

The Other in Italian Postcolonial Cinema Pasolini and Fellini. Two Case Studies

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Italy's postcolonial cinema: historical and methodological context

Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) is the most famous Italian film about western colonisation, but the film does not mention Italy's own colonial past. In fact, to rebuild the nation after the defeat of the war Italy had to focus on its challenging present and future instead of on its past; the Italians have, therefore, never experienced an official acknowledgement of the imperial enterprises. The archives concerning Italy's colonial enterprises have been closed for a long time and Italian school materials hardly discuss the matter.¹ As a result, the myth of *italiani brava gente* has been mostly kept intact until this day. Even though it has been fought against by scholars, authors and filmmakers who have pointed out the often painful history of Italian colonisation, it seems to be difficult to get rid of this persistent narrative.²

Up until recently scholars such as Brunetta and more recently Russo Bullaro tended to agree on the idea that Italian filmmakers did not concentrate on the former colonised (countries) and on the 'new' figure of the *extracomunitario* until the 1980s; the arguments supporting this position were that Italians were too preoccupied with the internal problem of the Southern Question – often defined as an internal form of colonisation – and that only in the 1980s the large influx of the *extracomunitari* became a problem of its own in the eyes of the Italian population.³ Clò has even argued that filmmakers were prevented from showing or making movies about Italy's colonial past in order to keep the myth of *italiani brava gente* intact: she describes two film projects, one script of 1953 on the Italian occupation in Greece that cost its maker Renzo Renzi a military sentence – the film proposal was never realized – and one on the Libyan resistance to Italian colonialism of 1981 by Moustapha Akkad, that was banned from

¹ A. Del Boca, *L'Africa nella coscienza degli Italiani: Miti, Memorie, Errori, Sconfitte*, Bari, Laterza, 1992; A. Di Sapio & M. Medi, *Il lontano presente: l'esperienza coloniale italiana. Storia e letteratura tra presente e passato*, Bologna, Editrice missionaria italiana, 2009, pp. 231-258.

² Cfr. A. Del Boca, *La guerra d'Abissinia 1935-1941*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1965; N. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002; R. Ben-Ghiat and M. Fuller (eds), *Italian Colonialism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

³ G. P. Brunetta, *Cent'anni di cinema italiano*, vol. 2 *Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Roma, Bari, Editori Laterza, 1991; G. Russo Bullaro, (ed.), *From Terrone To Extracomunitario. New Manifestations of Racism in Contemporary Italian Cinema*, Leicester, Troubador Publishing Ltd, 2010.

Italian public theatres.⁴ Although research on this topic is still rare, recently some interesting studies have been published on the concept of the Other and the colonial past in Pasolini's poetic, literary and cinematic oeuvre.⁵ Two other articles analyse references to Italy's colonial past in films from before the 1980s: Pinkus convincingly argues that Antonioni refers to this chapter of Italian history in *L'eclisse* (1962) and Greene interprets Francesco De Robertis' *Il mulatto* (1949) as a – however, 'single' and 'exceptional' – case of an Italian neorealist film in which race is an issue, and in which indirectly is referred to Italy's colonial past.⁶

Following these publications, in this article it is argued that not only Pier Paolo Pasolini, but also Federico Fellini acknowledge and discuss Italy's colonial past, both in their own distinct way in two films before the 1980s, respectively *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana* (1968-1970) and *Amarcord* (1973).⁷ Deconstructing the Italian colonial narrative of the juxtaposition of 'the Italian' to the Other and the accompanying prejudices about former colonies, as well as former colonised people,⁸ both films put into question the still existing prejudices and stereotypes of the Other in Italian society, and thus acknowledge the problematic lack of a national debate concerning Italy's colonial past. The two directors address this problem in their own distinct style, through which their personal experiences symbolise more abstract historical phenomena in Italy: those of denial and conflict. Whilst their styles and conclusions differ immensely, they point out to the same blind spot in the Italian society, with the 'excuse' of simply telling their life stories.

Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana*

'Africa! Unica mia / alternativa' is the last part of the poem *Frammento alla morte in Poesie incivili* written by Pier Paolo Pasolini in 1960. In fact, in both his cinematographic and his literary and poetic oeuvre Pasolini frequently referred to the complicated, paradoxical 'concept of Africa'.⁹ The significance of 'Africa' as a symbol for not only historical and philosophical problems, but for his personal conflicts as well, becomes clear in his semi-documentary *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana* (1968-1970).

The *Appunti* are presented as a notebook for a future *Oresteia* film project. In 1960 Pasolini translated Aeschylus' *Oresteia* into Italian, in which he found similarities

⁴ C. Clò, 'Mediterraneo interrupted: Perils and Potentials of Representing Italy's Occupations in Greece and Libya Through Film', in: *Italian Culture*, vol. xxvii, 2 (2009), pp. 99-115.

⁵ G. Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa. L'Africa di Pasolini. Panmeridionalismo e rappresentazioni dell'Africa postcoloniale*, Milan, Udine, Mimesis Edizioni, 2010; L. Di Blasi, M. Gragnolati & C. F.E. Holzhey (eds), *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction. Pasolini's Multistable Subjectivities, Traditions, Geographies*, Wien, Berlin, Turia + Kant, 2012.

⁶ K. Pinkus, 'Empty Spaces. Decolonization in Italy', in: P. Palumbo (ed.), *A Place in the Sun. Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from the Post-Unification to the Present*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 2003, pp. 299-320; S. Greene, 'Il mulatto: the negotiation of Interracial Identity', in: Russo Bullaro, *From Terrone To Extracomunitario*, cit., pp. 25-60.

⁷ My research method has been inspired by M. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Shadow of Auschwitz*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2007; D. Duncan, 'Italy's Postcolonial Cinema and its Histories of Representation', in: *Italian Studies*, 63, 2 (2008); and Á. O'Healy, '[Non] è una somala': Deconstructing African femininity in Italian film', in: *The Italianist*, 29 (2009), pp. 175-198. All scholars locate a corpus of films in the historical context and unravel a new historical meaning by deconstructing plots and reinterpreting contexts through postcolonial theory and film analysis.

⁸ See for instance Palumbo, *A Place in the Sun*, cit. and V. Maher, 'Immigration and Social Identities', in: D. Forgacs and R. Lumley (eds), *Italian Cultural Studies, an Introduction*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 160-177.

⁹ 'Il concetto africa' is used by Trento in: *Pasolini e l'Africa*, cit.

between Ancient Greece and contemporary Africa. In 1968 Pasolini planned to make a film entitled *Appunti per un poema sul Terzo mondo*: in five episodes he would focus on five parts of the 'Third World' and the African part of the film would have as a theme the conflicts and ambiguities between the 'white' culture, representing the western, rational and typically bourgeois culture that is already completely industrialised, and the 'coloured' culture: the archaic, popular, pre-industrialised and pre-bourgeois culture.¹⁰ He decided to translate Aeschylus' *Oresteia* into a film, set in contemporary Africa.

Along the way, combining several components, the *Appunti* become a complete work of its own. In the first part Pasolini shows images he made during his journey through Uganda (independent since 1962) in December 1968 and Tanzania (independent since 1961-63) in February 1969, commented on by the director himself later in his studio. The second part of the film consists of news images of the war in Biafra (now part of Nigeria) between 1967 and 1969, also commented on by the filmmaker. These images are not made by Pasolini and he repeatedly states that they are not of that specific war, but represent the war of the Greeks and the Trojans. A third part of the film consists of images and the accompanying sounds of a debate organised by Pasolini in 1970, in which the director asks African students at the Roman university La Sapienza to comment on his African *Oresteia* project. The fourth part of the film is a concert in the FolkStudio in Rome, in which several musicians interpret the *Oresteia* in a free-jazz style. The director made the notes for the Radiotelevisione italiana (RAI), but in the end were not broadcast, because of the changing political climate at the time, according to the producer of the *Appunti*, Gian Vittorio Baldi.¹¹ The eventual cinematic translation of the *Oresteia* was never realised either.¹²

Pasolini explains during the debate with the students at La Sapienza that, while translating the tragedy of Orestes in 1960, he noticed parallels between the archaic society of the classical Greeks and the African tribal culture, and realised that the latter was rapidly changing. The transformation of the *Erinyes*, the Furies – 'dee medievali del terrore esistenziale, [...] del terrore atavico, ancestrale' – into the Eumenides – 'dee dell'irrazionalità in un mondo razionale, [...] diciamo così dei sogni, dell'irrazionale che permane accanto alla democrazia razionale del nuovo stato' – reminded Pasolini of the transformation Africa was experiencing; the continent was now in the middle of a transition from a 'Middle-aged period' to a 'democratic period'. This is why he wanted to set the *Oresteia* in contemporary Africa. The students are rather critical and question whether Pasolini could put his ideas into practice. The director, however, defends his ideas without truly taking into account the students' objections.

Later in the film Pasolini explains that he sees the possibility that tradition in the newly independent Africa will go hand in hand with 'modernity'. This is why Africa was his 'only / alternative': he expressed a hope that, unlike in Europe, in Africa the 'archaic spirit' could maybe coexist with aspects of a modernised society. Trento refers to this alternative for the modernised and capitalist West as 'pan-meridionalismo' (Pan-

¹⁰ Pasolini, *Per il cinema*, cit., p. 2679.

¹¹ 'Cambiando i dirigenti a un certo momento Pasolini era diventato una persona di cui non si poteva parlare e assolutamente non si doveva aiutare'. G. V. Baldi: interview included in the French DVD of *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana*, 2009.

¹² Several reasons for this have been mentioned – lack of money, lack of time, lack of interest, etc. However, it is important to realize that the *Appunti per un'Orestide africana* are a finished project; this clearly seems to be the case at the end of the film.

South): a non-geographical *topos*, just as well referring to the Friuli of Pasolini youth as to Italy's south before the economic miracle and to the Africa of the 1960s, where 'traditional' elements could go hand in hand with modernity, thus resisting industrialisation, mass-media and alienation from tradition and nature. Africa and its Diaspora are of crucial importance for this transnational notion, as becomes clear in the *Appunti*.¹³

The film ends without a conclusion: it is still unclear what will happen to Pasolini's African *Oresteia*, just as it still is unclear what will happen to the African continent after the recent decolonization of many African countries.

Pasolini's 'Africa'

The orientalist notions of the African Other in the *Appunti* cannot be denied. However, to further understand the film, we have to look at the personal relationship Pasolini had with Africa, the 'pan-South' and the concept of the Other. In *Le ceneri di Gramsci* (1957) Pasolini wrote the phrase 'lo scandalo del contraddirmi', which became the point of departure for the publication of the volume *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction*, together with the concept of Wittgenstein's *Kippbild*, a figure that can be seen as either a rabbit or a duck, but not both at the same time: it never becomes a synthesis.¹⁴ This part of the article focusses on Pasolini's self-contradiction, or *Kippbild*, of the Self versus the Other.

Coming from small Friulian villages in the north of Italy, Pasolini described himself repeatedly as 'il negro' and 'il selvaggio'¹⁵ when he moved to Rome in 1950. In Rome he lived in the rural surroundings of the *borgate*, reminding him of his youth. He recognised this theme in 'il Terzo Mondo', of which in his eyes Africa formed a crucial part.¹⁶ His hope for the, in his eyes, pre-industrial, rural, archaic continent of Africa can be explained through his own persona: he himself had been 'modernised' without losing his roots. Moreover, parallels are found between the consequences of the economic miracle and the experiences referred to in the concept of the Other: most southern Italians (more often than not peasants) moved to the big cities in the northern part of the country, where they felt like marginal people alienated from 'their land', just as Pasolini had felt.¹⁷ Furthermore, to a certain extent the south has been colonised by the north ever since the Unification of the country; the Southern Question is colonial in itself, which makes Pasolini's view on Africa applicable to not only his own life, but to recent developments in Italy, as well.¹⁸

¹³ Trento in Di Blasi, *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction*, cit., p. 59.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ For instance in his poem 'Alla Francia' of 1958, to be found in P.P. Pasolini, *Le poesie. Le ceneri di Gramsci, La religione del mio tempo, Poesia in forma di rosa, Trasumanar e organizzar, Poesie inedite*, Milan, Garzanti, 1976, p. 259.

¹⁶ Pasolini in *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, a cura di W. Siti en S. De Laude, Milan, I Meridiani, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1999, p. 1417.

¹⁷ See Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa*, cit., p. 19; Russo Bullaro, *From Terrone To Extracomunitario*, cit.

¹⁸ See J. Schneider (ed.), *Italy's "Southern Question", Orientalism in One Country*, Oxford, New York, Berg, 1988; N. Bouchard, 'Reading the Discourse of Multicultural Italy: Promises and Challenges of Transnational Italy in an Era of Global Migration', in: *Italian Culture*, vol. xxviii, no. 2 (2010), pp. 104-20, particularly pp. 106-107; N. Moe, "'This is Africa": Ruling and Representing Southern Italy, 1860-61', in: A. Russel & K. von Henneberg (eds), *Making and Remaking Italy. The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, Oxford, New York, Berg, 2001, pp. 119-153.

Pasolini's Self and his Other

In the *Appunti* Pasolini presents himself on the one hand as the Self, travelling all the way to Africa to observe the Other from a distance through his camera lens, literally translating the Africans for his Western viewers, not giving them a voice other than the one imposed by himself to construct his western interpretation and adaptation of their culture. The binary oppositions which Pasolini uses to explain his intentions for making this film show that he can only look at Africa in relation to his western culture. He does not seem to truly listen to the objections made by the African students of La Sapienza, who think his idea will be hard to realise. However, as Gragnolati suggests, following Viano, the students could function as an 'antidote' against cultural colonialism.¹⁹ Gragnolati wonders if Pasolini actually expresses his own opinion through the mouths of the students; I would confirm this assumption, given Pasolini's anti-Hegelian sentiments of a disbelief in progress, and given the fact that the disagreeing students could have been left out of the film, but instead Pasolini chose to show them.²⁰ The *Appunti*, therefore, express a hope in a pan-African utopia, yet at the same time, by giving the Africans a voice after all through the students, they show how unrealistic this hope is. This turns out to be yet another *Kippbild*.

Moreover, Pasolini identifies himself with the colonial Other because he himself feels marginalised within his own society, just as the southern Italians are the Other within their own country. By drawing this parallel, he brings the African Other and the topic of colonialism closer to his own country, thus urging his viewers to think about who this Other actually is, and on how thoughts about the Other and colonisation in Italy have developed through time: he hands over a mirror to the western viewer by exaggerating his Selfness while being in Africa. Furthermore, by looking for similarities between the cradle of western society and Africa, he unravels these binary oppositions and shows how problematic such thinking is. He travels to Africa – the traditional colonial Other – to illustrate that the Other is just as well inside of him, and inside the Italian past and present.

Pasolini does not offer an objective image of Africa in his *Appunti*; by giving his film this personal, subjective dimension, he gives his own perception of the continent from an Italian perspective, influenced by the dominating narrative of his country. He ridicules this naive, idealising and oriental outlook on Africa by exaggerating his Selfness, but is also deeply tormented by this contradiction: his persona forms a *Kippbild* of the Self and the Other, never becoming a synthesis: 'Io sono contro Hegel [...]. Tesi? Antitesi? Sintesi? Mi sembra troppo comodo'.²¹

Federico Fellini's *Amarcord*

Federico Fellini did not travel to Africa to address the problematic concept of the Other. In Rome he made the film *Amarcord* (1973) in which he describes a town in the 1930s in the centre of Italy, *il borgo*, seen through the eyes of the adolescent boy Titta. Various scenes show different aspects of the life of the schoolboy Titta: school, home, friends, a trip to a country house with the family, and the many joint events in the village. Although he is the protagonist, the camera frequently loses sight of Titta and focusses on his friends and fellow villagers instead. The title suggests that the director shows his viewers elements of his childhood in the 1930s – 'a'm'arcord' means 'I remember' in

¹⁹ Gragnolati in Di Blasi, *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction*, cit., p. 130.

²⁰ Trento in Di Blasi, *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction*, cit., p. 73.

²¹ Through Gragnolati (p. 119 and 132): S. Arecco, *Pier Paolo Pasolini*, Rome, Partisan, 1972, p. 69.

Romagnolo, the language spoken in the province of Romagna, where Fellini was born and raised. However, since the village in the film does not have a name it could represent a typical central-Italian town. The story does not take place in one specific year either; memories and fantasies of the director and historical events from different years are mixed throughout the plot.²² It is nevertheless clear that the story is set in the 1930s; the rise of fascism affects the lives of all the characters in the film. The school boys greet the principal with the *saluto romano* and in the classroom a picture of Mussolini hangs on the wall next to a photo of the pope. On a Spring day Il Duce visits the village and all its inhabitants gather together to celebrate him. Fascism prohibited speaking in dialect, which in the film often results in the most original attempts to speak standard Italian by the villagers: a Creole-like language is the result.²³ Whoever explicitly or implicitly refutes fascism gets in trouble, as is shown in the scene in which Titta's father is forced to drink castor oil by the fascists, only because they suspect him of disagreeing with their politics.

Even though the fascists were not the first politicians with imperial aspirations in the history of the peninsula, imperial propaganda did culminate during the Italian Fascist regime: Mussolini used all media to make *italianità* the absolute norm, with the aim of forming a strong identity through which 'the Italians' would feel superior to non-Italians. At one point 'non-Italians' included homosexuals, Jews and Africans.²⁴ As Papalia states, '[m]ilitary conquest is generally accompanied by discursive practices that serve to legitimate colonisation and to maintain the colonised in a position of subordination [...]. [A]ny sameness would [undermine] the legitimacy of the conquest'.²⁵ Mussolini was well aware of this danger; all means were used to prevent the feared 'sameness': literature, films, journalism, commercials and speeches.²⁶

Fascism exploited nationalism: Italy is glorified throughout the entire film of *Amarcord*. Italian flags hang everywhere during the fascist parade, and when the Italian marine ship Rex reaches the shore of the village its inhabitants cry out 'Viva l'Italia!'.²⁷ The Italian is framed against an Other as well. In a scene on the terrace of the Grand Hotel the village boys suggest that all foreign girls are the same (for they are not Italian). During Mussolini's visit to the *borgo*, people sing the propaganda song *Facetta nera* which, in recounting how Italians rescue 'a poor Abyssinian girl', glorifies the

²² Kezich sums all the historical happenings and personal memories of Fellini up in *Fellini, la vita e i film*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2007 (first ed. 2002), pp. 299-300.

²³ Gaudenzi argues that in *Amarcord* the distinction between fascists and non-fascists is underlined by the difference in dialects and accents: C. Gaudenzi, 'Memory, Dialect, Politics: Linguistic Strategies in Fellini's *Amarcord*', in: F. Burke & M. R. Waller (eds), *Federico Fellini. Contemporary Perspectives*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2002, pp. 155-167.

²⁴ E. Ludwig, *Talks With Mussolini* [translated out of German by E. and C. Paul], Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1933; Kezich & Levantesi, *Una giornata particolare. Un film di Ettore Scola. Incontrarsi e dirsi addio nella Roma del '38*, Turin, Edizioni Lindau, 2003.

²⁵ Papalia in Russo Bullaro, *From Terrone To Extracomunitario*, cit., p. 106.

²⁶ Labanca, *Oltremare*, cit., pp.129-215; R. Ben-Ghiat & M. Fuller (eds), *Italian Colonialism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; P. Poddar et.al. (ed.), *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures - Continental Europe and its Empires*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008; G. Tomasello, *La letteratura coloniale italiana dalle avanguardie al fascismo*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1984; and *L'Africa tra mito e realtà, Storia della letteratura coloniale italiana*, Palermo, Sellerio, 2004; G. P. Brunetta, *Il cinema italiano di regime, da "la canzone dell'amore" a "Osessione"*, Bari, Editori Laterza, 2009; A. Di Sapio & M. Medi, *Il lontano presente: l'esperienza coloniale italiana. Storia e letteratura tra presente e passato*, Bologna, Editrice missionaria italiana 2009; Palumbo, *A Place in the Sun*, cit.

²⁷ Originally, Fellini had the idea to name the film *Viva l'Italia*. However, the director thought this would come across as too cynical. Federico Fellini, *Fare un film*, Turin, Einaudi, 1993 (first edition 1980), p. 155.

Italian colonial enterprises. The most obvious reference to the Other, however, is the following scene. The village lawyer tells that the Grand Hotel once had as a guests an emirate – small, ugly, draped in jewellery – and his harem of thirty women – dressed in white veils, accompanied and aggressively protected by servants with swords and coloured clothes. The village idiot Buscein recounts how the thirty women asked him to climb up onto their balcony to make love to all of them in an oriental bathtub, while in the background oriental music played and women belly-danced. Simple prejudices are confirmed in this story and the ‘exotic’ people are caricatured. No attempt is made to actually get to know these characters and the Arab world; they remain an abstraction. ‘In Africa, divento dottore e vado in Africa, così impara quella lì!’, cries Titta when he is cross with his mother. Apparently going to Africa is the worst punishment to his mother; it symbolises the exact opposite of Italy, and a place that is further away from his country and the *borgo* seems unimaginable to Titta. It is the ultimate Other.

Italy and the Other

More than once Fellini stated that he was not interested in politics. In this way, the director made certain that his audience would look at his films without any prejudices, and without looking for a hidden message. Fellini stated that his lack of political interest is

determinato, forse, in parte, dall’essere stato educato durante il fascismo e quindi diseducato ad ogni partecipazione in prima persona alla politica che non fossero esteriori dimostrazioni e cortei; e [riconosco] di aver conservato, nel tempo, la convinzione che la politica è una cosa dei ‘grandi’, fatta da signori pensosi [...] dei patrii destini, delle sorti dell’umanità, potevano avere il piglio un po’ farsesco di Mussolini, o la grave incombenza di un Giolitti (come veniva raffigurato da Galantara); oppure potevano riferirsi a modelli ancora più risorgimentali e marmorizzati, Crispi, Rattazzi, Minghetti, Ricasoli, il baronetto di ferro; che venivano rappresentati sempre in piedi nell’aula parlamentare, nell’atto di proferire un discorso davanti a colleghi gravi e barbuti, con la redingote nera.²⁸

The feeling that politics is something for serious and distant people is shown in *Amarcord* through the mentality of Titta and his friends – that of political disinterest – and in the way the fascists of the village are portrayed – different, authoritative, aloof, often having a strange accent because they come from outside the *borgo*. The school teachers came from southern Italy to teach in the north, a reference to the internal colonial theme mentioned above. All the unreachable people are fascists: the school teachers, the *carabinieri*, the politicians and the attractive women. The fact that Fellini in 1973 still had these feelings towards politics shows that his childhood experiences have had a huge impact on the rest of his life.

Fantasies and history are mixed up in the film: this is what happens in memories. This automatically leads to the question how much of the colonial propaganda of the 1930s still influences the way Italians think: Buscein’s stereotyping is a reflection of the colonial narrative of the fascist regime. Therefore, in *Amarcord* the real Other is not ‘the African’ in a faraway country as in Pasolini’s *Appunti*, but it is part of Italian society itself: it is the fascist. Titta and his friends approach fascists as if they were foreigners; they are the ones who are turned into abstractions. Buscein’s story is so full of

²⁸ Fellini in G. Grazzini (ed.), *Federico Fellini. Intervista sul cinema*, Rome-Bari, Editori Laterza, 1983 (ed. 2004), p.15.

stereotyping that Fellini shows the viewer how ridiculous it is to think this way; it is the village idiot telling the story. The real danger to society comes from within, for it is the fascists who preach this nationalism, expansionism and stereotyping; they preach fear. Fellini tells his viewers with the title that he remembers his past, which is essential for understanding his present. In 1980, writing about *Amarcord*, he stated:

Fascismo e adolescenza continuano ad essere in una certa misura stagioni storiche permanenti della nostra vita. L'adolescenza, della nostra vita individuale; il fascismo, di quella nazionale: questo restare, insomma, eternamente bambini, scaricare le responsabilità sugli altri, vivere con la confortante sensazione che c'è qualcuno che pesa per te, e, una volta è la mamma, una volta il papà, un'altra volta è il sindaco, o il duce, e poi il vescovo, e la Madonna e la televisione. Al limite anche sui terroristi o su qualsiasi altra forma eversiva siamo pronti a proiettare, a identificare riscatti confusi, riparazioni di torti, viscerali proteste, confondendo come al solito e pericolosamente la cura della malattia con il suo sintomo.²⁹

With *Amarcord* he tries to tell the Italians to 'grow up' and recognise the – fascist and colonial – past so as to come to terms with the present. The dangerous Other stays within the Italian society until it is acknowledged and dealt with. At the end of the film, Titta's mother has passed away and Gradisca, his idol, is married. He has grown up; a new era is announcing itself.

As with the *Appunti*, it is the subjectiveness of the story of *Amarcord* that makes it valuable: Fellini's personal experiences and prejudices are those of an Italian. The *borgo* is not Rimini itself, but symbolises a typical central-Italian village, just as the life story of Titta symbolises the story of an Italian boy who was brought up during the fascist regime.

Postcolonial films in the 1960s and 1970s

As shown in this article, long before the 1980s, both Pasolini and Fellini tried to come to terms with Italy's colonial past by referring to it in a personal way in their films. Both films become historically relevant exactly because of the subjectiveness of the stories, showing personal contradictions and conflicts of artists that were born and raised in Italy. Pasolini was unable to share his view on Africa with his *Appunti*, since it was not broadcast by the RAI at the time for political reasons, confirming Clò's theory mentioned above. Fellini, on the other hand, had declared himself to be a-political, which freed him from any political suspicion. Up to a certain extent he was in fact a-political, since he simply gave his own subjective perspective on his personal experiences of the history and state of his own country. However, he did refer to painful chapters of Italian history, which had political implications. The references to the fascist and colonial past were subtle to such an extent that he felt the urge to explain his own film in 1980.

The two artists had a different method of addressing problematic aspects of their society, reaching different conclusions: Pasolini's film reflects his personal anxiety, whereas Fellini's film is descriptive. Both deconstruct the thinking about the Other in terms of black and white by repeatedly ridiculing this orientalist narrative. Pasolini sees no solution, and is personally tormented by this *Kippbild* of himself of the Self and the Other. Fellini shows that the real danger – the real Other – comes from within the Italian society and from within himself, as well. He, however, suggests that, by acknowledging that this danger lies within one's own society and history, people might

²⁹ Fellini, *Fare un film*, cit., p. 155.

come to terms with it, will no longer blame 'the others' and will instead 'grow up'. While Pasolini is anti-Hegelian because of his disbelief in the idea of progress, Fellini expresses a hope for a future in which Italians know about their past and give it a proper place in national history (books) and in their personal histories. Both films are in this respect interesting and current today, since both perspectives are valuable and echo in modern society.

The fact that the colonial theme in Fellini's *Amarcord* has until now not been discussed, and has never been linked to Pasolini's film – though they, and this cannot be emphasized enough, differ in many aspects from each other – proves that this area of studies deserves further research. Pasolini and Fellini worked within an acknowledged cinematic tradition and it is therefore highly likely that more traces of reflection on the colonial past could be uncovered through the analysis of films similar to theirs. In the last few years there have been many problems concerning *extracomunitari* trying to illegally enter Southern Italy. Only through recognition of the past the Italian people will be able to understand and face their present.

Keywords

Italy, colonial history, film, national identity, the Other

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RIASSUNTO

L' 'Altro' nel cinema italiano postcoloniale Due esempi nella cinematografia di Pasolini e Fellini

In questo articolo si illustra, alla luce di due film, come Pier Paolo Pasolini e Federico Fellini abbiano cercato di mettere in discussione il silenzio sul passato coloniale italiano, in un periodo in cui – gli anni Sessanta e Settanta – il dibattito sul colonialismo era molto acceso nella cultura europea. Nelle opere analizzate nel presente contributo, i due artisti, facendo ricorso al proprio inconfondibile stile, affrontano criticamente i pregiudizi e gli stereotipi ancora esistenti nella società italiana. In *Appunti per un' Orestiade africana (1968-1970)*, Pasolini definisce l'Altro ancora partendo da una prospettiva occidentale, sebbene egli riconosca i problemi che nascono da uno sguardo 'binario' sull'Africa, cioè da un pensiero che articola la realtà secondo categorie

estreme, opposte e inconciliabili. Anche Fellini in *Amarcord* (1973) decostruisce il pensiero sull'Altro partendo dall'opposizione di concetti antitetici; egli ridicolizza più volte nel film quel modo di pensare orientalista e dimostra inoltre che il vero pericolo, ossia il vero 'Altro', viene piuttosto dall'interno del paese. Riconoscendo la parte 'fascista' o adolescente della società e smettendo di dare la colpa 'agli altri', gli italiani potrebbero per Fellini finalmente venire a patti con se stessi e con la loro storia (coloniale) recente. Come si suggerisce nel contributo, i due film analizzati non costituiscono delle eccezioni, ma anticipano una riflessione sul colonialismo italiano presente anche in altre pellicole che attendono di essere adeguatamente studiate.