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Outside Italy

Pasolini's Transnational Visions of the Sacred and Tradition

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ABSTRACT: In the 1960s and 1970s, Pier Paolo Pasolini described a rapidly changing world, expressing a new poetics that can be considered transnational. I will use different examples – beginning with Pasolini's Indian travelogues – to show how his initial devotion to Italian millenary traditions and peasant cultures finally led to an open vision and understanding of human behaviors and mores beyond any national boundary.

OUTSIDE ITALY

Pasolini's Transnational Visions of the Sacred and Tradition

Francesca Cadel

In the 1960s and 1970s – with *L'odore dell'India* (1962), *Il Padre Selvaggio* (1962), *La Rabbia* (1963), *Appunti per un film sull'India* (1968), *Pilade* (1966-70), *Appunti per un'Orestide africana* (1968-1970), *La Nuova Gioventù* (1975), and his unfinished posthumous novel *Petrolio* – Pier Paolo Pasolini described a rapidly changing world, expressing a new poetics that, as I will show in this contribution, can be considered transnational. If in the 1940s and 1950s his themes were all related to the specificity of Italian society, history, and traditions, beginning in the 1960s Pasolini started travelling around the world, widening his perspectives, as an *amateur* anthropologist, still passionate about the sacred and religion, among many other things. With his cinema Pasolini inaugurated new critical patterns, an international film style, a 'written language of reality' developing a trans-linguistic 'cinema of poetry',¹ which combined an increasing interest in transnational post-colonial economies with a strenuous defense of tradition and of the sacred within human societies.

I will use different examples – beginning with Pasolini's Indian travelogues – to show how his initial devotion to Italian millenary traditions and peasant cultures finally led to an open vision and understanding of human behaviors and mores beyond any national boundary.

L'odore dell'India (1962) is the travelogue of a six weeks' trip Pasolini made to India at the end of the year 1960, together with his friends, the writers Elsa Morante and Alberto Moravia. Pasolini had just directed his first movie, *Accattone*, had translated Aeschylus' *Oresteia* for the actor Vittorio Gassman, and was working on the book of poems *La religione del mio tempo*, which would be published in 1961.

It is true that, at the beginning of the 1960s, Pasolini and Moravia traveled to India with a standard concept of Eurocentric democracy in their minds, and this trip only reinforced their own sense of European-ness: once back in Italy Pasolini published *L'odore dell'India* and Moravia his *Un'idea dell'India*.² As Negri and Hardt pointed out in their book *Multitude*, in a paragraph entitled 'Two Italians in India':

It makes you wonder if the travel companions even saw the same country. In fact, although polar opposites, their two responses fit together perfectly as a fable of the two faces of Eurocentrism: ‘They are utterly different from us’ and ‘They are just the same as us’.³

Negri and Hardt are critical of the use of ‘European identity as a universal standard’: according to them the first Italian (Moravia) is unable to grasp singularity, the second (Pasolini) the dynamic relation of the common.⁴

Yet, despite his being a European in accordance with Negri and Hardt’s standards, in his *L’odore dell’India* Pasolini showed a tendency to rationalize and understand anthropologic and cultural issues, above all religion, in their dynamic relation to the common and with a focus on demographic and racial issues. In a passage on religion and India, after a detailed description of an Hindu guru (*il santone*), of his attitudes and behavior towards the people around him,⁵ Pasolini comes to his own conclusions, according to which the different religions practiced in India are gathered together and associated with a common spirituality, which, according to Pasolini, is above all pragmatic:

Fortunatamente l’induismo non è una religione di stato. Perciò i santoni non sono pericolosi. Mentre i loro fedeli li ammirano (ma mica tanto poi) c’è sempre un mussulmano, un buddista o un cattolico che li guarda con compassione, ironia o curiosità [...] Ma più che una religiosità specifica [...] ho osservato tra gli indiani una religiosità generica diffusa [...]. La non violenza, insomma, la mitezza, la bontà degli indù. [...]. Così in India, ora, più che alla manutenzione di una religione, l’atmosfera è propizia a qualsiasi spirito religioso pratico.⁶

Pasolini’s assumption – that in India every form of religiosity finds its home – might be considered a stereotype, yet he seems aware of his own limits as a traveler, tourist, or simply observer.⁷ What is relevant to my analysis is the fact that, while attending the Hindu funeral rites of cremation in India, Pasolini experienced a deep sense of communion, which was the same as he would seek in other cultures and other rites – specifically in those for the dead. The last sentence of Pasolini’s *L’odore dell’India*, with the anaphoric repetition of the negative forms (*Mai, nessun*) relating to place, time, action, and experience (*posto, ora, atto, abbiamo provato*), implies a lyrical and rhythmical shift towards the last words of the book – *comunione, tranquillità, gioia*, where a sacred ritual finally leads to a sense of belonging:

Mai, in nessun posto, in nessun'ora, in nessun atto, di tutto il nostro soggiorno indiano, abbiamo provato un così profondo senso di comunione, di tranquillità, e, quasi, di gioia.⁸

This conclusion will find a filmic representation in the long sequence closing *Appunti per un film sull'India*, where the viewer is asked to witness the Hindu rites of purification and cremation of corpses. J.S. Bach's sonatina from *Actus Tragicus* BWV 106 ('Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit', 'God's Time is the Very Best Time') is used as a musical commentary to these images, while Pasolini's voice-over can be heard uttering the last words from the script, which are ultimately an open question:

Un occidentale che va in India ha tutto ma in realtà non dà niente. L'India, invece, che non ha nulla, in realtà dà tutto. Ma che cosa?⁹

The pragmatic sense of religiosity Pasolini was referring to in his travelogue as quintessential to India – 'l'atmosfera propizia a qualsiasi spirito religioso pratico' – could be considered a possible answer to this final question, specifically when such religiosity allows a *transplant*, a sense of shared communion, tranquility, and joy. Having met Mother Teresa in Calcutta, whom he describes by quoting Michelangelo and Proust, Pasolini writes that never had the spirit of Christ seemed so vivid and sweet to him: it was what he called a 'perfectly successful transplant', 'bontà vera', a matter of *praxis*:

Ho conosciuto dei religiosi cattolici e devo dire che mai lo spirito di Cristo mi è parso così vivido e dolce: un trapianto splendidamente riuscito [...]. Suor Teresa è una donna anziana, bruna di pelle, perché è albanese, alta, asciutta, con due mascelle quasi virili, e l'occhio dolce, che, dove guarda, «vede». Assomiglia in modo impressionante a una famosa sant'Anna di Michelangelo: e ha nei tratti impressa la bontà vera, quella descritta da Proust nella vecchia serva Francesca: la bontà senza aloni sentimentali, senza attese, tranquilla e tranquillizzante, potentemente pratica.¹⁰

If in 1960 Pasolini was very positive towards religiosity and Christianity in India, in 1970 he would be much more critical towards the role of religion and specifically of Christianity in Africa. In an article of the early 1970s, 'Nell'Africa nera resta un vuoto fra i millenni', originally published in *Il Giorno*, Pasolini refers to the Christian missionaries (some Friulian friends among them) as agents of Western colonization and to religion as a pretext for neocolonial genocides. In this article,

referring to the Denka peoples in Sudan – which were first Christianized and then exterminated by the Muslim government – and to the Ibo genocide in Nigeria, Pasolini states without hesitation:

Il cristianesimo in Africa è stato, oggettivamente, prima il persuasore occulto del colonialismo ‘civilizzatore’, e poi uno dei pretesti, molto popolari, per gli attuali genocidi dell’era neocolonialistica.¹¹

In her book *Pasolini e l’Africa: Panmeridionalismo e rappresentazione dell’Africa postcoloniale*, Giovanna Trento refers to today’s ‘postcolonial studies’ – specifically addressing the dynamic role that Pasolini originally had in the 1960s and 1970s in representing ‘the other’, identified with the peasant panmeridional world. In her last chapter, *Convergenze postume*, Trento suggests that the character of the persecuted national hero (‘esponente del Partito politico di opposizione a Kado’) in Pasolini’s *Il padre selvaggio* can be interpreted as a reference to Antonio Gramsci.¹² Trento underlines the heterodoxical Marxist line that Pasolini represented, with his switch from Gramsci’s ‘subaltern’ to his own representations of the humble marginal subjects coming from the peasant and popular worlds. Referring to the above-quoted article, Trento ultimately links Gramsci and Pasolini, lamenting the fact that an empty space has been left in *postcolonial studies*, which needs to be filled:

Accorgersi oggi che nell’ambito dei *postcolonial studies* il lavoro di Pasolini, con le sue ascendenze gramsciane e le sfaccettate letture degli ‘universi alternativi’, non è stato preso sufficientemente in conto significa anche riempire un vuoto creatosi fra l’opera di Gramsci e la riscoperta internazionale di quest’ultimo avvenuta alla fine del Novecento. In questo senso Pasolini si pone come un intermezzo, collocandosi egli stesso in quel ‘vuoto’ da lui invocato nell’articolo *Nell’Africa nera resta un vuoto fra i millenni* per spiegare la condizione degli africani nella seconda metà del XX secolo.¹³

Pasolini’s focus on the humble marginalized subjects of the transnational, panmeridional peasant worlds can also be seen as an attempt to objectify his own marginality by sentimentally identifying with those subjects, their ethos, and their right to persist in their diversity.¹⁴ Again in 1970, in an article entitled ‘Che fare col buon selvaggio’, Pasolini listed several peoples that are not even considered to be or dignified as human in the Western civilized world: among them are the indigenous populations who were victims of genocide in Latin America and the

Denka and Masai in Africa. Switching to issues of gender and emancipation in the Western industrialized world, and making an observation that relates gender and race, Pasolini finally states that the Western concept of dignity is assumed as bourgeois, white, and virile:

La dignità umana per noi borghesi è la dignità virile; anche la donna, nella sua volontà di emancipazione, ha, per coazione, come scopo quello di fruire per diritto e mimesi della dignità virile (così come un negro Americano medio lotta per essere simile a un *executive* bianco).¹⁵

Anticipating the present debate on queer theory¹⁶, Pasolini here clearly analyzes the foundations of racism in terms of gender; it is the imposition of a unique model of reproduction, parenthood, and virility that produces the most traumatic forms of racism:

Questa identificazione della dignità umana con la dignità virile è il fondamento del razzismo [...]. La dignità virile bianca e non bianca si fonda su religioni monoteiste [...] Un indù non ha la dignità virile di un europeo o di un musulmano: i modelli a cui egli si adegua sono altri da quelli forniti dal prepotente e ottuso Dio Genitore.¹⁷

Despite this identification of a colonial and racist element in the superimposition of monotheistic religions upon the marginalized indigenous subjects, Pasolini's praise of Christian pragmatism and his adhesion to its radical message of identification with the humble and subaltern classes had been clearly stated in a 1968 letter to Giulia Maria Crespi. Here Pasolini wrote that his contemporary hero would be Camilo Torres, the pioneer of liberation theology, a Colombian Catholic priest from a well-to-do family. Torres, who espoused direct involvement by priests in revolutionary activity, took up arms with the Colombian guerrillas and was a prototype of a growing phenomenon in Latin America: the guerrilla-priest. Killed in his first battle, Pasolini fully embraces Torres' language of action:

Se io dovessi scegliere il mio eroe non sceglierei certo Che Guevara nè Mao: sceglierei Camillo Torres. Che ne direbbe della pace, Camillo Torres. Camillo Torres ha parlato della pace facendo la Guerra. Ne ha parlato, cioè, attraverso il linguaggio dell'azione.¹⁸

Beginning in the 1960s, Pasolini endorsed Christ's language of action; he portrayed it in his cinematic narrations and descriptions.

In his *Pasolini and Death: A Purely Intellectual Thriller*, Giuseppe Zigaina stated that the year 1960 demarcates an evolution in Pasolini's poetics and experimental research. It is a fact that 1960 was the year that Pasolini quit literature – although never poetry – to devote himself almost entirely to cinema. In fact, Zigaina sees in the figure of the *imitatio Christi* before the world Pasolini's 'written language of reality' through film.¹⁹ His was a process of identification with the Christ of Matthew – by no means a pacifist, as Pasolini made clear in the portrayal in his 1964 movie, *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo*.²⁰

In fact, Pasolini believed that, although the Catholic Church had committed many mistakes, the biggest would be to 'accettare passivamente la propria liquidazione da parte di un potere che se la ride del Vangelo'.²¹

If, in the 1960s and 1970s, neo-capitalism, neocolonialism, and commodification determined the new global economies, it was only by refusing worldly temporal power that the Church as an historical institution could play a leading role against consumerism and its totalitarian power over human bodies and could become a non-authoritarian guide for those all over the world who resisted and refused to submit to the new financial and military powers. In his 1974 article 'Lo storico discorsetto di Castelgandolfo', Pasolini referred to the 'intero corso della storia della Chiesa cattolica, cioè della storia umana (eurocentrica e culturocentrica)'²² and to Pope Paul VI's sincere pessimism about the possibilities of the Church's regaining an active role of resistance. Pasolini, who had started his article with some embarrassment, referring to an uncanny picture of Paul VI 'con in testa una corona di penne di Sioux, circondato da un gruppetto di "Pellerossa" in costume tradizionali',²³ showed instead a certain dystopian hope here and envisioned a possibility for opposition to the new world order:

La Chiesa potrebbe essere la guida, grandiosa ma non autoritaria, di tutti coloro che rifiutano (e parla un marxista, proprio in quanto marxista) il nuovo potere consumistico che è completamente irreligioso; totalitario; violento; falsamente tollerante, anzi, più repressivo che mai; corruttore; degradante (mai più di oggi ha avuto senso l'affermazione di Marx per cui il capitale trasforma la dignità umana in merce di scambio). È questo rifiuto che potrebbe dunque simboleggiare la Chiesa: ritornando alle origini, cioè all'opposizione e alla rivolta.²⁴

Pasolini certainly is a 'European writer', as his Eurocentric cultural references show (in India, Michelangelo, Proust, and Bach) and as Moravia defined him in an interview with Renzo Paris concerning *L'odore dell'India*,²⁵ yet his were global analyses of the dynamics of war and peace during the years of the Cold War. For instance, in 1960, on his journey to India, Pasolini found the central themes that he would develop concerning what was, at the time, the so-called 'Third World': inspired by that trip he would immerse himself in a conundrum of different projects, *note*, and *appunti* until the end of his life.

In his 1968 *Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo* he listed his recurring themes: (1) in Africa, the cultural clash between white and black civilizations; (2) nationalism in the Middle East; (3) South American guerrillas; (4) 'dropping out' in North American ghettos (racial segregation, self-exclusion and violence); and (5) hunger (starvation) and religion in India. In the concluding footnote to the text for his Indian movie (*Nota al Film Sull'India*), Pasolini explains that India can be considered both an exception and a common sample, in view of the enormity of its problems and contradictions; he further notes that the idea for these *Notes for a Poem on the Third World* came to him while he was in India filming a documentary whose subject was the search for locations for this story:

L'idea di questi *Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo*, mi è venuta girando in India un documentario che aveva come soggetto i sopralluoghi per un film di questa storia. [...] l'India da una parte non mi si è presentata come un paese 'tipico' del Terzo Mondo [...] dall'altra parte gli altri problemi comuni con tutto il Terzo mondo, hanno in India proporzioni così vaste e inafferrabili. [...] Ridurrei dunque il film indiano ai temi fondamentali della Religione e della Fame.²⁶

In the 1960s, Pasolini had an ambition to provide a global perspective – and southern Italy and northern Europe, in their dynamics of internal immigration, were also included and listed in these notes for a poem on the Third World:

Non mancheranno anche altri ambienti tra questi cinque fondamentali – per es., l'Italia del Sud, o le zone minerarie dei grandi paesi nordici con le baracche degli immigrati italiani, spagnoli, arabi, ecc.²⁷

With *La rabbia* (1963), a filmic poem (in prose and poetry) concerning the years of the Cold War, Pasolini had also offered a global glance on

the uninterrupted state of war and emergency throughout the planet and isolated a list of oppositions, visible in Europe, North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, Israel), Cuba, etc.: war versus peace; neocolonialism versus genocides; conformism versus individuals and individual choices.²⁸ But it was only with his analysis of the situation on the African continent that Pasolini found the complex yet united theory of violence and democracy that he developed poetically through his adaptation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in Africa.²⁹ In his 'Nota per l'ambientazione dell' Orestide' in Africa' (1968–69), he wrote that the issue of democracy in Africa was the most relevant and contemporary problem of the 1960s – the years of *négritude*, of the Third World, and of what he calls a necessary metamorphosis of the Erinyes, or Furies, into Eumenides. The terrible and fantastic divinities of African prehistory must undergo the same process as the Erinyes and become Eumenides:

Il problema veramente scottante e attuale, ora, negli anni Sessanta – anni del terzo Mondo e della Negritudine – è la trasformazione delle Erinni in Eumenidi [...]. Le terribili e fantastiche divinità della Preistoria Africana devono subire lo stesso processo delle Erinni: e divenire Eumenidi.³⁰

Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*, which treats the Afro-Asiatic roots of Classical civilization, had not been published yet, and Pasolini referred instead to a *White Athena* in order to translate Aeschylus' myth into the African cultural landscapes that he found whilst travelling and filming in Tanzania and Uganda.³¹ That is to say, Pasolini's Eurocentric cultural system is never dismissed or denied: he is a white, European, Italian intellectual and he refers to Greek tragedies as to the core of Western identity and civilization. In a sense, after India, even in Africa he's still looking for a *transplant*: if the very concept of democracy was born in Athens, and Athena is the Goddess of Justice, then Athena is white, but who cares? She is still the symbol Pasolini chose to use in order to suggest a possible transplant that would favour the metamorphosis and progressive development the African continent needs to undergo in opposition to violence and war and would be the only possible heritage coming from European colonialism.

In *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana* (1968–70), released only after Pasolini's death, he documented the theme of civil war using archival footage of the Biafra War, also known as the Nigerian Civil War. In his *L'Atena Bianca* (1968), Pasolini clearly stated:

Il tema profondo dell'*Orestiade*, almeno per noi lettori moderni, è il passaggio tra un periodo storico 'medievale' e un periodo storico 'democratico'; indi della trasformazione delle Menadi (dee medievali del terrore esistenziale) in Eumenidi (dee dell'irrazionalità in un mondo razionale) Se oggi, nell'Africa, accade qualcosa di simile, è indubbio che Atene (modello di forme democratiche) è il mondo bianco progressivo: e Atena, la Dea che ha insegnato a Oreste la democrazia, istituendo il primo tribunale umano e l'istituzione della votazione, è una dea Bianca.³²

Post-war Italy had also experienced this process of democratization and the passage from an irrational to a rational identity. In *Pilade*, the tragedy Pasolini had written in 1966 imagining a fictional continuation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, he specifically referred to the Italian resistance of 1943–45 – and to the opening of Ezra Pound's *Pisan Cantos* – lamenting the tragic end of the Italian peasant world.³³ As a matter of fact, the 1940s in Italy and Pasolini's Gramscian pedagogical mission and experience in Friuli and Rome found a transplant in Africa, as Giovanna Trento showed in her book on Pasolini and Africa:

Una delle ragioni principali che spinsero Pasolini verso il cosiddetto 'Terzo Mondo', e verso l'Africa in particolare, fu la valutazione che egli dette dei cambiamenti in corso allora nella società italiana, in cui il benessere aveva iniziato a modificare in modo irreparabile e irreversibile i comportamenti degli italiani, allontanandoli dalla vita contadina, dalle sue parlate, dai suoi costumi e dalla sua mentalità.³⁴

In the 1950s in Italy, survival was still a matter of guts, and Pasolini identified himself completely with the Roman lumpenproletariats and their desire for wealth. In *La Religione del mio tempo*, Pasolini associated himself with them:

Il loro desiderio di ricchezza è, così, banditesco, aristocratico. Simile al mio. [...] La nostra speranza è ugualmente ossessa: estetizzante, in me, in essi anarchica. Al raffinato e al sottoproletariato spetta la stessa ordinazione gerarchica dei sentimenti: entrambi fuori dalla storia, in un mondo che non ha altri varchi che verso il sesso e il cuore, altra profondità che nei sensi. In cui la gioia è gioia, il dolore dolore.³⁵

As a matter of fact, Pasolini had built his own freedom on the basis of his compulsions (to testify, to love, and to earn) throughout the years of Italy's Americanization, as he describes in the section entitled 'Tre ossessioni: testimoniare, amare guadagnare' in *La Religione del mio*

Tempo.³⁶ In the 1960s, Pasolini's freedom of movement and economic autonomy would be key to his own success as an independent intellectual, poet, and filmmaker. I personally find this aspect of Pasolini's biography very liberating, and I am not interested in moralizing – neither about wealth nor about desire – as has been done by others.³⁷ Pasolini lived a full life and underwent all possible metamorphoses, realizing his biggest dreams and suffering bitter disillusiones, by getting involved with reality in all its factiousness.³⁸

Moving towards a conclusion, I would now like to refer briefly to Pasolini's own critical (and ambiguous) relationship towards Italy's colonizer – the USA – and to the model of total consumption represented by the 'American Entropy', as he defined the new *status quo* following the end of historical fascism and World War Two in a short essay devoted to Andy Warhol. In 1975, Pasolini wrote a review of *Ladies and Gentlemen*, or the 'Drag Queen Paintings', Andy Warhol's exhibit at Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara, Italy, that same year. As he had done previously (in talking about India, Tanzania, Uganda, and Nigeria) here too Pasolini positioned himself as an intellectual and an artist addressing America and 'the sky of American Entropy' from a European, Eurocentric, Italian standpoint. Pasolini does not specify what he means by borrowing from physics the word *entropy*,³⁹ yet by associating this expression with the identity of Warhol's Drag Queens, he makes a statement that refers to the measure of molecular disorder and randomness of a system, as well as to spontaneous change:

The transvestites' names and surnames are not enough, their details of birth are irrelevant; they are absorbed in the uniqueness of the Person that prefigures them, settling next to other archetype Persons in the sky of American Entropy.⁴⁰

Pasolini asks for a dialogue with American artists (Man Ray, Warhol) and he specifically addresses Warhol with a question that comes from beyond a line of separation, implying division and oppositions of reality, identifying Europe and America as two antagonists mysteriously intertwined. If a message from post-War Europe implies division, a message from America comes from entropy and implies homogeneity, as is the case in archetypes. The model America imposes is mysteriously compact:

Can history be divided in Warhol's opinion? [...] Can a dividing line run between men? A message that reaches America from Europe implies all these divisions, these separations and oppositions of reality, and it is mysterious for this reason. Conversely, a message arriving in Europe from America implies unitariness, homogeneity and compactness. It comes from an entropy. And it is for this reason still more mysterious.⁴¹

Pasolini's conclusions isolate the *innocence* of an artist like Warhol within American entropy, along with his oxymoronic impotent liberty in representing the world and the 'sclerotic unity of the universe'. If the world cannot be grasped in its possible dialectics, the artist can still play with it in an innocent, insolent 'game'.⁴² This was the same game Pasolini was playing in his own factious reality, in the same global entropic universe, with his desperate vitality and love for the universe.

NOTES

- 1 See Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'La lingua scritta della realtà' (1966), in *Empirismo eretico*, in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull'arte*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 1, pp. 1503–40 (pp. 1504–05): 'L'avvento delle tecniche audiovisive, come lingue [...] come linguaggi espressivi o d'arte mette in crisi l'idea che probabilmente ognuno di noi, per abitudine, aveva di una identificazione tra poesia – o messaggio – e lingua. Probabilmente, invece – come le tecniche audiovisive inducono brutalmente a pensare – ogni poesia è translinguistica'. See also Pasolini, 'Il "cinema di poesia"' (1965), in *Empirismo eretico*, in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull'arte*, 1, pp. 1461–88 (p. 1476–77): 'Praticamente dunque, a un possibile livello linguistico comune fondato sugli "sguardi" alle cose, la differenza che un regista può cogliere tra sé e un personaggio, è psicologica e sociale. *Ma non linguistica* [...]. Quindi, se egli si immerge in un suo personaggio, e attraverso lui racconta la vicenda o rappresenta il mondo, non può valersi di quel formidabile strumento differenziante in natura che è la lingua. *La sua operazione non può* essere linguistica ma stilistica.'
- 2 Alberto Moravia, *Un'idea dell'India* (Milan: Bompiani, 1962).
- 3 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), p. 128.
- 4 Ibid.: 'If the second Italian writer could free himself of Europe as standard, he could grasp this dynamic relation of the common.'
- 5 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Romanzi e racconti*, ed. Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 1, pp. 1226–27: 'Era il santone. Chissà dove andava. Camminava impettito, nudo come un verme, con lo zazzellone e il barbone neri che andavano su e giù [...]: camminava altezzoso col petto in fuori, senza degnare di uno sguardo i fedeli. Sembrava un capoufficio che passasse per il corridoio tra gli uscieri e i fattorini. E quando un povero negretto, umile umile,

- gli si accostò e gli offerse la solita sigaretta accesa, egli non si voltò nemmeno non solo a ringraziarlo, ma nemmeno a guardarlo, quell'imbecille.'
- 6 Ibid., pp. 1227–28.
- 7 Ibid., p. 1227: 'È un fatto, comunque, che in India l'atmosfera è favorevole alla religiosità, come dicono anche i referti più banali.'
- 8 Ibid., p. 1284.
- 9 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Appunti per un film sull'India*, in *Per il Cinema*, ed. by Walter Siti and Franco Zabagli, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 2001), I, p. 1072.
- 10 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *L'odore dell'India*, pp. 1228–29.
- 11 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Nell'Africa nera resta un vuoto di millenni', first published in *Il Giorno*, March 20 1970, rpt. in *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana* (Bologna: Cineteca di Bologna, 2009), p. 21: 'Ho conosciuto nel Sudan [...] dei deliziosi piccoli missionari (tra cui un mio vecchio compagno di elementari friulano). [...] I Denka sono dunque in piccola parte cristianizzati [...]. I Denka sono stati quasi completamente distrutti dalle truppe del governo centrale, musulmano [...]. Anche gli Ibo in Nigeria erano non-musulmani (cioè feticisti e quindi in parte cristianizzati).'
- 12 Giovanna Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa: Panmeridionalismo e rappresentazione dell'Africa postcoloniale* (Milan: Mimesis, 2010), p. 241: 'La tragica esemplarità di ciò che Gramsci subì sotto il fascismo fu fondamentale nel secondo dopoguerra per costruire un nuovo senso di "italianità" nel Paese. Negli anni Sessanta, la figura di questo pensatore e uomo politico, la ricerca di una "poesia civile", il rapporto attivo tra poesia e politica costituiscono ancora riferimenti essenziali per Pasolini, nel suo difficile tentativo di descrivere la formazione politica e poetica di un giovane africano (Davidson) che si affaccia negli anni Sessanta (come Pasolini negli anni Quaranta) alla poesia e all'impegno per contribuire alla costruzione di un nuovo stato. Tuttavia è nella dimensione poetica, più che in quella politica, che – sia per Davidson che per Pasolini – è possibile un riscatto.'
- 13 Ibid., p. 247.
- 14 See *ibid.*, p. 247: 'Ma Pasolini – borghese di successo e "frocio" di periferia, "mammona" e viaggiatore, Cristiano e comunista, perseguitato e vincitore – è consapevole di guardare e di descrivere l'"altro"?'
- 15 Pasolini, *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana*, p. 23.
- 16 I am grateful to Manuele Gagnolati, whose article 'Pier Paolo Pasolini's Queer Performance: *La Divina Mimesis* between Dante and *Petrolio*', in *Corpus xxx: Pasolini, Petrolio, Salò*, ed. by Davide Messina (Bologna: CLUEB, 2012), pp. 134–64, engages a dialogue between Pasolini's last works and Lee Edelman's volume *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 17 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Che fare col buon selvaggio', in *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana*, pp. 23–24.
- 18 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Lettera a Giulia Maria Crespi', in *Per il cinema*, II, p. 2758. On Camilo Torres and Pasolini, see *Per il cinema*, p. 3234: 'Camilo Torres Restrepo (1929–1966), religioso colombiano, dopo aver studiato e insegnato a

Lovanio, tornò in patria e organizzò il Frente Unido del Pueblo, nel 1965 aderì alla guerriglia di tipo castrista e restò ucciso in combattimento; Pasolini lo ricorda nel dibattito su *Orgia* tenuto al Teatro Gobetti di Torino proprio il 29 novembre 1968.¹⁹

- 19 See Giuseppe Zigaina, 'Pasolini and Death: A Purely Intellectual Thriller', in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Pier Paolo Pasolini and Death*, (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2005), p. 35.
- 20 On the radicality of Pasolini's Christ, see Thomas Merton, *Opening the Bible* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1986), pp. 38–43: 'The Bible is everybody's book, and the unbeliever can prove himself as capable as anyone else of finding new aspects of it which the believer would do well to take seriously. Take, for example, the case of the Italian Marxist Pasolini and his extraordinary response to the Gospel of St. Matthew [...]. The value of the film lay in its extraordinary sincerity and authenticity. To begin with, it was obviously made on a very small budget indeed [...]. The result was a kind of cinematic passion play, with a visual authenticity approaching the Florentine or Sieneese painting of the 15th century (though without color). The contrast with the vulgar and lavish artificiality of Hollywood was, to say the least, impressive. Many Christians who saw the film criticized it, not because it was unfaithful to the Gospel, but because it presented a picture of Christ that frightened them. The Christ of Pasolini, young, dark, splendidly aloof, dreadfully serious, was obviously not the sweet, indulgent Jesus of late nineteenth-century Church art [...]. The Christ of Pasolini was not indulgent, he was demanding. He was not soft, he was unyielding. On certain points one felt he could be almost merciless. The fact that so many Christians could be shocked by this is itself shocking, for this picture of Christ obviously rested on a very real and open-minded reading of Saint Matthew! The only Gospel that is tougher is perhaps Mark's. Have we forgotten that love can be demanding, exacting, unyielding? Especially when it encounters indifference to the sufferings of others and a disposition to cheat and exploit them without mercy? The Christ of St Matthew can rigorously demand that men have mercy on one another as the only way to make them ready to receive mercy.'
- 21 Pier Paolo Pasolini, '22 settembre 1974. Lo storico discorsetto di Castelgandolfo', in *Scritti corsari*, in *Scritti sulla politica e sulla società*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), p. 353.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 350–51
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 350: 'un quadretto folcloristico estremamente imbarazzante quanto più l'atmosfera appariva familiare e bonaria'.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 353–54.
- 25 See 'L'esperienza dell'India: Un'intervista di Renzo Paris ad Alberto Moravia', in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *L'odore dell'India*, (Parma: Guanda, 2005), p. 119: 'Del resto Pasolini non rifiutava affatto l'Europa, tanto è vero che era già scrittore europeo prima ancora di essere uscito dall'Italia.'
- 26 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo', in *Per il cinema*, II, p. 2686.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 2679.

- 28 See Pier Paolo Pasolini, *La Rabbia*, ed. by Roberto Chiesi (Bologna: Cineteca di Bologna, 2009).
- 29 See Monica Centanni and Margherita Rubino, 'Gassmann, Pasolini e i filologi', essay-documentary, Italy 2005, <http://www.engramma.it/engramma_revolution/49/049_saggi_centanni_rubino.html> [accessed 20 May 2012]. In 1960 Vittorio Gassman assigned the task of translating Aeschylus' *Oresteia* to Pasolini and planned to stage it at the Greek theatre in Syracuse. This essay-documentary examines letters, theatre chronicles, newspapers, films, TV interviews of the period and unpublished material from the Archive of the Museum and the Centro Studi INDA in Syracuse. See also Massimo Fusillo, *La Grecia Secondo Pasolini. Mito e Cinema* (Rome: Carocci, 2007 [1996]), pp. 178–84, and Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa*, pp. 179–210.
- 30 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Nota per l'ambientazione dell'Orestide in Africa', in *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana*, p. 31.
- 31 Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987). On the topic of Black and White and the Classical world, see Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa*, p. 185: 'Paralleli fra mondo classico e africano sono stati più volte ricercati per "nobilitare" i canoni africani. Ma si potrebbe controbattere – con le parole di Stephen Howe – che lo slogan *Black Athena* è tanto storicamente falso quanto lo è quello *White Egypt*. Tagliare i ponti fra l'Egitto faraonico e il mondo classico, rivendicando per l'Africa e gli africani un legame esclusivo con la grande civiltà egiziana (a cui l'Etiopia sarebbe indissolubilmente legata) rappresenta – semplificando – una delle strategie principali di quello che comunemente definiamo Afrocentrismo (come espresso da Cheick, Anta Diop o Martin Bernal).'
- 32 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'L'Atena Bianca', in *Appunti per un'Orestide Africana*, p. 29.
- 33 See Ezra Pound's *The Pisan Cantos*, *Canto LXXIV*, in *I Cantos*, ed. by Mary de Rachewiltz and Maria Luisa Ardizzone (Milan: Mondadori, 1985), p. 838: 'The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's/bent shoulders'.
- 34 Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa*, p. 145.
- 35 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Li osservo questi uomini educati', in *La religione del mio tempo*, in *Tutte le poesie*, ed. by Walter Siti, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 2003), 1, p. 936. On *Pilade*, see Christoph Holzhey's essay in this volume.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 431–41.
- 37 See Walter Siti, 'Il mito Pasolini', in *Micromega*, 6 (November 2005), pp. 135–39, (p. 137): 'Per lui la cultura era una pellicola che si poteva staccare dalla vita a piacimento. Esattamente come sta facendo il desiderio consumistico; in questo senso, Pasolini non era un avversario del consumismo, ne era un modello.'
- 38 See the analysis Paola Colaiacono devoted to Pasolini and fashion in her *Factious Elegance: Pasolini and Male Fashion* (Venice: Marsilio, 2007).
- 39 See <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/189035/entropy>> [accessed 20 May 2012].
- 40 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Andy Warhol's Ladies and Gentlemen', in Andy Warhol, *Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: Starstedt Gallery, 2009), p. 6.

41 Ibid., p. 5.

42 Ibid.: 'Warhol's message for a European intellectual is about a sclerotic unity of the universe, in which the only liberty is that of the artist who, by substantially despising that universe, plays with it. // Representation of the world excludes all possible dialectics. At the same time it is violently aggressive and desperately impotent. There is therefore, in the perversity of its cruel, astute and insolent "game", a substantial and incredible innocence.'

Francesca Cadel, 'Outside Italy: Pasolini's Transnational Visions of the Sacred and Tradition', in *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction: Pasolini's Multistable Subjectivities, Geographies, Traditions*, ed. by Luca Di Blasi, Manuele Gagnolati, and Christoph F. E. Holzhey, *Cultural Inquiry*, 6 (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2012), pp. 151–65
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