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ABSTRACT: Despite his 'Third World' and Marxist sympathies, Pier Paolo Pasolini showed, throughout his life, strong poetic and political attention for national narratives and the building of Italianness. However, Pasolini's 'desperate love' for Italy and Italianness – which I consider one of the basic elements of his poetic universe – can be fully grasped only if we read it in the light of his fluid, transnational, and pan-meridional approach.

PASOLINI AND PAN-MERIDIONAL ITALIANNES

Giovanna Trento

INTRODUCING ITALIANNES AND THE PAN-SOUTH

Despite his ‘Third World’ and Marxist sympathies,¹ Pier Paolo Pasolini showed, throughout his life, strong poetic and political attention for national narratives and the building of Italianness. In fact, Pasolini repeatedly confronted issues that had been essential for the construction of a sense of Italianness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; such as: the dualistic theorization of the Southern Question (*la questione meridionale* that he overturned and reused); the issue of the Italian national language and the use of ‘minor’ languages and local dialects;² the strengthening of the post-unification sense of Italianness through colonialism in Africa; and obviously Fascism, which appropriated and distorted many of the narratives and discourses upon which an unstable sense of Italianness had been built at the end of the nineteenth century.

However, Pasolini’s ‘desperate love’ for Italy and Italianness³ – which I consider one of the basic elements of his poetic universe – can be fully grasped only if we read it in the light of his fluid, transnational, and pan-meridional approach. Thanks to numerous epistemological, poetic, and political tools (including the post-Gramscian discourses on Italian subalternity and the influence of pan-Africanism), Pasolini was indeed able to build a deterritorialized and idealized never-ending South: the Pan-South (*Panmeridione*),⁴ meaning a fluid, non-geographical *topos* where ‘traditional’ values are used in non-traditional and subversive ways with the goal of resisting industrialization, mass media, and late-capitalist alienation.⁵ Africa and its Diaspora, in particular, played an essential political and aesthetic role in Pasolini’s transnational and pan-meridional *démarche* and his construction of the Pan-South.

This article will focus on the fact that Pasolini’s aesthetic, poetic, and political approach was marked by a complementary dichotomy between national and ‘local’ issues related to the building of Italianness and transnational and pan-meridional *topoi* marked by different – at times antithetic – factors (such as the pan-Africanist perspective and the

colonial memory). This article will also argue that such unstable and fruitful tension between the two elements in these binaries – a tension that also relies on autobiography and a complex relation to subalternity and alterity – is at the core of Pasolini's work as a whole and makes it still open and crucial today.

AFRICA AND THE PAN-SOUTH

Pasolini developed, throughout his life, a pan-meridional perspective that is evident in such works, among others, as the comprehensive 'Third World' project *Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo* (1968, published in 1981), the anticolonialist and antifascist essay 'La Resistenza negra' (1961),⁶ and the film *Appunti per un'Orestiade Africana* (1969–70), which refers to Afro-Classicism and Black Diaspora in pan-Africanist terms, with the aim of connecting postcolonial Africa to pre-Hellenic Greece. Starting from his very first 'South' (Friuli) onwards, Pasolini was indeed able osmotically to include, produce, and reproduce multiple 'Souths' (here 'South[s]' is not to be taken literally in strictly geographical terms). He thus constructed the Pan-South, which is an open, never-ending, non-geographical *topos* that is highly marked by different political, poetic, aesthetic, and erotic urges. The Pan-South is, in any case, Pasolini's repository of 'reality'⁷ and summarizes and conveys many of his values and goals, including the sense of sacredness and the search for a non-neurotic sexuality.

The notion of the Pan-South is able to combine and explain – within a Gramscian or, better, post-Gramscian frame – Pasolini's multiple and different interests in anticolonialist struggles and the 'Third World', as much as his love for peasantry, dialects, pre-modern societies, Rome's sub-proletarian suburbs, rural Friuli, urban Naples, the Arab world, and sub-Saharan Africa. According to such fluidity, continuity, and transnationality – which constitute important aspects of Pasolini's pan-meridional approach but are also accompanied by other complementary ones – Africa, like the suburbs of Rome, Naples, and all the so-called Third World, become for him a variation on the elemental Italian dialectal and rural world, so dearly loved and frequented by the poet in his Friulian youth.

Pasolini's construction of the Pan-South is interconnected to another fundamental aspect of his work and life: his search for and rela-

tion to alterity and subalternity. From his early Friulian poems to his posthumous novel *Petrolio*, approaching, describing, and ‘living’ the ‘other’ was, in fact, always crucial to him. However, the ‘other’ was for Pasolini an unstable, multifaceted and, at times, elusive icon that had many intellectual, political, poetic, erotic, aesthetic, and autobiographical connotations. So much so that the primitivistic, ever-young ‘other’ portrayed throughout Pasolini’s works can be, alternatively, the pan-meridional subaltern (the peasant, the *borgatario*, the African, the Jew, the marginal self, etc.) and the mirror of an unreachable and unwanted image of the writer himself, thus initiating a fruitful poetic chain of oxymorons.⁸

In 1958, ‘Alla Francia’ (one of Pasolini’s very first ‘African poems’) opened with a multiple, oxymoronic, idealized, African self-portrait of Pasolini himself,⁹ thus prefiguring many of the poetic, political, and autobiographical horizons that would characterize Pasolini’s Africa(s). Afterwards, Africa and its Diaspora allowed him to articulate in full his complex relations to subalternity and alterity by providing a wide range of crucial stimuli on marginality, colonialism and anticolonialism, neo-capitalism, transnationalism, sacredness, and the Black Atlantic.

Between the end of the 1950s and mid 1970s, Pasolini repeatedly portrayed Africa and Africans in many poems (‘La Guinea’, ‘Alla Francia’, ‘Frammento alla morte’, etc.),¹⁰ the script *Il padre selvaggio* (1962–1975),¹¹ the films *Appunti per un’Orestide Africana* and *Il fiore delle Mille e una notte* (1974, approximately one-third of which was filmed in the Horn of Africa), seminal writings like ‘La Resistenza negra’ and ‘Le mie Mille e una notte’ (1973),¹² and some crucial posthumous travelogues, such as ‘La grazia degli Eritrei’ (1968) and ‘Post-scriptum a “La grazia degli Eritrei”’ (1973).¹³

On many occasions Pasolini sympathized with anti-colonialist and antiracist movements, as in the already mentioned *Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo*, the drama *Calderòn* (1973),¹⁴ and the sketch *La rabbia* (1963, part of a homonymous film co-directed with Giovannino Guareschi). But even in his very last works – the film *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* and the unfinished novel *Petrolio* – which are apparently far from Southern, pan-meridional, and ‘Third World’ aesthetics, African images and characters play key roles, at least in terms of self-citation or abjuration (*abiura*),¹⁵ elements that strongly characterized Pasolini’s work as a whole.

But Pasolini's Africa and his Pan-South can also present themselves as mirrors of or substitutes for his beloved and corruptible 'wild home village' (*natio borgo selvaggio*, as Giacomo Leopardi put it), as it is evident in his 1962 'African poem' 'La Guinea', which – apart from referring to Negritude in pan-meridional terms – is first of all a homage to Italian peasantry and the village of Casarola, where the poet Attilio Bertolucci liked to spend his time. Thus, Pasolini's journey through Africa and the Pan-South must at times be read as a nostalgic and fantasy journey through pre-World War II Italy, bearing in mind that – according to him – in post-fascist Italy subaltern classes had been irremediably going through a dreadful and destructive 'anthropological mutation'.¹⁶

Antonio Negri (in an interview with Francesca Cadel) noted that Pasolini's 'aesthetic populism' (*populismo estetico*¹⁷) – based on Franciscan ideal models and a general sense of political and personal defeat – pushed him, particularly from 1968 onwards, to 'invent' the tendency of Italian society to move towards a new Fascism, meaning a completely negative form of postmodernity that Pasolini erroneously called Fascism and summarized in his last film *Salò*.¹⁸ Although Pasolini (who was born during Fascism and was raised in colonial and imperial Italy) was one of the most active and radical post-World War II antifascist Italian intellectuals, towards the end of his life he ended up casting a nostalgic gaze on how Italian subaltern classes and 'popular bodies' existed and acted before World War II and during Fascism – in other words, before they irremediably started sinking into the 'unreal' and alienated condition proper to late capitalism.¹⁹ Such a 'nostalgic' element and the (up to a certain extent, vain) search outside Italy for Italy's rural, peasant, and sub-proletarian universe and for the 'popular body' are among the basic aspects on which Pasolini's pan-meridional approach was built.²⁰

THE SOUTHERN QUESTION, COLONIALISM, AND THE BUILDING OF ITALIANNESS

Pasolini's work rotates around a very original and multifaceted (partly autobiographical, definitely political) discourse on alterity and subalternity. His poetic and political *démarche* was unique, very personal, autobiographically orientated, and often ahead of its time. Besides this, his *démarche* was also marked by other complementary aspects, being both impregnated with key transnational issues of his time (such as the Black

Question and anticolonialist struggles) and strongly influenced by 'local' Italian cultural and historical factors related to the building of Italianness both before and after Fascism.

First of all, Pasolini's constructions of alterity, subalternity, and the Pan-South must be read in light of the Italian post-war 'Gramscian renaissance'. Right after World War II, Italy's post-fascist and antifascist political and cultural 'national reconstruction' was strongly marked, at various levels, by the publication and 'rediscovery' of Antonio Gramsci. This original Marxist political thinker – born in Sardinia in 1891 and imprisoned under Fascism in 1926 – died in 1937 and then became Italy's post-war national icon of antifascism. As such, Gramsci had important repercussions in terms of politics, culture, and imagery on Italian society and became crucial for post-war Italy's self-representation in its entirety. Particularly effective was the symbolic appropriation of Gramsci as martyr to Fascism operated by the Italian Communist Party leader Palmiro Togliatti.²¹ In the 1950s, the centrality of Gramsci in Italian society as a symbolic political figure is clearly exemplified by Pasolini's mid-1950s poem *Le ceneri di Gramsci* (included in his homonymous collection of poems, published by Garzanti in 1957).

Gramsci's massive intellectual work was published in Italy from 1947 onwards.²² Gramsci confronted many crucial national political issues, including the Southern Question. The notion of the Southern Question arose in the 1860s with the unification of the country from the need to consider the social and economic problems of southern Italy as essential elements of the new Italian state and from the necessity of building up an 'exhaustive' and 'comprehensible' description of the South in a country that was finally unified. However, ever since the nineteenth century, the concept of the Southern Question contributed to emphasizing the gap between North and South – so much so that the image of southern Italy became increasingly homogeneous and the Italian South was finally perceived as the 'other'.²³ Thus, the North-South dichotomy, proper to the dualistic theorization of the Southern Question, finally crystallized the image of Italian alterity in the icon of the southern peasant without land, who became, at the same time, a carrying element of the national identity and the 'other inside the country'. The primitivistic, ever-young 'other' portrayed by Pasolini throughout his life and work certainly bears with it reminiscences of such an 'other inside the country', constructed from Italy's unification onwards.²⁴

Antonio Gramsci tackled the Southern Question in terms that provided the peasantry and Italian southern peasants with some agency and theoretical strength, not only within the plurality of Italian post-war Marxist discourses, but sometimes also outside Marxist groups.²⁵ The prominence given to Gramsci's approach strongly affected post-World War II Italian anthropology and ethnography, leading these disciplines to focus mostly upon Italian folklore, particularly that of the South. The 'Italian southern subaltern' thus became the fulcrum of a vast post-Gramscian anthropological and fictional literature that (thanks to Ernesto De Martino and others) devoted much attention to southern Italy, the peasantry, and its folklore.²⁶

Although Pasolini and Gramsci differed in many ways,²⁷ this post-World War II 'Gramscian renaissance' – even more than Gramsci's work itself – and the Italian debate around southern issues that stemmed from it had a strong impact on Pasolini's work, in particular on his approach to peasantry and dialects and on his construction of the Pan-South.²⁸ However, various texts by Pasolini pose the uncomfortable question of the essentialization of subaltern bodies and the crystallization of the 'primitive' pre-modern condition. Nonetheless, Pasolini was able to appropriate, overturn, and reinvent the dualistic theorization of the Southern Question, so much so that the Italian 'other inside the country' (the icon of the landless southern peasant) became for him, alternately, the African deterritorialized within the Pan-South (such as Zumurrud in his film *Il fiore delle Mille e una notte*) or the pan-meridional icon without class consciousness but endowed with the 'reality' of the 'popular body' (such as his friend and favourite actor Ninetto Davoli).²⁹

But, besides Marxist, Gramscian, and post-Gramscian influences, Pasolini also showed much interest in pre-fascist Italy, meaning the period during which the country's post-unification national narratives were built. In particular, in the early 1940s Pasolini devoted his university thesis and dissertation to the Italian poet Giovanni Pascoli (1855–1912).³⁰ Later on, in 1947 and 1955, Pasolini published two short essays on Pascoli, respectively *Pascoli e Montale* and *Pascoli*.³¹

Pascoli e Montale (1947), by setting a *trait d'union* between these two important and apparently different Italian poets (Giovanni Pascoli and Eugenio Montale), acknowledges Pascoli's contribution to the shape taken by the language of Italian poetry in the nineteenth century. *Pascoli* (1955) – written for the hundredth anniversary of Pascoli's birth

and published in the first issue of 'Officina' – provides a challenging (and to a certain extent political) approach to Pascoli's work that not only takes into consideration stylistic and psychological aspects, but also rotates around issues related to the nineteenth-century building of Italianness and highlights the role played by poets and intellectuals in Italian society.³² Although – according to Pasolini – Pascoli possesses an innovative drive (of which he was, by the way, mostly unaware), Pascoli is, ultimately, a 'modern' and bourgeois version of the 'Italian archetype'. Nonetheless Pascoli did provide a new model of the poet and intellectual that would survive for decades.³³

Pascoli is a text that allowed Pasolini to deal in an original way with various aesthetic and political issues that were on his agenda in those years. Towards the end of this short essay, Pasolini quoted a passage taken from Gramsci's *Letteratura e vita nazionale* that openly refers to both Pascoli and the writer and politician Enrico Corradini, that is to say, two crucial intellectuals of pre-fascist Italy who would articulate, in different ways, the centrality of nationalism in post-unification Italy.³⁴ In 1955, Pasolini, quoting Gramsci, indeed wrote:

Italian writers – Gramsci noted somewhat hastily – have been harmed by an intimate *apoliticism*, laced with a verbose national rhetoric. From this point of view, Enrico Corradini and Pascoli were more *simpatici*, with their professed and militant nationalism, since they attempted to resolve the traditional literary dualism between people and nation, though they also fell into other forms of rhetoric and oratory.³⁵

In the same essay – *Pascoli* – Pasolini's original critical approach to Pascoli stressed the latter's tensions between centre and periphery and between immobility, obsession, and experimentation.³⁶ In any case, Pasolini felt close to Pascoli mostly for other reasons: he considered Pascoli's poems very important for the shape taken later on by twentieth-century Italian poetry;³⁷ for both poets, the *poetica della parola*, the 'minor' languages and their musicality were central;³⁸ Pasolini appreciated and reused Pascoli's falsely ingenuous, magical and highly artificial world;³⁹ and he felt bound to Pascoli by a 'human fraternity' (*fraternità umana*) that went beyond Pascoli's stylistic and formal choices.⁴⁰ But in *Pascoli*, Pasolini also pointed out that Pascoli and his 'sentimental life' were irremediably marked by 'a childish and formless goodness that, in order to become somehow plastic, needed Christian or socialist nominal applications'.⁴¹

It should not be forgotten, though, that in 1911 Pascoli, despite his socialist sympathies, delivered a speech called *La grande proletaria si è mossa* (first published in *La Tribuna* on 27 November 1911 and often republished), meant to support the Libyan campaign and Italian colonialism in Africa.⁴² The occupation of Libya was, indeed, supported not only by Italian nationalist and conservative groups, but also by some groups and individuals with socialist sympathies. Pascoli's *La grande proletaria si è mossa* evoked Italy's efforts of nation-building through the Risorgimento and colonialism. It praised the ancestry of Rome, recalled the trauma of Adwa (where Italians had been defeated in 1896 by 'barefooted Africans'), and welcomed the Libyan campaign as the 'national' solution for the painful international mass-migration of working-class Italians.⁴³ Similarly, Enrico Corradini and many right-wing intellectuals supported imperialism. Corradini believed that the welding of 'modernity' with the spiritual values of ancient Rome's heritage was the key trait in the search for a foundation myth for the very young Italian nation.⁴⁴

Despite the fact that a massive process of industrialization occurred relatively late in comparison to other European countries,⁴⁵ Italy began to accumulate small overseas possessions from the 1880s onwards. The Italian colonial enterprises resulted, to some extent, from British international policies and had 'imitative' motivations related to national and international prestige. Hence in Italy the *Oltremare* (meaning 'the colonies') did not just play an active role in jump-starting industrial capitalism; first of all, it had a symbolic and 'imagined' role in perceiving 'ourselves' as 'more Italian' and 'more modern' (an aspect that would be shared by Futurism and would be stressed by Fascism). Thus, on many levels, the *Oltremare* was one of the 'driving myths' of Italy since the unification of the country and before and during Fascism.⁴⁶ 'Italian Africa' did not only represent the 'elsewhere', since it was also instrumental to the self-representation of Italy. This became quite evident in 1911, when – as has been said – many intellectuals proudly celebrated fifty years of unification and modernization of the country by stressing the myth of the 'greater Italy' (*La Grande Italia*) and strongly endorsing the Libyan campaign.⁴⁷

In Italy's former colonies, the memory of colonialism has remained vivid. Yet for decades, Italian historiography after World War II tended to exclude colonialism from national history, and the country was marked by a general oblivion towards its colonial past. This happened

for numerous, complex, and partly still unclear social and historical reasons,⁴⁸ including the difficulty of ‘digesting’ the fascist past and the lack of a proper decolonization process. Starting in the 1970s, historiography on this subject has slowly begun to develop, mostly thanks to Angelo Del Boca’s pioneering research.⁴⁹ In the last ten years, there has been an increasing international interest in the history of Italian colonialism, as well as in postcolonial studies.⁵⁰ However, many of its aspects remain unexplored, particularly those related to the history of culture.

But colonialist intellectual and cultural dimensions are essential to understanding fully the construction and ‘destruction’ of discourses and narratives on Italianness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As has been said, after the unification of the country and until the fall of Fascism, both colonialism in Africa and the dualistic theorization of the Southern Question had great symbolic relevance for Italy’s self-representation, the building of Italianness, and the country’s attempts at ‘modernization.’ These elements influenced, among others, the shape taken by Futurism⁵¹ and Fascism’s construction of a national popular culture.⁵² Both colonialism in Africa and the Southern Question, explicitly or implicitly, recur in Pasolini’s work as well.

Fascism coagulated and stressed many of the preoccupations of post-unification Italy; in the 1930s, it strongly stressed the symbolic centrality of the Ethiopian Campaign.⁵³ But ever since the nineteenth century, Italians had looked at the Horn of Africa ambiguously and constructed a cultural and scholarly ‘Mediterranean Africa’ that was based on the legacies of ancient Rome and Latin antiquity, was affected by the age-old presence of a non-Western form of Christianity in ‘Abyssinia’, was instrumental in ‘justifying’ Italian colonialism in North and Northeast Africa, and was influenced by the problems posed at home by the dualistic theorization of the Southern Question and by the mass-migration of working-class Italians overseas.⁵⁴ This was so much the case that the colonial Horn of Africa became the extreme southern Italy of and for a ‘greater Italy’, where landless peasants were supposedly going to find their pieces of land and become less subaltern.⁵⁵

In the 1930s Fascism promulgated, first of all in the Horn, a set of racist norms that opened the path to the wider racist legislation enacted in the metropole starting in 1938. Despite the fact that Fascism, through these norms, tried to stress the complete ‘otherness’ of Northeast Africa vis-à-vis Italy for political, strategic, and racist reasons, and

despite the already mentioned post-World War II Italian ‘colonial oblivion’, nonetheless, some notions, ideas, and scholarly constructions from the colonial past continued to operate throughout the twentieth century and survived until the 1970s. This becomes particularly evident on a close reading of Pasolini’s ‘Eritrean texts’ (which I will mention below), in particular his 1968 travelogue ‘La grazia degli Eritrei’, which stresses the ‘classical’ beauty of Eritreans, contains reminiscences of some nineteenth century missionary writings (Sapeto’s in particular), and vaguely alludes to Giuseppe Sergi’s early-twentieth-century anthropological theory of the *Homo eurafrikanus* and to Carlo Conti Rossini’s 1916 study *Principi di diritto consuetudinario dell’Eritrea* on forms of land tenure in the region.⁵⁶

Pasolini was not only an intellectual who, in post-war Italy, devoted much attention to Africa and Africans, but he was also the one who, after Italy’s loss of its African colonies, most continuously and significantly addressed Italian colonialism in the Horn of Africa, and dared – exceptionally for his time – to describe Eritrea as a former Italian colony.⁵⁷ Pasolini’s Africa(s) have multiple facets and different nuances; among them a somewhat homogeneous Eritrean corpus can be detected, one which is particularly far from the *engagé* and Marxist attitudes that characterize some other African works of his (such as the essay ‘La Resistenza negra’ and the project ‘Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo’).

Pasolini’s ‘Eritrean texts’ include two posthumous travelogues and a long article that describe Eritrea and Eritreans: ‘La grazia degli Eritrei’ (1968, published in 1981), ‘Post-scriptum a “La grazia degli Eritrei”’ (1973, published in 1981), and ‘Le mie Mille e una notte’ (1973). *Il fiore delle Mille e una notte* (1974) should be added to this list (as mentioned before, approximately one-third of it was filmed in the Horn of Africa). Moreover (as has also been said), Pasolini’s last works – the film *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* and the unfinished novel *Petrolio* – explicitly or implicitly refer to Eritrea and Eritreans, at least in terms of self-quotation from the three writings mentioned above.⁵⁸

Pasolini’s ‘Eritrean texts’ are very original, but also somewhat ‘politically incorrect’ and disturbing. They bring up complex issues related to the ambivalence of the (apparently) dismissed Italian colonial memory, the use of ethnography and autobiography, Fascism, and much more. Although we won’t have the opportunity here to delve deep into this exceptional aspect of Pasolini’s work, let us read, for instance, how

his article 'Le mie *Mille e una notte*', somewhere between blitheness and provocation, describes Italians who were still living in Eritrea at the beginning of 1970s, including some 'old fascists' portrayed in somewhat benevolent terms:

Among the few 'new' Italians who are now making large fortunes of a 'transnational' type, next to those already famous ones such the Barattolos (cotton) and the Melottis (beer), and the 'old' Italians, who have been here since the time when Eritrea was an Italian colony (and among these we also find the 'very old' who have been Eritrean for generations, that is, since the time of Crispi), there is a group of 'intermediate' Italians with, well, intermediate tasks. For example the teaching body. Or the diplomatic corps. This is a group of people which is strangely likeable (to tell the truth, even any possible 'fascism' of those naively nostalgic 'old' Italians is not among the most detestable: it is a curious and quite funny fossil [...]).⁵⁹

But Pasolini problematically ascribes even to Eritreans an almost benevolent gaze onto Fascism, as we read in 'La grazia degli Eritrei': '[Eritreans] judge the wrongs done to them (for instance the fascist ones) without getting involved in them, meaning without becoming partners in rancour'.⁶⁰ In any case, these passages, as much as other ones taken from Pasolini's 'Eritrean texts', operate a disturbing but fruitful collision between Pasolini's already mentioned 'reinvention' of Fascism and his representation of colonialism.⁶¹ What is essential in Pasolini's 'Eritrean texts' is the fact that, despite being difficult and disturbing, they provide unique and precious tools to retrace and rewrite the underlying continuity between pre-fascist colonialism, Fascism, and postcolonial representations of Italian colonial Africa.

THE 'OTHER' AND THE 'SELF': PAN-MERIDIONALLY ITALIAN

In spite of some preliminary difficulties Pasolini faced in finding the appropriate words to describe Eritrea and Eritreans (he stated indeed: 'As far as I know, no words exist in Italian to aptly describe the architecture of Asmara, Keren, and Agordat: the colonial style is perfectly inexpressible.'⁶²), his 'Eritrean texts' did provide accurate and beautiful descriptions of Eritrea and Eritreans – but descriptions which are sometimes ambiguously meant to be also descriptions of Italy, meaning the metropole. Moreover, several passages in Pasolini's Eritrean corpus show the ambiguity existing between Pasolini's complacent (or ironic)

reuse of colonial stereotypes and his desire of beauty and surprise in contemplating and describing Eritrea and Eritreans.⁶³

Although Pasolini's numerous, rich, and problematic forays into the Horn of Africa have been long underestimated, or even forgotten, by most scholars,⁶⁴ his expeditions to other 'southern regions' of our planet have been the object of studies and discussions.⁶⁵ As far as his descriptions of India and Indians are concerned,⁶⁶ in 2004, Pasolini was accused by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri of being Eurocentric and, ultimately, self-referential. According to them, Pasolini was able to grasp the 'other', the 'non-Western', only by recurring to his own Europeaness, seen as the universal standard, starting from which Pasolini was able to notice in India only what could be assimilated to Italy and, ultimately, 'looked like home'.⁶⁷

Although some orientalist and paternalistic traits are definitely present in Pasolini's work, I think that Pasolini's *regard* on alterity is richer and more complex. Indeed, Pasolini was a performer, meaning that he performed and re-performed the poetic universes he was building up. He was *engagé* in the sense that he engaged himself, even physically, in his work; and in so doing, he managed to combine aesthetics and politics. In fact, blatantly and courageously, Pasolini engaged decisively in autobiography, which, as with Michel Leiris,⁶⁸ allowed him to mix levels of anthropological observation and fictional literature, thus avoiding any Manichean simplifications. Pasolini duly manifested the crisis of the 'observer/observed' dichotomy and centred his work on a rapport with the 'other' that was not resolved in clearly distinct categories of 'self' and 'other than one's self'. Thus, the 'other' (the African, the Indian, the pan-meridional self) in Pasolini is a somewhat elusive being, stuck in an eternal primitivism which, at the same time, presupposes as its constitutive element an undesirable identification of the author with the object of his desire; undesirable because, in the moment in which the identification with the 'other', the eternal youngster, should take place, Pasolini would see his own oxymoronic motor of corruption, lack of redemption, and poetry nullify itself.

In Pasolini the construction of the 'other' is thus also the construction of an idealized (although ambiguous) image of the 'self',⁶⁹ an image that – as much as his work in its entirety – is based on complementarity, being 'highly Italian' and 'highly transnational' at the same time. Consequently, it is not a surprise that in Pasolini the constructions and representations of the Pan-South happened also through a very

close relationship with his native country and through the poetic appropriation and ‘reinvention’ of it (starting from the Friulian village of Casarsa, *fontana di rustico amore*).

Even the already mentioned notion of *corpo popolare* (‘popular body’), which is rooted in Pasolini’s representations of Italian subaltern classes and the *ragazzi*, is also highly transnational and pan-meridional, as embodied by two characters interpreted in the 1970s by an African-Italian young woman Pasolini met in Asmara, Ines Pellegrini.⁷⁰ In *Il fiore delle Mille e una notte* the slave Zumurrud is an icon of subalternity: a black African female slave located somewhere in the fluidity of Pasolini’s Pan-South. She is assertive and has some agency, being blessed with the joy and the ‘reality’ that only belong to subaltern classes and are constitutive of the ‘popular body’.⁷¹ In *Salò*, the African servant – played, once again, by Ines Pellegrini – is the last possible incarnation of the ‘grace’ of the ‘popular body’ (her first, brief portrait in the garden of the villa echoes Pasolini’s previous travelogue ‘La grazia degli Eritrei’). Moreover, she embodies Pasolini’s ‘Third World’ and his interest in anti-colonialist struggles, as becomes evident in the scene of her killing. Towards the end of the film, the killing of the two lovers – the African servant and the Italian partisan executed by fascists⁷² – proposes a subtle play of self-citations and abjurations.⁷³ In any case, this important scene, by implicitly referring to Pasolini’s 1961 essay ‘La Resistenza negra’ (which had already established a parallel between anti-colonialist struggles and poetry and the partisan Resistance to Fascism), stresses once again the strong ties between transnational issues and Italian ones, ties on which Pasolini’s work decidedly relies – so much so that Pasolini managed to confront ‘hyper-Italian’ issues (Catholicism included) through a transnational and pan-meridional gaze⁷⁴. This is the case of his script *San Paolo* (written between 1968 and 1974),⁷⁵ which has a transatlantic setting and repeatedly refers to the Atlantic slave-trade. Such transnational elements manage to mitigate and question some conservative traits that, in any case, are present in *San Paolo*.⁷⁶

Pasolini’s strong, complex, and sometimes conflicting ties with Italy and Italianness pushed Italo Calvino in 1974 to accuse him of mourning the petty ‘Italietta’.⁷⁷ Despite such accusation, in Pasolini’s work as a whole transnational and pan-meridional elements are fundamental, as becomes particularly evident in ‘Sinieciosi della diaspora’, a rarely quoted poem that was first published in 1970 in the review *Nuovi*

Argomenti (a few years before Calvino's accusation) and then included in Pasolini's collection *Trasumanar e organizzar* (1971).

'Sinieciosi della diaspora' is the product of Pasolini's interest in the Jewish and Black conditions – an interest he had already developed in the 1960s in his collection *Poesia in forma di rosa* (1964), above all in the poem 'La realtà'.⁷⁸ 'Sinieciosi della diaspora' first associates Blacks and Jews; then, towards the end of the poem, it depicts a diasporic, oxymoronic, and transnational image of 'steady instability': 'la pianta trapiantata, dalle radici scoperte' ('the transplanted plant with exposed roots').⁷⁹ In so doing, Pasolini managed to perceive that the transatlantic slave trade and the Jewish wanderings were comparable to one another, to foresee that these collective experiences would later be considered essential for the (re)reading of 'modernity', and to prefigure the centrality assumed by the diasporic condition in the late-twentieth century. Thus, 'Sinieciosi della diaspora' anticipated the late twentieth-century broader use of the notion of Diaspora (as articulated by social scientists Paul Gilroy and James Clifford, among others⁸⁰) by referring to both the Black and the Jewish conditions in transnational terms.⁸¹

The complex tension existing in Pasolini between Italy and the Pan-South – a tension that has at its core the problem of time, history, and the Black Question in transnational terms (as would also occur a few years later in *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana*⁸²) – was highlighted by Pasolini himself in 1966 in his article 'L'altro volto di Roma':

The problem of shacks, mud, destitution and dust, is not a specifically Italian problem: it is one associated with the culture of Neorealism only because it was Neorealism which first discovered it, but then left it as it was: that is, a specifically Italian problem. Instead it is a problem facing more than half of humanity, that humanity, which today is beginning to impact on history, bringing enormous imbalances, both in terms of practice and in terms of ideas. This humanity's war was fought in Russia in 1917, and now in Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, and perhaps, above all, in the heart of the United States of America, where, indeed, the Black problem is not a specifically American problem, but sums up a situation which is typical of the modern world as a whole; a situation whose historical significance is not less than that of industrialization, the employment of technology, automation, mass culture.⁸³

As this article argues – and as highlighted in the above quote – in Pasolini we experience an original, fruitful, and sometimes problematic coexistence of 'local' Italian issues and transnational and pan-meridi-

onal *topoi*. The very idea of 'Italy' (or even 'Rome') seems unimaginable and ungraspable in its fullness within a merely national perspective, as just stated in 'L'altro volto di Roma'. Indeed, to avoid the essentialization of any 'specifically Italian problem', Pasolini demands that we should place Rome, Italy, and, implicitly, Italianness in a wider pan-meridional context in which Africa, its Diaspora, and 'the Black problem' play crucial roles.

However, Pasolini's pan-meridionalism is marked by different (sometimes even opposite) characteristics that make his poetic, intellectual, pan-meridional universe somewhat unstable and thus open to further fruitful elaborations. On the one hand, fluidity and continuity are essential to Pasolini's Pan-South, which (as has been said) is a non-geographical topos based on transnationality. Without mentioning additional, problematic, autobiographical urges that, during the 1970s, would become pressing in Pasolini's work,⁸⁴ in very general terms we can say that, during the 1960s, Pasolini became increasingly disillusioned with Italy because of the massive industrialization that led the country to a major 'anthropological mutation'.⁸⁵ The more disillusioned Pasolini was to become with Italy and Italians, the more he would look southwards, to Africa in particular. So, starting from an early Friulian, rural, and dialectal vocation which had already been asserted, Pasolini's device for the creation of the 'other' brilliantly, but problematically, ended up encompassing, almost by osmosis, the African interlocutor. Africa, like the suburbs of Rome, Naples and all the so-called Third World, was indeed a variation on the elemental Friulian dialectal and rural world.

Nonetheless, Pasolini's oeuvre as a whole can be schematized as a series of binary oppositions, without ever envisaging (in particular in his last years of activity) any form of Hegelian synthesis.⁸⁶ Hence, numerous aspects must be taken in consideration to grasp the complexity of Pasolini's pan-meridionalism. As has been said, some 'local' Italian cultural and historical factors remain visibly at the core of Pasolini's pan-meridionalism. Moreover, his 'Third World' and anticolonialist sympathies testify to the influence of leftist, international, and pan-Africanist discourses, widespread around 1960. In any case, all the elements on which Pasolini's pan-meridionalism relies do not necessarily find a harmonious resolution, since they can most effectively manifest themselves through oxymoron and abjuration (*abiura*), meaning a radical, recurrent, and regenerating rejection of a phase of his intellectual past.⁸⁷ In

the mid-1970s in *Salò*, we observe an important *abiura* in the shape of the death of the black servant and the communist partisan, who make love and are killed by fascists. As has been said, their love references Pasolini's 1961 'La Resistenza negra', which highlighted the ties between anti-colonialist struggles and poetry and the partisan Resistance to Fascism. Hence, Pasolini here performs the killing of the universes and references that belonged to 'La Resistenza negra' and thus kills his 'Third World' (embodied by the African servant), which throughout the 1960s had been one of his richest sources of intellectual, political, and poetic inspiration. But, such murder, being an abjuration, is also a ritual and, possibly, regenerating execution that takes place within Pasolini's work itself, in order to push his work and his pan-meridional horizon constantly and infinitely further.

NOTES

- 1 Pasolini's complex relation to Marxism(s) cannot be fully outlined here. Among Pasolini's many considerations on related topics, see his essays: 'Dal laboratorio. (Appunti *en poète* per una linguistica marxista)' (1965), in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull'arte*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 1, pp. 1305–42, and 'Marxismo e Cristianesimo' (1964), in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), pp. 786–824.
- 2 Pasolini devoted much attention to folk and dialectal poetry and edited two massive volumes: *Poesia dialettale del Novecento*, ed. by Mario Dell'Arco and Pier Paolo Pasolini (Parma: Guanda, 1952), and *Canzoniere italiano. Antologia della poesia popolare*, ed. by Pier Paolo Pasolini (Parma: Guanda, 1955). In Pasolini, the concept of *poesia minore* has a non-qualitative connotation, as made evident in 1947 by his essay 'Pascoli e Montale': 'Tanto la poesia pascoliana quanto la poesia montaliana possono essere dunque classificate "minori", ma non in un senso qualitativo di questo termine: "minori" in quanto riducono le proporzioni del mondo a un oggetto, a un'occasione, in cui quel mondo resta riassunto' ('Pascoli e Montale', in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull'arte*, 1, p. 275).
- 3 This issue is far too complex to be fully explained here. For instance, I can quote some lines taken from his poem 'Una disperata vitalità', part of the collection *Poesia in forma di rosa*: 'Ricordo che in quell'amore mostruoso / giungevo a gridare di dolore / per le domeniche quando dovrò splendere // "sopra i figli dei figli, il sole!" // Piangevo, nel lettuccio di Casarsa, / nella camera che sapeva di orina e bucato / in quelle domeniche che splendevano a morte...' (in *Tutte le poesie*, ed. by Walter Siti, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 2003), 1, p. 454. See also Piergiorgio Bellocchio, "'Disperatamente italiano'", in Pasolini, *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, pp. xi–xxxix.

- 4 I forged the concept of *Panmeridione* (Pan-South) and the notions related to it (*Panmeridionalismo*, pan-meridionalism, and *panmeridionale*, pan-meridional) in order to be able to critically explore Pasolini's approach to Africa and the South(s). These concepts are primarily heuristic tools that allow us to grasp the complexity of Pasolini's political and aesthetic elaborations of peasantry, subalternity, and the 'popular body.' For an accurate explanation of these concepts, see my book: *Pasolini e l'Africa, l'Africa di Pasolini: Panmeridionalismo e rappresentazioni dell'Africa postcoloniale*, pref. by Hervé Joubert-Laurencin (Milan: Mimesis, 2010), pp. 29–35.
- 5 On Pasolini's oxymoronic 'non-traditional use of tradition' (*uso antitradizionale della tradizione*) after the 1940s, see Guido Santato, 'Pasolini, Pier Paolo (1922–1975)', in *Dizionario critico della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Vittore Branca, 4 vols (Turin: UTET, 1986), III, pp. 378–86, p. 378.
- 6 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo', in *Corpi e luoghi*, ed. by Michele Mancini and Giuseppe Perrella, pref. by Paolo Volponi (Rome: Theorema, 1981), pp. 35–44; Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'La Resistenza negra', in *Letteratura negra*, ed. by Mario De Andrade and Léonard Sainville, 2 vols (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1961), I, pp. XV–XXIV.
- 7 Pasolini's notion of 'reality' is very close to that of sacredness and has little to do with realism; see René de Ceccatty, *Sur Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2005), pp. 56, 112. For him, 'reality' is a sort of 'primordial authenticity' that finds full application in popular bodies and sexuality.
- 8 The oxymoron is recurrent in Pasolini. Borrowing an expression forged by Franco Fortini in 1959, Pasolini liked to call himself *poeta della sineciosi*, the *sineciosi* being, according to Fortini, a particular type of oxymoron. See Franco Fortini, *Attraverso Pasolini* (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), pp. 21–22.
- 9 'Ho la lieta sorpresa di vedere che assomiglio / a Sekou Touré, il presidente della Guinea: / il naso schiacciato e gli occhi vivi. / Anche lui risalito al grigiore della storia / da baratri di puro spirito selvaggio: / negro proprio come era biondo Rimbaud' ('Alla Francia', in *Tutte le poesie*, I, p. 1007).
- 10 'Alla Francia' (part of the 1958 epigrams) and 'Frammento alla morte' (part of the 1960 section 'Poesie invincibili') were both included in Pasolini's collection *La religione del mio tempo* (Milan: Garzanti, 1961). 'La Guinea' was included in the section 'La realtà' of Pasolini's collection *Poesia in forma di rosa* (Milan: Garzanti, 1964).
- 11 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Il padre selvaggio* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975).
- 12 Pier Paolo Pasolini's article 'Le mie Mille e una notte' first appeared in the magazine *Playboy* (Milan), September 1973, pp. 43–126, and was republished in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Romanzi e racconti*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1998), II, pp. 1884–1921.
- 13 Both 'La grazia degli Eritrei' and 'Post-scriptum a "La grazia degli Eritrei"' were published posthumously in Pasolini, *Corpi e luoghi*, respectively pp. 50–54 and pp. 55–58.
- 14 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Calderòn* (Milan: Garzanti, 1973).
- 15 I discuss some African images contained in *Salò* and *Petrolio* in my forthcoming

- article ‘Pier Paolo Pasolini in Eritrea: Subalternity, Grace, Nostalgia and the “Rediscovery” of Italian Colonialism in the Horn of Africa’, in *Postcolonial Italy: The Colonial Past in Contemporary Italy*, ed. by Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).
- 16 Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘10 giugno 1974. Studio sulla rivoluzione antropologica in Italia’, in *Scritti corsari*, in *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, p. 309.
 - 17 Franco Fortini – following Alberto Asor Rosa – mentioned Pasolini’s ‘populismo estetizzante’, already evident in the mid 1960s (*Attraverso Pasolini*, p. 125).
 - 18 ‘Intervista a Antonio Negri (Roma, giugno 2000/dicembre 2001)’, in Francesca Cadel, *La lingua dei desideri: Il dialetto secondo Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Lecce: Manni, 2002), pp. 177–89. Paradoxically though, Pasolini is one of the writers who, most strongly and incisively, pioneered ‘postmodernism’ in Italy in the early 1970s, as is particularly evident in his posthumous novel *Petrolio*, edited by Graziella Chiarocossi and Maria Careri (Turin: Einaudi, 1992).
 - 19 Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘La forma della città’, in *Per il cinema*, ed. by Walter Siti and Franco Zabagli, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 2001), II, pp. 2124–29.
 - 20 The notion of ‘popular body’ (*corpo popolare*) – with its blend of ‘reality’, ‘grace’, sacredness, sexiness, resistance to the establishment, and mocking impudence – is fundamental in Pasolini’s political and aesthetic approach to subalternity and the Pan-South. For further details on this complex matter, see my paper ‘*Il corpo popolare* according to Pier Paolo Pasolini: Body, Sexuality, Subalternity, Reality, Resistance, Agency, and Death’ presented at the conference *Pasolini’s Body: New Directions in Pasolini Scholarship*, held in 2011 at the University of California Santa Cruz, and still unpublished.
 - 21 See Chantal Mouffe and Showstack Sassoon, ‘Gramsci in France and Italy: A Review of the Literature’, in *Antonio Gramsci: Critical Assessments of Leading Political Philosophers*, ed. by James Martin, 4 vols. (London: Routledge, 2002), IV: *Contemporary Applications*, pp. 81–115: ‘The limitation of the discussion of Gramsci in terms of the Italian national heritage was part of the attempt to portray the Italian working-class movement and its political representatives as the rightful heirs of the Risorgimento, as a new hegemonic national force which could strive to become the fundamental factor in rebuilding Italy on the basis of a wide-ranging alliance of anti-fascist forces. Togliatti therefore presented Gramsci as a cultural figure, a leading martyr to Fascism, who “belonged” not just to the working class and the PCI but to all those classes and groups interested in the building of a “new democracy”’ (p. 83).
 - 22 Antonio Gramsci’s *Lettere dal carcere* was published in 1947 and afterwards many posthumous publications followed. The six volumes of *Quaderni del carcere* came out between 1948 and 1951, reaching in 1975 their most accredited critical edition, edited by Valentino Gerratana.
 - 23 On these complex topics see Piero Bevilacqua, *Critica dell’ideologia meridionalistica. Salvemini, Dorso, Gramsci* (Padua: Marsilio, 1972); Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Jane Schneider, ed., *Italy’s “Southern Question”: Orientalism in One Country* (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

- 24 Such a primitivistic, ever-young 'other' was also influenced, from 1960 onwards, by Pasolini's image of ancient Greece. In Pasolini, Greece is barbaric, and he has a barbaric vision of antiquity. Hence, he rejects any neoclassical idealization of ancient Greece and any image of Olympian coldness and rational balance. On Pasolini and ancient Greece, see Massimo Fusillo, *La Grecia secondo Pasolini: Mito e cinema* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1996).
- 25 For an overview of the various readings of Gramsci's work, see, among others, Nicola Matteucci, *Antonio Gramsci e la filosofia della prassi* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1951); and Piero Rossi, ed., *Gramsci e la cultura contemporanea* (Rome: Editori Riuniti and Istituto Gramsci, 1975).
- 26 The ethnographer and anthropologist Ernesto De Martino (1908–1965) played a seminal intellectual role in post-World War II Italy. His important works on Italian southern folklore – which are close to both philosophy and psychiatry – were affected by the publication of Gramsci's essays; among others, see De Martino's volumes *Mondo magico* (Turin: Einaudi, 1948), *Morte e pianto rituale: Dal lamento pagano al pianto di Maria* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), and *Sud e magia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1959). Pasolini's 'African regard' and his construction of the Pan-South were influenced by De Martino; on Pasolini's readings and misreading of De Martino's theories, see Armando Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body: Pier Paolo Pasolini from Saint Paul to Sade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 6–9.
- 27 Of particular interest is the fact that Pasolini's wide use of the adjective 'humble' to define the popular, peasant, dialectal universe had paternalistic undertones (albeit with subversive power) which were absent in Gramsci, who instead had forged the term 'subaltern classes' in a spirit of solidarity. On this topic, see Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa, l'Africa di Pasolini*, pp. 72–83.
- 28 On Pasolini's relations to Italian anthropology and ethnography, and his studies on dialects, see Alberto Mario Cirese, 'Il *Canzoniere italiano*: Pasolini studioso di poesia popolare', in *Lezioni su Pasolini*, ed. by Tullio De Mauro and Francesco Ferri (Ripatrasone: Edizioni Sestante, 1997), pp. 133–66.
- 29 Even though paternalistic and orientalist traits are present to some extent in Pasolini's representations of Africa, alterity, and subalternity, his 'use' of Gramsci foreshadowed some 'postmodern' considerations developed by Anglophone left-wing intellectuals and social scientists, including the necessity of reconsidering the 'classic' Marxist concept of social class in the light of other individual and socio-political variables, notably 'race, class, and gender', as Edward P. Thompson first pointed out in *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).
- 30 At first, Pasolini's thesis was supposed to focus on visual arts under the supervision of Professor Roberto Longhi, but in the end it focused on Pascoli; see Marco A. Bazzocchi and Ezio Raimondi, 'Una tesi di laurea e una città', in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Antologia della lirica pascoliana: Introduzione e commenti*, ed. by Marco A. Bazzocchi and Ezio Raimondi (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), pp. v–xvii. On Pasolini's readings of Pascoli, see Marco A. Bazzocchi, *L'immaginazione*

- mitologica: Leopardi e Calvino, Pascoli e Pasolini* (Bologna: Pendragon, 1996), pp. 125–52.
- 31 The original publications were: Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘Pascoli e Montale’, *Convivium*, Turin, 2, n.s. (1947), pp. 199–205; Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘Pascoli’, *Officina*, 1.1 (May 1955), pp. 1–8.
- 32 ‘Comunque si era, bisogna dire, in pieno, e qualificato, fervore: nel fervore di una nazione che si era appena istituita e di una classe sociale che si apprestava a farsene dirigente. Non si dimentichi che è in quei due o tre decenni che si gettano (bene o male, ma con fondamentale onestà) le fondamenta filologiche su cui impiantare una interpretazione della storia letteraria italiana; [...] Questa è l’origine necessaria, e per così dire professionale, di tanta ricerca e inquietudine linguistica del Pascoli, che è stata spiegata finora attraverso un esclusivo esame interno della sua psicologia’ (Pasolini, ‘Pascoli’, in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull’arte*, 1, pp. 999–1000).
- 33 Original version: ‘Il “plurilinguismo” pascoliano ([...]) è di tipo rivoluzionario ma solo in senso linguistico, o, per intenderci meglio, verbale: la figura umana e letteraria del Pascoli risulta dunque soltanto una variante moderna, o borghese nel senso moderno, dell’archetipo italiano, con incompleta coscienza della propria forza comunque innovativa. [...] Sicchè, anche se con una squisitezza e una coscienza formale che vorrebbero addirittura far pensare a un salto di qualità, a un’altra storia, i nuovi letterati italiani dalla “Ronda” all’ermetismo, in realtà si iscrivono in quel primo modulo umano nuovo di letterato ch’è fornito dal Pascoli: e anzi, con qualche regresso verso un più tetro apoliticismo e misticismo tecnico, corrispondente appunto al più grave stato d’involuzione del periodo fascista’ (ibid., pp. 1004–05).
- 34 While Pascoli had socialist sympathies, Enrico Corradini (1865–1931) was a right-wing intellectual and politician. Corradini founded the review ‘Il Regno’ (1903) and wrote the essays *La vita nazionale* (1907) and *L’ombra della vita* (1908) and the novels *La patria lontana* (1910) and *La guerra lontana* (1911).
- 35 Original version: “Agli scrittori italiani – annota un po’ frettolosamente il Gramsci, – ha proprio nociuto l’apoliticismo intimo, verniciato di retorica nazionale verbosa. Da questo punto di vista sono stati più simpatici Enrico Corradini e il Pascoli, col loro nazionalismo confessato e militante, in quanto cercano di risolvere il dualismo letterario tradizionale tra popolo e nazione, sebbene siano caduti in altre forme di retorica e di oratoria” (Pasolini, ‘Pascoli’, in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull’arte*, 1, p. 1005).
- 36 Giampaolo Borghello, *Il simbolo e la passione: Aspetti della linea Pascoli-Pasolini* (Milan: Mursia, 1986), p. 174.
- 37 ‘Come si vede, assai ricco e complesso è l’importo del Pascoli alle forme poetiche del Novecento: determinante, anzi, se in definitiva la lingua poetica di questo secolo è tutta uscita dalla sua, sia pur contraddittoria e involuta, elaborazione’ (Pasolini, ‘Pascoli’, in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull’arte*, 1, p. 1003).
- 38 Francesca Cadel, ‘Aspetti della linea Pascoli-Pasolini: Un’analisi delle traduzioni di Pasolini da *Myrica*’, *Rivista Pascoliana*, 7 (1995), pp. 37–58.
- 39 The concept of *falsa ingenuità* (false naivety) of Pascolian descent is fundamental

- for grasping the complexity of Pasolini's aesthetics. In 1969–70, Pasolini – after being asked why he had chosen Pascoli in the early 1940s as subject matter of his university thesis and dissertation – indeed stated: 'I chose Pascoli because he was a poet who was very close to some of my own interests at the time, and very close to the world of Friulian peasants. Pascoli's characters and his settings, his children, the birds and all that, his magical and highly artificial world, which is falsely ingenuous – all this was very close to my taste': cf. Oswald Stack, ed., *Pasolini on Pasolini: Interviews with Oswald Stack* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1969–70), pp. 19–20.
- 40 'Il Pascoli è poeta a cui mi sento legato quasi da una fraternità umana, e, per questo, benchè non sempre accetti la sua risoluzione formale, e anzi, in qualche periodo della mia vita l'abbia assai criticata, l'ho sempre letto e molto assimilato.' This is a statement by Pasolini quoted by Bazzocchi and Raimondi in 'Una tesi di laurea e una città', p. xvii.
- 41 Original version: 'ci troveremo di fronte a una vita sentimentale viziata, a una affettività di continuo protestata ma senza oggetto, a una bontà informe e infantile che per rendersi in qualche modo plastica necessita di nominali applicazioni cristiane o socialistiche' (Pasolini, 'Pascoli', in *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull'arte*, I, p. 1003). Carla Chiummo also suggested that 'Pascoli allarga lo sguardo del suo ritratto verso l'affermazione di un nuovo credo artistico e di un nuovo codice morale che coniughi – fuori da dogmi di chiesa o di partito – Vangelo e socialismo umanitario (più esplicitamente nel *Tolstoi*: San Francesco e Garibaldi)' ('Il *Paulo Uccello* tra ritratti immaginari e francescanesimo *fin de siècle*', *Rivista Pascoliana*, 9 (1997), pp. 9–31).
- 42 Italian colonialism in North and Northeast Africa began in the early 1880s and lasted until the early 1940s. Italy acquired Assab in 1882 and Massawa in 1885; in 1890, it established as a colony the whole of what was then called Eritrea. Italy started occupying Somalia in 1889, Libya in 1911, and finally occupied Ethiopia from 1935–36 until 1941. In 1936, Mussolini – who was in power from 1922 to 1943 – proclaimed the empire and created *Africa Orientale Italiana* in the Horn of Africa. Although Italy obtained the fiduciary administration of Somalia between 1950 and 1960 from the United Nations, Italian colonialism in Africa came to a sudden, formal end through Italy's defeat in World War II, outside a proper decolonization process.
- 43 Giovanni Pascoli, 'La grande proletaria di è mossa', in Giovanni Pascoli, *Prose*, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1946), I, pp. 557–69.
- 44 Giorgio Israel, *Il fascismo e la razza. La scienza italiana e le politiche razziali del fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), p. 32.
- 45 The car manufacturing company FIAT was founded in Turin in 1899. However, a large part of the country (especially in the South) became industrialized only after World War II.
- 46 Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare: Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), p. 25.
- 47 Emilio Gentile, *La grande Italia: Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Rome: Laterza, 2006), pp. 5–12.

- 48 Labanca, *Oltremare*, pp. 428–40.
- 49 After publishing in 1965 a first, small, well-received book on the occupation of Ethiopia, *La guerra di Abissinia 1935–1941* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1965), the historian Angelo Del Boca, published between 1976 and 1988 six volumes devoted to various aspects of Italian colonialism in Libya and the Horn of Africa.
- 50 See three edited volumes: Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan, eds., *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory* (London: Peter Lang, 2005); Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds., *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and Patrizia Palumbo, ed., *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). See also: Uoldelul Chelati Dirar et al., eds., *Colonia e postcolonia. Attraversamenti di memorie, identità e confini nel Corno d’Africa* (Rome: Carocci, 2011); Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, eds., *Postcolonial Italy: The Colonial Past in Contemporary Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).
- 51 Even Marinetti’s grotesque ‘hyper-modernity’ and his construction of a sort of ‘futurist primitivism’ were products of a difficult formulation of ‘modernity’ in post-unification (mostly rural) Italy, as made particularly clear by Marinetti’s African novel *Mafarka le futuriste: Roman africain* (Paris: Sansot, 1909).
- 52 See, among others: Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), and James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy: The Passing of the Rex* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).
- 53 Fascism’s crucial need to build an Italian popular culture and its pursuit of a fascist national tradition were articulated through the stress on *Strapaese* and *Stracittà*, meaning both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ aspects, ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ models for Italian society. These opposite – sometimes contradictory – models would find their ultimate symbolic application on the ‘Abyssinian plateau’, where Italianness could be stressed through both ‘modern’ colonialist enterprises and rural settlement projects (mostly around Jimma).
- 54 Giovanna Trento, ‘From Marinetti to Pasolini: Massawa, the Red Sea and the Construction of “Mediterranean Africa” in Italian Literature and Cinema’, *Northeast African Studies*, 12.1 (2012), pp. 269–303.
- 55 Already by the end of the nineteenth century, Prime Minister Francesco Crispi wished to combine expansionist African policies with the phenomenon of Italian mass emigration, expecting Africa (the ‘Abyssinian plateau’ in particular) to supply land to needy Italian farmers and peasants.
- 56 Trento, *Pasolini e l’Africa, l’Africa di Pasolini*, pp. 86, 136, 179–92, 211–19.
- 57 The richness and complexity of Pasolini’s ‘African regard’ had gone unnoticed until recent times. See Trento, *Pasolini e l’Africa, l’Africa di Pasolini*.
- 58 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Petrolio*, trans. by Ann Goldstein (New York: Pantheon, 1997), pp. 125–26, 132–43.
- 59 Original version: ‘Tra i pochi italiani “nuovi” che stanno facendo grosse fortune di tipo ormai “transnazionale,” accanto a quelle già famose dei Barattolo (cotone) e dei Melotti (birra), e gli italiani “vecchi,” che sono qui dai tempi in

- cui l'Eritrea era una colonia italiana (e tra loro ci sono anche i “vecchissimi,” ormai eritrei da generazioni, cioè dai tempi di Crispi), c'è un gruppo di italiani “intermedi,” con funzioni appunto intermedie. Per esempio il corpo insegnante. O il corpo diplomatico. Si tratta di un gruppo di persone stranamente simpatiche (a dire il vero anche l'eventuale “fascismo” dei “vecchi” ingenuamente nostalgici non è dei più odiosi: è un curioso fossile, abbastanza buffo [...])' (Pasolini, 'Le mie *Mille e una notte*', p. 1901).
- 60 Original version: '[Gli Eritrei] Giudicano i torti fatti loro (mettiamo quelli fascisti) senza implicarvisi, cioè senza rendersi complici del rancore' (Pasolini, 'La grazia degli Eritrei', p. 54).
- 61 But Pasolini's main attempt of 'digesting' Fascism was yet to come – although I wonder if in his last film, *Salò*, such a 'digestion' of Fascism through defecation did really happen. On the complex meaning of the 'turd' in *Salò*, see Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body*, pp. 303–05.
- 62 Original version: 'Non esistono nella lingua italiana, che io sappia, termini per descrivere l'aspetto architettonico dell'Asmara, di Cheren o di Agordat: lo stile coloniale è perfettamente inespriabile' (Pasolini, 'Le mie *Mille e una notte*', p. 1887).
- 63 The following lines taken from 'La grazia degli Eritrei' give an idea of the complexity and ambiguity proper to Pasolini's Eritrean *corpus*: 'Infine c'è il Basso Piano, in fondo a cui, come ai confini della morte, sorge Massaua. A proposito di questo Basso Piano, la “Domenica del Corriere” della fine dell'altro secolo – stranamente famigliare – ci soccorre ancora, dandoci il piacere di una conferma anziché quello di una scoperta. Dune gialle, sinistramente tonde, disposte su diversi piani, e punteggiate di cespugli verdastri, scuri. Insomma, ecco là il bersagliere di Rho, con nel pugno il tricolore e l'ascaro fedele pronto a fargli scudo col suo corpo e cadere sotto il piombo copto. Anche questo campione di paesaggio è iterativo. E immagino che si ripeta molto a Sud e molto a Nord di Massaua. / Ecco: credo che nessuno di noi si aspetti una Massaua che non sia una riproduzione di una cittaduzza italiana micagnosa e provinciale, coi suoi cognomi veneti alle botteghe e i suoi espressi (com'è per esempio, scoraggiante esempio, la parte moderna di Tripoli: non dissimile dalle città dell'Agro Pontino). Niente di tutto questo, niente. Massaua è una piccola città apocalittica, di struttura completamente araba nella parte vecchia, mentre di tipo anglosassone sono le strutture del porto: di italiano è ciò che in Tanzania o nel Kenia è indiano, le bottegucce, e le pensioni' (Pasolini, 'La grazia degli Eritrei', pp. 50–51).
- 64 See my forthcoming article 'Pier Paolo Pasolini in Eritrea: Subalternity, Grace, Nostalgia and the “Rediscovery” of Italian Colonialism in the Horn of Africa', in *Postcolonial Italy*.
- 65 See Giuliana Benvenuti, *Il viaggiatore come autore: L'India nella letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), pp. 109–51; Caminati, *Orientalismo eretico: Pier Paolo Pasolini e il cinema del Terzo Mondo* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2007).
- 66 See in particular Pasolini's film *Appunti per un film sull'India* (1969) and his travelogue *L'odore dell'India* (Milan: Longanesi, 1962).

- 67 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in The Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), pp. 127–29.
- 68 Michel Leiris, *L'Afrique fantôme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934).
- 69 Fruitful considerations can be found in Robert S. C. Gordon's chapter "Un folle identificarsi": Figuring the Self', in his *Pasolini: Forms of Subjectivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 138–60.
- 70 Pasolini describes how he met Ines Pellegrini in his article 'Le mie Mille e una notte', p. 1885.
- 71 At the very end of the film, in order to retain her essentialized, joyful, subaltern condition, Zumurrud is happy to return to slave-master-lover dynamics, without wishing to escape her enslaved condition. Thus, I only partly agree with the accurate description of Zumurrud outlined by Colleen Ryan-Scheutz, who stresses this character's subversive self-assertiveness: see Colleen Ryan-Scheutz, *Sex, the Self, and the Sacred: Women in the Cinema of Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 189–93.
- 72 On this scene see: Serafino Murri, *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (Turin: Lindau, 2001), pp. 121–24.
- 73 See my unpublished paper 'Il corpo popolare according to Pier Paolo Pasolini.'
- 74 However, the duality on which Pasolini's work relies can also have autobiographical connotations, as it is evident in *Il padre selvaggio* (the teacher and the student), *Petrolio* (the two Carlos), and *San Paolo* (the theme of the conversion).
- 75 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *San Paolo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977).
- 76 On the oppositions and dualities that characterize *San Paolo's* Paul of Tarsus, see Maggi, *The Resurrection of the Body*, pp. 23–24.
- 77 According to Calvino, 'una Italicetta in cui forse solo ora che è morta e sepolta, Pasolini può trovarci del buono' (Italo Calvino, 'Quelli che dicono no', interview by Ruggero Guarini, *Il Messaggero*, 18 June 1974, p. 3).
- 78 'E cerco alleanze che non hanno altra ragione / d'essere, come rivalsa, o contro-partita, / che diversità, mitezza e impotente violenza: / gli Ebrei ... i Negri ... ogni umanità bandita ...' ('La realtà', in *Tutte le poesie*, I, p. 1116). See – also in *Poesia in forma di rosa* – the poem 'Progetto di opere future' and the poetic sections *Israele* (see the poems 'Una giornata a Tel Aviv...' and 'Lungo gli 85 km...') and *L'alba meridionale* (see the poem 'Come in un velo giallo...'). Moreover, in the collection *Trasumanar e organizzar*, two other poems provide interesting considerations on Israel and Judaism: 'L'enigma di Pio XII' and 'Il mondo salvato dai ragazzini'.
- 79 The last lines of 'Sinieciosi della diaspora' read: 'O Gioco, allora intervieni tu, ad afferare / la pianta trapiantata, dalle radici scoperte / perché confondere capelli biondi e capelli bruni, / gioventù e vecchiaia, / era una cosa che non si poteva fare sul serio' (*Tutte le poesie*, II, p. 170).
- 80 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993).
- 81 For an analysis of 'Sinieciosi della diaspora' and Pasolini's notion of diaspora, see Trento, *Pasolini e l'Africa, l'Africa di Pasolini*, pp. 169–77.

- 82 As has been said, the film *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana* refers to Afro-Classicism and Black Diaspora in pan-Africanist terms, with the aim of connecting postcolonial Africa to pre-Hellenic Greece; see *ibid.*, pp. 179–210.
- 83 Original version: 'Il problema delle baracche e del fango, della miseria e della polvere, non è un problema particolaristicamente italiano: esso è legato alla cultura del neorealismo solo perché il neorealismo l'ha scoperto per la prima volta; ma l'ha lasciato così com'era: ossia un problema particolaristicamente italiano. Mentre è un problema di più di mezza umanità, quella che si affaccia oggi alla storia, portando enormi squilibri, nella pratica e nelle idee. La guerra di questa umanità si è combattuta in Russia nel '17, e ora in Algeria, a Cuba, nel Viet Nam, e, forse soprattutto, nel cuore degli Stati Uniti d'America, dove, appunto, il problema dei Negri non è un problema particolaristicamente americano, ma riassume una situazione che è tipica di tutto il mondo moderno; una situazione il cui peso storico non è minore di quello della industrializzazione, dell'applicazione della tecnica, dell'automatismo, della cultura di massa' (Pasolini, 'L'altro volto di Roma', *Paese Sera*, 27 novembre 1966; now in Pasolini, *Romanzi e racconti*, II, pp. 1865–66).
- 84 On related topics, see Marco Belpoliti, *Pasolini in salsa piccante: Con otto fotografie di Ugo Mulas* (Parma: Guanda, 2010).
- 85 Pasolini, '10 giugno 1974. Studio sulla rivoluzione antropologica in Italia', pp. 39–44.
- 86 'Che cosa significa dire che l'ispirazione, il moto primo, di tutto quello che Pasolini scrive si fonda sulla antitesi, su di una contraddizione? L'antitesi è rilevabile a tutti i livelli della sua scrittura' (Fortini, *Attraverso Pasolini*, p. 21). On the complexity of Pasolini's dualism, see Fusillo, *La Grecia secondo Pasolini*, pp. 6–8.
- 87 At the beginning of the 1960s, Pasolini had already rejected his committed intellectual activity of the 1950s, by stating at the end of his *Poema per un verso di Shakespeare* 'ABIURO DAL RIDICOLO DECENNIO!', thus inaugurating his creative activity of the 1960s. But the most well-known among his abjurations is 'Abiura dalla *Trilogia della vita*', first published in the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, 9 November 1975, pp. 1–2, now available in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Lettere luterane*, in *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, pp. 509–603.

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