

Panel H1

Auditorium

Animation, the Double and the Uncanny

Marco Bellano

A Newer Pygmalion. Animation and the Animated Statue



The presence of animated statues within the expressive realms of animation is an especially remarkable one. It harks back to one of the most ancient and compelling themes in the aesthetics of all arts, that is the relationship between life and its reproduction; at the same time, it poses a paradox that invites to reflect on the nature of animation itself.

An animated statue and its world share in fact the same Pygmalion: the “author” of the animation. The entity onto which the audience projects the “authorship” of the work does not just bring the statue to life, but also defines it as a statue, a lifeless lookalike of a breathing creature. Without this second attribute, the statue would be merely one among many animated characters; to establish its uncanny status, it first needs to be explicitly presented as a simulacrum, devoid of life. Such a contradiction echoes some of the key theses by Victor Stoichita on the “Pygmalion Effect”, which is indeed an «effect of resurrection», but also an «effect of death» (Stoichita, 203-204).

The talk will discuss how the definition of animation can be enlightened and commented by the animated statue, and its visual and narrative appeal. The discourse will resort to comparative analysis on selected examples from diverse works such as Norman McLaren’s *A Little Phantasy on a 19th-century Painting* (1946), Paul Grimault’s *Le Roi et l’Oiseau* (1980), and the 1996 Disney production *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Animated statues presented in an apparently reversed way –“de-animated”, from life to death– will also be considered, such as the ones featured in Friz Freleng’s *Ding Dong Daddy* (a 1942 “Merrie Melodie”) and the Disney blockbuster *Frozen* (2013).

Select references

Michelle E. Bloom, “Pygmalionesque Delusions and Illusions of Movement: Animation from Hoffmann to Truffaut”, *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 291-320.

Ülo Pikkov, *Animasophy. Theoretical Writings on the Animated Film*, Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2010.

Victor I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid To Hitchcock*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Biography

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Marco Bellano, PhD, is adjunct professor in History of Animation at the University of Padova, Italy. He was several times guest teacher of Film Music at the University of

Salamanca, Spain. He graduated from the Conservatory of Vicenza in Piano and Orchestral Conducting.

In 2014 the SAS assigned him the Norman McLaren-Evelyn Lambart Award for the Best Scholarly Article ("The Parts and the Whole. Audiovisual Strategies in the Films of Hayao Miyazaki and Joe Hisaishi", *Animation Journal*, Vol. 18, 2010); the SAS also co-funded his conference project "Il cinema d'animazione e l'Italia" (Padova, 2014). The second edition of the conference ("L'animazione e le arti") took place in October 2016. In 2017, he will chair the 29th SAS Annual Conference.

He is associate editor of the cinema journal *Cabiria*.

He collaborates with many orchestras and cultural organizations; he is vice president of the "Francesco e Paolo Contarini" association for contemporary music. He wrote the books *Metapartiture. Comporre musica per i film muti* (2007) and *Animazione in cento film* (2013, with Giovanni Ricci and Marco Vanelli).

He co-edited in 2017 (with Giannalberto Bendazzi) the final *Animation Journal* issue, on Italian animation.