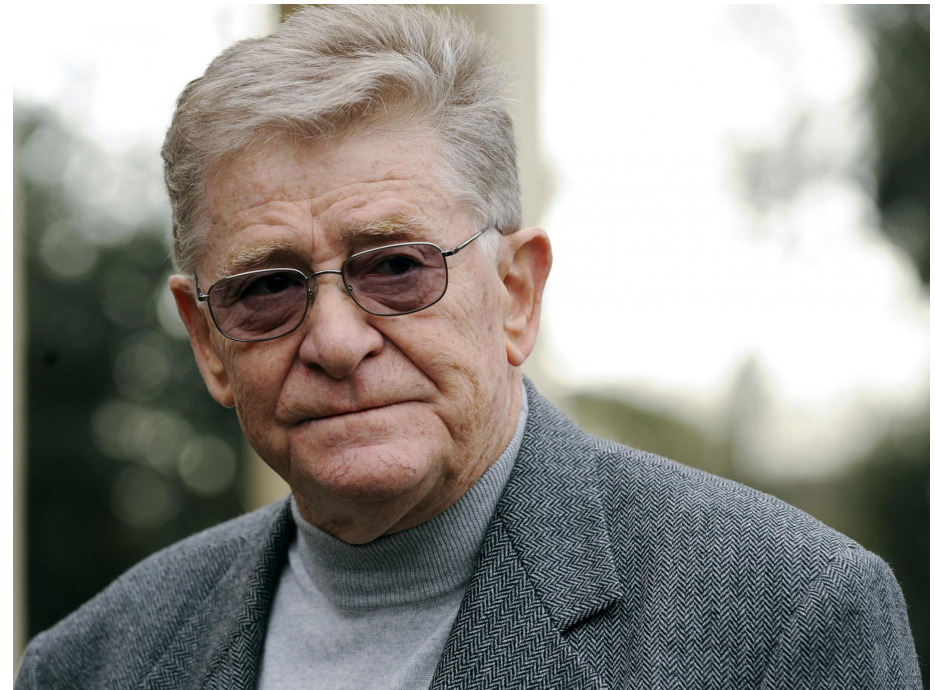
After a period characterized by partially unsuccessful works ("Un certo giorno", 1968; "I recuperanti", 1969; "Durante l'estate", 1971; "La circostanza", 1974), in 1977 he produces "L'albero degli zoccoli", a film about the life of countrymen of the Po valley, played by non-professional actors and in Bergamo's dialect, which represents a poetic and realistic look at the same time and deprived of gratuitous sentimentalisms, qualities that make this movie a masterpiece. 1987 is the year of his comeback with the claustrophobic and distressing "Lunga vita alla signora!", awarded with the Leone d'argento prize in Venice; next year he will be awarded with the Leone d'oro for "La leggenda del santo bevitore", a lyric adaptation (written by Tullio Kezich and the director himself) of a Joseph Roth novel.

His latest works (Il mestiere delle armi, 2001; Cantando dietro i paraventi, 2003; Centochiodi, 2007) retrace history with knowledge and fascination, revealing a rare ability to control the set and the means of expression, a rare desire of going back to the greatest historical figures.

## OLMI'S CINEMA

Throughout his career Olmi has never directed predictable movies, but he is one of those authors that carves out the sense of things in every work. His first movies tell about the passage from countryside to industrial civilization, trying to get deeply in contact with the characters and the stories, by analysing each of their aspect, even the most hidden and intimate one. In the second part of his career, in he talks about war and peace, the silence of intellectuals, the dialogue with illness and death, the insufficiency of books and culture as a reference point. The camera's point of view almost gives us a surreal image because of distorted perspectives and spaces inside the shot. There's not a linear representation of the scene, but there is a different point of view, that highlights the subordination of someone that aims for something. This can be seen in the oppression suffered by Domenico and the director's will to take us into another dimension by subverting the classical shooting schemes.

Olmi can be considered one of the greatest Italian directors.





## SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

- Il tempo si è fermato (1958)
- Il posto (1961)
- I fidanzati (1963)
- E venne un uomo (1965)
- Un certo giorno (1969)
- Durante l'estate (1971)
- La circostanza (1974)
- L'albero degli zoccoli (1978)
- Camminacammina (1982)
- Lunga vita alla signora! (1987)
- La leggenda del santo bevitore (1988)
- Il segreto del bosco vecchio (1993)
- Il mestiere delle armi (2001)
- Cantando dietro i paraventi (2003)
- Tickets (2005) - in co-regia con Abbas Kiarostami e Ken Loach
- Centochiodi (2007)
- Il villaggio di cartone (2011)
- Torneranno i prati (2014)

## FILIATIONS

### FROM THE SUBURBS TO THE CITY CENTRE



GIOVANNA 1962 – PONTECORVO



IL POSTO 1961 – OLMI



DA TREVICO A TORINO 1973 – SCOLA

### A LOOK BEYOND



SCIOPERO 1925 – EJZENSTEJN



IL POSTO 1961 – OLMI



SOGNI D'ORO 1981- MORETTI

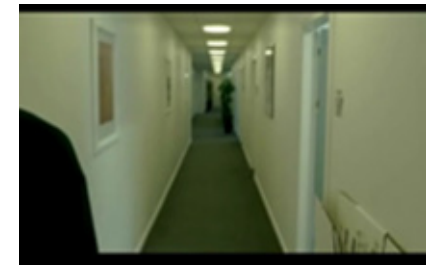
### ALIENATING WORK / THE PLACE



MI PIACE LAVORARE MOBBING 2001



IL POSTO 1961 – OLMI



IL GRANDE CAPO 2007 – VON TRIER

## THE IMAGE OF WOMEN



MONICA E IL DESIDERIO 1953 -BERGMAN



IL POSTO 1961 – OLMI



PARIS NOUS APPARTIENT 1960 - RIVETTE

## THE COUPLE, LOVE BEGINNING



MONICA E IL DESIDERIO 1953 -BERGMAN



IL POSTO 1961 – OLMI



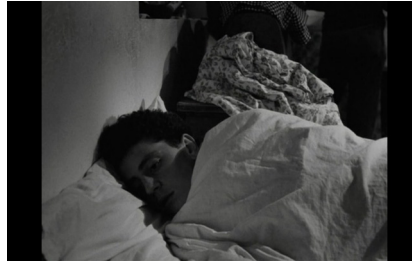
DA TREVICO A TORINO 1973 – SCOLA

TESTIMONY : OLMI'S  
TALKS ABOUT THE  
OLMI'S CINEMA

"My company training has been the basis of my relationship with the cinema. Since I made the business documentaries I have attempted to show the working world from a particular point of view, observing a man and his personal relationships with his work activities. My first three films deal with this theme and record the social changes that occurred in the 1950s and 60s, during the economic boom. My films correspond with my way of "seeing" life. When I enter a room, I look at the whole picture, because I'm interested in details and close-ups; through the details and close-ups, you can understand the essence of existence. I always shoot faces. For me, a face is not only the synthesis of the person who the face belongs to; it is the synthesis of universal history. My films do not come from other films, but from reality, from life; that's the reason why my films are only the instrument I live together with myself and the others."

# III - ANALYSIS

## SEQUENTIAL DÉCOUPAGE



### 1 – Opening credits (00:00:00-00:02:43)

Domenico pretends to be asleep in the kitchen. It is still dark outside, and his father goes out to work, telling his wife what to do for Domenico's job interview.



### 2 – At home (00:02:40 -00:04:09)

Domenico is still in bed and quarrels with his brother, who comes into the kitchen to finish his homework.



### 3 – Travelling to the interview (00:04:10 -00:07:09)

Domenico leaves home with his brother, gets on the train and looks at the other passengers with curiosity.



4 –Arriving at the Company and waiting to do the test (00:07:10 -00:14:20) Domenico enters a room full of people waiting; like him, many young people have just finished studying and they are all looking for work.



5 – Leaving the company for the testcentre. (00:12:11 -00:13:52) The group cross the corridor, leave the company building and walk down the street.



### 6 – Written exams (00:12:53 -00:17:02)

As a maths problem is dictated, Domenico seems lost and looks around at everyone in the room.



### 7 – At the dairy, lunch break (00:17:03 -00:18:56)

Domenico goes to the dairy because he wants to have lunch. The room is full of people and all the tables are occupied, so he shares a table with others.



### 8 – Around the city (00:18:58-00:22:46)

Domenico leaves and crosses the road. He reaches a girl looking at shop windows. They walk together and decide to go into a bar.



### 9 – In the bar (00:22:47 -00:24:52)

They go into the bar and order coffee, but only the girl takes a seat. Domenico remains standing; he observes the other customers and behaves the same way.



### 10 – Around the city, running to the job test (00:24:53 -00:26:51)

They observe the changing city and walk past building sites and heavy traffic. Realizing that they are going to be late for the test, they hold hands and run there together.



### 11 –Psychological test (00:26:52 -00:29:47)

The group takes a psychological test; after the collective exam, the test ends with individual questions. Domenico smiles in reaction to embarrassing questions.





**12 – The end of the job test/ back home (00:29:48 -00:35:32)** Domenico waits for the girl to come out of the building. They introduce themselves and start chatting. When they arrive at the tram stop Domenico decides to wait for Magali's bus.



**13 – Back home after the job test (00:35:33 -00:36:32)** The family is having lunch, waiting for Domenico because they want to know the outcome of the tests. Domenico starts telling them about his experience



**14 – Shopping for a new coat (00:36:33 -00:37:21)** Domenico goes with his mother to buy a new raincoat. He wants the same one he saw with Magali, but his mother convinces him to try on a cheaper one.



**15 – At home (37:21 - 38:16)** Domenico lies in bed thinking about Magali and making a list of women's names; on the chair is his new raincoat.



**16 – The first day at work (00:38:17 -00:40:09)** Domenico leaves home with his father to go to the city centre; it is his first day at work.



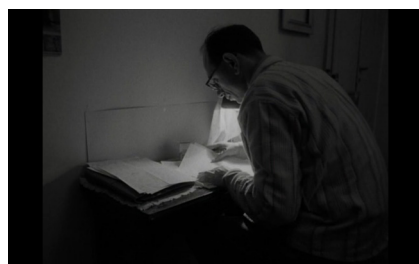
**17 – At the company: given a job (00:40:10 -00:45:25)** Domenico arrives at the company and goes upstairs to the offices. Magali arrives with her mother. Then an employee comes into the room and allocates everyone a job. Domenico arrives at his workplace: an external department.



**18 – Meeting the personnel manager (00:40:25 -00:52:00)** Domenico walks down a long corridor; he is going to meet the head of personnel. After a brief conversation, he discovers that he has been given an interim job. Accompanied by a secretary, he reaches his workplace; he is a messenger boy.



**19 – At the office (00:52:03 -00:54:55)** Employees are at work in an accounts office full of desks; the office manager is in charge.



**20 – The life of employees (00:54:56 -00:59:40)** One of the employees seen in the previous scene is busy writing a manuscript in a room. A wife is cutting her husband's hair. People in a bar are listening to an amateur singer. A woman is having dinner.



**21 – At the company (00:59:41 -01:02:49)** An employee is crying in the office, while the other colleagues and the office manager comment the event. Domenico is at his workplace. When the bell rings for lunch, all the workers rush out to the company canteen.



**22 – The company canteen (01:02:50 -01:04:15)** Domenico is sitting at the table with his colleagues, and looks around for Magali.



**23 – Outside the building at the end of the day (01:04:16 - 01:05:20)** Domenico is waiting for Magali outside the company but she doesn't arrive. It rains, so he leaves reluctantly.



#### 24 – The uniform (01:05:21 -01:08:52)

Domenico is happy to wear his uniform. He looks at himself in the bathroom mirror. Outside the building, he waits for Magali, but sees her with her colleagues and does not have the courage to approach her. He goes home alone.



#### 25 – The card (01:08:53 -01:11:33)

Domenico is sitting at his desk as he writes a Christmas card to Magali. They meet by chance and she greets him. They talk, but their conversation is interrupted several times by other colleagues. Magali invites Domenico to the company's New Year's Eve dance and he accepts with pleasure.



#### 26 – At home (1:11:34 - 1:28:07)

After dinner, Domenico is in the kitchen with his family. He rushes out with the complicity of his mother to go to the party. His father complains about his son's freedom.



#### 27 – Going to the dance (01:13:02 -01:28:08)

Domenico runs to catch the tram into the city. He stands on the tram, looking out of the windows, taking care not to miss his stop.



#### 28 – The New Year's Eve party at the company club (01:14:00 -01:28:09)

Domenico arrives alone and is given a bottle of champagne. He enters the empty room, puts on a straw hat, and sits down. He looks at the door, waiting for Magali. After making a toast to the New Year, people start dancing in groups.



#### 29 – At the office (01:28:09 -01:28:25)

All the workers, including Domenico's boss, are standing and looking at the empty desk of their dead colleague.



#### 30 – House of the dead employee. (01:28:26 -01:28:43)

The room is empty and tidy; there is nothing belonging to the dead employee.



#### 31 – At the office (01:28:44 -01:32:03)

Domenico stands waiting for the desk that the boss has assigned him: that of his dead colleague. When Domenico sits down, a colleague at the end of the row protests because he claims the position on the grounds of seniority. Domenico moves to the end of the room, and all the other employees start moving over to grab the next desk. Domenico is resigned to acceptance of the hierarchical system; he sits down and looks around him, understanding that now he is inexorably part of the system.



#### 32 – End Credits (01:32:03 -01:32:58)

## FILM MATTERS - THE DOUBLE



(37'e 04")(frame 1)

Domenico, accompanied by his mother in a clothing store, is surrounded by coats: his mother wants to buy him one for his work (frame 1). In the middle of the shop stands out a dummy with the most expensive and stylish coat.

The theme of double can manifest and express himself visually and narratively in different ways: the same person living two distinct, lives at the same time, consciously or not; two people almost identical that pass off as a unique individual; real physical transformations that make impossible any recognition and discernment of the self; an actual splitting of personality and corporeality; superheroes with a double life hidden from everyone. There are many movies in which this theme is displayed, starting from *The case of Becky* by Frank Reicher, a 1915 movie where the theme of Double focuses on the protagonist's inner duality, to the countless versions of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hide* and movies like *Partner* (1968) by Bernardo Bertolucci, inspired by *The Double*, a novel by Dostoyevsky; *Blade Runner* (1982) by Ridley Scott, Philip K. Dick and *The Dead Zone* (1983) by David Cronenberg based on the work by Stephen King with the same name, ending up with the most recent *Black Swan* (2010) by Darren Aronofsky.

In our case the theme of the Double is shown in different moments throughout the movie, for instance when Domenico's double is the dummy, which embodies everything he would like

to be. It's tall, beautiful, independent, without a mother that decides for him and most of all it wears the coat he would like to buy in order to impress Magali, the other aspiring worker he was secretly and timidly in love with. A coat he will never succeed to buy, so he will make do with a less expensive and beautiful coat, at least for the moment.



frame 2

Domenico's double is therefore the idealization of the dummy, which now reappears through the glass, at the end of the movie. The character gradually went through an evolution that results into this image (frame 2) where, in front of the mirror he fiercely admires his figure: he's wearing the coat he wanted, he was able to buy it thanks to his first salary as a delivery man, and the uniform's hat. This double, the other Domenico, adult, elegant, fierce won't be able to win Magali's heart though, maybe because of destiny or because he wasn't actually ready.



# THE SOUND



“Il Posto” is one of that kind of movies in which the audio is characterized by dubbing and reconstruction of sounds, post-synchronised in a studio, indeed the sounds of the changing city, the noise of the job candidates’ shoes as they march like soldiers up the marble staircase of the company building.

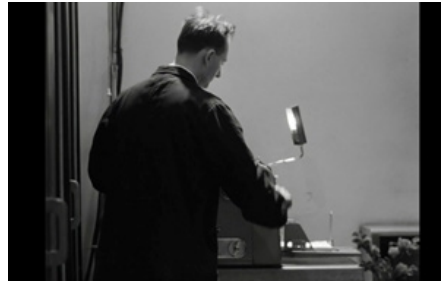
The big screen gives back an alive and vibrating synesthetic experience, through both images and sounds, noises, melodies and rhythm. Everything contributes to the creation of a convincing representation of the reality that we live every day. As our daily life can’t leave sounds out of consideration so does the cinema, starting from his first crying: a ragtime that perfectly fitted the slapstick of that moment, the orchestra records for Don Juan, the first words told by Al Jolson, although being said in an exaggerated racial stereotype. From 1930 onwards, the live sound recording techniques, that is to say recorded directly on the set, have brought a totally new freshness and vitality to an invention that already had 35 years.

The “sound synch” was adopted by the Anglo-Saxon countries since the beginning. As for Italy, a strictly “camera-centred” country, they had to wait until the 70’s. Dubbing was born here, because of cultural and political factors. All movies coming from American majors were dubbed in Italy where the dubbing studios soon enough became very professional, thanks to the use of professional actors, who started their acting career in theatres.

So the golden age of Italian dubbing started, ending really soon when the fascist government established a tax on dubbing, that forced American producers to suspend film importing starting from the 31 December 1938. After the end of World War II, in Italy editing becomes a common practice that was unthinkable in other countries because it influenced the type of story and production of the movie, for example neorealist directors made their actors pronounce random numbers and phrases, and then think about sounds during the dubbing phase.

IL POSTO has no musical soundtrack at all, only city sounds and the actors’ dialogues, in true neorealist style.

The lack of an extra diegetic sound track is not a weakness of the film, but is actually a strength. The film’s soundtrack is just the sounds of the city and of the workplace, and is as fundamentally important for the narrative as the photography in capturing the viewer and creating empathy and emotional involvement with the characters in the film.



For example, in the final scene Domenico has just taken his “place” at the very last desk in the accounts office. The camera frames his face in a close-up with the sharp, repetitive and irritating noise of the printer; it marks time and has a very dramatic meaning when associated with Domenico’s vacant gaze into the distance.



## ANALYSIS OF A SEQUENCE

### THE MARCH TOWARDS THE PLACE

(from 12:17 to 14:07)

#### CONTEXT

The economic "boom", people moving from the countryside to the city, the search for a job place, the estrangement from the family are only a few of the themes dealt with in the movie. The director, since the beginning of the movie, tells about scenarios and situations that will repeat, through some peculiar sequences that describe the new working class that goes away from the countryside and have to deal with the completely new chaos of the city and the big spaces of a big company.

One of these scenes is the passage of the new workmen from the room of the first meeting to the central building of the company, where a writing exam will take place. It looks like a real march, where the workers look like toy soldiers following a general that leads them to their possible future: the job they always dreamt about, in order to emancipate and take part in a consumerist society that is starting to grow up during those years.



frame 1

#### THE DEPTH OF SPACES

The sequence opens with an empty and long corridor on which all the offices doors exposes. The room is placed at the opposite end from the one of entrance, in a waiting position in front of the flux of people that is approaching to highlight the depth of the corridor, that is to say the greatness of the company as opposed to the smallness of the individuals. The linear depth of the shot gives a dramatic point of view of this moment.

The aspiring workers walk through the corridor, some are looking down, they all have the same rhythm highlighted by the sound of the heels on the floor. It almost looks like an army marching towards a common enemy, all on the same level.



frame 2

#### THE CHANGING OF SOCIETY

Society is changing, habits, costumes. The march now is going from the inside to the outside of the building, they are all still marching following the same rhythm. The changing is explained through the parallelism between two generations, Domenico is stopped by a pedestrian. It's an old man that is taking his dog out for a walk who is surprised by all these boys that are going to make an exam for a job. The conversation between them, spoken in Lombard dialect, highlights the strangeness of that event and the change of costumes and habits. The world is changing and also a Milan citizen realises that.



frame 3

## GREAT SPACES, GREAT ARCHITECTURE



frame 4

The vastness of spaces, the size of the buildings reaffirms the change. We can't see the countryside anymore, the farmers with their horse-pulled cart that go to work or the small provincial station, but we only see big and beautiful buildings.



frame 5



frame 6

The long staircase and the dim light highlight the unknown location they are cutting through.

The position of the camera amplifies the greatness of the building's architecture that infuses a feeling of estrangement. We can't see the subjects anymore, but we can get a glimpse of them amongst the upper balcony's columns. We can arrogantly hear the

sound of steps.

The director chooses to emphasize the large open spaces in the company building as a way to show the changes taking place in society; from the simplicity of the countryside, people are moving into the grandeur of ostentatious city architecture.



frame 7



frame 8

The job candidates' march is almost over; the last room before the exam room is completely dark, and a single ray of sunlight filters in through a window. Only the silhouettes of the people are seen in a long shot as the fixed camera waits for them to pass by.

This representation seems to highlight the anxiety and the fear of the army of aspiring workers that is going to face the trials that will lead them to work, emancipation and to an identification with the consumer society that was growing during those years.

## THE DREAM OF A MOTHER

The mother of the very young job candidate is alone in a bright room full of furniture. The director focuses on her, creating a temporary pause in the narrative sequence. The shot from above emphasizes the smallness of the woman, contrasting with the vastness of the room and of the company.



frame 9



frame 10

While she looks at herself in the mirror, we can imagine the thoughts of a mother, her projection on her youngest son who, maybe thanks to an intercession, will manage to have the so longed job. A job that will permit to all the family to emancipate and become a part of the new growing capitalist society. To underline this aspect (frame 10), a close-up is used, so a frame more emotional than descriptive. The camera is behind the woman, and much of the frame is taken up by the mirror, but despite this, the woman's face stands out. Looking at herself in the mirror and touching her eyebrows, she is symbolically projected into another world.

## FRAME ANALYSIS



Frame at 48:05"

**Context.** Domenico has been hired and has successfully passed the first round of interviews. After meeting Magali in the room with the other successful candidates, he has followed an office worker to the company headquarter building. Here a secretary accompanies him to the office of the Engineer, the company's technical manager. After exchanging a few remarks with Domenico, the manager drinks a coffee before telling the boy the job that has been assigned to him.

**The subordination of the job-seeker** The point of view of the camera returns an almost surreal because of the prospects of distorted spaces inside the frame, there isn't a linear representation of the scene, but there is a different point of view, which emphasizes precisely this subordination aspirant.

This point of view emphasizes the oppression suffered by Domenico and the director's willingness to take us to another dimension of subverting the classical schemes of recovery.

Domenico is in the Engineer's office with the manager and is about to know if he has a job or not. This frame is very interesting because the actors' positions explain their moods and roles in the film.

Domenico is at the centre of the frame, and appears smaller than the Engineer; although the engineer is shown in profile, he has weight in the frame. From this viewpoint, Domenico's seat is lower than the Engineer's. The characters' actions and body language are very expressive in this frame. While talking to Domenico, the Engineer drinks a coffee, underlining that job interviews are part of his daily routine and showing his superiority towards Domenico because only the Engineer is drinking coffee. Domenico is intimidated and shy; his mood is emphasized by the way he looks at the Engineer.

Domenico's subordination is clear and evident; this single frame shows that the director intends to underline the differences between the two characters; he achieves with the positions of the actors and scenography, but the actors' performances are also fundamentally important.

The Engineer never looks at Domenico; he looks at the book on his desk and even when drinking his coffee, he concentrates on the cup. This clearly indicates his superiority to the other person. Domenico, on the other hand, hardly manages to speak audibly when he answers the Engineer's questions, and his expression shows that he is worried and afraid. The behaviour of the two characters once again underlines the social changes taking place, the new balances and the new relations of power in a capitalist industrial society.

## SHOT ANALYSIS



1



3

### APPROACHING THE COUPLE

(from 26'31" to 27'10")

**Context.** During the lunch break Domenico and Magali go to the dairy, have a coffee and stop to look at the building site of the metro. They realize they are going to be late, so they start running through the traffic; all the work in progress symbolizes a city that is changing.

**Another dimension.** In this shot we seem to finish into another dimension. The noises of the city, the traffic, the annoying sounds of the construction sites are now replaced by the tweeting of birds. We don't see cranes, trams and cars, but only Domenico and Magali surrounded by nature, it seems to be in another movie, an expressionist movie from the 20's. The frames of this shot seem to be some really evocative paintings, the two characters running hand in hand and their smiles make us think of a happy couple of lovers.

This feeling doesn't last long. Their stay in another dimension, their love, their run are interrupted as soon as they leave the field, when they come back in the street. It seems like the director wants to show the spectator another movie, where there's only an illusion of new born love, strictly linked to another environment, another time, using a different style.

**The birth of a love.** This is a very important sequence from the emotional point of view; in a few shots the director shows the relationship between Domenico and Magali. He helps her to cross the street, he takes her hand and they run back to the company. Their run is recounted in a tracking shot that focuses on the couple holding hands and their smiles of complicity. This moment takes them into another dimension, suggesting that this is just the beginning of a beautiful love story, interrupted by a passerby who reproaches Domenico. This is a situation that will be repeated several time in the film, so that the couple are prevented from having a deeper relationship.



2



4



## CINEMA AT WORK

## IMAGES AND ECHOES/COMPARISON



IL POSTO, ERMANNO OLMI 1961



PLAYTIME – JACQUE TATI, 1967

Il lavoro raccontato attraverso le immagini è al centro di questo confronto, nel fotogramma de *Il posto* vediamo la totalità della stanza dove gli impiegati svolgono il lavoro con le scrivanie perfettamente allineate. Una visione più esasperata delle linearità e della conformità la vediamo nel fotogramma di film *Playtime* di Jacques Tati, nella sua visione futurista di un ufficio, dove gli impiegati sono rinchiusi in dei freddi e squadrati box.



IL POSTO, ERMANNO OLMI, 1961



TEMPI MODERNI, CHARLIE CHAPLIN, 1936

In questi due fotogrammi emerge una visione grottesca e ironica del mondo del lavoro. Nel fotogramma del posto uno degli impiegati è intento nella pulizia del suo cassetto della scrivania, e in questa pulizia tutti i fogli che trova li accartoccia e li lancia per farli cadere nel cestino, ma la pallina di carta sistematicamente finisce sulla scrivania del collega oberato di lavoro. Nell'altro fotogramma c'è Charlie Chaplin nel suo *Tempi Moderni*, dove con il suo fare crea scompiglio nella catena di montaggio della fabbrica.

## "THE TABLE", SOURCE OF STORIES

"The table", where you sit, where you eat, talk, take decisions... has always been used as a narrative source to create stories and tell about a slice of society. In Italian cinema "the table" has been a vehicle to tell stories typical of neorealism, in which the table was the centre of house life and where there was often very little to eat or where people used to spend important moments throughout the movie.

In "Il Posto", for example, during the scene after the job interview, Domenico's father, supported by his wife, tries to have all the information about his day to understand how it went. It's one of the first important moments in the movie, where the sensitivity of our characters discloses.



Il Posto – 1961



Miseria e Nobiltà – 1954

In opposition to this shot I wanted to show one of the most famous scenes in Italian film history: the mythical scene of the spaghetti eaten with hands in "Miseria e nobiltà", a film that talks about the theme of hunger, with irony and sagacity, with an unforgettable Totò. In this film a servant knocks at the door of the two families and starts to set the table, offering an endless series of tasty food and a lot of smoking-hot spaghetti. Totò and his friends jump on the table and start to eat hungrily, while they dance, hiding bunches of spaghetti in their pockets as they almost wanted to stock them up for eternity.

## CONNECTIONS WITH THE MOVIE OF CINED COLLECTION



**CONTEXT** In the Cined collection there are many movies that have in common some scenes that take place around a table, in different years, situations and styles. Around the table, apart from eating, we speak, exchange views, express one's opinion, sometimes we don't even need word, body language is enough to communicate inside the world that rotates around the table.

**COMMUNICATION AROUND THE TABLE** In these two shots that I decided to compare, "Il posto" and "El espíritu de la Colmena", two very different movies for plot and setting, both protagonists seems to be communicating us the same thing: a sense of discomfort, reflection, wait and silence at the same time.

Here we can feel a lack of communication, the mother in "Il posto" is isolated from the dialogue between Domenico and his father. She would like to participate, but she does not. She leaves the task to her husband.

In "El espíritu de la colmena" we have the same feeling. The father looks down, he is isolated in his own world while the girls at the table communicate by looking at each other and smiling.

Also the composition of the framing is similar. It's very interesting to notice that it focuses very little on what there is on the table, but enhances the actors expressions and what we see behind their back: a kitchen in a modest house, with all the items on display, in "Il Posto", underlining the social and economic context of the rural village house; in "El espíritu de la colmena", a window, through which a warm light is entering, whose weave recalls a beehive, giving the scene a dramatic edge.

## TRANSFORMING CITIES



IL POSTO, OLMI 1961



EN CONSTRUCCION

The change of society and transformation of the city are two of the most important themes analysed in "Il posto". The transformation of Milan in 1961, the change of the landscape, the cranes and the constructors make the city similar to the Barrio Chino of 2000 in Barcelona where a giant residential building is being constructed to replace old houses that will be destroyed, like the stories told in "En construccion". During lunch break, Domenico and Magali look astonished at the workmen, the cranes and the huge transformation that is taking place in front of them. In the same way in "En construccion" the story is viewed from the eyes of the ones living the change in first person: an old mariner, the workers, a Moroccan immigrant that mixes poetry and philosophy with a good eye for details, a young couple that cannot find its place in the city, faces, backs, shovels, rubbish, cats and guys as testimonies of the transformation that will turn the neighbourhood upside down.

## THE CHOICE OF BLACK AND WHITE

Other than the representation of communication and the conflict at the table I decide to compare two shots of "Il Posto" and "O sangue", because in the shots chosen they even seem to belong to the same movie.

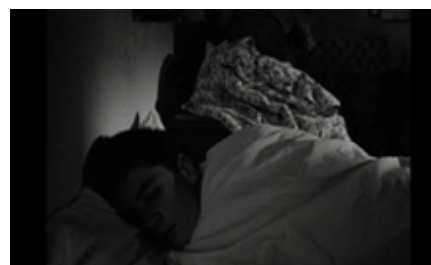
"Il posto" and "O sangue" are both filmed in black and white. It was a choice in both cases. The first color movies were made in the USA in 1935, while the first Italian colour movie was filmed in 1952, "Totò a colori", directed by Steno. The use of black and white in contemporary movies can be seen as a useless and boring technique from the youngsters but, on the contrary, the directors that choose to use it nowadays seem to suggest the spectator to use his imagination in order to compensate

the lack of color in the film reality.

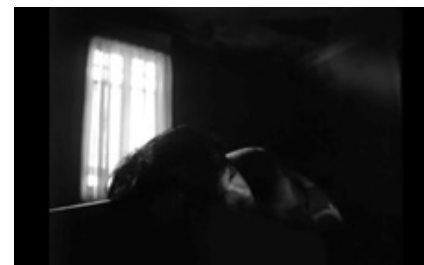
The black and white is a synonym of memory but also of elegance and style or retro echoes, either because the expressionist black and white shadows are more obscure for the spectator, or because the detachment from reality always makes the story convincing.

## COMPARISON WITH OTHER ARTS

IL POSTO ( ERMANNO OLMI – 1961)



O SANGUE ( PEDRO COSTA- 1989)





## MODERN ART

Deserted walls, dull grey skies, degraded and degrading signs of industrial development, bright and acid colours at the same time, dark shadows.

Sironi's work expresses the double tension that characterises a urban context constantly expanding: on one side a dimension of power that creates an overwhelming constructive energy; on the other side a dimension of darkness that produces a sense of disorientation and solitude.

Sironi tells about a Suburban landscape of a city, Milan, that is changing and that can be compared to the one described by Olmi, even though in different periods. The two stories express in the same way the changes that the cities are going through.

Mario Sironi, after adhering to the futurist manifesto, after the war became one of the main supporters of a need to go back to order, need that he expressed through a style defined by metaphysic features and a geometrical essentiality.

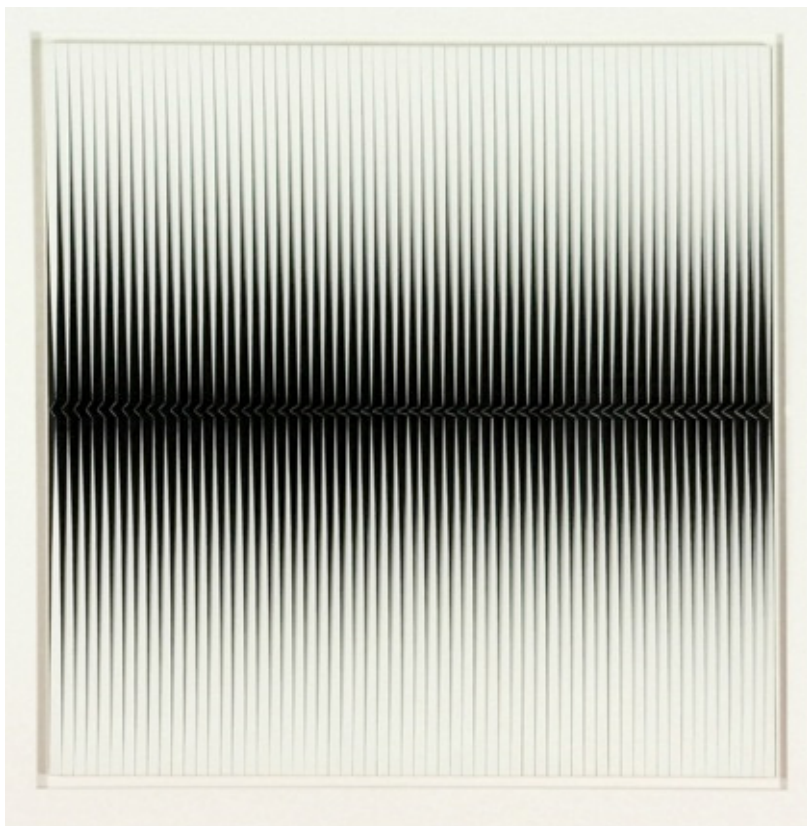


"PAESAGGIO URBANO" DI MARIO SIRONI 1940





## OPTICAL ART



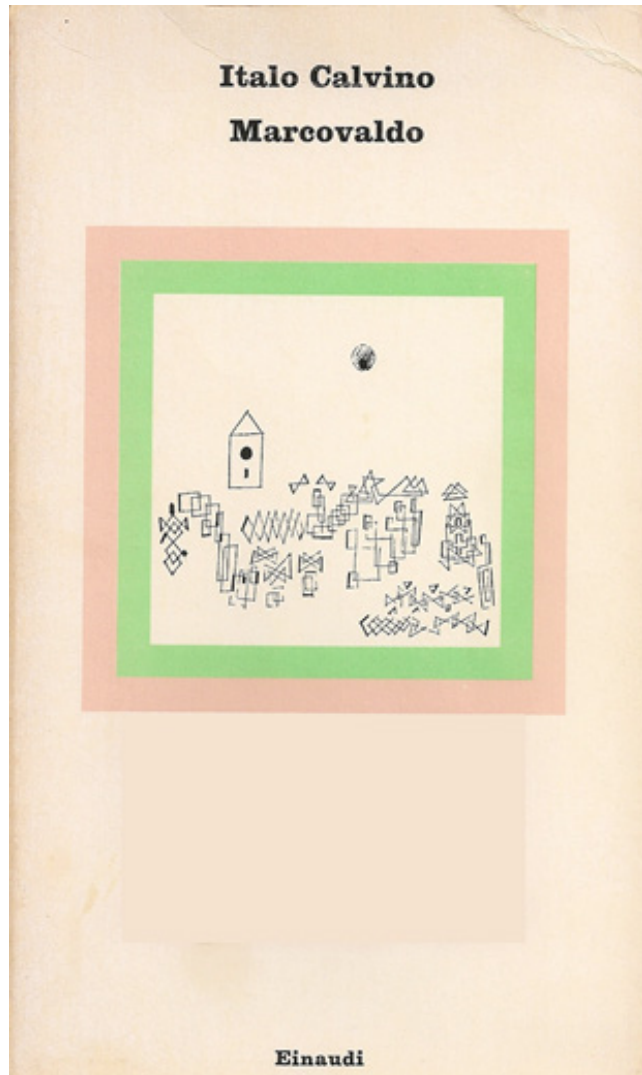
ALBERTO BIASI - ORIZZONTALE E OLTRE - 1973



Lines that intertwine and lines that proceed parallel, comparing architettoniche lines of the stairway of the modern building of "Il posto" with the lines of this work can influence the viewer to go beyond the first view, go into a deeper dimension that transforms these lines.

Biasi has participated as the lead in a number of artistic experimentation initiatives, especially in the sixties. In particular, his name is linked to the maximum optical-kinetic art season popularity, thanks to its artistic creations built on the basis of precise optical illusions. His paintings generally have surfaces that change appearance depending on the angle of view.

## LITERATURE



The literature connection proposed here is with Italo Calvino's novel Marcovaldo.

The central character of the novel is a "pure character" like Charlie Chaplin, a man from the suburbs or the countryside, who is exiled in an industrial city of the 1960s. The novel is set in a city that could be either Milan or Turin; Calvino chooses not to specify the city's name, because he wants to describe a generic industrial city in the years of Italy's economic boom.

Calvino uses the same method to describe the place where his character works, so that the factory is anonymous; it is the factory, meaning any factory, an anonymous, impersonal, and alienating place.

MARCOVALDO – OVVERO LE STAGIONI IN CITTA' – ITALO CALVINO 1963 \_EINAUDI

*"So one day, waiting for the tram that would have taken him to the SbaV company, where he used to drudge, he noticed something unusual near to the tram stop, in the sterile and encrusted stripe of soil that followed the trees in the boulevard: in some spots, on the stump, there seemed to be some lumps, here and there, that opened and showed round subterranean bodies. He bowed to lace his shoes and looked better: it was mushrooms, real mushrooms, that were growing up right in the middle of the city! Marcovaldo felt that the grey and miserable world that surrounded him was suddenly becoming generous and full of hidden treasures, and that there could be still hopes for something in life, apart from the hourly wage of the contract, the cost-of-living allowance, the family allowance and the bread price increase."*



## HOW THE FILM WAS RECEIVED THE VIEWS OF TWO CRITICS

### AN ITALIAN CRITIC Published on *Letture*, January 1962

This is one of those movies that confirm the widespread opinion that phantasmagoria of the masses, threatening stories are useless to entertain the public in front of the screen without having to regret having bought the ticket. The success that it's meeting in Italian theatres can be attributed not only to the prices received in Venice (O.C.I.C.; Critic's Price, Coppa Città di Imola 1961) and in London (Sutherland Trophy), or to the clever and legitimate publicity about Olmi's name (author of *IL TEMPO SI E' FERMATO*, covered in prices by most of the international juries as much as it is unknown to the public), but also because of the participation of the public to the everyday life pictured in the movie with simplicity and stylistic vivacity.

It's an easy and enjoyable work, but it needs to be examined very carefully, to prevent from being misled from its linearity and pleasantness.

We can divide it into three narrative sections.

First – fundamental and immediately clear – is the one referring to the story of Domenico: a farm boy that goes to Milan to take an exam for employee job in a big society; he obtains the job, at first as a office boy and then as an employee.

The next theme can be expressed like this: as much as the conquer of a guaranteed work can seem the most desirable (as viewed from the outside and from Domenico, his parents and colleagues), it's not like that indeed if from the first moment we can meet someone who has a different opinion and if that world doesn't seem one of the most suitable to show joy and human dignity.

While he follows his adolescent, Olmi seems to be telling him: << Your job! You'll see what I mean>>. And indeed Domenico understands, when he has his job, looks in front of him, with his eyes bare open, serious, while the mimeograph machine beats the time, symbolising the mechanism that will keep him prisoner forever. The second narrative section is the one referring to the work environment and that was very important for the director: he describes minutely all employees and workers, with their habits (not entertaining at all) and all their small or big family dramas, their manias, caused by the limits imposed to their existence.

So for Olmi, a job in a big city gives a certain economic stability, but condemns man to become half a man, limited and breathless, when he's not hateful and mean. In this kind of social poem it's the employees that are always wrong. They are the specimen of a society that they are part of in the first place and from which they are led to depression. It is a conception of work life that can only be defined as pathetic, pessimistic or almost unlikely to open any concrete and positive glimmer.

The third narrative section is the encounter between Domenico and Antonietta. It

has its weight in the movie, maybe because it's the most fascinating part, thanks to the rare beauty of invention and tone. It has a bittersweet aftertaste. But the thing that can be easily noticed it's that it appears in the beginning and then disappears, with an autonomous tendency. The encounter arises with the exams, but it could also arise later; it disappears, apparently without any reason.

Of the three narrative elements, the first two could be united if there wasn't too much <<Domenico>> in the first part and too much <<employees>> in the second; the first and the third as well if there wasn't <<too much work>> and less <<Antonietta>> and vice versa. So the elements are and remain three; If only two cannot reach unity, it surely won't be found in all of three. Maybe there was a misconception in the origin of the movie. Maybe the director was too impulsive because of the things he had to say, so he didn't bother to know what could be the only thing that would have given the spectator a rose instead of scattered petals. Talking about Olmi's works, the term "poetry" is not introduced by mistake, if used with precaution. A poetry to which we were used for its presence in the previous industrial documentaries, with ponderous pipes, concrete and iron mountains the chant of man was always present.

Also in this film that takes place in the mechanical industrial world, man is always in first place. This predominance determines the style and imposes the rhythm of language whose characteristic is the adoption of a cinematographic time that tends to identify itself to real time. All this gives the possibility to register even the smallest details of expressions; give a meaning to the most common gestures, and a value to common and poor objects: the description of the sympathy that characterises the two adolescents, the run through the park and their hands interlaced; the sequence of the party, deserted for all those character playing, singing, dancing and screaming <<allegria>>.

Consequence of this narrative is the need to proceed in a certain (<<divisionistic>>?) way, in order to create a character, an atmosphere, a story. A way that cannot confront with the limits imposed in a movie.

If the spontaneous and fresh notation pours – as it pour in Olmi – from a sort of immediate and improvisational inspiration during the screenplay phase, it is even more essential when it becomes minute the notation and improvisational the creative force. Otherwise this lucky and particular styles is precluded from telling greater stories, broadening knowledges of the most complex levels of reality and soul. In "Il Posto" virtues and limits are evident.

The virtues are supported from a perfect adaptation to figurative elements: photography and post-production without any effect and with "spontaneous" lightning; cinematography is accurate; dialogues find their beauty in the truth.

47

We cannot forget acting. Olmi used only non-professional actors. The result, as in his previous movie, was surprising and it is a confirm that the director can choose and guide the performers. The acting, fresh and modest, but also subtle and fitting, perfectly matches the style of the whole movie. (S.R.)



**AN FOREIGN CRITIC** Screen: A Clerk in Italy: 'Sound of Trumpets' at Two Theaters By BOSLEY CROWTHER, Published: October 23, 1963 – New York Times

IT is obvious that Ermanno Olmi, the young director responsible for the new Italian film. "The Sound of Trum pets" ("Il Posto"), which opened yesterday at the Fifth Avenue Cinema and Cinema II, has learned his craft by making documentaries and has learned it exceedingly well.

For this remarkably simple yet complex, ingenuous yet profound little film about a Milanese working-class young ster who gets his first job in a big industrial plant is in the unmistakable style of a documentary. It is brisk, realistic, pictorially sharp. The camera is simply an observer from the opening shot. The viewer is kept at every moment in the position of a looker-on, never made a vicarious participant in the emotions of the people involved. And the narrative line is consistently that of as sembled facts, the truth.

All Mr. Olmi shows us are a few crisp and crucial episodes. There's the whole strange and crowded experience of the lad on the day he goes to take the competitive examinations required of all applicants for a job — his getting up in the morning, his going into the city on a suburban train, his watching the other applicants, his taking the silly exams, his meeting a girl, walking with her and finding himself fall ing in love.

Then there's the subsequent business of going to the city a few days later to find out how he did, seeing the girl again, learning that both of them have jobs but in different plants, starting in as an errand boy and observing the routines of the white-collar clerks.

And finally there's a search ing documentation of his experiences at an office party on New Year's Eve, waiting hopefully and sadly for the girl who never appears, and then a terminal scene showing what happens when he is promoted to the job of a clerk.

That's it — a simple, literal recount of the things that happen to this lad starting out on the big industrial treadmill that seems so awesome and desirable at the start.

And yet, underneath the literal detail — underneath the hundreds and hundreds of just-right bits of documen tary information about this lad and the people he meets— there comes into intellectual focus a profound comprehen sion of the youth, of his anxieties, fears and excitements and a lesser comprehension of the girl.

So trenchant is Mr. Olmi's camera and so sensitive and subtle is he in directing his actors to give him precisely the right attitudes and looks, that every small thing we see, every gesture, every expression of the boy and the girl — and, indeed, of the people around them — contributes to the formation of an in tensely vivid impres sion of being present and watching their lives unfold.

And as we feel this — as we find ourselves reacting with the sympathy of a parent or a friend to the poignant experiences of the youngsters and to the sad exposures of the petty existences of the clerks — we sense a piercing awareness of the terrible

monotony of the routine that quietly traps the white-collar worker and channels youth into the oblivion of old age.

Mr. Olmi is clearly an artist with the seeing-eye camera and he appears to be as skillful as Vittorio de Sica in getting inexperienced people to act. Fron Sandro Panzeri, a fledgling actor who bears a haunting resemblance to the late Gérard Philipe, especially in the sad expression around the eyes, he has got so much natural behavior, so much revelation of a youngster's whims and moods that one comes away from the picture with a sense of knowing this boy.

And he has got Loredana Detto (who happens to be his wife) to give a thoroughly entrancing suggestion of the pathetically elusive girl.

Others, whose names aren't even mentioned, are perfect in other roles. I'd like to cite every one who is present at that office party, for instance. It's a gem.

One hesitates, of course, to be too clamorous about Mr. Olmi on the strength of this one film. It is modest in its intentions, limited in its scope. But it clearly reveals a picturemaker who knows how to make a camera see the poetry in life and hint at vain longings and ironies too sad and depressing to tell. The monotonous thump of the rotor on a mimeograph machine is the visual and aural symbol with which the picture ends.

(Mr. Olmi's second feature film, "The Fiancés," was shown at the First New York Film Festival. It is due for release this fall.)

#### The Cast

THE SOUND OF TRUMPETS, scenario by Ermanno Olmi; directed by Mr. Olmi; a Titanus-24 Horses Production; distributed by Janus Films. At Cinema II, Third Avenue at 60th Street, and the Fifth Avenue Cinema, at 12th Street. Running time: 90 minutes.

Antonietta . . . . Loredana Detto

Domenico . . . . Sandro Panzeri

# TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## BEFORE SCREENING

\*Work on the frame used for the film poster - Analysis of its composition, and appearance.

- Compare the posters of the different Nations, What differences are there? What do they communicate?
- What does it tell us about the characters and about the drama?
- Does the film seem to refer to precise cinema genres?
- What correlation exists between the image on the poster and the film's title?

## AFTER SCREENING

A three-stage process can be followed.

### 1) CONSIDERATIONS: DISCUSSION

Do not worry about reservations/criticisms about the film; it is important to listen to them and to ask questions.

- \* Even if the work on the poster has been done before screening, it is possible to start from this point by asking if the pupils' ideas were reflected in the film.
- Which are the important moments in the film? Describe them and relocate them in the film. Why are they important?

Do the feelings expressed before screening reflect the film you have seen?

- \* Reconstructing the development of the characters and the story.
- What kind of character is Domenico Try to write his biography.
- What kind of character is Magali? Try to write her biography.
- How do Domenico and Magali change during the film?
- What is the situation at the beginning and end of the film?
- What are the principle stages and changes that take place between these two points?
- How would you define the ending of this film? Try to imagine a different ending.

## 2) VERIFYING, DESCRIBING, ANALYSING

Considering that the two leading actors are not professional actors, and they were at their first experience, try to identify and classify their acting using precise examples (diction, gestures, movements).

- How are the feelings expressed in this film ?
- Are there mostly expressed by the dialogues ?
- Chose two or three sequences and analyse the way the emotion is shown (silence, looks, rhythm, editing...)

### \* Words and sounds

- What do you think about the absence of a musical soundtrack?
- Could there be a voice over ? Choose an emotional sequence and try to compare with music and voice over.
- How does the city make its presence felt?

### \* The setting

- How important is the setting in this film?
- There is a location that is more important than the others?
- There are elements of the locations that have impressed you? Which? And why?

## 3) INTERACTION WITH THE IMAGES, SHOTS AND SEQUENCES

This means making the pupils more active towards the images. They can imagine many situations deriving from the different sections of the booklet.

### \* Work on fixed images

Start with "Plot Summary and Aspects" and choose an image (or frame) from the film (or if possible let the pupils choose an image). What aspects of the film does it contain and what is missing?

Choose a scene and establish the context, describe its composition (the space and the positions of the people), explain the dramatic elements deriving from this scene and ask what it says about what comes next in the film.

Start with "Images-Echoes" and choose an image from the film, then look for others of all kinds to associate with it. A variation: start with the choice of an image, and produce one or two images to relate to the film.

Select images throughout the film where you can see young people with adults : put them together and comment the way these relationships are set up. What can we understand if we analyze these images ?

### \* Work on moving images

A shot is the piece of time and space cut and assembled to make up a scene. A sequence is a relatively independent dramatic unit.

Refer to the "Analysis" section and compare one shot with other or with key sequences in the film:

- Describe the entry and exit from the shot or sequence?
- What changes have taken place between the beginning and the end of the shot or sequence?
- How do the set design and the camera movements of the camera (or fixed camera) participate in the story?



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