

## Preface

Giaime Alonge, Giulia Carluccio

*La Valle dell'Eden* and the Dams film program had a long relationship with the late Miriam Hansen. We first made contact in 1999, when we proposed translating one of her essays, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," an essay that appeared in Italian in a dossier devoted to "Cinema and Visibility" in the fourth issue of *La Valle dell'Eden*. Four years passed, and we translated a second essay, "Room-for-Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," which appeared in Italian only a few months after the publication of the English version. We were proud of it, and Miriam was pleased. The essay was long, and we had to divide it into two subsequent issues, respectively # 12-13 ("Film and History") and 14 ("Film and Thought"). Almost at the same time, the publisher of *La Valle dell'Eden* chose to have Miriam's groundbreaking book translated and published, *Babel & Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (1991). The translation, with an author's preface for the Italian edition, came out in spring 2006. At the time, we were working on a conference on "Cinema and Gender Studies," which was going to be held in December. Along with Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane, Miriam was going to be one of the keynote speakers. Unfortunately, due to the sudden deterioration of her health, she was forced to cancel her trip. We promised to invite her again as soon as her condition allowed her to travel. She promised to come, but she could not fulfill that promise. In 2009 we crossed paths again for the last time, when we organized a conference on Rudolph Valentino. Of course, Miriam was involved in the project from the very beginning, offering precious advice, and many papers relied upon her work on Valentino and stardom in the American silent cinema.

Miriam Hansen's death was a severe loss for the entire Film Studies community. The present dossier of *La Valle dell'Eden* collects essays written by some of Miriam's colleagues and friends on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean as well as by scholars who never met her in person but have been deeply influenced by her writings. It is the homage we want to pay to Miriam's memory and legacy.

We thank Vincent Marsicano, who translated into English, or checked the translations, of the majority of the essays. We also thank Lorenzo Donghi, Andrea Mattacheo, Matteo Pollone, and Hamilton Santià, who helped us with the editorial work.