

Introduction to
CINEMA AND PSYCHOANALYSIS:
THE WOMAN AS SHADOW OR MASK –
Thematic Dossier

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Whereas Sigmund Freud regarded femininity as a mysterious, unexplored and even 'dark' continent, describing not what a woman is, but how does she come into being (the notorious question 'What does a woman want?'), Jacques Lacan argues that hysteria is an attribute of femininity (the question 'What is a woman?') and proposes the concept of a feminine *jouissance* (Fr. *la jouissance féminine*, cf. *Le Séminaire. Livre XX. Encore, 1972-73*), which goes 'beyond the phallus' but also regardless of the biological sex. In reference to the phallic signifier, the woman is exceptional because she exists on the side of the One. Moreover, she cannot be assigned a number, existing within the logic of the singular and of the infinite. Yet, the woman is bound to wear the phallic mask: she doesn't possess the phallus, but she must behave like she has it.

Representing the feminine exceptionality and problematizing the relations between gender and sexuality, cinema in almost all its genres (classical, modern, Expressionist, noir, Western, melodrama etc.), approaches some essential psychoanalytical themes such as identification, castration, desire, masquerade, fantasy, symptom, fetish, perversion. But how does cinema create and conceive the image (and the self-image) of the woman? Is the woman in her fascinating presence envisioned only as the object of the determining male gaze, only in relation with the patriarchal logic and with language? What is meant after all by the spectacle or by the show off behind the sexual difference and how is the woman's masquerade connected with her body? Cinema, the "materialization of the fiction" according to Lacan, brings the unconscious into light regardless of the sex, even though there are film or stage directors who prefer to deal predominantly with the feminine unconscious

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(Federico Fellini or Ingmar Bergman, to name only two filmic examples; Milo Rau or Andriy Zholdak in contemporary theatre). Thus, the screen is a privileged ground for the appearance and the presentation of the real – the psychoanalytical real, defined only in triad with the imaginary and the symbolic. Besides, it is also the territory of women as masks of masculinity (especially in Japanese cinema), the surface where the phallic jouissance of the woman (as opposed to the supplementary abovementioned feminine jouissance) is projected, the surface of suffering or caricatural laughter of the feminine character (as in David Lynch and Woody Allen), the surface of the psychotic uncanny (Germ. *das Unheimliche*) related to an inhibited or repressed feminine desire (Luchino Visconti, Michael Haneke). Other examples involve the feminine faces as shadows that blend into each other (Bergman – *Persona* or *The Silence*; Antonioni with his famous trilogy on the modern alienation), the visage of the woman framed in monstrous close ups (Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*) or grasped in fear and terror (the films of Dario Argento and Alfred Hitchcock). Finally, the screen often provides an imperishable shelter for the realm of cadaverous women that wander unrestfully in-between two deaths, as in Dreyer's *The Word/Ordet* and in Bergman's *Cries and Whispers/Viskningarna och rop*.

This dossier of *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Phiosophia* gathers the **Proceedings of the first edition of the International Colloquium on Cinema and Psychoanalysis** which took place in October 27-28, 2018, and was organized by the Forum of the Lacanian Field Romania, in collaboration with the Faculty of Theatre and Film at Babeş-Bolyai University. The theme was *The Woman as Shadow or Mask*, with reference to cinema and psychoanalysis. Also, the keynote speaker was Muriel Mosconi (Psychoanalyst, member of EPFCL, AME) and the invited speaker was Ioan Pop-Curşeu (Professor, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Theatre and Film). The feminine enigma that points to the mask and to the shadow as theatrical hypostases of the feminine subject encouraged interdisciplinary and synthetic papers. The authors brought into discussion different subjects concerning the status/ the role of the woman as shadow or mask on the screen by reexamining the aforementioned concepts or by approaching other perspectives that could be of relevance.