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## Table of Contents

Pier Francesco Galli	
<i>Scientific foundations of psychotherapy</i> (1962)	64
<i>Introductory note</i> (2006)	63
<i>Discussion with interventions by Leonardo Ancona, Silvano Arieti, Danilo Cargnello, Elvio Fachinelli, and Pier Francesco Galli</i> (1962)	71
Alessandro Izzi	
<i>Repression and nightmares. Italian cinema in the shadow of the Shoah</i>	78
Damiano Garofalo	
<i>Coscienza di classe, identità ebraica e “zona grigia”. Per una rilettura politica di Kapò</i> [Class consciousness, Jewish identity, and “grey zone”. For a political rereading of the 1959 movie <i>Kapò</i> by Gillo Pontecorvo]	90
Andrea Minuz	
<i>I “valori spirituali del cinema italiano”. Antisemitismo e politica della razza nelle riviste cinematografiche degli anni trenta</i> [The “spiritual values of Italian cinema”. Anti-Semitism and the politics of race in the film magazines of the 1930s]	96
Giordana Terracina	
<i>The internment camps in Libya</i>	103
Stefania Zezza	
<i>The junctions of memory</i>	115

# The Scientific Foundations of Psychotherapy\*

Pier Francesco Galli\*\*

*Abstract.* This paper was presented in 1962 at a course organized in Milan by the “Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy” (later called *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*), and reprinted in 2006. The author discusses the problem of the scientific foundations of psychotherapy and the issues related to the use of the method of natural sciences for the study of human nature, with reference to phenomenology, existentialism, and the tradition of interpersonal psychoanalysis in North America. To this end, the author introduces for the first time his concept of “continuous interpretative activity” composed of different semantic codes, not only verbal codes, in order to give back to the patient his/her signifiers. At the end of the paper the discussion that followed this presentation is reported, with the commentaries by Leonardo Ancona, Silvano Arieti, Danilo Cargnello, Elvio Fachinelli, and Pier Francesco Galli.

*Key Words:* Psychoanalysis, Science, Existentialism, History of psychoanalytic concepts, Critique.

**Introductory note to the edition in issue no. 2/2006 of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*.** *This essay is the transcription of one of the two addresses I made at the first continuing education course organized by the Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy (later called Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane [“Psychotherapy and the Human Sciences”]) in Milan in 1962; the second was on the theme of psychotherapy training. In the next issue (no. 3/2006) of the journal Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane, the one earmarked as a special edition for the Fortieth Anniversary, I will broadly tell the initial history of the group, of its cultural-political choices, and the role, which, I, myself, in concert with many colleagues and friends, believe it played. In this introductory note I will limit myself to pointing out certain ideas. I decided to publish the paper in this issue no. 2/2006 of Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane because the subject matter that I was outlining at the time is essentially connected to the position I am presenting in the article published on pp. 153-164 of this same issue no. 2/2006. Then it was about ideas and hypotheses in the making, incorporated into a socio-cultural context, well-represented by the commentaries following the talk, and also interesting from a historical viewpoint. In fact one could also highlight: the comparison with Silvano Arieti on the problem of existential analytic philosophy, which took its first steps in the U.S. with the publication of the 1958 book *Existence* by Rollo May, the commentary of Danilo Cargnello, key Italian representative of anthropoanalysis, the hints of comparison with Harry Stack Sullivan’s interpersonal theory perspective, with his impact on therapeutic practice, presented in Italy as a major development (the first six volumes of the book series “Biblioteca di Psichiatria e di Psicologia Clinica” had just been published by the publisher Feltrinelli of Milan, edited by myself and Gaetano Benedetti); Sullivan’s *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (1940) and *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (1953) as well as Frieda Fromm-Reichmann’s *Principles of**

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\* Original title: “Fondamenti scientifici della psicoterapia”. Taken from: Gruppo Milanese per lo Sviluppo della Psicoterapia [Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy] (editor), *Problemi di psicoterapia. Atti del I Corso di aggiornamento* (Museo della Scienza e della Tecnica, Milan, December 11-14, 1962. Contributions by Leonardo Ancona, Silvano Arieti, Gaetano Benedetti, Franco Fornari, Pier Francesco Galli, Ugo Marzuoli, Virgilio Melchiorre, Silvia Montefoschi, Fabrizio Napolitani, Berta Neumann, Virginio Porta, Mara Selvini Palazzoli, Tommaso Senise, Enzo Spaltro). Milan: Centro Studi di Psicoterapia Clinica, 1962, pp. 69-89 (pp. 80-89: Discussion). Reprinted in: *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, 2006, XL, 2: 203-220 (pp. 212-220: Discussion). We thank for the permission to reprint. The text is presented in a discursive manner because it is a transcription of the audio recording. Translated by Joyce Myerson. Some editorial footnotes have been added.

\*\* Via Garibaldi 3, 40124 Bologna, Italy, E-Mail <pierfrancescogalli@libero.it>.

*Intensive Psychotherapy (1950) were already available and establishing themselves on the market; Silvano Arieti's Interpretation of Schizophrenia (1955) would be published as no. 7 of the book series a little while later. One could also mention the controversy with Elvio Fachinelli, at the time very close to Lacan's position on verbal language, and therefore critical in relation to my proposal to study the therapeutic factors, keeping in mind the "non verbal" language, which he considered "ineffable". Years later, Elvio himself would write some important papers on ecstasy and on unconscious to unconscious communication (e.g., La mente estatica. Milan: Adelphi, 1989). In conclusion, these were memorable moments of culture in development, about which I will speak further. We were in the process of writing the pages of the history of psychotherapy in Italy together with the many people with whom we came into contact. At the time we just did it, without knowing we were doing it. Now it is exciting to look back on all this in the light of the present.*

It is possible that the title of my presentation could make one think of something finalized. Since it has to do with the scientific foundations of psychotherapy, one would assume that it would be a discourse expounding upon these scientific foundations. But I am merely attempting to pose the question, since I feel that, in terms of a scientific discourse in psychotherapy, it is not yet possible to assert such a thing. I say this because, in the two most recent International Congresses of Psychotherapy, many voices were heard posing the question of synthesis in psychotherapy, as if it were possible, since a high level of knowledge in our field has been reached. These voices were also heard drawing conclusions on what the situation of psychotherapy is and therefore of this particular aspect of the human relationship. This is in no way possible and it is anti-scientific today, because we have not had a real and proper scientific discussion in psychotherapy until now.

In other sciences, the scientific dialogue has experienced a series of vicissitudes from which the psychiatric issue was entirely divorced; particularly the psychotherapeutic issue because—and we have to especially try to interpret the problem in historical terms—what have we encountered in the last decades of the history of psychotherapy in terms of the philosophy of science? Freud mostly used biological models to interpret what was being discovered. In other words, he was trying to bring the essential dynamic of the individual back to biological models.

This conception and configuration was correct then, because at the moment when Freud was trying to understand instinctual life in terms of the energy and dynamics, using concepts borrowed from Helmholtzian physics, these conceptions represented the end-point of a situation determined by positivism, which justified having faith in certain explanatory models; therefore the validation of relationship experiences, otherwise inexpressible in terms of these models, was justified as a principal objective. Since these results were not valid in the long-term, the attempt to use analogical discourse in order to explain the psychological dynamic, which psychoanalysis and psychiatry tried to do, is no longer valid.

In that era there were some disciples that detached themselves from Freud: Alfred Adler and Adler's theory, Carl Gustav Jung and Jung's theory. And today we have many other schools of psychotherapy that boast successes and have probably really had them.

It is well-known that successes ascribable to psychological factors can be had by anyone facing a patient, even without adopting techniques related to one school over another, in other words even without adopting a specific theoretical reference strategy.

With these first dissidents of Freud, we have the first two attempts at theory building, ones that have had success because, at the time, it was still justifiable to attempt to construct a theory of the human being, and to try to explain the meaning of the psychotherapeutic relationship in terms of a general theory of human nature; it is easy to understand how certain models of the then culture wind up in Adler's theory. One of the major initial successes of Jung's attempt at separation from Freud was basically the fact that he attacked the issue of sexuality in Freud and in psychoanalysis; if we made a concrete investigation into what is generally known about Jung by the public, even a

specialized public, we would find that basically what is known is that this dissident disciple of Freud was against the idea of explaining everything in terms of sexuality.

All the sciences have had a critical period, coinciding with that revolution in scientific thought that gave rise to the formation in Vienna in 1929 of the *Wiener Kreis* (the Vienna Circle): a group of scholars, scientists, and philosophers, who were opposed to traditional philosophy, and denounced classical metaphysics, within the context of the philosophy of science, and formed the so-called logical empiricist school of thought. This group moved almost *en masse* to the United States, and here we have another example of how ideas of European origin get transferred to the U.S., of how the many successes of these ideas stem from the fact that a culturally open environment granted their expression, without the resistance that, here in Europe, is rooted in our cultural heritage, something that, from a pragmatic point of view, has constituted a considerable hindrance. This orientation has tried to establish new bases for the philosophy of science.

The repercussions, concerning psychology, have been substantial: above all, only behaviouristic concepts were accepted at the inception of logical empiricism; it was the only accepted viewpoint because it was the single thing that related concretely to the established characteristics so that a scientific model could be specifically verifiable, and the only one in which it was possible to verify the characteristics that justified its adoption as a scientific hypothesis. Psychoanalysis, as a general theory of personality, was rejected *en bloc* because it didn't correspond to that specific type of scientific method, which had become customary in all the sciences.

Beneath the issue of logical empiricism lies a fundamental concept: going back to Ernst Mach's principle, we have seen how, in scientific research, there exists a series of factors of a cultural nature, resulting from the cultural values in which the scientist operates, factors that intervene on the very occasion of choosing the issues, and formulating the working hypothesis. The scientist believes him/herself to be objective, and instead introduces a series of elements of a socio-cultural and psychological nature into the development of working hypotheses, at the exact moment in which he/she believes that he/she has formulated a scientific hypothesis, and is presenting systems through which verification can be reached.

This is a fundamentally important fact—and it is so particularly in psychology and psychotherapy—because it allows us to assess the reasons why there has not been progress on an interdisciplinary level in psychology and psychotherapy.

Too often psychotherapists and psychologists speak about an interdisciplinary relationship, when that phase of the interdisciplinary relationship has not been traversed in psychotherapy and psychology.

Too often, to this day, terms referring to schools of thought are adopted, when there exists a huge communications deficit between the various schools of thought and approaches. We must always be functionally accurate with the terms we adopt and with the type of operation we may accomplish with that term, trying to apply the most precise meaning possible. Often we do not know how another acts in concrete terms: we only know the framework of reference that he/she employs, namely the theoretical constructs which he/she tries to draw from the empirical data. Theoretical constructs drawn from empirical data are found in every scientific sector; but where does this happen in psychotherapy?

A scientist who operates in the physics field can use provisional working hypotheses; in psychotherapy this has proved much more difficult because it wasn't possible to adopt provisional hypotheses; but I believe that today it should be possible and that it is moreover necessary, in order to be able to scientifically broach the issue of psychotherapy. The empirical data assembled needed a cultural framework within the cultural values of a specific society; presenting an empirical fact as a simple hypothesis could put in jeopardy a person's very essence as experienced in a particular society.

It is at this point that every psychotherapist has felt the need for a theory of human nature. We thus find Freud who creates his theory of human nature: and herein arise the difficulties of approach to psychoanalysis, the hatred of psychoanalysis, and the rejection of it; an enormous confusion has been created between psychoanalysis, in terms of its philosophical meaning and its existential meaning, and the therapeutic aspect of the psychoanalytic models. If fifty years ago it was justified to attempt a metaphysical theory of humanity, today it no longer is.

Philosophically speaking, we have journeyed through existentialism, which gained many disciples in psychiatry; current theorizing in psychiatry is based upon concepts derived from existentialism, and this is something everyone knows.

Does this then mean that psychoanalysis is no longer valid? Absolutely not! It only means that the human being of today, and therefore the psychiatrist as well, has been able to dispose of a rigid personality theory model, and can express the same acquisitions in new terms. This means that the empirical data of yesterday is framed by the philosophy of today. It is important to point out that this philosophy has explicitly abandoned all attempts at metaphysics.

The situation in which we find ourselves has prompted me to say all this in order to show how many and which philosophical impediments exist at the root of theorizing in psychotherapy—in other words, how we have always felt deep down the need to immediately frame the empirical fact within the theoretical castle we have constructed. Today we still hear too often talk about choice in psychotherapy as if it were an issue of faith. It is not possible to have scientific discourse in these terms. There are historical reasons for this fact: for example, the differences between schools also resulted from the differences between the personalities that created these schools, personalities that gave rise to conflicts of a personal nature. These conflicts took place more or less forty years ago; most of the disciples of these personalities are still alive, and this has created a huge amount of insularity: people who do not communicate, who criticize each other, and who often have no idea what the other is doing. Everyone uses his/her own language to express concepts that should instead serve to create the basis for a common language, useable by everyone. It should be as simple as possible in order to employ models within which to merge the empirical data from any orientation or school. If a certain orientation has a theory on human behaviour and another a different theory, and if we check which patients were treated by therapists of a specific orientation rather than another, we find substantial differences in the type of patients treated. We have here Professor Silvano Arieti, a representative of the interpersonal psychoanalytic school. What has been the fundamental significance of this school? It was one of the first to tackle the problem of schizophrenic psychoses from the psychoanalytical standpoint. Why, in fact, didn't orthodox psychoanalysis deal with this problem? And where did the basic mistake of thinking that orthodox analysis was not valid for the understanding of psychosis come from? Because this is not true, inasmuch as the orthodox psychoanalytic models *can* help a great deal in the understanding and interpretation of psychotic situations.

This core scepticism arose because Freud, probably for personal reasons and also due to difficulties encountered with patients, had concluded that psychoses were not able to be treated with psychoanalysis. This also represents the expression of an array of fears that had a deeper root within society itself—the unease and fear that society feels in relation to a seriously mentally ill person.

On the other hand, most representatives of the interpersonal psychoanalytic school have had most of their success with psychotics. They advise one to enter into the therapeutic situation with greater personality aspects than the older orthodox psychoanalyst would have. They speak about interpersonal relationships. They find justification in their psychological theories and not by chance do the major representatives of this school attempt measures perfectly consistent with the American socio-cultural reality. This explains how, in terms of the scientific evaluation of the data drawn from the therapeutic relationship, we have always been spoiled by the need to construct a theory. It is not by chance that here in Italy the Catholic world has felt threatened by the advent of

psychoanalysis. There was a united rejection, without any discussion, because there was a fear that the Catholic vision of the essence of humanity would be threatened by a specific method of theorizing.

We find ourselves in the same situation with regards to the Soviet world, in which there was the same type of rejection, and a lack of scientific discussion; if we examine this rejection on its premise, we see that a real attempt at communication, a real attempt to acknowledge just the empirical aspect of what takes place in the psychotherapeutic relationship has not been made.

Dealing with a sector, that of psychology and psychotherapy, which invests the whole of the personality, we can find a justification for this situation. However, we have to recognize that it has left us with a cultural void in our wake. For this reason we cannot talk about synthesis in psychotherapy today. If we are able to speak of synthesis, we can speak about it only in the moment when we are trying to open a dialogue on the issue, and trying not to make references to schools of origin and therefore—let us be clear—to the reference frameworks we adopt, and—let us be even clearer—to those reference frameworks which largely help to give us a sense of security in the therapeutic relationship.

What is this “something” of which Professor Arieti has spoken<sup>1</sup> and about which he has also written in his book<sup>2</sup>? What is this “something”, beyond what we can interpret or understand by means of our reference frameworks, and which nevertheless acts within the therapeutic relationship? This exchange, or primary relationship, is something we must take into account, without rejecting the possibility of knowing it, in order to understand the limitedness of all the reference frameworks that we have up until now employed. The problem, in functional terms, could be formulated in terms of communication theory. We could speak about, for example, non-verbal communication, and attempts at knowledge of this communication. This could be one of the ways in which we may perhaps be able over time to construct a general theory of psychotherapy.

Another emblematic example that caused controversy between Professor Arieti and myself last year in the United States is the issue of existentialism. He accused those of us in the European school of talking about the existential approach, one which however does not ever apply to therapeutic technique, but which does follow psychoanalytic models. This is true even if we could say: the basic therapeutic situation has changed because of our approach.

What I would like to say is that, whereas we lived the experience of existentialism as a cultural phenomenon and our psychiatry was an expression of this situation, it was only a few years ago that a series of articles by our most important existentialist writers was translated in the United States. Some American psychiatrists, referring to Rollo May<sup>3</sup>—and doubtlessly possessing intellectual knowledge of the subject matter but not the experience of it, this issue being the experience of another culture—discovered existentialism at a moment when the American psychiatric situation was in crisis. Consequently, existentialism’s language of “crisis” found a favourable environment. On the other hand, these psychiatrists did not do anything else but repeat, therapeutically speaking, certain technical models, introducing some value choices in terms of existentialism, to which the American public today could be particularly receptive, but which do not benefit psychotherapy as a science.

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<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the paper Arieti presented just before this presentation by Galli at this meeting. The title of Arieti’s paper was “Psicodinamica e psicoterapia delle psicosi schizofreniche” (Psychodynamics and psychotherapy of schizophrenic psychoses), published, in two parts, on pp. 18-68 of the *Proceedings*, and was reprinted in: Marco Conci, Sergio Dazzi & Maria Luisa Mantovani, editors, *La tradizione interpersonale in psichiatria, psicoterapia e psicoanalisi*. Bolsena (Viterbo, Italy): Massari, 1997, pp. 363-395. Later it was reprinted also on pp. 76-110 of issue no. 1/2014 of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, with the interventions held at the time by Leonardo Ancona, Silvano Arieti, Alda Bencini, Gaetano Benedetti, Massimo Fagioli, Eugenio Iannàccaro, Prof. Manghi, Corrado Montanari, Silvia Montefoschi, Cherubino Trabucchi, and Umberto Vanzelli.

<sup>2</sup> Silvano Arieti, *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*. New York: Robert Brunner, 1955 (Italian translation: *Interpretazione della schizofrenia*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Rollo May, Ernest Angel & Henri F. Ellenberger, editors. *Existence*. New York: Basic Books, 1958.

Thus Professor Arieti's criticism is very fair when he asks us what kind of technical contribution can existentialism offer. However, on our part, we are justified in answering that the contribution is not to be considered in terms of technique, but should be considered as a possible aid in understanding certain ontological structures for expressing and understanding the essence of phenomena, which occur in the sphere of the interpersonal relationship. This is the fundamental significance of the existential approach to psychotherapy, rather than what it contributed to technique.

The problem of scientific research in psychotherapy has especially been felt in the recent past. In the U.S. a group of psychoanalysts has assembled a small study group to examine in depth the specific problem of the scientificity of psychoanalytic theory—the *Rapaport Study Group*<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately Rapaport died, after having published a commendable essay on the structure of psychoanalytic theory in 1959 (*The Structure of Psychoanalytic Theory: A Systematizing Attempt*)<sup>5</sup>, and was not able to continue the work he had started. However, his was one of the first formulations that we have of what is structurally valid, in terms of the modern scientific approach to psychoanalysis, and of how this problem is felt today as a need to connect with certain scientific explanatory models, and as a need to insert ourselves into a scientific discussion of general significance—one which might go beyond the metaphysics of human nature via our knowledge of it within the psychotherapeutic relationship. Unfortunately, no one will relinquish this need, because, while an engineer or a doctor may be able to abandon his/her philosophy of life in relation to others, no psychiatrist exists who does not feel that he/she is a depository of a specific conception of humanity. No psychotherapist exists who does not have his/her own conception of life and who does not introduce it into his/her relationship with others as a value reference, or who does not seek to bring what he/she has worked out from the relationship with others into a general conception of life.

I would like to highlight here how and why today one may be able to perfectly insert the problems of dynamic psychology and psychotherapy into this type of scientific attitude that has rejected psychoanalysis. It has been seen, twenty years on, that there has practically been no scientific principle, whatever the science, which has defied the critical efforts of logical empiricism: nevertheless science has progressed. The logical empiricists of recent times—and I am referring to Albert Ellis and Herbert Feigl, who work in the *Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science*—had to recognize that it was possible to make a great deal of progress on the basis of a peculiar feature of the individual/human being, namely on the basis of a process that only he/she is capable of making. These authors, who consider scientific reasoning as always inductive, have called primary induction the ability to theorize and formulate hypotheses on the basis of empirically demonstrated and demonstrable, statistically validatable etc. data. However, they have noted that a human being has the intrinsic capacity to formulate hypotheses with a high degree of prediction on the basis of a minimum of information. This is the clinical method which we continue to employ, and I think it is interesting to see how, today, people for whom the validity of psychology lies in being able to trace it back to physiological structures, are able to welcome the possibility of developing hypotheses purely on a clinical basis.

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<sup>4</sup> After George S. Klein's death, in 1971, the group was renamed *Rapaport-Klein Study Group*. This group begun its yearly meetings at the *Austen Riggs Center* (Stockbridge, Massachusetts) in 1963, and still meets today; the web site is [www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein](http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein).

<sup>5</sup> David Rapaport, *The Structure of Psychoanalytic Theory: A Systematizing Attempt*. In: Koch S., editor, *Psychology: A Study of a Science. Study 1: Conceptual and Systematic. Vol. 3: Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, pp. 55-183. Also in: *Psychological Issues*, 2, Monograph 6. New York: International Universities Press, 1960 (Italian translation: *Struttura della teoria psicoanalitica. Un tentativo di sistematizzazione*. Preface by P.F. Galli [pp. 9-12; also in: *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, 2007, XLI, 2: 231-233]. Turin: Boringhieri, 1969).



We have come to the realization that, in order to conduct this type of scientific research, it is necessary to train researchers on the personality level, to train observers and take advantage of their intrinsic abilities.

I think it is important that in the past five years there has been this recognition of the scientific value of the clinical method, and therefore of the method used in psychotherapy. The issue of psychotherapists is not however one of saying: they have returned to the method we have always used! Sometimes, when colleagues, interested in experimental psychology, try to formulate hypotheses about our work and take scientific stabs at it, a conflict arises, because it seems to us as if they wish to study things which any one of us, with the minimum of experience, would already know the outcome of, would be able to predict, and therefore would find useless to experimentally validate.

However, it seems to me that the fundamental approach would be to start with small situations, to study them in depth in the most objective way possible, using, as well, experimental psychology methods, and above all working so that the study of psychotherapy might be centred on the issues, such as: why does this phenomenon exist? How was this phenomenon viewed by the various schools of thought? How was it described and theorized? What values are operating within it? Why does this term in one school have a different meaning in another?

Here I would like again to make a connection to the problem of “what is eluding technique in psychotherapy”. Too often it is said that psychotherapy is an art.

This is not at all true! I expressed this issue elsewhere a few years ago in this way: the basis of technical knowledge is worked out and assimilated psychologically, and allows us to act without rational control over our actions within the therapeutic context in an appropriate way, and with what I have called the “technical spontaneity” of the therapist. This, in my opinion, takes care of the issue of art in psychotherapy.

Now I will speak about the different perspectives that could be useful to research in psychotherapy.

In order to do scientific research in psychotherapy the first thing to do is to formulate a common language—a language upon which everyone can agree, a common language for which it is not necessary to adopt a magic terminology. It is easily possible to use everyday language to express certain situations, to use a language which is universally comprehensible, and with which to express all possible experiences. That this language should become our scientific code or that it employs everyday terminology is not important, as long as a preliminary effort is made in this area.

A series of empirical studies has been attempted—mostly by Carl Rogers. I must emphasize that the figure of Rogers has a special significance in the history of psychotherapy for one reason: Rogers did his research by applying the techniques of experimental psychology, such as the recording of sessions, the evaluation of diverse treatments, endeavouring to analyze the personality changes that can occur during a single therapeutic session, or during the course of the psychotherapy, or before and after the psychotherapy.

Therapeutically speaking, Rogers was a champion of the so-called “non-directive therapy”, in which there is a minimum of active intervention on the part of the therapist, and in which the variable “person”, therefore, seems excluded as much as possible from the therapeutic field. Rogers rejects interpretation (we are not analyzing here whether it is right or wrong to reject interpretation), however I think it is interesting to see how Rogers has been one of the few therapists who has moved towards theorizing only in recent years. He is one of the few that has had the courage to work for thirty years without ever presenting something in theoretical terms, but continuously referring to practice and answering, “I don’t know!” when asked what meaning should be attributed to a specific manifestation or to a specific phenomenon observed during the course of therapy. When he was asked what framework of reference he was using, he answered “the relationship!” It was not by chance that Rogers has recently had a personal encounter with Martin Buber (we will

discuss this on Thursday evening<sup>6</sup> and try to elucidate further). However I believe it is important to point out that here we have someone who was able to ignore the compulsive need to immediately convert facts into a theoretical construct; Rogers had the courage to administer care without needing a framework of reference to lean on.

In conclusion, I would like to say that there are three necessary attitudes for doing research in psychotherapy: one scientific, one therapeutic, and one philosophical. Can we find all three in the same person? I do not think so; many of us, with a talent for the therapeutic relationship, refuse to express ourselves in experimental terms, to articulate what we observe in an experimental language, and have difficulty doing so. It is rare to find people with both an experimental as well as a therapeutic mindset. And if they existed, doubts would arise as to their ability to be free of scientific qualms that can impede the interpersonal relationship: there are fundamental personality differences that prompt one to opt for one or another type of work. I think that the most appropriate course to take is that of teamwork, which seems to me truly essential for what could become research in psychotherapy today. There are specialized teamwork techniques, like brain storming, much-used in scientific research today, and which evolved out of a specific need. At first the research team worked towards posing and proposing rational hypotheses, based on the clash between the rationalities of the individuals participating on the team.

It has been seen that the inventive aspect within this type of group was rather scarce. Thus a different kind of technique emerged: a group of people, having studied a specific problem, expresses within the team environment everything that comes to mind in the freest possible manner; ultimately rational control over the material produced by the team takes effect. This permits the introduction of those physiological coefficients of the unconscious, constituting inventiveness, into the formulation of the scientific hypothesis. Only a minimal part of what we do is subject to rational control, so wanting to use only this part when conducting scientific research has resulted in an error, the significance of which can only be grasped through a change in the techniques used to conduct the research. On a strictly technical level, I would say that this is the type of approach that must be adopted for psychotherapeutic research.

It is important to point out one thing: Italy is virgin territory when it comes to this research sector, and so I consider it absolutely essential not to get caught up in those situations that have stifled the scientific approach to psychotherapy. Just because it is virgin territory, we are more unprepared, but it is possible to arrive at a certain preparedness for research over a period of years, in a more open fashion, since we do not have a tradition behind us acting as a hindrance in this specific area.

This is the underlying substance of what we wish to impart here; personally, I cannot view the issue in any other way. I believe that if certain perils exist in our situation, that of being in virgin territory, we must also consider the enormous advantage of finding ourselves in this position and being able to tackle these problems for the first time today.

In conclusion, and in an attempt to summarize what I have said, I would like to make a literary comparison: Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities* (1930) is a work that has had much success in Italy in recent years; a book written over a period of thirty years and contemplated over fifty, it presents and expresses all possible avenues of human experience in our era; Musil is a witness to our time. The work is unfinished: it is not possible to come to a conclusion about existence, about human nature, and therefore it is not possible to come to a conclusion about the meaning of psychotherapy. I would say, in terms of psychotherapy, that it is above all an attitude towards life, conscious of the limits within which it must move, as witness and presence to suffering: this, in my opinion, is the existential role of the psychotherapist in society.

I will stop here (it is six o'clock) in expectation of the discussion to follow.

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<sup>6</sup> The Round table on Martin Buber, held on Thursday, December 13, 1962, was published on pp. 284-309 of the *Proceedings*, and reprinted on pp. 275-298 of issue no. 2/2015 of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*; it was chaired by Franco Fornari, and the participants were Pier Francesco Galli, Virgilio Melchiorre, Mara Selvini Palazzoli, and Enzo Spaltro, with interventions by Leonardo Ancona, Enzo Codignola, Gianfranco Garavaglia, and Silvia Montefoschi.

## Discussion

*Danilo Cargnello*

In the first place, I would like to congratulate you, my dear Galli, for such a clear and rich presentation. I am not a psychotherapist even if I do try my best to help the mentally ill I work with, but I would like to offer some clarifications to what I have heard.

You began with Freud and have recognized how in Freud there initially was a comprehensive alignment with the culture and the sense of culture of his time, and how he conceived of the human psychic organism in a totally identical manner to how biologists conceived of the biological organism itself. And there was ambition on his part as well: in fact he hoped that one day it would be possible to study the two organisms in the same way: let us say he believed in the philosophical premises of the era in which he lived and in which he articulated his immortal decision. The philosophy which Freud drew on was above all the philosophy of Johann Friedrich Herbart; not just Herbart's philosophy but, especially, Herbart's philosophy. But in Freud, despite this alignment with the ideas of his age, there is truly a novelty; there is the Freud who speaks about regression mechanisms, of the mechanisms—and I highlight this word—of projection, and so on, and there is the other Freud, infinitely greater, the truly immortal Freud: the Freud of transference. What does Freud's advent into psychotherapy mean? It means this: everything that happens originates from this relationship.

Now I would like to comment on what you said about philosophical doctrines that actually touch upon psychiatry and psychology, and in a certain sense, even psychotherapy: that these new vistas place their value in a value much closer to humanity than the one adopted by Freud in his time. I would therefore be cautious. This "I" which exists in the world, does not have intentionalities or functions or something added to it; when "I" is pronounced, it is already in the world, and is already intentionally with someone.

And if there is no one in front of him/her, he/she is with him/herself, or he/she ends up with him/herself, and this naturally is of great importance. So, I would like to urge you to consider these comments, even in terms of philosophy, if you will.

*Pier Francesco Galli*

I am fully in agreement with what Professor Cargnello has said, and if I had had more time at my disposal I would have expounded more fully on the topic than I have done today. However, my purpose was to illustrate clearly two facts: first, the impossibility and the absurdity of trying to speak today of a synthesis in psychotherapy. In psychotherapy we have progressed by leaps and bounds over decades. We must critically re-evaluate our ideas, establish an essentially critical outlook on what we have done, and on our future perspective, and then begin to reap the benefits of this; we have no idea when or how or if this synthesis might come.

As for Freud, my criticism was of the scientific variety, made in an attempt to demonstrate how attempts of varying significance were continually being made, and this we see even in the history itself of psychoanalysis; if we analyze moment by moment where the most emphasis was put in terms of therapeutic factors, we see how we have lived through, for instance, that period in which we thought everything was about interpretation, and in which interpretation was the therapeutic component *par excellence*.

This morning we talked about Rosen's technique: John Rosen<sup>7</sup> administers care to patients. He cures them, has undeniable therapeutic successes, and naturally tries to explain all this with the technique of immediately interpreting the patients' behaviours. And it is not here, as we have seen, wherein the value of his therapy lies. At a certain point we come across Jacob L. Moreno, who uses psychodrama, and tries to explain the therapeutic factor in terms of catharsis. And then we have

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<sup>7</sup> John N. Rosen, *Direct Analysis: Selected Papers*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1953.

Serge Lebovici who uses the same psychodrama, and says that it is not just a cathartic fact, but that even within the context of psychodrama, interpretation is the therapeutic key. Then we see that attention has been moved onto transference, and it becomes apparent that here, too, there is something that escapes us, but that helps us to care for others anyway. Thus I would say that the fundamental issue is only this: to try to point out, to isolate, and to scientifically study the various therapeutic factors.

*Leonardo Ancona*

I do not know if I will be able to express what I wish, because our good friend, Galli, has truly imbued the various topics with great depth and delicacy. I will try, however, because I would like to clarify the specific merit his talk has had. Such have been the challenges and the mental processes of the last few years that it has not been possible to write about it yet, and this is the reason why Galli has had to avail himself of his own thoughts.

Each of us, when we deal with a topic in psychology, psychiatry, or psychotherapy—and this has been one of the points that Galli has touched upon—brings a mental universe with him/her, a cultural universe with social reflections, of which it is truly hard to divest ourselves. Each of us sets up his/her own philosophy, in every action we undertake, and yet it is necessary to divest ourselves of this because, if it is true what Galli has reported—that progress in psychotherapy and psychiatry has been made precisely in the moment when we have made the effort to distance every structure and every premise of both a metaphysical and methodological nature from ourselves, in a structural sense, and this *has* brought progress—it therefore seems to me that the discussion to be had is this one: it is true that we are human; it is true that we have our principles, and we have to have them, however, we must set them aside in the field of research, of the application of psychology and psychiatry.

The progress made has taken place when we have understood this relationship (as Professor Cargnello has so appropriately reminded us) when one says that within the “I” there is always an inherent otherness, that an “I” cannot exist without the existence, as well, of an *alter*. This relationship is elusive. It eludes sight, measurement, and dreams. It is elusive because beneath every manifestation, there is always a subjective element and it is not possible to discern objectivity. And yet it’s there, it stabilizes everything, and the only way to identify it is precisely to find an instrument to help us grasp it, since we do feel and experience it.

It is only in this way that there exists the freedom to apprehend new realities, to feel that there exist human situations that are full of existential significance for us and for others, and to make progress by means of this new knowledge that cannot be formalized but still represents a true knowledge of human nature.

And why do I want to highlight this fact? Because I sincerely think that this is the only way to be able to draw us all together, and to make progress in the field of psychotherapy and psychiatry. However, we are systematically seeing that there are some who do not do this and this constitutes an injustice to those who are.

I do not wish to insert myself into personal issues. However, when we observe that there are colleagues, psychologists who have their own preconceived and yet, in their viewpoint, legitimate vision into those things expressed in a common language, and who at a certain point become irritated because they hear colleagues speaking another language, ones who say that realities exist which are not seen from their perspective, this truly hurts us and them, because we, in this moment, are stalling the progress of every science, and especially of our own discipline, a discipline that will surely be destroyed.

I do not wish to name names, but this has even taken place in this hall. We hope that it will stop happening, not because this is our Symposium—it is not mine or Galli’s—it is everyone’s Symposium—but because this should establish a code of mutual respect, of intellectual expansion, and also of education at this high level in which we move.

*Pier Francesco Galli*

I naturally have nothing to comment about what Ancona has said. However, he has reminded me of an episode that may be interesting in relation to a person with whom we are all acquainted. We all know *The Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl* by Madame Sechehaye<sup>8</sup> and we all know about the life story presented in this work. At a certain moment, Madame Sechehaye, in order to be able to justify the therapeutic result she achieved before the colleagues within the environment from which she came—a rather orthodox psychoanalytic environment—felt the need to assert that the patient's situation was certainly not an Oedipal situation, because, during the course of the therapy, the use of Oedipal-type interpretations had not been necessary to resolve the situation. This therapist, who achieved a brilliant success, who had had a life experience and an immeasurable therapeutic one with her patient, felt the need to connect the validity of what she had done to that microscopic aspect.

*Silvano Arieti*

First of all I would also like to congratulate our friend Galli who, in a very succinct manner, has been able to give us the benefit of his profound thoughtfulness and his extensive studies. He has said a great deal and I cannot review everything in a few minutes. Much of what he said, in some way, matches my own thoughts and I am honoured to have such a distinguished ally.

For example, he has said that we have to accept even what we don't understand, and this, as Dr. Galli himself has said, in a certain way, applies to some of the things, which I have tried to say this morning<sup>9</sup>, to this concept of the primary relationship. We may not understand the phenomenon well, but just because we can't understand it, it does not mean we should exclude it.

And I would like to say that this can be said for almost every psychological concept. When we speak, for instance, about character, or personality, or even, the ego, the super-ego, the unconscious and so on, we are using terms that we cannot actually define in a scientific manner, terms that the Vienna Circle, to which Dr. Galli has alluded, would definitely reject, and not use, but how can one do modern psychiatry without these concepts? How can one not talk about emotions, feelings, personality, character, even if these terms are obscure? We need to use them even if they are imperfect. And on this point we are agreed.

We also agree on the point that an automatic choice of values always takes place upon adopting one type of therapy rather than another. And he has referred to the fact that existentialism was adopted first in Europe and then in the United States. This can be interpreted culturally—as a manifestation of the culture in the United States today. It is not only existentialism that has been embraced. For example, in the United States we also see a rebirth of religious sentiment: the churches, the synagogues, the temples of any religion that up until fifteen or twenty years ago were empty, are now filling up more and more. Why? It is possible that this acceptance of existentialism and of religion may have common ground, that there may be, for historical reasons, a need for mysticism and a need for things that do not seem rational at first glance. It is possible that there may be deeper reasons, which we cannot yet explain.

I also appreciated another concept that Dr. Galli has expressed, and he expressed it much better than I could in a conversation that I had yesterday with other colleagues. He does not like this term “art”, and he has said that what we opt for represents a certain technical spontaneity on the part of the therapist and I believe that this concept is valid and it immediately brought to mind what happens in some human activities. For example—this is only an example and I do not say that it is the most appropriate—when playing tennis we do not use science, we do not measure the angle or the ballistics where the ball will fall. We don't have the time to do this. And yet, we have the

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<sup>8</sup> Marguerite H. Sechehaye, *Journal d'une schizophrène*. Paris: PUF, 1950 (English translation: *Reality Lost and Regained. Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl. With Analytic Interpretation*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1951; Italian translation: *Diario di una schizofrenica*. Preface by Cesare L. Musatti. Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1955). See also the 1968 movie by Nelo Risi *Diary of a Schizophrenic Girl*.

<sup>9</sup> See Footnote 1.

technique and we're capable of playing tennis: this is a human activity which I cannot say is called art. It is a game in which some rational elements can be applied, because even when playing tennis, we use our cerebral cortex, but of course we use it in a different way from when, for instance, we read Kant or Aristotle. For this reason, I would like to say that this immediacy, this non-conscious awareness of which Dr. Galli has spoken may truly be an important concept.

I will now mention a point upon which I slightly disagree with Dr. Galli and perhaps this is because I didn't understand that well. It seems to me that Dr. Galli has a somewhat prejudicial attitude towards theory or theoretical formulations. For example: I think, as I have understood it, that he does not want theories about human nature. Now, it seems to me that despite the fact that these theories about human nature have been made in some way, or revoked or modified or transformed by subsequent theories, they have been very useful. This brings to mind Benedetto Croce's saying that, despite the fact that we build and tear down houses, we always need houses, from the time that humans left the jungle until today, and we will continuously build houses, even if at a certain point the houses must be destroyed if no longer good.

Dr. Galli cited Freud and others and, notwithstanding the fact that these theoretical castles may have now been changed, they have been absolutely necessary, in my opinion, in the search for methods that have had practical effectiveness. And even if all of these theories are eventually abolished, some progress has still been made, just as, for instance it has happened with philosophy: one philosophy follows after another, but it is possible to see signs of progress in all these different philosophical ideas.

It seems to me that Dr. Galli may have slightly contradicted himself. For example, when he has supported those methodologies with which I am very much in agreement: such as, with a minimum of information, we can develop hypotheses; this is also the method that we psychiatrists, beginning with Freud, have adopted, and when Dr. Galli accepts this method, he is acknowledging in some way the formation of theories. Because, what else is a hypothesis? There is a quantitative difference, but basically it is a type of theory.

Finally, I wish now to comment on what Professor Cargnello has said and to merge it with what Dr. Galli has said in reference to those cultural forces that act even unconsciously upon us. Professor Cargnello has spoken to us about alterity, certainly a very legitimate term and one which we should accept, but I want to add that this concept is also part of the culture of this century. In fact, it hasn't only emerged as an existentialist concept but in many other forms. I will cite a few: for example, in the psychology of George Herbert Mead<sup>10</sup>, who has nothing to do with existentialism, he, too, speaks to us about the "I" and the "me", and also in the psychiatry of Harry Stack Sullivan, who speaks about the relationships between the individual and others, about this form of alterity, and now, in England, the psychoanalysis of Ronald Fairbairn is acquiring more and more importance. Fairbairn seems to be a rising star in England. And what is he talking about? He is no longer talking about instincts but about this relationship with objects. For this reason, it seems to me that this, too, may be an expression of a natural force that becomes more and more conscious.

### *Pier Francesco Galli*

I will answer as systematically as possible the questions put to me and comment on the observations of Professor Arieti. Firstly, on this remark of his: how can we not use certain concepts in modern psychiatry? This is most correct and it is indeed accepted on an operational basis. The problem is to be able to formulate these concepts in an operational way. I am not going to try here to do that, because, even though I have knowledge of the problem, these are definitions, in which, if one gets a word wrong, it is enough to totally change the meaning of the sentence: every word must have a very precise meaning.

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<sup>10</sup> George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

I have transcribed some examples, but I see that they were not among the most valid. However, in a volume of the *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, there is an article by Ellis<sup>11</sup>, which precisely represents an attempt at operational formulations of psychoanalytical concepts: he starts with classical psychoanalytical definitions and tries to reformulate these same definitions in an operational manner.

In the United States, the philosophy of psychoanalysis had become the philosophy of living better, and at a certain moment I believe they realized that this was not the right route. Among other things, there was an article, called *L'ontologia sul divano* (Ontology on the couch) that came out in Italy in the journal *Il Mondo*, dealing specifically with this problem, and written by Alberto Arbasino, who was in the U.S. at that time. It spoke directly to the enormous influx that existential psychiatry was attracting there, and to how there was no demand within it for a new therapeutic element, but a demand for something more essential, which I can affirm that psychotherapy will never be able to provide: it is not the task of the psychotherapist to impart the meaning of life to another. The psychotherapist can impart the meaning of the relationship experience, which can enable the other to feel equal to all others, and seize from society his/her own opportunity to be.

I do not have any prejudices towards theories at all! I have prejudices towards the desire to theorize about the human being, and I feel that this is a situation which one cannot stay out of today. And this seems a valid position to me, because it is not a passive acknowledgement, but the active acknowledgement of a limit that stimulates and can inspire us towards research. As you, Professor Arieti, have expressed the concept—accepting a theory of the human being in terms of practical usefulness—is most correct; however accepting a theory in terms of the usefulness which we can get out of it, is like accepting, for example, a religion in terms of the usefulness that we can get out of it, and I do not know how possible this is and how it can allow us a European cultural approach.

I am not at all against theorizing. Rejection of theoretical constructs originated from the fact that these theoretical constructs then became binding and prevented scientific progress. Well and good if these constructs are formulated not as a theory of the human being, but as hypotheses, which we can use to move forward, provided that proving them is possible and that therefore they can be reintroduced into those canons that are the basis of scientific discourse. Therefore it is logical to make use of certain theories. It is logical to adopt these concepts, but always fully conscious of their limits. As great as the figure and genius of Freud may be, I do not personally feel that I can accept him as the metaphysician on whom to centre my life and my scientific research; his is a genius of which we can make use, but one which we can also put aside. At some point it is incumbent upon us to shatter some of the great man's myths, and then move forward along a path of research in an operationally valid way, as all of our colleagues in other research sectors do.

I believe that I have clarified my thought and it pleases me to have been given the opportunity to do so.

### *Elvio Fachinelli*

I only want to express some perplexities that have been aroused in me, first during Dr. Galli's presentation and then during these last assertions of his. It seems to me that, in fact, we have now arrived at a sort of tediousness: Jung, Adler, Freud, and on and on, up until the very last, whom I must admit I do not know very well. I feel that instead we should actually look at something else. It seems to me that, deep down, in going back over the history of psychotherapy, Freud appears as one of the most careful in terms of theorizing. The referring of theory to concrete experience is constant in him. There does not exist—up until World War I—a genuine and true metaphysical Freud. There is almost always the scrupulousness of referring to the patient's concrete experience. And so I believe that this, for someone doing psychotherapy, could be a basic guideline.

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<sup>11</sup> Albert Ellis, An operational reformulation of some of the basic principles of psychoanalysis. In: Herbert Feigl & Michael Scriven, editors, *The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis*. In: *Minnesota Studies in Philosophy of Science*, 1956, Volume I, pp. 131-153. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1956. Internet edition in PDF: [http://mcps.umn.edu/assets/pdf/1\\_5\\_Ellis.pdf](http://mcps.umn.edu/assets/pdf/1_5_Ellis.pdf).

I would say that this could also make it possible for us to explain a certain aspect of Freudian orthodoxy in terms of historicity, because it's easy to say "yes, in essence they are experts". We refer to the experts like one refers to Aristotle, and this I believe is true. However, in a certain way, isn't it possible that this type of prudence, this particular aspect of Freudian orthodoxy, represents cautiousness in the face of the rush to theorization? Because it seems to me that beyond the Freudian environment, there has essentially been a discussion about theories, while, on the other hand, on the strictly clinical level, Freud, at least to a certain extent, tried to control himself. I say this not in defence of Freudianism, but in an effort to provide an explanation of the phenomenon, in terms of historicity.

Another observation that I would like to make is on the use of the term "the existential approach to psychotherapy". Maybe it would be better to say phenomenological approach in that it restores the profound sense of this new achievement. In other words, it is not about a new metaphysics almost externally superimposed onto psychotherapy, but rather the ability of a particular method, of a different approach that is not part of a specific metaphysics, of a specific mode of operation that could be discussed and perhaps abandoned. In the context of a much-needed deepening of the psychotherapeutic experience—rather than pursuing, in fact, the vicissitudes of the preverbal relationship, which are actually inexpressible by their very nature—wouldn't it be more useful to analyze in greater depth the essentials of the relationship between therapist and patient, that is to say the language? In this sense, as in the experiment of the French analysts like Lacan, it could be interesting to focus precisely on the one-to-one relationship, on the analysis of language, and on what is actually unfolding in the psychotherapeutic relationship.

#### *Pier Francesco Galli*

It pleases me that Dr. Fachinelli, through his intervention, has given me the possibility to clarify an ambiguity that may have been created. Understanding historically this problem corroborates what I have said. First of all, there has been no attack on Freud the person, because if ever there existed a person who has proceeded with enormous scientific rigour, with extreme coherence, with the greatest capacity to reformulate hypotheses at which he had arrived, to abandon them and to formulate other ones throughout his life, that person was Freud. Therefore I have nothing to say about the person Freud—who surfaces in all his writings—nor on the scientific logic he uses. The attack I made was on the method, which made sense then. Today, however, it no longer makes sense for us to remain attached to it.

Let us look at another example: the attempt to scientifically envisage the therapeutic relationship had been made in terms of the use of free association, a technique borrowed from psychology or experimental psychology. This provided at the time a certain guarantee of an experimental nature, of legitimacy to psychoanalysis—an acceptable concept then, but not now.

Naturally, a rejection of theory does not mean a rejection of psychoanalysis; however it means an attempt—as I have said and repeat once more—to formulate in an operational way the concepts of psychoanalysis, to insert oneself into the modern scientific dialogue, and therefore to respect the requirements of a scientific concept as Herbert Feigl, for instance, presented them. I have copied them here: "Requisites for a scientific theory: consistent operations, logically defined with empirical intersubjective and repeatable premises, with the possibility of formulating laws or concepts of an elevated predictive capacity." It is necessary to be able to find these three elements in each of the concepts we use, and my criticism from an historical point of view was made precisely to show how all too often a certain type of scientific instrumentality has been used as an instrument of power in hindering the progress of science.

Here I have to make some practical references. If you take any psychoanalytic journal, including an Italian journal, and you go look at a bibliographical references, you will always find the names of the same authors over and over. This is not a criticism of psychoanalysis, which has always moved forward with extreme caution during periods of great creativity; however after the first twenty or twenty-five years of psychoanalysis this creativity almost disappeared. Just think, for



example, of what theoretical constraint had created the simple assertion that it wasn't possible to establish transference with a psychotic. We can see how much all this has made it possible to completely reformulate the same theory of approach to some basic facts of psychological theory, made by the same psychoanalysts. Therefore there are no criticisms of one group rather than another, or any attempts to criticize them, or lack of desire to understand them in historical terms. We *do* understand them historically! But may this understanding help us not to feel constrained with respect to the scientific approach.

This then was what I wished to express—no criticism on a personal level, and no criticism either of what was historically achieved. And I wish to say more: I think that a Freud, who could work with actual concepts of scientific research, would have definitely produced more than what psychotherapists living today could produce in this area.

With regard to non-verbal communication, we must clarify: if we adopt the term “sense of the relationship”, it is easy to say it but difficult to then define it, to know what we mean; therefore, one of the modes of operation we can use is that of studying it in terms of communications theory, which is not only limited to the verbal expression of communication. This is one of those expressions and a problem that has obsessed Jacques Lacan for decades... We can also date the educational development of Lacan back to the many contacts he had with a group of English philosophers (the theory of language, the phenomenological study of language etc.).

Lacan, in his seminars, analyzes Plato's *Dialogues* in great depth, bringing them into his seminar as a subject of study. However, in functional terms, in order to understand the essence of this relationship, referring solely to language is somewhat limited; it is necessary to say here whether it is scientifically valid, speaking of language, to wish to consider it purely on the formal level, or to wish to accept as valid the significance of the language interpretation, in other words, whether it is scientifically useful and operationally valid to use the interpretation or not.

Interpretation is a method we can adopt—associating certain contents with other contents. Is it right to use it or not? Phenomenologists naturally say no (not because of bias or rejection), and use another method. It is a matter of seeing whether, in order to grasp the essence of the psychotherapeutic relationship, it is necessary to accept just this method, or whether it is necessary to study precisely those non-verbal expressions, which we cannot say are impossible to study, because there is a great deal of knowledge on this subject. They may be difficult to study, but nevertheless they definitely represent a path to follow in order to understand the essence of what I continue to call “therapeutic factors”. We should face the problem of therapeutic factors, and be able to analyze all of them without being prejudiced in favour of one or the other.

Far be it from me to say that a single person must or can do this, because everyone, practically speaking, continuously needs frames of reference, and needs a threshold to serve as a safety threshold: no one has the ability to study all of these aspects, however all of these ways are valid for trying to grasp the essence of a phenomenon that no one is capable of defining. We shall see how difficult this effort will be, when we'll try all together to analyze what Martin Buber has said, Thursday evening<sup>12</sup>. We talk about the relationship, the relationship in psychotherapy. Let us try to see what this relationship is. If we do not, then we are really using terms with a mystical significance. In my talk, I was trying to delineate a variety of fears that should be there, and to offer a series of critical analyses of all that has been done, so that they will allow us to face the issue with a sort of intellectual virginity.

In essence that was the nucleus of my address. Therefore far be it from me to fling criticisms, which would be stupid. So many obvious criticisms have been flung at psychoanalysis that it would be shameful to add any more.

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<sup>12</sup> See Footnote 6.

# Repression and nightmares. Italian cinema in the shadow of the Shoah

Alessandro Izzi\*

*Abstract.* A glimpse on the production of Italian films that have dealt more or less directly with the Shoah theme, from Goffredo Alessandrini's *L'ebreo errante* (1948) to Claudio Gora's *Febbre di vivere* (1953) from Sergio Capogna's *Diario di un italiano* (1970-71) to the films of the Naziexploitation (a genre of which Italy has the controversial pride to have been, at the beginning of the 1980s, the world's leading producer and exporter) in search of a red thread joining together titles diverse by style, genre and approach to matter. The purpose of this work is to rethink the main (and often unknown) stages of a collective remission of responsibility, but also to emphasize those moments in which the past has found its way back to haunt us, leaving us with a less edulcorated and self-acquitting cinema, and to lead the long and for the most part untrodden way towards the recognition of our true past.

*Keywords:* Italian cinema, Shoah, Repression, Remission of responsibility, Concentration camps, *Italiani Brava Gente*, Anti-semitic stereotype, Delation, Italian racial laws, Nazi exploitation.

## Introduction

If we watch the production of Italian films that have dealt more or less directly with the Shoah theme, the persistence of a red thread joining together titles diverse by style, genre and approach to matter is surprising.

Whether it is comedies like Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella* (1997) or complex psychological dramas such as *La finestra di fronte* (2003) by Ferzan Ozpetek, whether it's movies bordering on pornography as in the films of the *Naziexploitation* (a genre of which Italy has the controversial pride to have been, at the beginning of the 1980s, the world's leading producer and exporter) or whether we are dealing with the composure of the historic and memorial reconstruction 'a la Bassani', as does Vittorio De Sica's *Il giardino dei Finzi Contini*, not much changes. Our cinematography reveals a complex and highly stratified national effort aimed at repressing the collective responsibility in participating in the European Jew extermination process. Such an effort, in the postwar period, sprouts very effectively from the birth of a national rhetoric that puts all the blame of the war on the German ally and assigns the entire Italian population, without any form of distinction, the role of victims.

Only in recent years Italian historiography has begun to point the finger at this attitude aimed at gaining amnesty through amnesia, and has begun to cast more light on the actual involvement of Italian reality in the extermination machine<sup>1</sup>.

Yet we have still a long way to go, if one thinks that an accurate census of the Italian concentration camps is still in progress as we write<sup>2</sup>, or considers the tremendous difficulty in

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\* Professor of "Storia e critica del cinema", Università Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy; Co-director of the on-line journal *Close-up* ([www.close-up.it](http://www.close-up.it)), Rome; Address: Via Maresca 72, 04024 Gaeta (Latina), Italy, E-Mail <[alterquando@gmail.com](mailto:alterquando@gmail.com)>.

<sup>1</sup> In order to have a little idea of the complex process of dealing with Italian historic past, see, in particular: Gentile Emilio, *Fascismo, Storia e interpretazione*, Laterza, Bari, 2007, or Ruzzententi Martino, *Shoah Le colpe degli italiani*, Manifestolibri, Roma, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> You can have an idea of the current state of the work visiting the web page [www.campifascisti.it](http://www.campifascisti.it).

facing our colonial past whose reality does not shed a positive light on our racial policies which, as now seems to be the general consensus, was not a mere concession to the upcoming alliance with the Reich.

This rhetoric of national victimization, espoused in equal measure by the nostalgic right wing parties (which had not already been eradicated, while indeed it was very soon reconfirmed in important positions in the new Italian society), by the Catholic Church (anxious to avoid reopening the controversy about its alleged participation or, at best its silence about the extermination of the Jews), as well as by the left wing parties (which sought instead to capitalize consensus on a reconstruction project which was prompted by the need to put a stone over the past), is now recognized in the formula "*italiani brava gente*"<sup>3</sup> and influences our cinema in all its aspects with the exception of very few cases destined from their inception to have very little luck in the cultural debate.

A rhetoric presently destined to drive the complex public perception of the event, which oscillates between a generic pity for the victims and the weariness, often annoyed boredom, with which the annual recurrence of the Memory Day is observed. A recurrence which for once was instituted in Italy first, a year before than in the rest of Europe<sup>4</sup>.

The public's reactions to the annual renewal of commemorations, or even more so their opening of newspaper debates and their attempts of relativization (including the addition of a remembrance day to commemorate the Foibe victims, where we remember the barbarism of a communist regime and not of a Fascist one) is indeed a formidable litmus test that reveals the split in two soul of the national consciousness and the difficulty of building a future when one has not yet come to terms with his past<sup>5</sup>.

Yet alongside these moments of censorship and repression that animate so many of our films and that remain fundamentally unchanged in a cinema that in the last seventy years has changed a lot, survive moments of painful re-emergence, works that crystallize a sense of anguish typical of the elaboration of a deep trauma. Certainly not the trauma of the victims, but that of the children of the executioners, of those who are facing the prospect of a new life, and even for just a moment are compelled to lift the fictional veil of national rhetoric and to uncover the brutal shapeless horror squirming under the family rock.

The purpose of this work is therefore to rethink the main (and often unknown) stages of a collective remission of responsibility, but also to emphasize those moments in which the past has found its way back to haunt us, leaving us with a less edulcorated and self-acquitting cinema, and to lead the long and for the most part untrodden way towards the recognition of our true past.

Finally we will be able to catch the sense of a cinematography that is still essentially incapable of activating a constructive relationship with its past and is therefore destined to repeating, with few variations, the same communication strategy of coupling the often allusive and vague "said" with the more painful "unsaid", which inevitably ends up frustrating even the filmmaker's best intentions, as genially highlighted in Alberto Caviglia's film *Pecore in erba* (2015), not coincidentally a fake documentary, a mockumentary.

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<sup>3</sup> See Focardi Filippo, *Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano: La rimozione delle colpe della seconda guerra mondiale*; Laterza, Roma, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> A full reconstruction of the national debate around the question of the *Giornata della Memoria* (Memorial Day) is effectively reconstructed in Gordon Robert S.C., *The Holocaust in Italian Culture, 1944-2010*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2012. See also what Furio Colombo wrote about this issue: Colombo Furio, "L'Europa e la Shoah, la legge del silenzio", in *Il fatto Quotidiano*, January 27, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> See also Valentina Pisanty, *Abusi di Memoria. Negare, banalizzare, sacralizzare la Shoah*, Bruno Mondadori, Turin, 2012; Claudia Gina Hassan, *Costruzioni della memoria e rappresentazioni sociali*, in: Andrea Minuz & Guido Vitiello (editors), *Cinema e Storia 2013*, Year II, no. 2, with the monograph *La Shoah nel cinema italiano*, Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro).

## Remissions and silences

Perhaps the most emblematic case of repression of the reality of the Shoah in the Italian cinematic production system is also one of the less known and less quoted (even in the international debate) among the case studies.

It is Claudio Gora's *Febbre di vivere* (1953), a film freely (and in some ways recklessly) inspired by a play by Leopold Trieste written immediately after the end of World War II in a climate already dominated by a desire of reconstruction, when Italy started (thanks to the Marshall Plan) to move towards a brighter future, and as far away as possible from any re-emergence of fascist sentiment.

The drama had been relatively successfully staged back in 1946 and it showed the profound need of a Jewish actor and playwright to reflect on the racist sentiment that had been the basis of the promulgation of racial laws, and on the reasons behind the turning in of so many Jews who ended up in the extermination camps. It is definitely an operation dictated by a profound urgency, which focuses on the issue of the coexistence of Jews and gentiles, and ventures on philosophical reflections of burning actuality that however fail to resonate with a nation that sees amnesia as the only possible condition for its reconstruction and for the definition of narrative strategies that would enable it to recount even its most recent past.

*Cronaca*, this is the title of the work by Leopoldo Trieste (actor who, incidentally, also starred in Roberto Rossellini's *Dov'è la libertà?* (1952), one of the few films of the period to place unpleasant accents on the issue of deportation even if in only a single small episode) puts at the center of the discourse the figure of Daniele, a young Jew returning from the concentration camps. Daniele is looking for Massimo, the man who claimed to be his friend but who had betrayed him to get the payoff awarded to those who turned Jews in. Leopoldo Trieste soon abandons the plot of a simple vengeance story to develop a quasi-metaphysical drama, which reflects on the motivations behind the act of delation while probing the persistence of the anti-Semitic stereotype and of a creeping and insinuating racism in an Italian culture that just came out of the war. Probably no contemporary text (but also the later ones) places so much emphasis on the motivations behind the delation of Jews, which cannot be simply explained with the reward attached to it. So the "why" remains the center of the discourse of a desperate process of realization that finds its completion only in the dramatic third act after Massimo finally disappears and we figure out that Daniele was the true protagonist

*“with his spiritual interests and with his anguished ‘why’s’, and that the narrative was no more than background and atmosphere, while the main theme was that of racial hate (thus the ambitions of the drama overcome the modesty of the title)”<sup>6</sup>*

and the answer to the distressing questions is among the oldest and most desperate that the Italian theater has ever provided.

When, years later, Claudio Gora begins his film adaptation, the repression of the Jewish question could not be more complete. *Febbre di vivere* expunges from the narration every possible reference to the racial issue and to the recent past of Fascist Italy. The movie, anchored only to the present reality of an Italy that has risen from its rubble, transforms Daniele into a mere convict, imprisoned after some shady maneuvers of Massimo aimed at pocketing a small reward. The work of Gora, an effective fresco of the new postwar generations and of the shallowness of the new Italian born of amnesia and amnesties, loses all historical references and any philosophical implications and becomes involuntarily emblematic of an ongoing process of deep repression in the Italian context. The same reasoning just a few years earlier had motivated the decision by all major Italian publishers not to publish *Se questo è un uomo* by Primo Levi, considered too painful for a nation

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<sup>6</sup> See Introduction to the book of drama also reported at the web site: [http://www.rufinateatro.it/archivio\\_testi\\_teatrali/query\\_det.asp?id=973](http://www.rufinateatro.it/archivio_testi_teatrali/query_det.asp?id=973)

that just wants to forget and to look at the future pretending that the repression could somehow afford them some serenity. The same reasoning applies to Jewish survivors who come home with their burden of unreported stories and soon adapt themselves to silence because the world does not really want to hear certain stories (and even if they listen to them they would not believe), such as very well exemplified in another formidable piece of theater as *Napoli milionaria* by Eduardo De Filippo, in which an ex-deported Italian is unable to talk about his misfortunes to his own family members who keep telling him to forget and just think that he eventually made it back home.

The same reasoning that at about the same time that Gora's movie was premiered, prevented Zeffirelli from debuting as a movie director with a film based on a short story written by Pratolini.

The project of this film had long been in the Florentine writer's wish list, and started to take shape in 1952 in a time when Pratolini had begun to broaden substantially his narrative horizons. If the earlier years had seen the genesis of texts mainly focused on his individuality and his direct experience, with *Vanda* (this is the title of the very short story from which the film should have been taken), the writer's inquiry begins to move towards a representation of society and towards a group of characters that, though still sketched in the short space of a short story, begin to aspire to a strong individuality away from the personal experience of the author.

As Gianluca Schiavo notes in an interesting reconstruction of the salient stages of the project:

*“According to the project, the neophyte Zeffirelli should have been in charge of the shooting and for the two main roles he thought of Walter Chiari and Lucia Bosè. In the following two years, several producers examined the text, but none of them thought it appropriate to finance the film.”*<sup>7</sup>

The project is misunderstood by the many producers to whom it is presented, and even if they are enticed by the prospect of securing the signature of the author of *Cronaca di poveri amanti* (published in 1946) and although reassured by the opportunity of launching an author such as Zeffirelli already very active in cinema as a second director alongside Luchino Visconti, among others, they still are intimidated by the audacity of a subject that reconstructs with utmost precision the Italian experience after the promulgation of racial laws. *I fidanzati*, this is the title of the ill-fated film, should, in fact, have told the story of a Jewish girlfriend (engaged with a gentile) who commits suicide after witnessing his father's arrest. And even the attempt to bring the narrative into the tracks of a resistance story by presenting Vanda's parent as a Party opponent, did not make it more acceptable. A tale so tenaciously immersed into every day fascism, with a story that portrays Italy at the very least guilty of ignorance and indifference to the fate of the weaker, was too far ahead of its time. The subject, published in *Cinema nuovo* in the section titled “The films that they wanted to do” is in this sense accompanied by interesting considerations from the two authors about the difficulty of producing a melodrama based on two unpopular conditions such as

*“1) The protagonist is a Jewish girl, and precisely because of her being Jewish during the war, tragedy must ensue: a thorny subject and with no appeal to the public; 2) It is true that this is essentially a love story, but a love story with a “bad ending”, even with suicide: another thorny and unpopular argument”*<sup>8</sup>.

If the resistance of producers to the creation of Hebrew-based films set during the period of persecution is linked to considerations of the low commercial appeal they may have with the

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<sup>7</sup> Gianluca Schiavo, Un soggetto mai realizzato di Pratolini e Zeffirelli, ISSN 1127-4883, *Bollettino Telematico dell'Arte* (BTA), 24 Luglio 2009, no. 532, [www.bta.it/txt/a0/05/bta00532.html](http://www.bta.it/txt/a0/05/bta00532.html).

<sup>8</sup> Pratolini Vasco & Zeffirelli Franco, *I fidanzati*, in: *Cinema nuovo*, 1954, no. 35, p. 277. The subject of the movie was published from n. 35 al n. 38.

general public, they are nevertheless based on a widespread attitude of *weak memory*<sup>9</sup> that deeply permeates our cinema and also involves those productions that make it through the censor's net and land in the theaters of our peninsula. We will talk more of this in the next chapter.

What it is interesting to know here is the fact that only a few years later Pratolini's short novel becomes a film thanks to the efforts of other authors and other production contingencies. It is a movie that is far from being a great success and often barely mentioned in the analysis of the relationship between Italian cinema and Shoah.

It is *Diario di un italiano* by Sergio Capogna, a film shot in 1971, but distributed only later between 1972 and 1973 (a further confirmation of the difficulty of our cinema to deal with the subject). The film stars an affirmed diva such as Alida Valli (although the part of Vanda is assigned to the then beginner Mara Venier). *Diario di un italiano* pays its literary debt from the beginning, with the long introduction of the protagonist's voice over, which is in line with the composure of the typical style of prose of Pratolini, but remains anchored to the same graceful packaging of other contemporary re-enactments of the fascist period, with its usual tinge of discreet melancholy in the atmospheres of photography, in the soft music and in the memorial dynamic that mixes up both individual and collective. In this way the story assumes the contours of an elegy when the *bildungsroman* dynamic becomes central in the construction of the plot and we start to see Valerio as the true protagonist of the story: a nineteen-year-old who, during the era of the promulgation of racial laws, begins to look at the world through adult eyes as he confronts in his still adolescent wonder the injustice of persecution.

At the beginning of the '70s *Diario di un italiano* - is part, -in a way we could even consider it a precursor - of those post-60's climate movies that in the years of the terrorist attacks called *Anni di Piombo* began to reflect in a less self-exculpatory way on the more extremist and dangerous drifts of the Fascist regime. Pierpaolo Pasolini's production of *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (1975) follows two years later: a neglected reflection on the subject of fascism in its most frustrating and terrible dynamics. And within a few years *Il portiere di notte* (1974) by Liliana Cavani comes to the screens, a film which reasons on the theme of Memory by dealing with a repressed past that comes back painfully enough to not allow any hope in the future. It is a long stretch of new representations of the Shoah which culminate with the explosion of the *Naziexploitation* phenomenon, which from daytime nightmare slips naturally into pure and simple horror, as if to say that, after so much repression, it is necessary for memory to explode in a telluric, uncontrolled, traumatic way, populating our cinemas of Nazis that are as monstrous as the movie vampires of the English Hammer film.

It is necessary to wait till 1980, with the programming of *Holocaust*, the television mini-series, however, before the specificity of the Shoah can begin to claim its space in the Italian cinematic (and television) productions.

A memorial opening that does not seem to arise from inside the Italian cultural fabric, but is a twisted reflection of a complex international debate to which Italian reality couldn't remain deaf for too long. Here too, the Italian response is halfway between censorship and reticence.

*Holocaust* was poorly programmed by national television networks and did not give room for many debates. The programming of this fiction however became part of a cultural context which, while recognizing Jews as the privileged victims of Nazism, did not recognize its own active participation in the extermination process.

*Holocaust* is, in the context of Italian culture, a meteor that leaves little sign of its passage behind, shakes consciences a bit but cannot oppose a process of repression that has been in place since the postwar period.

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<sup>9</sup> With this memorable definition Millicent Marcus defines the first years of Italian Cinema dealing with the theme of Shoah: Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Shadow of Auschwitz*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2007

As Emiliano Perra notes:

*“The miniseries aired in eight episodes instead of four as in other countries. They were not followed by open-air television discussions that lasted until the night, as it happened in West Germany and France. In addition, the weak support provided by the network to the show was reflected in the print coverage that never reached the breadth of that of other countries. [...] Among the reasons why this was a missed opportunity was the decision of RAI to transmit the miniseries in May and June, rather than in the next six months, as established earlier.”*<sup>10</sup>

In this way

*“The most dramatic episodes of the miniseries aired while public attention was focused on the election. Additionally, the dilution of the broadcast over a month (in the United States and West Germany was broadcast over several consecutive nights) softened its emotional impact, transforming the Holocaust from a major event into any miniseries.”*<sup>11</sup>

Even the positions of the national press at the time of the airing of the *Holocaust* miniseries prove to be a Litmus Test of the split consciousness of the national memory.

Emiliano Perra tells how there were those who criticized the miniseries simply because it showed an Italian reporter on an extermination camp, contradicting the idea that the Italians could not have anything to do with the Shoah<sup>12</sup>.

However, the post-Holocaust airing does have the merit of starting wide-ranging productions such as *La Storia* based on Elsa Morante’s masterpiece (Luigi Comencini, 1987) or *I ragazzi di Via Panisperna* (Gianni Amelio, 1988), or even *Notti e nebbie* by Marco Tullio Giordana (1984), and including *Storia d’amore e d’amicizia* (Franco Rossi, 1982), which owes the most in its form and in the spirit to the American miniseries. It is also very likely that the airing of *Holocaust* was one of the possible causes of the extinction of the *Naziexploitation* phenomenon (it is no coincidence that one of the last films is entitled *Olocausto Parte seconda – I ricordi, I deliri, la vendetta* (Angelo Pannacciò), a movie which seeks, from its very title, a false continuity with the miniseries, but which at the same time shows how difficult it is to carry out reckless operations on a topic that returns to being sensitive. Yet, despite the proliferation of Italian productions on the subject that will be intensifying at the beginning of 2000, in conjunction with the establishment of the *Giornata della Memoria*, the Shoah seems paradoxically to be fading out more and more from the screens.

On the contrary, the more the production cacophony on the subject increases (a phenomenon that only in the past recent years has seemingly begun to reverse), the more the productions tend to withdraw from the historical facts to become an a-historical representation of an absolute evil that allows, in its substantial timelessness, to steer clear of topics such as responsibility, collaboration and cultural heritage.

There is therefore a subtle red thread that ties together the never-made films we’ve talked about in this section with the films that were made, and we will talk about later, and with the apparent excess of memory that has materialized in our recent cinema. And it is the red thread of a continuous and unobstructed repression, of an inability to deal with our own past and of constructing a sense of Italian-ness that is finally inclusive and serene, free of any skeletons in the closet.

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<sup>10</sup> Emiliano Perra, *Politica, Memoria, Identità*, in: Andrea Minuz & Guido Vitiello (editors), *Cinema e Storia 2013*, Year II, no. 2, monograph: *La Shoah nel cinema italiano*, Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro), 2013, pp. 53-54.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

<sup>12</sup> The article of which Perra is talking is G. Franchi, *Mostruosa macchina della morte*, in *Il resto del Carlino*, June 1, 1979.

Moreover, it is but very recently that Faenza had to apologize for the difficulties encountered in the circulation of his movie *Anita B.*

Upon its release in January 2014, Faenza denounced the persistence in Italy of a culture of a denial of everything related to the Shoah, as the main reason behind the choice of releasing only 20 copies of the movie for circulation.

*“All I had to do was point out that the protagonist of the film was a young survivor of Auschwitz and the doors of the movie theaters just locked up,”*

says the filmmaker just after the release of the film. As he also added, Italy is

*“still in a state of tranquilizing oblivion, a repression that prevents us from working on memory as it should be done, and this with respect to the Holocaust, but also to other atrocities or massacres. Guilty is in my opinion television, that is an enemy of memory.”*<sup>13</sup>

### **Nazi Exploitation as the return of the repressed repressor?**

The idea of reading into *Naziexploitation* a return of a national remission, therefore, although probably excessive on the cultural historical level, however, reveals itself surprisingly suggestive and incredibly rich of interesting implications, especially if applied to the analysis of the single films.

At any rate the movie genre, outside of any purely Italian consideration, still represents an attempt to approach the horror of the concentration camps in an archetypal key. In this perspective, *Naziexploitation* is thus an attempt, filtered by the genre grammar, to approach the World War II, as the founding myth, the *Urszene* of the present time; in this key the extreme tangle of Eros and Thanatos is functional to an almost psychoanalytic return to the origins, to the diseased fertility that has given birth to our world<sup>14</sup>.

From this point of view, it is extremely significant to note that the movie genre does not follow the cultural censorship channel we mentioned in the preceding chapter, but it somehow feeds on the repressed, the untold and the allusions that abound in all the films that, until the 1980s, deal the theme of the Shoah.

Moreover, the fact that all Italian cinema seems to be pervaded by an unmistakably erotic vein is symptomatic<sup>15</sup>.

For example, in *Il grido della terra* (1949) by Duilio Coletti, a reference to unspeakable erotic tortures is made in the wedding scene on board the ship, where Dina mentions who knows what torments the poor woman must have suffered in Auschwitz, adding that a marriage like that was possible only because both spouses were interned in a concentration camp and thus clearly understood what each of them was forced to undergo. The underlying idea, implicated in this allusion within a film built mainly on the unspoken, is that in the fact that both the spouses know

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<sup>13</sup> Faenza statement is published in Anna Maria Passetti, *Anita B.*, il regista Roberto Faenza denuncia il tabù sul tema dell'Olocausto in: *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, January 15, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Guido Vitiello, *L'erotica di Auschwitz. Una genealogia della “Nazi-sexploitation” italiana*, in: Andrea Minuz & Guido Vitiello (editors), *Cinema e Storia 2013*, Year II, no. 2, monograph: *La Shoah nel cinema italiano*, Rubettino, Catanzaro, 2013, pp. 85-101.

<sup>15</sup> Ilan Avisar notes that we can find elements of eroticization of Shoah since the beginning of our post-war cinema in the torture scenes of *Roma città aperta* (1945) by Roberto Rossellini. Read Ilan Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust. Cinema's Images of the Unimaginable*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1988.



exactly the condition of life in the camp and for this they will never be fraught with the horrible need of having to tell their past to someone who never saw even the photographs of Auschwitz. The fact that horror remains in the sphere of the unnamed (when western society still had to confront the taboo of the impossibility of telling the horror) tickles the spectator's fantasy into imagining the worst.

A further step in this direction is represented by the previous *L'ebreo errante* by Goffredo Alessandrini (1948), in which the erotic dimension of the concentration camp (the Auschwitz represented in the movie does not even contain an allusion to the crematorium furnaces and gas chambers) is magnificent in all possible directions. Beginning with the insisting statement of an obligatory voyeuristic dimension (think of when the prisoners are forced to look at the victims of executions by some Kapò who punishes and scolds those who look down), a situation that will become obsessively common in all the various *naziexploitation* movies.

As soon as they arrive at the camp, the prisoners are classified based the work they can perform. From the very beginning the most good looking women are routed to the *house of the sad pleasures*, and mystery seems to get no thicker on their fate. Subsequently, the brutality of life in the camp is made evident and indisputable by a sense of substantial sexual promiscuity, amplified by the figure of a male Kapò who immediately sets his eyes on a young deportee soon subjected to heavy sexual attention. The homosexual component, generally omitted or subjected to crawling allusions, is heavily declared in this film and it is part of the torture that characterizes the infernal group of the camp.

But the case of *L'ebreo errante* is especially significant because we can find in the movie, for the first time and from now on unchanged, all of Italy's self-exculpatory strategies regarding Shoah. Such an extraordinary continuity persists to this day.

In this respect, it is important to go through the most significant stages of this film.

*L'ebreo errante* is, in fact, the first film to significantly break the silence on the question of the extermination of Jews in Europe during World War II. The film is signed by Goffredo Alessandrini, a director who grew up during the years of Fascism, when he sung the praises of the regime. A good part of the rhetoric of the regime is reflected without any particular repercussions in this post-war production.

In fact, the film owes its ill fame not so much to the intrinsic merits of the well cured form of the package, as to the highly questionable way in which it deals with the subject of Jewish reality, framing it historically in a very oscillating and problematic film.

It is also significant that, at a time when the Italian cinema begins to hunger for realism and where the first films of Rossellini, Visconti and De Sica are made, a film such as *L'ebreo errante* who also chooses a setting which is so dear to the rising neorealism as it is the same war that animates the images of *Roma città aperta* (1945) and *Paisà* (1946), ends up oscillating between one genre and the other in a way that disorients the commentators of the time<sup>16</sup>.

*L'ebreo errante* is, from this point of view, a very effective demonstration of how at a time when our cinema begins to face the thorny issue of Jewish reality, some extremely problematic elusive strategies, so slippery to appear unconscious, begin to take shape. In the present case, the choice to address the Jewish question from a point of view that would be dear to the regime (that of the legend of the wandering Jew, that is to say, the Jew who had vilified Christ on the cross and had been for this damned and forced to wander on the earth until he acknowledges his error and adheres to true faith, that is, the Catholic one) drives the narration from an aspiration to the realism of the

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<sup>16</sup> See in particular Emiliano Perra, *Conflicts of Memory, The Reception of Holocaust Films and TV Programs in Italy, 1945 to the present*, Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Bern, 2010, which contains a detailed chronicle of the reaction of Italian press to the movie.

representation of the concentration camps (an aspiration frustrated by the obvious unreliability of the historical detail) to an quasi peplum drift when the story builds a long flash-back in Palestine at the time of the crucifixion of Christ.

The film tells the story of Matteo Blumenthal, the errant Jew of the title. The man, having derided the Christ, whom he had not been able to ask for the grace of healing his dying son bitten by a poisonous snake, wanders around the world, through millennia, alone, with no affections, aging, dying and awakening hopelessly rejuvenated with apparently no possibility of redemption. Throughout the centuries, he faces all the major stages of Jewish persecution for which racial anti-Semitism is only the last and the most terrible, but he does so by always maintaining an anomalous position with respect to his co-perpetrators. Being himself a proven proof of the truthfulness of the Catholic faith in whose bosom he dares not dissolve, Matteo becomes very critical of his people and, indeed the film surprisingly shows him, at the beginning of the contemporary segment, while trying to take advantage of the deportations of other Jews by striking bargains with the Nazis. The detail, albeit psychologically motivated, is in fact the revival of an anti-Semitic stereotype that sees in the Hebrew the perfect usurer ready to cynically profit even from the disaster of his own people.

Matteo, however, falls in love with Sarah, the daughter of an eminent scientist and Jew, and also aware that sooner or later the persecution will hit him and that his immunity is temporary and just motivated by his wealth, decides to be deported with his beloved and he arrives in Auschwitz. Here begins his parable of redemption that will culminate with his personal sacrifice. Following an attempt to escape, the man, who had managed to leave the camp accompanied by his beloved woman, decides to return to save the lives of the prisoners who would be killed in his place, but not after securing salvation for Sara.

By way of his personal cross, Matteo's soul finally ascends to join the saints while the sun triumphs over the clouds of the sky that only for a while have managed to hide its splendor.

In its exemplary Narration *L'ebreo errante* declares openly its Catholic matrix and ties together with great precision the anti-Judaism typical of many phases of the history of the Catholic Church with the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich, yet the film avoids to talk about Italy. In fact, the film shows us the implementation of racial laws (and it does it without a real narrative need in Germany), but it fails to tell us the fact that Italy has had such legislation as well. Subsequently the action moves to France and then to Poland, to Auschwitz. From the point of view of historical linear history, however, the film takes shape first in 1935, then a reckless flash-back brings us to Palestine in 33 AD. when Jesus faces his ascent to Calvary and is vilified by Matteo. Subsequently an {enduring montage} follows the steps of the poor protagonist who is thrown out of everywhere, including catholic Spain. Throughout this effusion of brief details there is almost no trace of Italy. The persecution is, indeed, a supranational reality as it will be within the *Naziexploitation* genre that only marginally and sporadically touches our national ground (this is the case of Luigi Batzella's *La bestia in calore*, 1977).

In short, the definition of "where" and "when" the film is set is simultaneously oriented in two directions. On the one hand, the "where" is defined anywhere in Europe, but in any case "over there", "far far away", on the other hand the "when" becomes the "always and forever" of myth and fairytale. From the beginning, in short, Italian cinema that tackles the theme of the Shoah gets the dimension of a fable, an allegory. A fantasy, in short, that soon becomes horror, and horror are almost all the *Naziexploitation* films.

An analogous argument could be made for another film that so profoundly influenced the phenomenon that it could be considered, for this reason, more than a model, a diseased root. It is the case of *Kapò* (1959) by Gillo Pontecorvo, which, despite an attempt to achieve a more realistic description of the life in the camps, does not refrain from referring to the homosexual instincts that soiled the relationship between the prisoners.

But the points of contact between the Nazi genre and the film by Pontecorvo do not end here and indeed, many narrative elements of *Kapò* are often openly stolen by many Nazi films, a proof not

just of their extraordinary vampire like character (the nazi genre is composed of films that quote extensively- often plagiarizing – from all of cinema), but also of the fundamental importance of the Pontecorvo's masterpiece.

Often resumed in the context of the line is, for example, the idea and the possibility of a love story even within the abomination of the extermination camp. Although present in movies that deal with the sex theme in all of its most depraved conjugations, there is virtually no film in the Nazi genre that does not celebrate the birth of a "healthy" couple, of an idyllic moment ideal, naturally destined to end catastrophically .

Of all the films in question, however, *L'ultima orgia del Terzo Reich* (Cesare Canevari, 1977) is even more reckless in putting together its tale by plagiarizing narrative solutions similar to those experimented by Pontecorvo.

Like the young Edith of the 1959 film, Canevari's Lise is in fact taking the part of the enemy out of her desperate desire to live. She soon becomes practically a Kapò (although here, in fact, Lise abandons the prisoner's cabin to live in the rooms of the commander of the camp who is intrigued by her apparent contempt of death) and she does not hesitate to commit the worst sins to hold fast to her privileged condition. Among the sins she commits the most significant from Pontecorvo's *Kapò* point of view is how she witnesses impassively the execution in the gas chamber of her dearest friend, while the soldier who was in love of the girl is killed in the space of an emphatic shot which recalls to our memory the Pontecorvian tracking shot from *Kapò* (actually here in several frames of mounting tension, that culminate in the foreground of the boy with his forehead pierced by a bullet).

Elsewhere it is the dull ending of *Kapò* to be plagiarized, with the scene of the protagonist dying in the attempt to escape (as the protagonist of Alessandrini's *L'ebreo errante*) but not after rediscovering her disowned origins in *articulo mortis* singing a religious song.

It happens, for example, in the finale of *La svastica nel ventre* (Mario Caiano, 1976) where the heroine, after disowning her own culture by becoming a Nazi officer's lover to save her own life (like Edith did becoming a Kapò), rediscovers her own self and her past love singing a Jewish song during a party in the villa (one of the recurring themes of the genre) and is killed because of that.

Other elements taken from the "untold" of the earlier Italian cinema which compose the jagged universe of the Nazi thread are finally the incestuous feelings that dominate the imagination of films like *I sequestrati di Altona* (Vittorio De Sica, 1962 from the play by Jean Paul Sartre) and *Vaghe stelle dell'Orsa...* (Luchino Visconti, 1965)<sup>17</sup> representing the continuity of a condemnation that crosses the boundaries of the camp and imposes on children, while a creeping and persuasive hint of pedophilia was even implied in the sinister relationship between teachers and boys in *Germania anno zero* by Roberto Rossellini (1948).

What we have attempted to plot is, therefore, a continuity within the Italian cinema that allows, here more than elsewhere, the imagination of an extreme genre such as *naziexploitation* to take root with great energy.

A reality that bases its effectiveness in an extreme attempt to paint the Nazis as the source of all possible perversions, the founding element of the mythology of the "good Italian" and the "bad German" that has such a big role in defining our national memory.

And in this sense it is paradoxical that a big contribution to the definition of this genre comes from a film such as *Salò o Le centoventi giornate di Sodoma* by Pier Paolo Pasolini. This film puts at the center of the discourse the horror of a power that devours itself in an orgiastic rite, but its imagination penetrates with ruthless criticism Italian fascism, and with it all forms of fascism.

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<sup>17</sup> Particularly interesting in this sense is the analysis made by Annette Insdorf in her study of cinematographic representations of Shoah. See: Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, which contains an interesting focus on Visconti's and De Sica's movies.

## Other repressions and other nightmares

If Naziexploitation represents the nightmare that emerges from the repressions of Italian cinema, we must admit that it is not the only nightmare that has disturbed our nights.

Looking from this rather eccentric perspective at the films that have filled the last years of our production we realize how often the memory of the Shoah emerges in a telluric, painful and often unresolved manner.

In *Il giorno della Shoah* (2010) by Pasquale Squitieri, for example, the memory of the deportations is directly linked to images of the earthquake that has destroyed L'Aquila in recent years. The protagonist of the movie, who at the beginning of the film sleeps peacefully in his bedroom, receives by telephone the news of the earthquake and his memory goes immediately to those families of Italians who helped him, a Jew, to hide from the persecution and he now perhaps has the possibility, if they are still alive, to return the favor of providing refuge for them at the time of need. The film mixes recklessly alternating sequences of earthquake, with sequences of repertoire images from the liberated camps almost as if it was trying to find a principle of identity in the catastrophe. Sleek choice, if you think just for a moment how putting side by side a natural disaster and the horror of war can easily push the viewer to accept the Shoah as an "unfortunate" event without any cause or motivation, freeing him from the hassle of having to recognize a responsibility, while forcing him at the same time to repeat the same mistake.

*Il giorno della Shoah* is just one of the many films that bring the Shoah into the nightmare space. Others follow the same track less clearly as Ricky Tognazzi's *Canone inverso* (2000) or even as the most contemporary horror-movies (for example in *Zombie massacre: Reich of the Dead* by Marco Ristori and Luca Boni, 2015) that enter an extermination camp and transform prisoners into zombies.

In all cases, however, the nightmare tends to end with no consequences. After the night of the witches, the morning brings back the same repression strategies with which we have told each other this painful piece of history for a long time. And probably *Egidio Eronico's My father - Rua Alguem 5555* (2006), not by coincidence an international coproduction which deals with the story of Mengele's son looking for his father, is one of the few representations of the pain and trauma of discovering how deeply we can be close to the world of the persecutors. And also coincidentally, a film not really successful, quite forgotten, barely quoted as a case study, though as the director himself says, an interesting case of repression from our consciousness:

*"The comparison of a man with the recent past of his country represented through a generational conflict. And it is from this point of view that novels and films tell a story not only or not just German. It is worth mentioning how in Italy, just a few years ago, Franca Cavagnoli has dealt with the same theme with "Una pioggia bruciante" (Edizioni Frassinelli, 2000), a training novel where a 20 year old girl searches for truth in the past of her father and when he discovers that during the war of Africa the Italian army had used chemical weapons, something deflated inside her too: her father, who in the 1930s had been there as a motorist in aviation, in his adulcorated version of The facts had not told her about those bombings"*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The statement is contained in the movie press book from A.B. distributors and it is available on the web: [www.studiopuntoevirgola.com/presskits/2006/Cinema/my\\_father.pdf](http://www.studiopuntoevirgola.com/presskits/2006/Cinema/my_father.pdf).

In the end, it's that same amnesia that affects poor Davide Veroli in *La finestra di fronte* by Ferzan Ozpetek, set in motion in a contemporary Rome so terribly similar to that of the racial laws, with the same big and small egoisms, the same silences and the same creeping racism. For seventy years, we have made little progress in beginning to tell our own story with a more lucid look. Recent events, indeed, and a certain sense of historical denial that continues to pervade our society, seems to mean that the new oblivion of recent years that relegated Shoah stories in the context of short film and no longer in television and cinema, is nothing but the beginning of a series of possible catastrophic steps backwards.

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## Coscienza di classe, identità ebraica e “zona grigia”.

### Per una rilettura politica di *Kapò*

#### [Class consciousness, Jewish identity, and “grey zone”.

#### For a political rereading of the 1959 movie *Kapò* by Gillo Pontecorvo]

Damiano Garofalo \*

*Abstract.* The aim of this essay is to link the Marxist concept of "class consciousness" to the analysis of the evolution of the character of Edith (Susan Strasberg) in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1959 movie *Kapò*. Here, in fact, Pontecorvo and Solinas (the screenwriters) choose to put at the center of the film a direct reference of what Primo Levi called the "gray zone", that vast ambiguous and paradoxical area that extends between the persecutors and the victims of the Holocaust. In particular, we refer to the story of Edith, a Jewish girl deported to Auschwitz who, by the time she arrived, decided to take the opportunity of change her identity in a political prisoner, thus escaping to death. Just entered the camp, she becomes a *Kapò*, a victim that the inhumane conditions of the *Lager* forced to become a collaborator of the persecutors, and then a perpetrator. The *Lager* in Pontecorvo's intentions is nothing more than a transposition of society in the Marxist sense, in which the Nazi executioners metaphorically represent the bourgeois classes, while the victims are the proletarian classes oppressed by history and reduced to a subordinate condition. Starting from this, the character of Edith puts on a real awareness of her social condition (class), and at the same time of her identity. And it is precisely from the intersection between class consciousness and religious identity that the paper will begin, with the aim of giving an account both of the Marxist interpretation of the society made by Pontecorvo through the representation of the *Lager*, and of the "gray" historical condition of its ambiguous protagonist - also through a conclusive analysis of the Italian political reception of the film.

*Keywords:* Italian cinema; Holocaust cinema; Gillo Pontecorvo; class consciousness; gray zone

*Riassunto.* L'obiettivo di questo saggio è quello di applicare il concetto marxista di «coscienza di classe» all'analisi dell'evoluzione del personaggio di Edith (Susan Strasberg) in *Kapò* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1959). Qui, infatti, Pontecorvo e Solinas scelgono di mettere al centro del quadro un personaggio di quella che Primo Levi avrebbe chiamato la «zona grigia», quella vasta area ambigua e paradossale che si estende tra i carnefici e le vittime della Shoah: nella fattispecie, ci riferiamo appunto alla vicenda di Edith, una ragazza ebrea deportata ad Auschwitz che, al suo arrivo, decide di sfruttare l'opportunità di fingersi una prigioniera politica appena deceduta, scampando così alla morte. Entrata nel campo, ella diventa una *Kapò*, ovvero una vittima che le condizioni inumane del campo spingono a diventare collaboratrice degli aguzzini, e quindi carnefice. Il *Lager* nelle intenzioni di Pontecorvo non è altro che una trasposizione della società in senso marxista, in cui i carnefici nazisti rappresentano metaforicamente le classi borghesi, mentre le vittime le classi proletarie oppresse dalla storia e ridotte a una condizione subalterna. A partire da questo presupposto, il personaggio di Edith pone in atto una vera e propria presa di coscienza della propria condizione sociale (di classe), e allo stesso tempo della propria identità. Ed è proprio dall'intersezione tra coscienza di classe e identità religiosa che il saggio prenderà le mosse, con l'obiettivo di dare conto sia dell'interpretazione marxista della società fatta da Pontecorvo attraverso la rappresentazione del *Lager*, sia della “grigia” condizione storica della sua ambigua protagonista, anche attraverso un'analisi conclusiva della ricezione politica del film.

*Parole chiave:* Cinema italiano; Cinema e Shoah; Gillo Pontecorvo; Coscienza di classe; Zona grigia

### 1. Struttura di classe e presa di coscienza

Il concetto di coscienza di classe, come è noto, è stato sviluppato soprattutto in seno all'analisi marxista della società e della storia. Secondo la tradizione di questa concezione, gli appartenenti a una stessa classe costituiscono un collettivo organico soltanto successivamente a una determinata “presa di coscienza”. La loro autocoscienza quali membri di una classe, infatti, emerge soltanto come risultato conclusivo di un processo collettivo. Si tratta, nello specifico, di uno sforzo teorico

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\* Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Dipartimento di Scienze della Comunicazione e dello Spettacolo, Via Sant'Agnes 2, 20123 Milan, Italy, tel.+(39) 02-72342872, E-Mail <damiano.garofalo@unicatt.it>.

che segue una certa esperienza politica, spesso indirizzata da una leadership rivoluzionaria, e che porta a un mutamento della propria soggettività e del proprio ruolo all'interno della società stessa in quanto classe. La coscienza di classe, secondo questa visione, si trova quindi soltanto al termine di un processo di soggettivazione politica, cui corrisponde una determinata organizzazione sociale e strutturale del mondo<sup>1</sup>.

In aggiunta a questa visione, in una nota nella seconda versione del saggio sull'*Opera d'arte* (1936), Walter Benjamin attribuisce alla coscienza di classe un ruolo meno deterministico, certamente più attivo e rivoluzionario. Più che sull'omogeneità della classe, il filosofo tedesco insiste sulla scomposizione delle sue componenti: non è più, infatti, la dimensione del lavoro a determinarne la conformazione strutturale, ma è la società stessa a divenire il campo allargato di infinite e possibili configurazioni di classe<sup>2</sup>. La prospettiva, potremmo dire, è analoga a quella già proposta, qualche anno prima, da Wilhelm Reich nella *Psicologia di massa del fascismo* (1933). Qui, lo psicanalista austriaco aveva già messo in discussione la tradizionale interpretazione socio-economica del concetto di classe in favore di una decodificazione di questa in chiave psico-sessuale. Asserendo una naturale corrispondenza della struttura della società a quella della dimensione individuale, Reich svelava, ad esempio, l'istante generativo del totalitarismo nella repressione delle pulsioni primarie delle masse<sup>3</sup>.

In tale prospettiva, la proposta di Benjamin pare un tentativo di sistematizzazione teorica delle intuizioni di Reich, uno sforzo di assolutizzare la riflessione politico-economica marxista in una dimensione sociale, culturale, psicologica. Seguendo questa interpretazione, l'acquisizione di una coscienza di classe si configura come un processo attivo, modificando la tradizionale visione di una massa passiva e ornamentale, costantemente sottoposta alla leadership politica<sup>4</sup>. In questo modo, la struttura della classe diventa configurazione della società stessa, una società in cui, nell'epoca della riproducibilità tecnica, sia l'estetica che la politica rappresentano due dimensioni non più separabili. La classe diviene, così, metafora del mondo e della storia; la sua presa di coscienza, di conseguenza, principio generativo di ogni conflittualità sociale, reale o immaginata.

## 2. La rappresentazione del Lager come metafora della società capitalista

Se la struttura delle dinamiche di classe e la decodificazione della presa di coscienza devono, secondo il punto di vista appena tracciato, essere applicati all'interpretazione della società e della storia, il trauma della Shoah ha certamente rappresentato un fortunato terreno di traslazione di questo paradigma. Lo è stato, prima di tutto, in riferimento a quelle letture filosofiche che hanno visto nella condizione annichilente del Lager una metafora della subalternità di classe nella società<sup>5</sup>. In secondo luogo, lo stesso rapporto psicologico tra vittima e carnefice – così spesso erotizzato in chiave psicanalitica – può essere letto come un'analogia della più nota dialettica tra servo e padrone, tra proletariato e borghesia<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Per le principali elaborazioni di queste teorie, cfr. soprattutto K. Marx, *Miseria della filosofia*, trad. it., Saponà e Savelli, Roma 1970 e V.I. Lenin, *Che fare?* (1902), trad. it. a cura di V. Strada, Einaudi, Torino 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. W. Benjamin, *L'opera d'arte nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica*, trad. it., Einaudi, Torino 2000, in particolare la nota 24. Per la ricostruzione delle posizioni di Benjamin sul concetto di classe, cfr. A. Cavalletti, *L'esigenza comunista. Note sul concetto di «classe»*, in "Alfabeta2" (maggio 2011), pp. 10-11, e id., *Walter Benjamin e il concetto di classe*, in "Zapruder", n. 37 (2015), pp. 138-144.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. W. Reich, *Psicologia di massa del fascismo*, trad. it. a cura di F. Belfiore e A. Wolf, Sugar, Milano 1976, in particolare p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> La prospettiva di Benjamin è, per certi versi, simile a quella già tracciata Lukács, che pone l'accento sulla spontaneità e sull'immediatezza dell'azione rivoluzionaria di classe, più che sulla sua leadership che la guida. Cfr. G. Lukács, *Storia e coscienza di classe*, trad. it., Sugar, Milano 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Si vedano, tra tutte, le riflessioni di Primo Levi sulla condizione di subumanità vissuta dai prigionieri ad Auschwitz. In particolare, cfr. P. Levi, *I sommersi e i salvati*, Einaudi, Torino 1986, pp. 24-52, su cui torneremo dopo.

<sup>6</sup> Mi riferisco, in particolare, alla recensione di Susan Sontag di due libri fotografici usciti nel 1974: *The Last of the Nuba* di Leni Riefenstahl e *SS Regalia* di Jack Pia, cfr. S. Sontag, *Fascinating Fascism* in "New York Review of Books", 6 febbraio 1975, ripubblicata anche in id., *Under the Sign of Saturn*, Farra-Straus-Girauz, New York 1980, pp. 73-105. Inoltre, si vedano le numerose riflessioni in proposito di Pier Paolo Pasolini, cfr. P.P. Pasolini, *Questo è il mio testamento*, in "Gente", 17 novembre 1975 e, più in generale, id., *Petrolino*, Mondadori, Milano 2005.

In questo, il cinema ha innegabilmente tracciato delle robuste basi di riflessione, estetica e morale, che hanno condizionato diversi tentativi successivi di fare i conti con l'etica della rappresentazione della Shoah<sup>7</sup>. Il riferimento è, nello specifico, a una serie di *topoi*, presenti in buona parte degli *Holocaust film*, in virtù dei quali la dimensione politica e metaforica del Lager, così come quella del rapporto tra vittima e carnefice, appaiono allusivamente anticipate o, di richiamo, velatamente assorbite<sup>8</sup>. Il percorso, da *Roma, città aperta* (Rossellini, 1945) a *Il figlio di Saul* (Nemes, 2015), appare lungo, tortuoso e dissestato: per questa ragione, abbiamo deciso di concentrarci sul primo esempio che ha avvistato e interiorizzato queste disseminazioni, concettualizzando le sfumature politiche all'interno della chiave narrativa del melodramma. Si tratta di *Kapò* (Pontecorvo, 1959), di cui si vorrebbe qui tracciare una breve analisi a partire da due elementi, considerati di particolare rilevanza: a) l'imbrigliamento della condizione subalterna della vittima nell'ambiguità della «zona grigia» leviana, in cui si colloca da subito il personaggio di Edith/Nicole, in fuga e alla ricerca della propria coscienza/identità; b) la messa in scena del Lager come metaforico laboratorio politico-sociale, dove la coscienza rivoluzionaria e la solidarietà di classe trionfano sull'oppressore, nazista o padrone che sia<sup>9</sup>.

Se la decodificazione del rapporto tra vittima e carnefice ha messo spesso in gioco sia questa dimensione politica, sia una sfera più marcatamente psico-sessuale – che non di rado, come abbiamo visto, si sono intrecciate –, prima di entrare nell'analisi del film di Pontecorvo è necessario richiamare qualsiasi riflessione al concetto di «zona grigia» già elaborato da Primo Levi. Scrive Levi, infatti, ne *I sommersi e i salvati*:

«L'ascesa dei privilegiati, non solo in Lager ma in tutte le convivenze umane, è un fenomeno angosciante ma immancabile: essi sono assenti solo nelle utopie. È compito dell'uomo giusto fare guerra ad ogni privilegio non meritato, ma non si deve dimenticare che questa è una guerra senza fine. Dove esiste un potere esercitato da pochi, o da uno solo, contro i molti, il privilegio nasce e prolifera, anche contro il volere del potere stesso; ma è normale che il potere, invece, lo tolleri o lo incoraggi»<sup>10</sup>.

Lo scrittore torinese definisce la «zona grigia» come quel campo di intersezione tra bene e male in cui il potere si esercita sotto forma di privilegi. Nella «zona grigia», potremmo dire, la coscienza di classe si annacqua in un ibridismo dai contorni sfumati che stravolge l'ordine sociale. Non è più chiaro chi sia il servo e chi il padrone, chi il borghese e chi il proletario, chi la vittima e chi il carnefice: i ruoli sociali vengono continuamente invertiti, a scapito delle identità individuali e delle prese di coscienza di sé. Avallando questa interpretazione, per poi traslarla in chiave metaforica, la «zona grigia» non sarebbe altro che una manifestazione dell'oppressione del padrone (i nazisti) che,

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<sup>7</sup> Non ci riferiamo, in esclusiva, a tutti quei film d'autore che hanno messo esplicitamente in scena le dinamiche sopra citate – dalla lettura ibrida, tra Wilhelm Reich e Thomas Mann, dell'ascesa del regime nazista ne *La caduta degli Dei* (Visconti, 1969) al rapporto perverso tra vittima e carnefice ne *Il portiere di notte* (Cavani, 1974), passando per ulteriori versioni erotizzanti, alcune estreme come la villa-Lager di *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (Pasolini, 1975), altre grottesche come *Pasqualino Settebellezze* (Wertmüller, 1976) – e nemmeno a quel filone *sadiconazista*, o se si preferisce al cosiddetto sotto-genere di serie B della *Nazisexploitation*, che grazie all'accentuazione della dimensione pornografica e alla sempre più costante predominanza del *gore* ha condotto tale riflessione estetico-politica alla sua fase terminale. Per un approfondimento sul sotto-genere dei *Nazisexploitation*, cfr. M. Stiglegger, *Sadiconazista. Faschismus und Sexualität im Film*, Gardez, St. Augustin 1999 e D. H. Magilow, K. T. Vander Lugt ed E. Bridges, *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema And Culture*, Continuum, New York 2012. Per i pochi contributi in italiano cfr. G. Vitiello, *Il testimone immaginario. Auschwitz, il cinema e la cultura pop*, Ipermedium, Santa Maria Capua Vetere 2011, pp. 119-152 e id., *L'erotica di Auschwitz. Una genealogia della «Nazi-Sexploitation» italiana*, «Cinema e storia», n. 2 (2013), pp. 85-101.

<sup>8</sup> Per un'organica definizione di questi *topoi*, cfr. soprattutto A. Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003 e A. Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust. New Perspectives on Dramas, Documentaries and Experimental Films*, Continuum, New York 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Il film di Pontecorvo è noto soprattutto per la celebre critica al «carrello» proposta da Jacques Rivette nel 1960 sui «Cahiers du Cinéma» (n. 120) e ripresa, nel 1992, da Serge Daney su «Trafic» (n. 4). Non è questa la sede per una trattazione del problema: tuttavia, per un'accurata ricostruzione del dibattito si rimanda a C. Bioni, *Il carrello di Kapò visto da qui. Il film di Pontecorvo e la sua ricezione critica riletti in prospettiva*, in «Cinema e storia», n. 2 (2013), pp. 117-128.

<sup>10</sup> P. Levi, *I sommersi e i salvati*, cit., p. 29.



tendendo a controllare e circoscrivere l'unità di classe, mirerebbe direttamente all'annientamento delle classi proletarie (i deportati) e al sopimento di qualsiasi istanza rivoluzionaria da loro proveniente. Come scrive ancora Levi, il Lager non è altro che una manifestazione della società capitalistica, in quanto esso stesso

«può ben servire da “laboratorio”: la classe ibrida dei prigionieri-funzionari ne costituisce l'ossatura, ed insieme il lineamento più inquietante. È una zona grigia, dai contorni mal definiti, che insieme separa e congiunge i due campi dei padroni e dei servi. Possiede una struttura interna incredibilmente complicata, ed alberga in sé quanto basta per confondere il nostro bisogno di giudicare»<sup>11</sup>.

### 3. *Kapò*: un'analisi politica

Gillo Pontecorvo e Franco Solinas scelgono di mettere al centro di *Kapò* un personaggio che alberga proprio in una metaforica «zona grigia», quella vasta area ambigua e paradossale che si estende tra vittime e carnefici: nella fattispecie, ci riferiamo alla vicenda di Edith (Susan Strasberg), una ragazza ebrea deportata ad Auschwitz che, al suo arrivo, decide di sfruttare l'opportunità di fingersi una prigioniera politica appena deceduta (Nicole), scampando così alla morte immediata. Entrata nel Lager, ella diventa una *Kapò*, ovvero una vittima che le condizioni inumane del campo spingono a diventare collaboratrice degli aguzzini: carnefice con i deportati e vittima con i nazisti, Edith è costretta a prostituirsi in cambio della propria condizione di privilegiata. Così come anticipato, l'ambiguità del rapporto tra vittima e carnefice si manifesta anche nella sfera sessuale<sup>12</sup>.

La circostanza è rilevante, non solo perché Edith, diventando Nicole, ripudia la propria identità ebraica per andare ad abitare quella «zona grigia» dove è necessario abbandonare qualsiasi coscienza di sé. Ma anche e soprattutto perché, grazie all'arrivo nel Lager di Sasha, un soldato comunista dell'Armata Rossa con cui Edith/Nicole inizia una relazione segreta, ella sarà condotta verso una presa di coscienza della propria condizione sociale (di classe, ovvero quella di deportata ebrea). Anche in questo caso, la presa di coscienza passerà attraverso un'iniziazione di tipo sessuale: se, infatti, i nazisti avevano ridotto Edith/Nicole alla sua “grigia” condizione in virtù dei favori sessuali che ella forniva loro, la sua presa di coscienza arriverà dopo l'autenticità della relazione amorosa e romantica con Sasha. È proprio dal rapporto con Sasha, quindi, che emergerà la coscienza di classe di Edith/Nicole: attraverso il suo sacrificio finale, per certi versi indotto da Sasha stesso, ella ritroverà la condizione subalterna di oppressa che le appartiene per inerzia, nonché quell'identità ebraica che lei stessa aveva ripudiato all'arrivo nel Lager. Solo attraverso la morte, prima della quale reciterà dei versetti della *Shemà Israel* (una preghiera ebraica), Nicole può tornare Edith, abbandonando così il grigiore della condizione esistenziale cui era destinata, manifestando una presa di coscienza di sé ma, soprattutto, svelando un ritorno alla tradizione ebraica che la condurrà, in un meccanismo di redenzione spirituale, verso la salvezza ultra-terrena<sup>13</sup>.

La messa in scena del Lager in *Kapò* diventa, quindi, un laboratorio politico-sociale in cui la coscienza rivoluzionaria e la solidarietà di classe, manifestate sotto forma di sacrificio, trionfano sull'oppressore nazista. Quest'ultimo, di fatto, assume nel Lager il ruolo metaforico che corrisponde alla borghesia nella società capitalista. I ruoli che Pontecorvo e Solinas definiscono all'interno del Lager possono, quindi, essere trasposti nella società tutta. La condizione dei prigionieri del Lager non è altro che la condizione universale delle classi oppresse nella storia: se la borghesia ha tentato di imbrigliare le coscienze di classe nel limbo dell'apoliticità della «zona grigia», le classi proletarie hanno il compito di ribellarsi e risorgere dalla condizione di subumanità cui sono ridotte.

Questa sorta di apologia della resistenza collettiva dei deportati richiama, fin troppo esplicitamente, il legame indissolubile tra la prigionia del Lager a la condizione umana di

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Su questa dimensione ambigua del personaggio di Edith/Nicole, cfr. G. Vitiello, *Gillo Pontecorvo, Kapò. Il tragico della “zona grigia” e il bianco e nero del melodramma*, in “Storiografia” n. 19 (2015), pp. 97-109 (105-107).

<sup>13</sup> Per un'interpretazione del film in chiave religiosa, cfr. I. Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust. Cinema's Images of the Unimaginable*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1988, p. 45.

subalternità vissuta dalla classe proletaria nella società capitalista. Non è un caso che la massa indistinta dei prigionieri del Lager abbia bisogno, per ribellarsi, di una guida politica, rappresentata in *Kapò* dall'arrivo dei prigionieri sovietici che cantano un coro di battaglia russo. Se i soldati dell'Armata rossa si costituiranno come ideatori della rivolta<sup>14</sup>, Pontecorvo ci suggerisce come il ruolo realmente rivoluzionario sia, però, compiuto non tanto da Sasha, ideatore della rivolta nel Lager, quanto da Edith/Nicole. Grazie al suo sacrificio finale, infatti, ella potrà immergersi all'interno di una più generale solidarietà di classe, a partire dalla quale non finirà tanto per emergere come eroina, ma per scomparire in essa, grazie proprio alla presa di coscienza di sé<sup>15</sup>. Se Sasha, infatti, dimostra di poter mandare consapevolmente a morire Nicole in nome di un bene comune – la liberazione della condizione di subalternità di tutti i prigionieri, e quindi la realizzazione del socialismo – Nicole ritroverà sì la sua coscienza di sé – divenendo «una dei centomila»<sup>16</sup>, direbbe Benjamin – ma morirà, di fatto, da ebrea, tornando nuovamente Edith in una conversione melodrammatica, forse un po' frettolosa, ma decisamente coerente con il suo percorso politico/spirituale. L'analogia proposta da Pontecorvo e Solinas sta tutta, quindi, nell'ambiguità del trasformismo di Edith/Nicole: quella «zona grigia» non è altro che una condizione umana universale, così come quella lotta contro l'oppressore delle classi subalterne una ridondanza della storia.

#### 4. La ricezione politica di *Kapò*

Il successo internazionale di *Kapò* colse di sorpresa gli stessi Pontecorvo e Solinas: il film, infatti, venne candidato all'Oscar per l'Italia come migliore film straniero, dopo essere stato presentato fuori concorso a Venezia con circa dieci minuti di applausi e critiche eccellenti apparse su riviste internazionali<sup>17</sup>. La critica italiana, soprattutto quella di stampo marxista, venne attratta soprattutto dal tema della distruzione morale e dell'annichilimento prodotto dal Lager. Edoardo Bruno sulla rivista “rosselliniana” «Filmcritica» sottolinea, ad esempio, come temi che emergono dal film quali il sacrificio, la redenzione o l'espiazione delle colpe siano fortemente connessi con un preciso punto di vista morale dell'autore sul mondo<sup>18</sup>. Sulla stessa scia, sul rotocalco comunista «Vie Nuove» Antonello Trombadori assolutizza il dilemma della scelta politica di Edith/Nicole, sottolineando come il film non mostri soltanto la ferocia di un conflitto razziale o ideologico, ma anche e soprattutto «le atrocità del conflitto tra le insopprimibili aspirazioni dell'uomo in quanto individuo e la crudeltà di situazioni collettive che non ammettono soluzioni individuali»<sup>19</sup>. La critica marxista, dunque, sembra insistere molto nel riportare il dilemma etico e religioso della protagonista di *Kapò* su un piano essenzialmente morale. Maurizio Liverani, ad esempio, afferma su «Paese Sera», quotidiano pomeridiano fondato nel 1948 dal Partito comunista italiano, come il film di Pontecorvo sia «uno spettacolo di una grande dignità, sul piano estetico e sul piano dei moti dei sentimenti», ovvero, «uno spettacolo necessario sul piano della morale»<sup>20</sup>.

Tra le voci fuori dal coro, Alberto Moravia su «L'Espresso» critica invece la seconda parte del film, giudicata eccessivamente melodrammatica e superficiale, osservando come «la cosa più orribile dei campi, e cioè che la maggioranza dei prigionieri era ridotta in tali condizioni di

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<sup>14</sup> Secondo Ilan Avisar, la rivolta finale di *Kapò* sarebbe direttamente ispirata a quella del campo di sterminio di Sobibór, realmente avvenuta nell'ottobre del 1943. Cfr. I. Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust. Cinema's Images of the Unimaginable*, cit., p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> A questo proposito Vitiello ha parlato di una sorta di “coscienza di Lager”, cfr. id., *Gillo Pontecorvo, Kapò. Il tragico della “zona grigia” e il bianco e nero del melodramma*, cit., p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> L'espressione è citata in A. Cavalletti, *Walter Benjamin e il concetto di classe*, cit., p. 141.

<sup>17</sup> Al di là delle polemiche suscitate dalle critiche francesi sul “carrello”, sembra che la ricezione internazionale del film sia stata per lo più trionfale. Cfr. Irene Bignardi, *Memorie estorte ad uno smemorato. Vita di Gillo Pontecorvo*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1999, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> E. Bruno, *Kapò*, «Filmcritica», Ottobre 1960, n. 102.

<sup>19</sup> Antonello Trombadori, *Kapò*, «Vie Nuove», 25 ottobre 1960, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> Maurizio Liverani, *Cade e si redime l'ebrea di Kapò*, «Paese sera», 5 ottobre 1960.

abbruttimento e di bestialità da giustificare, agli occhi dei nazisti, lo sterminio, questa cosa Pontecorvo non ha saputo e voluto dircela», preferendo invece puntare «sull'eccezionalità d'un caso individuale, romanzesco e improbabile. Secondo l'intellettuale romano, Pontecorvo ha creato «una macchina spettacolare estrovertita la quale, sia pure con verosimiglianza, punta più di fuori, sullo spettatore, che di dentro, sulla materia»<sup>21</sup>. Sulla stessa onda, un altro scrittore come Vasco Pratolini osserva sul settimanale «ABC» come il film, pur essendo «troppo impeccabile nella ricostruzione del lager, decade rapidamente dopo la bellissima sequenza dell'arrivo dei prigionieri e della tortura inflitta a Sacha, quando cioè dalla rappresentazione di una umanità tragicamente allenata, entra nella sfera dei sentimenti, diciamo pure del sentimentalismo»<sup>22</sup>.

Secondo la critica di stampo marxista, dunque, la seconda parte del film, e nello specifico le esigenze melodrammatiche e più specificatamente d'intrattenimento messe in scena da Pontecorvo e Solinas, sembrano annacquare la forza dell'iniziale intento politico e morale dei suoi autori. Tuttavia, il legame diretto tra la metaforica rappresentazione della società capitalista attraverso il Lager e le intenzioni di Pontecorvo e Solinas di politicizzare, e dunque assolutizzare, una lettura della Shoah in termini marxisti non viene dunque rilevato in modo palese dalla maggioranza dei critici. Gli osservatori, dimostrandosi maggiormente interessati a sottolineare le venature melodrammatiche e sentimentali della vicenda narrata, smarriscono per strada i segni e le tracce di un punto di vista che, oltre a trarre il proprio avvio da una precisa matrice politico-ideologica, s'inserisce all'interno di una tradizione teorica, filosofica e letteraria di lungo raggio.

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<sup>21</sup> Alberto Moravia, *Personaggi ingiustificati*, «L'Espresso», 6 ottobre 1960.

<sup>22</sup> Vasco Pratolini, *Un'eroina senza eroismo*, «ABC», 18 ottobre 1988.

**I “valori spirituali del cinema italiano”.**  
**Antisemitismo e politica della razza**  
**nelle riviste cinematografiche degli anni trenta**

**[The “spiritual values of Italian cinema”.**  
**Anti-Semitism and the politics of race in the film magazines of the 1930s]**

Andrea Minuz\*

*Abstract.* This essay revisits the debates concerning cinema and fascism exploring the reception of racial laws and anti-Semitism in Italian film culture, focusing on two important film magazines of the 1930s, *Film* and *Bianco e Nero*. If fascism believed in the potential of cinema as national industry and vehicle of propaganda, the circulation of anti-Semitic discourse and the effort to give a racial purity to Italian movies has always been underestimated by historians of Italian cinema. In this context, Italian racial laws were seen as key-points for affirming national regeneration and spiritual values in Italian cinema, positioning it in a radical antagonism to the materialistic backdrop of Hollywood’s films.

*Keywords:* Italian cinema, Film culture, Fascism, Anti-Semitism, History of cinema, Propaganda, Racial laws.

*Riassunto.* Il saggio prende in esame i dibattiti su cinema e fascismo, esplorando la ricezione delle leggi razziali e antisemite nella cultura cinematografica italiana, con particolare riferimento a due importanti riviste degli anni 1930, *Film* e *Bianco e Nero*. Se l’interesse del fascismo per l’industria cinematografica come veicolo di propaganda è stato ampiamente studiato, meno attenzione è stata rivolta alla circolazione di discorsi antisemiti e il tentativo di attribuire al cinema la capacità di diffondere e raccontare la “purezza della razza”. In questo contesto le leggi razziali vengono utilizzate sia nella chiave dell’affermazione dei valori spirituali del cinema italiano, sia in antagonismo all’orizzonte materialistico del cinema hollywoodiano devoto al profitto anziché all’arte.

*Parole chiave:* Cinema in Italia, Fascismo, Antisemitismo, Storia del cinema, Propaganda, Leggi razziali.

## Introduzione

Nell’ambito dei rapporti tra il cinema italiano e il racconto della Shoah, un campo di ricerche avviato con una serie di importanti lavori prodotti soprattutto negli ultimi anni ma tutt’altro che consolidato, le indagini sugli anni Trenta e le eventuali ripercussioni della questione razziale e dell’antisemitismo nella cultura cinematografica dell’epoca sono una sorta di buco nero. Com’è ovvio, nella maggior parte dei casi, questi lavori si concentrano sui processi di rielaborazione e narrazione della *Shoah* che prendono forma a partire dal dopoguerra. La letteratura sviluppata sin qui riguarda il mancato incontro tra il neorealismo italiano e il coinvolgimento italiano nella persecuzione degli ebrei, oppure i primi importanti film degli anni Sessanta che inquadrano il tema nel cosiddetto ciclo “resistenziale” caratteristico del cinema italiano (*Kapò* di Pontecorvo o *L’oro di Roma* di Lizzani); o ancora, più in generale, ci si muove dentro quel variegato corpus di opere (finzioni e documentari) comprese tra il cinema degli anni Settanta e la vertiginosa crescita di film e fiction innescata dal caso *La vita è bella*, sorta di punto archimedeo del nostro racconto cinematografico Shoah. Gli anni Trenta entrano quindi solo come “visione retrospettiva”. Come nel caso dell’adattamento cinematografico di *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, del più recente *Concorrenza*

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\* Associate Professor, *Sapienza Università di Roma*, E-Mail <andrea.minuz@hotmail.com>.

*sleale* di Scialoja, a suo modo, della prima parte del film di Roberto Benigni, solo per restare agli esempi più noti.

Scarsi invece i lavori che si interrogano sulla diffusione del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo italiano nella cultura cinematografica dell'epoca. Questi temi vengono sfiorati nelle ricerche sul cinema italiano alle prese con il racconto coloniale, come nel caso dell'ultimo lavoro di Ruth Ben Ghiat, *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema*<sup>1</sup>, dove però, va da sé, l'attenzione si concentra quasi esclusivamente sulle stereotipie utilizzate nella rappresentazione delle popolazioni africane. Nel complesso, appaiono rarissimi o del tutto assenti i riferimenti all'antisemitismo e alle politiche razziali nelle storie ufficiali del cinema italiano. Scarsa l'attenzione a questo tema anche negli studi classici su cinema e fascismo; qui in particolare l'idea di fondo sembra essere che il cinema, anche quando serviva in modo esplicito la causa della propaganda, non sia mai stato coinvolto direttamente nell'opera di divulgazione dell'antisemitismo di Stato<sup>2</sup>. D'altronde, l'Italia non ha prodotto un film come *Süss l'ebreo (Jud Süß)* di Veit Harlan, emblema della politica antisemita dell'industria cinematografica tedesca. Tuttavia, lo ha accolto e recensito con toni entusiasti nelle riviste di cinema più prestigiose, dove si tessevano non di rado le lodi imprenditoriali e culturali di Goebbels. Se quindi spostiamo l'attenzione dai film ai discorsi prodotti dalla cultura cinematografica, la questione razziale e l'antisemitismo trovano un proprio specifico spazio di elaborazione<sup>3</sup>.

Nel volume di Mario Avagliano e Marco Palmieri, *Di pura razza italiana. L'Italia ariana di fronte alle leggi razziali*<sup>4</sup>, troviamo alcuni riferimenti al rapporto tra cultura cinematografica, mondo dello spettacolo e antisemitismo con rapidi accenni al coinvolgimento con le politiche razziali del Direttore del Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, Luigi Chiarini, già vicedirettore di "Quadrivio", o di alcuni registi come Domenico Paolella. Il discorso però appare decisamente più ampio. In questo articolo vorremmo portare attenzione sul modo in cui due importanti riviste cinematografiche dell'epoca, "Bianco e nero" e "Film", testate di certo distanti dalla temperie culturale dell'antisemitismo e del razzismo italiani, siano entrate in contatto con questi temi. Non si tratta infatti di riviste di propaganda. Tanto meno di riviste vicine al mondo scientifico e pseudoscientifico che promuoveva la cultura razziale. "Bianco e nero", rivista tutt'ora attiva, nasce come organo ufficiale del Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia ed è caratterizzata sin dalla sua fondazione (1937) da saggi di taglio teorico, lunghi interventi critici e analisi di film e questioni tecniche che ben presto la rendono una delle più importanti, se non la più importante e prestigiosa, rivista di cinema della cultura italiana, punto di ritrovo imprescindibile per registi, critici, intellettuali. "Film. Settimanale di cinematografo, teatro e radio", fondata nel 1938 e attiva fino al 1950, era invece una rivista di taglio cronachistico, largamente diffusa, attenta soprattutto ai fenomeni legati al divismo e rivolta a un pubblico decisamente più popolare. Entrambe, come ora cercheremo di vedere, offrono notevoli spunti di interesse per un discorso sulla circolazione e rielaborazione dell'antisemitismo nella cultura cinematografica dell'epoca. Tali discorsi si offrono anzitutto come un'appendice minore, ma assai significativa, della vasta opera di divulgazione dell'antisemitismo affidata a "La difesa della razza" di Teresio Interlandi, a testate come "Quadrivio", diretta dallo stesso Interlandi, o "Il Tevere", "La vita italiana" e alla ricaduta di questi temi nella stampa più generalista.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Ben Ghiat, *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Di grande interesse la ricerca di David Bruni su Aldo De Benedetti, uno dei più importanti sceneggiatori degli anni Trenta, vittima delle discriminazioni razziali. Cfr. D. Bruni, *Dalla parte del pubblico. Aldo De Benedetti sceneggiatore*, Bulzoni, Roma, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Per uno studio sui discorsi prodotti attorno ai racconti cinematografici della Shoah nella cultura italiana si rinvia al fondamentale lavoro di Emiliano Perra, *Conflicts of Memory: The reception of Holocaust Films and Tv Programmes in Italy, 1945 to the present*, Peter Lang, Verlag, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. M. Avagliano, M. Palmieri, *Di pura razza italiana. L'Italia «ariana» di fronte alle Leggi razziali*, Baldini & Castoldi, Milano, 2013

## I valori spirituali del cinema italiano

Nella primavera del 1938, a ridosso della promulgazione delle Leggi Razziali e della diffusione del Manifesto, sulla rivista “Bianco e Nero” appare un articolo dal titolo programmatico: *Preliminari sul cinema in difesa della razza*, a firma di Giulio Cogni. Di formazione filosofica, autore di *Il razzismo e I valori della stirpe italiana* (pubblicati l’anno precedente) e di una *Piccola bibliografia razziale* apparsa nel 1939, Cogni fu tra i più attivi promulgatori «in forma comprensibile presso il grosso pubblico», come spiegava Guido Landra in un intervento sul peso degli studi antropologici in Italia, proprio nel 1938, dei «problemi della origine e formazione della razza italiana, della differenza biologica e spirituale tra italiani e giudei, della necessità di una difesa contro il meticcio e contro l’influenza di razze diverse dalla nostra»<sup>5</sup>.

Il cinema entra nel discorso di Cogni come mezzo esemplare per diffondere la consapevolezza razziale presso la popolazione italiana. Seguendo uno schema consolidato della propaganda, il cinema può «plasmare l’idea di razza presso l’anima del popolo» in modo diretto e indiretto. Il metodo diretto è legato alle forme della pedagogia. Qui il cinema fornisce l’apparato illustrativo del discorso razzista. Ma il più efficace, ricorda Cogni, è il metodo indiretto, quello costruito attorno alle “virtù rigeneratrici dell’arte”. Ovvero, legati ai meccanismi del racconto e della finzione. Qui entra in gioco il discorso dell’italianità rappresentata al cinema. Scrive Cogni:

«Non è vero che l’italiano ideale sia quel tipo che una retorica menefreghista e italianoide ha formato sui modelli per l’appunto dei peggiori italiani, modelli che sono prima di tutto piaciuti tanto agli stranieri, quando trovavano gli italiani così divertenti. Sono i modelli dell’italiano brunetto e bassotto, semplicione e canoro, mangiator di maccheroni, gabbator del prossimo, lacrimogeno, violento e infine qualche volta eroe sul serio in modo romanticamente commovente»<sup>6</sup>

Questo modello di italianità, già ampiamente combattuto dal fascismo, è percepito come un grande ostacolo alla costruzione di un racconto cinematografico capace di diffondere e costruire una consapevolezza razziale presso il popolo italiano. Un tipo italiano che invece dovrebbe essere raccontato nel suo profondo legame, in termini spirituali e biologici, al bacino dell’Europa centrale, perfetta «sintesi tra il mediterraneo e le Alpi». Ora, sostiene Cogni, «non si può negare che da noi non si sia tentato di fondare il film sui nostri valori puramente nazionali, ma si è caduti in uno sbaglio fondamentale dovuto alla mancanza della consapevolezza razziale degli italiani, è mancato cioè l’occhio ai modelli superiori del proprio sangue»<sup>7</sup>. La prevalenza del modello bruno, con gli occhi scuri, legato all’italianità meridionale, secondo Cogni, si richiama a un modello teatrale, posticcio, folkloristico, che tradisce la vera spinta europea della stirpe italiana. Ci rappresentiamo, insomma, secondo i pregiudizi con cui ci hanno sempre guardato gli stranieri. Cogni quindi ha a cuore un’italianità mediterraneo-nordica, gli «italici che scesero dal nord»; è su questo che può e deve costruirsi un cinema nazionale che «scavi a fondo nella nostra letteratura di tutti i tempi e non la falsi con personaggi convenzionali»<sup>8</sup>. Se questo progetto appare tutt’altro che semplice è perché «il mercato cinematografico è prevalentemente in mano agli ebrei» e «il cinema più diffuso, quello americano, avendo carattere non nazionale ma assolutamente internazionale, non ha alcun senso per i valori della razza»; gli uomini rappresentati da questo cinema sono «esseri sradicati, cosmopoliti»; e questi «film mediocri, diffondono tra gli ingenui un senso perfettamente neutro dell’uomo»<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> G. Landra, *Gli studi antropologici in Italia, negli anni XIV, XV e XVI in Atti della Sips* [Società italiana per il progresso delle scienze], XXVII riunione, vol. II, 1939; cit. in G. Israel, P. Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell’Italia razzista*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1998, p. 259.

<sup>6</sup> G. Cogni, *Preliminari sul cinema in difesa della razza*, “Bianco e nero”, n. 3, 1938, p. 66

<sup>7</sup> Ivi, p. 73

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> G. Cogni, *Preliminari sul cinema in difesa della razza*, “Bianco e nero”, cit, p. 68.

Nel primo numero del 1939, si trovano vari interventi di grande interesse. Anzitutto, campeggia in bella mostra nell'indice un lungo articolo dal titolo *Gli ebrei nel cinema*, firmato dal regista Domenico Paolella. Questo intervento si offre come una sorta di breve storia del cinema riscritta utilizzando il prisma di lettura dell'antisemitismo. Il discorso parte dal passaggio dal cinematografo (invenzione scientifica e tecnologica) all'industria del cinema. I pionieri del cinema come i fratelli Lumière o Méliès, nota Paolella, non erano ebrei. Sperimentavano il cinema in chiave scientifica, documentale e artistica. Sono stati gli ebrei ad averlo convertito in una macchina per fare soldi, ovvero in un'industria: «non le possibilità artistiche che si rivelano di giorno in giorno sempre più promettenti li attiravano, ma l'odore dell'affare»<sup>10</sup>. Le esigenze commerciali che umiliano l'arte e «l'istituzione della donna fatale ad opera degli ebrei» (Paolella cita Theda Bara), sono i cardini su cui si è costruita la cinematografia internazionale. D'altro canto, anche la fotogenia, «lo sforzo della bellezza formale», le «menzogne delle ciprie, delle matite colorate, del cerone» sono opera degli ebrei. Il discorso su Greta Garbo è in tal senso esemplare. Garbo è la pura incarnazione dell'arte più sublime, finché non viene chiamata ad Hollywood, dagli ebrei. Qui, sul suo volto, Paolella riconosce il conflitto, l'eterna lotta tra le ragioni del denaro realizzato con il commercio della sensualità e quelle dell'arte: «Forse il fascino di quest'attrice dipende proprio dall'ambigua posizione in cui è costretta, di dover tendere sempre verso il sensuale (per colpa degli ebrei), mentre dal suo volto traspirano le sublimazioni più alte»<sup>11</sup>. Poi è il turno di Chaplin, «tipico rappresentante della mentalità ebraica (...) la cui influenza è stata più perniciosa perché giunta per vie insospettabili, come il riso»<sup>12</sup>, e dell'invasione degli ebrei nel cinema espressionista tedesco degli anni Venti, così come del disprezzo per l'opera di Lubitsch, soprattutto, va da sé, il Lubitsch emigrato a Hollywood, con le sue «operette perniciose». Gli ebrei come Lubitsch hanno portato al cinema la frivolezza che Paolella ovviamente condanna come un'offesa all'arte cinematografica, un modo vile, meschino di raccogliere il consenso del pubblico, utilizzando il tema dell'adulterio.

Le posizioni idealistiche che vedono nell'assetto industriale del cinema un'umiliazione delle ragioni dell'arte sono largamente condivise nel mondo culturale italiano, anzitutto dal responsabile di "Bianco e Nero", Luigi Chiarini. Il ruolo dello Stato in tal senso è decisivo. Spetta allo Stato infatti il compito di garantire la tenuta "spirituale" dell'arte cinematografica attraverso una sapiente mediazione tra le ragioni del pubblico e quelle dall'arte, evitando di appiattare i film sulle pure dinamiche del profitto, come succede a Hollywood. Il vasto programma avviato dal capo della Direzione Generale della Cinematografia, Luigi Freddi, che certo gioca la carta della modernizzazione della nostra industria, diventa così anche l'orizzonte comune in cui confluiscono idealismo, centralità dello Stato e difesa dei valori dell'italianità. Un numero speciale di "Bianco e nero" del 1939, curato da Luigi Chiarini e Umberto Barbaro, raccoglie attorno a queste idee gli interventi dei rappresentanti di spicco della cultura italiana (Gentile, Cecchi, Longanesi, Bontempelli, Marinetti) e ospita un discorso di "Giuseppe" Goebbels sui rapporti tra il cinema, la difesa dell'identità culturale e lo Stato. Nei loro interventi sia Freddi che Chiarini ribadiscono che la cinematografica è un'«attività spirituale» e come tale deve essere sganciata dalla «smania del commercio». In tal senso, «sono i paesi autoritari», sostiene Chiarini, «quelli che più di altri possono condurre attraverso il cinema una vera e propria missione di civiltà», ovvero «disintossicare il pubblico dal veleno del cinema hollywoodiano»; ribadendo che «bisogna agire sullo spirito e non sul portafogli se si vuole elevare il cinema alla sua vera funzione»<sup>13</sup>. In tal senso appare del tutto sintomatico che Chiarini affidi proprio a Telesio Interlandi un intervento sulle forme che dovrà assumere il cinema politico in Italia<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> D. Paolella, *Gli ebrei nel cinema*, "Bianco e nero", n. 5, 1939, p.45.

<sup>11</sup> Ivi, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> Ivi, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> L. Chiarini, *Prefazione*, in "Bianco e Nero", n. 2, 1939, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> T. Interlandi, *Chi ha paura del cinema politico*, Ivi, pp. 26-28.

## Il “tipo italiano” nel cinema

Come si vede, quindi, le posizioni di Domenico Paolella non possono considerarsi culturalmente isolate. Non sono un'improvvisa irruzione dell'“antisemitismo” nel dibattito sul cinema italiano. Al contrario, sono gli ideali inseguiti dal cinema italiano che potevano trovare nell'antisemitismo una spinta inedita, un valido sostegno, anzitutto nelle forme di un'opposizione culturale alle ragioni del cinema americano. L'idea di un cinema schiacciato sull'inseguimento del profitto per colpa degli ebrei, come scrive in modo più esplicito Paolella, emerge quindi dentro un terreno culturale ideale, non riducibile alle sole logiche della propaganda fascista. Sono posizioni che egli riprende e ribadisce anche in vari interventi nella rivista “Film”, nel contesto quindi di una testata più popolare, attenta soprattutto agli elementi divistici, spettacolari e di cronaca mondiale, come i concorsi di bellezza e la ricerca di volti nuovi per il cinema.

«Sono anni che ci si batte perché il cinema che si fa in Italia diventi veramente italiano», leggiamo in editoriale del 20 agosto 1938 dal titolo *La razza e il cinema italiano*, «ma non basta che i capitali con cui si realizza siano italiani, è necessario che lo diventi nello spirito, cioè nella rappresentazione fedele dell'Italia e degli italiani»<sup>15</sup>. Secondo Paolella, il cinema italiano, in questo carente e ancora poco incisivo, dovrebbe prendere esempio dal cinema americano e dalla sua capacità di «incarnare nel tipo fisico la razza», come nel caso di Clarke Gable, «barbaro-bambino-bastardo-ricco, come è la civiltà americana». Paolella passa in rassegna però qualche timido tentativo in tal senso, come *La fossa degli angeli*, film sui suoi lavoratori del marmo di Carrara, diretto da Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, con Amedeo Nazzari. Secondo Paolella, proprio Amedeo Nazzari può rappresentare e incarnare un tipo di “italiano ideale”. «Amedeo Nazzari rappresenta l'ideale fisico della nostra razza», come riportava un articolo dello stesso anno sulla rivista “Cinema illustrazione”<sup>16</sup>. Ci sono quindi due modi per raffigurare l'italiano al cinema, sostiene in chiusura l'articolo, due strade differenti che prevedono da un lato la ricerca di attori preparati attraverso gli studi dell'accademia, dall'altro l'elevazione a protagonista di «gente scelta tra il popolo, tipi veramente italiani e fotogenici di cui è piena la penisola dalle Alpi alla Sicilia»<sup>17</sup>. Come si vede, siamo già dalle parti della tipizzazione che verrà costruita nel dopoguerra, attraverso il neorealismo. Nello stesso numero di “Film”, si annuncia l'avvio di una rubrica (anonima) che si occuperà di analizzare l'opera di cineasti ebrei: «più che sugli aspetti meramente negativi, questa serie di articoli insisterà sulla intima fisionomia non europea dell'arte ebraica»<sup>18</sup>. Tra i nomi annunciati, Charlot, Pabst, i fratelli Marx, Josef Von Sternberg. Quest'ultimo, ad esempio, è visto come il capostipite cinematografico del “sex appeal”, vale a dire un intreccio di «materialismo e sensualismo ebraico», una particolare visione della sensualità, tipicamente ebraica, decadente, immorale e costruita esclusivamente a fini commerciali: «una visione pessimistica e insieme sensuale della vita che è caratteristica dell'anima ebraica, anzi di un certo ebraismo squisitamente intellettuale (...) ecco perché nelle loro concezioni scientifiche o artistiche il sesso assume così profonda, così tragica importanza»<sup>19</sup>. Questi articoli verranno presentati come il fiore all'occhiello della politica culturale della rivista, così come si può leggere nell'editoriale di accompagnamento del primo intervento (su Chaplin):

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<sup>15</sup> D. Paolella, *La razza e il cinema italiano*, “Film”, n. 30, 1938, p. 1. Si veda anche *Spettacolo e razza*, “Film”, n. 31, 1938.

<sup>16</sup> *Il tipo italiano nel cinema*, “Cinema illustrazione”, n. 41, 1938, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> D. Paolella, *La razza e il cinema italiano*, cit., p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> *Cineasti ebrei: Josef Von Sternberg*, “Film”, n. 33, 1938, p. 2



«“Film” può vantarsi di essere stato il primo e l’unico giornale di spettacolo italiano che mentre gli altri si perdevano dietro ai pettegolezzi di varietà miranti a turlupinare i lettori, si è occupato dei rapporti tra il cinema e la razza e continuerà la serie di articoli sugli ebrei al cinema e segnalerà tutte quelle iniziative cinematografiche che intendevano esaltare e difendere i valori della nostra razza»<sup>20</sup>

Nelle idee di Domenico Paolella, la mobilitazione del cinema italiano a difesa della razza doveva quindi coinvolgere il documentario didattico, e in modo particolare l’attività del LUCE, ma insistere soprattutto sul cinema di finzione. Come aveva già ribadito in altri interventi, è al cinema popolare e spettacolare che spetta il compito di raccontare l’italianità facendo leva sulla consapevolezza razziale. In tal senso, richiama più volte il patrimonio e la tradizione del film storico italiano, spronando il cinema italiano a raccontare le gesta di grandi italiani nella chiave dell’identità razziale. La missione artistica del cinema poteva pertanto trovare nella difesa, nel racconto e nell’esaltazione della razza, una dei suoi serbatoi narrativi di riferimento. La politica antisemita dell’Italia fascista avrebbe così permesso, nel ragionamento di Paolella, una automatica difesa delle ragioni dell’arte e della spiritualità del cinema italiano.

Dopo questa intensa e appassionata difesa della vocazione artistica del cinema italiano, Domenico Paolella, passato indenne dal fascismo all’Italia repubblicana, diventerà sin dai primi anni cinquanta e fino alla fine degli anni settanta l’infaticabile autore di pellicole indimenticabili, quali *I Teddy boys della canzone*, *I pirati della costa*, *Il raggio infernale*, *Gardenia il giustiziere della mala*, *Maciste contro lo sceicco* e molte altre ancora.

## Conclusioni

Si può certo obiettare che la maggior parte di questi discorsi non influenzarono direttamente la produzione cinematografica italiana a cavallo tra la fine degli anni Trenta e Quaranta, ma sarebbe sbagliato oltre che riduttivo liquidare per questo il contributo che alcune riviste di cinema pensarono di dovere dare alla causa antisemita.

Nelle sezioni dell’esposizione E42 consacrate alla politica razziale, mai completate a causa della guerra, ma che pure avrebbero dovuto trasformarsi in una struttura permanente per raccontare la politica demografica, razziale e sanitaria del regime, c’era spazio anche per il cinema. Il progetto per l’Istituto di ortogenesi e bonifica della stirpe, curato da Nicola Pende, già a capo dell’Istituto di Biotipologia individuale e ortogenesi, si divideva in cinque parti: «Il reparto “dottrina” dedicato alla “illustrazione dottrinale” della scienza biotipologica, poi dei reparti sui metodi d’indagine, la documentazione, i mezzi e le cure ortogenetiche, e un reparto “film sonoro”»<sup>21</sup>. D’altro canto, sempre alla fine degli anni Trenta si sperimentavano le applicazioni della scienza biotipologica alla costruzione degli attori, una sorta di fondazione su basi scientifiche della fotogenia, come nel caso dei lavori di Raffaello Maggi sul “biotipo” nel cinema, pubblicati anch’essi sulla rivista “Bianco e nero”<sup>22</sup>.

In tal senso, sarebbe interessante iniziare a rileggere alcuni film di quel periodo nel quadro della ricerca di una italianità chiamata a operare una sintesi tra il mediterraneo e le Alpi, come vagheggiato da Cogni nella ricerca del suo «tipo italiano» nel cinema. È il caso, ad esempio, di *La corona di ferro*, di Alessandro Blasetti (1941), definito da Brunetta, «vero e proprio centone di miti e racconti popolari e fantastici di epica mediterranea e saghe nordiche, di richiami alla leggenda del

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<sup>20</sup> In “Film”, n. 33, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> G. Israel, P. Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell’Italia fascista*, cit., p. 289.

<sup>22</sup> R. Maggi, *Alcuni criteri per la selezione dei cineartisti*, in “Bianco e nero”, n. 1, 1939, pp. 15-30.

Santo Graal, a Marco Polo, alla favola di Andersen, a Tarzan, a Edipo Re e alla tragedia greca»<sup>23</sup>. Un lavoro di ricerca in tal senso deve essere ancora avviato. Un lavoro vale a dire che prenda in considerazione le tracce del discorso razziale e antisemita nel contesto della cultura cinematografica dell'epoca, analizzando gli scopi che esso intercettava e le strategie retoriche che utilizzava. Il punto non ci sembra tanto verificare o meno l'adesione all'antisemitismo delle personalità più in vista del cinema italiano, come nel caso emblematico di Luigi Chiarini, quanto mostrare la disseminazione dell'antisemitismo in una serie eterogenea di discorsi. Dalla ricerca di una italianità cinematografica alla difesa del monopolio statale contro l'ideologia del profitto, dall'inseguimento dei valori artistici del film alla chiusura del mercato nazionale, fino al rafforzamento della prospettiva idealistico-spirituale dentro un orizzonte industriale segnato dalla tecnica, qual è quello cinematografico, l'antisemitismo offriva a ben vedere un orizzonte ideologico-culturale utile a molti scopi (oltre a quelli più ovvi di favorire eventuali carriere istituzionali). Non a caso, gran parte delle critiche al cinema hollywoodiano e ai cosiddetti film commerciali passeranno immutate nel loro impianto teorico di base dalla cultura fascista a quella marxista e cattolica del dopoguerra. Potremmo dire che se in quell'epoca il razzismo non poteva che tentare di giustificarsi su basi scientifiche, il cinema italiano tentò pur se per un breve periodo di fondare la sua missione culturale e artistica sulle basi idealistico-spirituali del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo. Questi d'altronde furono i tratti specifici del razzismo italiano, un razzismo cioè più attento alle risonanze spirituali che a problematici fondamenti biologici, e come tale non riducibile a quel "fenomeno d'importazione" legato all'alleanza con la Germania a lungo raccontato dalla nostra tradizione storiografica. Come scrivevano alla fine degli anni Novanta, Giorgio e Pietro Nastasi nel loro fondamentale studio, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista*, «fintantoché non si farà pienamente i conti con questo razzismo romano-italico-spiritualista – quello che fu davvero egemone – la storiografia del razzismo nell'Italia fascista deve considerarsi solo agli inizi»<sup>24</sup>. Per esempio, nel campo della storia del cinema italiano, è ancora largamente prevalente l'idea di un Centro Sperimentale che in quegli anni funzionò soprattutto nei termini di una «scuola di antifascismo, oltre che di autentica formazione professionale»<sup>25</sup>, come scrive sempre Brunetta. Una posizione costruita in gran parte sulla presenza di Umberto Barbaro, intellettuale marxista e grande divulgatore del cinema sovietico nelle aule del Centro, la cui biblioteca, vale la pena ricordarlo, è ancora oggi intitolata a Luigi Chiarini. Senza pretendere di ribaltare tale posizione, indubbiamente in parte fondata, ci sembra difficile liquidare una così vasta pubblicistica antisemita nella logica di una propaganda subito o imposta dall'alto.

Un lavoro di ricognizione sulle riviste, i dibattiti e i discorsi che incontrarono in varie occasioni l'antisemitismo può invece mostrare la continuità tra alcune ansie specifiche della cultura italiana degli anni Trenta e i suoi sviluppi nel dopoguerra. Si pensi alla ricerca di un'italianità spontanea, non contaminata dalle logiche hollywoodiane, perseguita dal cinema neorealista; si pensi alla difesa del cinema di Stato contro l'ideologia del profitto specifica di Hollywood (o degli ebrei, come si scriveva in quegli anni); si pensi all'antiamericanismo trasversale alla cultura marxista e cattolica, alla ricerca di una dimensione spirituale dell'arte cinematografica contro le ragioni del cinema commerciale. Il coinvolgimento diretto delle personalità artistiche con le politiche antisemite, pur importante, è in tal senso solo il primo passaggio per un discorso più vasto capace di inquadrare le funzioni culturali del consenso alle politiche razziali fasciste.

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<sup>23</sup> G.P. Brunetta, *Cent'anni di cinema italiano. Dalle origini alla seconda guerra mondiale*, Laterza, Bari 1995 (1991), p. 194. Corsivo mio.

<sup>24</sup> G. Israel, P. Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1998, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> G.P. Brunetta, *Cent'anni di cinema italiano. Dalle origini alla seconda guerra mondiale*, cit., p. 190.

## The internment camps in Libya

*Giordana Terracina\**

*Abstract.* The list of the internment camps in Buerat el Hsun and Zuetina, created in Libya by Mussolini in September 1940 with a Decree issued following Italy's entry into the war, is presented. As one can deduct from the names, the inmates were foreign Jews (mostly French and British), considered dangerous or suspected due to their "enemy" citizenship. Other information is listed next to the internment date, such as their arrest by the Italian authorities and their escape after the arrival of the British Army.

*Keywords:* Internment camps; Jews; Libya; Fascism; Buerat el Hsun; Zuetina.

The list presented here shows internment in the Buerat el Hsun and Zuetina camps, created by Mussolini in September 1940 with a Decree issued following Italy's entry into the war. As one can deduct from the names, these were foreign Jews; French and British, considered dangerous or suspected due to their 'enemy' citizenship. As indicated, the first period of internment was brief, as many were released following guarantees provided by their acquaintances and thanks to their good behaviour.

Other data is listed next to the internment date, such as their arrest by the Italian authorities and their escape after the arrival of the British. In the early months of 1941, Cyrenaica was liberated by the Allies until April, when it was reconquered by the Italians. Many Jews decided to follow the British as they withdrew towards Egypt, which led to their names being on lists kept at the border ordering they be re-arrested.

With the return of the Italians came the problem of the evacuation of the about 4,000 Jews still in Libya. The camps were no longer sufficient and so others were built, among them Giado and Gefren. These resulted in different conditions compared to the past due to a high percentage of deaths caused above all by typhus fever and malnutrition, which the authorities were aware of, but did nothing about. This has resulted in them being considered death camps rather than internment camps. Libya's definitive liberation by Allied forces occurred in January 1943.

In the meantime, in September 1941, Ettore Bastico, Governor of Libya, sent a letter to Rome requesting the deportation of the about 7,000 foreign Jews still in the country. The internment camps were on the verge of collapsing due to the lack of funding needed to feed those detained there. In January 1942 deportation to Italy was started for the about 870 British Libyan Jews and the about 1,900 Anglo-Maltese Jews, a journey that for many of them ended in 1944 at the Bergen Belsen concentration camp in Germany. The roughly 1,600 French Jewish citizens were returned to their countries of origin, such as Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, as also happened to the roughly 255 Greek Jews.

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\* Piazza Bainsizza 3, 00195 Rome, Italy, E-Mail <gsaralvo@gmail.com>.

COGNOME	NOME	PATRO- NIMICO	MATRO- NIMICO	DATA DI NASCITA	LUOGO DI NASCITA	LUOGO DI RESI- DENZA	LUOGO DI CONCEN- TRAMENTO/ INTERNA- MENTO	NAZIO- NALITÀ	PROFES- SIONE	F, A, C, L, D (vedi <i>Legenda</i> )	NOTE
Addati	Vittoria	Iacob	Diamantina Labi	03/11/1918	Tripoli	Bengasi		Francese		F	Moglie di Scialom Baranes
Aidan	Hammus	Huato	Aziza Buaron	08/09/1923	Bengasi			Francese		F	
Aidan	Susann	Angelo Nahum	Sammana Cammuna	23/05/1908	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	Fuggita con 5 figli minori
Baranes	Abramo	Nissim	Diamantina Reginiano	20/09/1923	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Baranes	Alfonso	Fu Vito	Fu Giulia Valenzi	30/01/1900	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese	Impiegato		
Baranes	Eugenio	Fu Vito	Fu Lucia Valenzi	07/08/1906	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese	Commer- ciante		
Baranes	Leone	Mosè	Gurta Azra	1900	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Barda	Elia	Dadusc	Rachele Bengiamin	Anni 24	Bengasi			Francese		A. Condannato a 24 anni di reclusione il 06/06/1942	
Barda	Elia	Fu Hai	Elisa Bugobza	09/04/1903	Bengasi			Francese		F	
Barda	Giuseppe	Fu Hai	Lisa Leghziel	1924	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F; A	
Barda	Huado	Fu Aronne	Publil Sahaduna	1895	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Italiano			
Barda	Vittorio	Dadusc	Rachele Bengiamin	Anni 20	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Bedussa	Abramo	Fu Nessim	Giulia Bendad	28/12/1914	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		C (il 12/06/1942)	
Bendaud	Isacco	Hammus	Zula Mimun	1904	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Bengiamin	Abramo	Zachino	Messauda Labi	1895	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Bengiamin	Clafo	Zachino	Messauda Labi	1906	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Bengiamin	Davide	Haim	Elena Cohen	1903	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			

Bengiamin	Haim	Zachino	Rachele Assan	1869	Tripoli		Zuetina	Inglese			
Bengiamin	Iacob	Abramo	Regina Barda	1926	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Bengiamin	Isacco	Abramo	Regina Barda	21/08/1919	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Bengiamin	Maier	Haim	Elena Cohen	1905	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Bengiamin	Mosè	Abramo	Regina Barda	16/08/1922	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Beniamin	Eugenio	Fu Edoardo	Fu Anna Ruben	10/11/1912	Zliten		Buerat el Hsun	Anglo-maltese	Commerciante		
Berebbi	Iona	Fu Hammus	Maria Mazuz	09/02/1910	Tripoli	Bengasi				C	
Berebbi	Scialom	Fu Hummus	Maria Mazuz	14/07/1919	Tripoli	Bengasi				C (il 12/06/1942)	
Berebbi	Suso	Fu Halifa	Ester Hassan	1885	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Italiana	Impresario edile		
Braha	Elia	Mosè	Fu Giohra Halfon	18/06/1904	Derna			Inglese	Rappresentante		
Bramli	Cammuna	Meborak	Giohra Bramli	14/09/1905	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Buaron	Clafo	Isacco	Grazie Haim	1895	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Buaron	Clafo	Iuda	Ester Buaron	14/04/1903	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Buaron	Giacobbe	Iuda	Ester Buaron	1898	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Buaron	Giuseppe	Isacco	Mezzala Assal	12/04/1922	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Buaron	Haim	Iuda	Ester Buaron	06/01/1906	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Buaron	Hammus	Iuda	Ester Buaron	1904	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Buaron	Iusef	Effraim	Mezzala Dadusc	13/01/1919	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese	.	F	
Buaron	Nessim	Jusef	Ester Haccard	1898	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Burbeah	Iacob	Fu Iosef	Fu Sarina Tesciuba	1890	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Barbiere		
Cahlum	Hammus	Fu Brinhas	Rachele Zuares	1921	Bengasi	Bengasi				F	

Cohen	Aron	Iusef	Maria Rumani	1894	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Cohen	Elia	Iusef	Maria Rumani	1906	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Cohen	Isacco	Vittorio	Nahum Semina	11/04/1911	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun librato il 10/09/1940	Francese	Spedizio- niere		
Cohen	Iusef	Abramo	Messauda Addad	23/04/1918	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Cohen	Iusef	Aron	Misa Rubina	03/08/1920	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Cohen	Salomone	Iusef	Maria Rumani	28/11/1900	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Cohne	Musci						Confinato a Marada (Bengasi) per 1 anno con l'obbligo del lavoro nelle miniere di sali potassici 29/01/1941				
Cremsic	David	Fu Hammus	Zula Hassan	1923	Tripoli	Bengasi				F	
Curiel	Enrico	Fu Moise	Fu Palmira Nunes Svais	20/09/1910	Malta		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Commer- ciante		
Curiel	Raffaele	Fu Abramo	Fu Azra Giohra	02/07/1875	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Commer- ciante		
Curiel	Raul	Fu Moise	Fu Palmira Nunes Svais	18/02/1905	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Impiegato		
Debasc	Arietta	Gabriele	Tesciuba Elena	18/04/1937	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Debasc	Clemente	Scialom	Ruth Debasc	1925	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Debasc	Diamantina	Gabriele	Tesciuba Elena	11/03/1924	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Debasc	Gabriele	Beniamino	Hadria Nahum	1890	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Debasc	Leone	Beniamino	Hadria Nahum	1894	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Debasc	Lidia	Gabriele	Tesciuba Elena	1919	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Debasc	Rachele	Gabriele	Tesciuba Elena	15/11/1929	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	

Debas	Scialom	Fu Abramo	Haim Zula	1881	Tripoli		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Debas	Scialom	Gabriele	Elena Tesciuba	1920	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Debas	Scialom	Gabriele	Tesciuba Elena	20/07/1921	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Debas	Viola	Gabriele	Tesciuba Elena	03/08/1933	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Duani	Alfonso	Fu Simone	Daua Elisa	25/02/1921	Bengasi	Bengasi				F	
Falzon	Giuseppe	Fu Angelo	Gaetana Zarafa	05/06/1893	Zitlen		Buerat el Hsun	Anglo-maltese			
Fargion	Ida	Elia	Agiman Ventura	18/07/1906	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	Moglie di Labi Samuele
Fargion	Mery moglie di Scialom Leghziel	Elia	Agiman Ventura	1897	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Fellus	Aldo	Fu Davide	Elia Haggiag	14/12/1910	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Italiano	Spedizioniere		
Frig	Scialom	Fu Isacco	Dadusc Mezzala	Anni 21	Alessandria d'Egitto	Bengasi			Venditore ambulante	A. Condannato il 06/06/1942 a 24 anni di reclusione	
Gasbo	Angelina	Giacomo	Fortunata Saban	Anni 26	Tripoli	Bengasi				A. Condannata a 24 anni di reclusione. F	
Gasbo	Sarina	Hacum	Messauda Sabban	1914	Tripoli					F	
Genah	Iusef	Fu Mosè	Fu Missaudi Labi	1891	Tripoli			Francese		A (e condotto nel carcere di Bengasi a disposizione della Procura Militare in aprile 1942)	
Genah	Raffaele	Michele	Ascir Cammuna	02/01/1909	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Genah	Scialom	Michele	Ascir Cammuna	05/07/1900	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 19/10/1940	Francese			

Genah	Vittorio	Michele	Ascir Cammuna	1904	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Gerbi	Hacmun	Iacob	Fu Smeralda Ben Dauil	60 anni	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Giuli	Suso	Fu Iuda	Gemila Mimus	1920	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Habib	Abramo	Elia	Clementina Habib	Anni 40	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese	Calzolaio	C	
Habib	Clafo	Fu Scialom	Sara Mimun	14/04/1890	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Tipografo		
Habib	Iacob	Daniele	Sarina Raccah	17/04/1917	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Rappre- sentante		
Habib	Iusef	Babani	Dana Rosina	1909	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese	Impiegato industriale Igino Palla	A (il 23/04/1941)	
Habib	Zachino	Fu Scialom		11/04/1897	Tripoli		Tradotto nelle carceri di Porta Benito per scontare 15 giorni e a fine pena rinchiuso nel campo istituito all'interno del carcere.	Inglese			
Haddad	Hummus	Clafo	Lisa Buaron	10/02/1920	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Haddad	Mordohai	Clafo	Lisa Buaron	28/05/1929	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Haggiag	Clafo	Fu Hai	Miha Nahum	31 anni	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese			
Haggiag	Giacobbe	Scialom	Lahuns Habib	03/01/1881	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Haggiag	Iacob	Salomone	Fu Rahuma Arbib	1891	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 19/11/1940	Francese	Commer- ciante		
Haggiag	Pagani Giuseppe	Fu Hammus	Rebecca Mimun	12/03/1884	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 13/10/1940	Italiano	Insegnant e		



Halfon	Elisa moglie di Samuele Leghziel	Fu Saul	Ester Halfon	1884	Tripoli	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Haliffi	Vittorio	Fu Giacobbe	Fu Ester Tito	03/09/1889	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun				
Hassan	Salomone	David	Ester Fadlun	1915	Bengasi	Bengasi	Zuetina				
Hori	Benedetto	Omram	Smeralda Labi	15/01/1917	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Journo	Elia	Salomone	Rachele Fellus	08/11/1908	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese	Commerciante		
Journo	Salomone	Fu Elia	Fu Anna Sabbani	15/01/1880	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese	Piazzista		
Labi	Abramo	Meborak	Massauda Buaron	Anni 50	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Aronne	Mosè	Miha Levi	18/10/1904	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Aronne	Sion	Messauda Fadlun	1894	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Benedetto	Fu Jusef	Misa Rubin	03/04/1923	Bengasi			Inglese		F, L. Condannato a 30 anni di reclusione il 06/06/1942	
Labi	Benedetto	Sanin	Giohra Giuli	01/03/1920	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Labi	Cesare	Mosè	Miha Levi	03/01/1889	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Clafo	Elia	Diamantina Debasc	1876	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Clemente	Clafo	Mina Rubin	1909	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	David	Mordohai	Rachele Saich	30/09/1916	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Davide	Samuele	Ida Fargion	18/09/1924	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Elia	Clafo	Rubin Mina	09/11/1905	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Elia	Davide	Esterina Brambli	10/01/1907	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Labi	Elia	Hai	Assal Messuada	1907	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Elia	Isacco	Sarina Buholza	15/05/1904	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Elia	Mordohai	Ester Giuli	1900	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Elia	Sion	Ruth Bedusa	15/07/1903	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	

Labi	Hai	Iusef	Smeralda Labi	1880	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Huato	Sion	Ruth Bedussa	12/03/1909	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Isacco	Elia	Munda Sceiban	05/02/1867	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Maier	Samuele	Ida Fargion	27/04/1929	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Meborah	Fu Hammus	Misa Leghziel	19/06/1925	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Meborak	Fu Davide	Fu Sossia Buaron	1860	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Mordohai	Isacco	Marina Duhabsa	10/03/1914	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Mordohai	Mordohai	Sarina Buholza	02/02/1913	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Nessim	Sion	Messauda Fadlun	1902	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Labi	Raffaello	Sion	Ruth Bedussa	21/05/1905	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Labi	Rahmin	Clafo	Regina Rubin	1911	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Ruth	Iusef	Grazia Haddad	1879	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberata il 28/06/1940	Francese			
Labi	Ruth	Samuele	Ida Fargion	17/03/1936	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Samuele	Mosè	Miha Levi	17/03/1891	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Labi	Sanin	Meborah	Rachele Barda	1888	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Scialon	Isacco	Buholza Sarina	10/07/1919	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Sion	Abramo	Uasi Labi	Anni 18	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Sion	Elia	Diamantina Debase	1882	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Labi	Sion	Fu Giacobbe	Fu Mezzala Hassan	15/03/1891	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese	Commerciante		
Labi	Sion	Nessim	Mezzala Tamman	20/02/1924	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Labi	Smiha	Samuele	Ida Fargion	21/01/1939	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Labi	Vittorio	Mordohai	Rachele Saich	1924	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			

Labi	Vittorio	Mosè	Miha Levi	03/08/1896	Bengasi		Zuetina. Dopo l'uscita dal campo fu nuovamente arrestato il 20/04/1941 e trattenuto nel carcere della città	Inglese	Commer- ciante di preziosi	F	
Leghziel	Abramo	Samuele	Elisa Halfon	08/03/1918	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Leghziel	Daniele	Scialom	Mery Fargion	06/08/1923	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Leghziel	Noemi, moglie di Saul Leghziel	Scialom	Mery Gargion	08/02/1919	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Leghziel	Samuele	Fu Hai	Sara Guetta	1880	Tripoli	Bengasi		Francese	Commer- ciante all'ingros- so di generi alimentari	F	
Leghziel	Saul	Samuele	Elisa Halfon	10/01/1916	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Leghzie	Scialom	Fu Hai	Sara Guetta	1891	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese	Commer- ciante al- l'ingrosso	F	
Levi	Abramo	Fu Raffaele	Fu Elena Piperno	10/11/1891	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 12/08/1940	Francese	Rappre- sentante		
Levi	Arturo	Fu Graziano	Fu Elena Claudio	15/08/1876	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese	Industriale		
Levi	Raffaele	Abramo	Rosa Nahum	30/04/1909	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 19/08/1940 e nuovamente interanto il 27/09/1940	Francese	Commer- ciante		
Macluf	Raffaele	Sanin	Amira Ramo	19/12/1921	Tripoli	Berce			Sarto		
Mazzuz	Raffaele	Davide	Semina Nagim	15/02/1905	Tripoli	Bengasi	Zuetina	Francese			

Messiah	Abramo	Salomone	Fortunata Hassan	25/04/1890	Tripoli	Bengasi	Zuetina	Anglo-maltese		F	
Messiah	Emilia	Samuele	Violetta Minerbo	21/03/1896	Malta	Bengasi		Anglo-maltese		F	
Messiah	Isacco	Fu Salomone	Fu Fortunata Hassan	1895	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Francese	Spedizioniere		
Messiak	Abramo	Salomone	Assan Fortunata	25/11/1890	Tripoli		Zuetina	Inglese			
Mimun	Jacob	Nessim	Nhuma Misa	22/09/1919	Tripoli	Bengasi		Francese		A .Condannato a 3 anni di reclusione	
Mohai	Dadusc	Fu Beniamino	Fu Rachele Beruh	Anni 42	Bengasi	Bengasi				A. Condannato a 12 anni di reclusione il 16/03/1942	
Msica	Elia	Jusef	Braha Gazala	16/11/1921	Derna	Derna		Inglese			
Msica	Jusef	Daivd	Regina Zahut	Anni 18	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Msica	Mezzala in Nemni	Scialom	Smeralda Nhasa	1890	Tripoli	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Nahim	Clemente	Mosè	Smeralda Naim	15/09/1904	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Nahum	Arturo	Nessim	Giohra Tita	01/12/1917	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Nahum	Isacco	Scialom	Fu Elena Haggiag	24/01/1906	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Italiano	Mediatore		
Nahum	Pio	Fu Nessim	Tito Giohra	11/03/1906	Bengasi	Bengasi	Zuetina	Inglese		F	Marito di Aidan Susanna
Nahum	Pio	Nessim	Giorha Tita	11/03/1906	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Nahum	Rebecca	Nessim		1899	Tripoli			Apolide		F	
Nahum	Renato	Nessim	Giorha Tita	30/04/1900	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Naim	Isacco	Davide	Elisa Labi	1899	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Nemni		Fu Elia	Msica Mezzala	15/04/1924	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Nemni	Attilio	Benedetto	Halfon Mezzala	1909	Derna	Tobruk		Inglese	Commerciante	F	
Nemni	Fragi	Elia	Mezzala Msica	17/09/1921	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			

Nemni	Iusef	Isacco	Zula Nahum	07/03/1917	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 13/10/1940	Inglese	Insegnante		
Nemni	Rehana	Fu Elia	Msica Mezzala	1916	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Nemni	Sion	Elia	Mezzala Msica	15/11/1910	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Nemni	Sion	Fu Cesare	Giulia Gerbi	Anni 20	Derna	Derna		Inglese			
Nemni	Vittorio	Fu Simone		1895	Tripoli			Inglese		F	
Pines. Moglie di Vittorio Labi	Ghita	Isacco (nato in Roamania)	Elena Giarburg nata in Polonia, ebrea apolide, residente a Roma con il marito.	12/07/1910	Merano	Bengasi		Inglese		F	Fuggita con 3 figli: Mosè, Aldo, Rachele
Reginiano	Abramo	Davide	Belchama Barda	05/10/1900	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese	Libraio		
Reginiano	Clemente	Huato	Ester Azra	21/10/1903	Tripoli		Zuetina	Inglese			
Reginiano	Clemente	Scialom	Keria Assan	13/10/1913	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Reginiano	Giuseppe	Scialom	Heria Assan	12/07/1918	Barce		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Reginiano	Isacco	Davide	Belchama Barda	1904	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun	Inglese			
Reginiano	Mosè	Scialom	Heria Assan	04/02/1902	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese		F	
Reginiano	Nessim	Huato	Ester Musani	05/04/1916	Bengasi		Zuetina	Inglese			
Reginiano	Scialom	Kattim	Ramisa Haghlib	1885	Tripoli		Zuetina	Inglese			
Rubin	Misa	Fu Musci	Fu Batta Buaron	1907	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Rumani	Elia	Huani Rumani	Meriem Sadon	16/01/1939	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Rumani	Huani	Fu Saul	Gazala Attia	27/06/1913	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Rumani	Saul	Huani Rumani	Meriem Sadon	10/01/1936	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Sadon	Meriem	Elia	Heria Arbib	03/07/1917	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	Moglie di Rumani Huani
Sadon	Ruth	Hai	Sarina Buaron	1901	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	

Sammut	Giuseppe	Emanuele	Elezia Mallia	01/07/1895	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 19/10/1940	Anglo-maltese			
Seror	Rahmin	Sion	Rica Baranes	1894	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940				
Tamman	Abramo	Chalifa	Meriem Hori	1906	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Tamman	Clafo	Iuda	Ester Labi	25/06/1917	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Tamman	Mosè	Raffaele	Giulia Guetta	1920	Tobruk	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Tammna	Clafo	Hammus	Ester Fargion	07/05/1929	Bengasi	Bengasi		Francese		F	
Tayar	Huado	Fu Elia	Fu Lahoma Barda	1878	Tripoli		Buerat el Hsun liberato il 10/09/1940	Francese			
Tesciuba	Elena	Simeone	Diamantina Tesciuba	1900	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Zard	Isacco	Davide	Giulia Farfara	1903	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		A. Condannato a 24 anni di reclusione il 06/06/1942	
Zard	Sara in Labi	Fu Haim	Ester Bramli	12/12/1906	Bengasi	Bengasi		Inglese		F	
Zuares	Pintas	Rahmin	Fu Zora Scianthun	1906	Tripoli					A. Condotto nel carcere di Bengasi e messo a disposizione della Procura Militare in aprile 1942	

**Note:** In conseguenza del ripiegamento dei Carabinieri addetti alla sorveglianza del campo di concentramento di Zuetina, la notte del 4 febbraio 1941 tutte le persone ivi internate furono lasciate in libertà ma per deficienza di automezzi il comando gruppo dei Carabinieri non poté trasferirle in Tripolitania come richiesto.

[Since the Carabineers watching over the concentration camp of Zuetina left, the night of February 4, 1941, all the inmates were freed, but the Carabineers did not have enough vehicles to carry them to Tripolitania as requested]

**Legenda:** F = Fuggiti al seguito degli inglesi [Escaped following the English Army]  
C = Condannati a morte [Condemned to death]  
A = Arrestati [Arrested]  
L = Latitanti [Fugitive]

## The junctions of memory

Stefania Zezza \*

*Abstract:* To teach about the Holocaust represents nowadays one of the most challenging and educational activities a teacher might cope with. In the last ten years the International Master on Holocaust Studies at Roma Tre University has been educating and training teachers and educators to inform, explain and deepen this topic. The Master's graduates have therefore represented a significant resource in the field of Holocaust research and education in Italy and abroad. On October 27, 2017, two teachers, who have been engaged in the Holocaust education for years, graduated from the Master, presenting their dissertations, two extremely interesting studies on the Holocaust education and on memory. Francesca Rennis discussed her work *Aspetti di didattica della Shoah*, focused on the connection between the teaching of history and that of the Holocaust. Luigi Saito presented his dissertation *Sami Modiano e la sindrome del sopravvissuto*, where he dealt with the issues of trauma, resilience and the survivors' syndrome. Sami Modiano and his wife, Selma, attended to the lecture.

*Key words:* Holocaust, Education, Trauma, Survivor, Survivors' Syndrome, Resilience.

To teach about the Holocaust represents nowadays one of the most challenging and engaging educational activities a teacher or a professor might cope with. The challenge depends on the fact that only in the last two decades the Holocaust has become an autonomous topic whose study needs a specific and peculiar approach, different from that applied to other historical events.

Undoubtedly in the history of mankind the Holocaust may be considered an event whose specificities are not only linked to the event itself, but also to its effects on many aspects of human life and to the long-term consequences concerning the educational approach to the event. It is crucial to remember what happened but, at the same time, it is fundamental to understand how to remember and to let the memory be meaningful.

In the last ten years the International Master on Holocaust Studies at Roma Tre University has been educating and training teachers and educators to inform, explain and deepen this topic which is extremely complex.

The Master's graduates have therefore represented a significant resource in the field of Holocaust research and education in Italy and abroad, both for their specialized knowledge and for their professionalism dealing with a topic, which is sometimes only approximately known. These scholars or teachers are aware that the Holocaust needs to be studied focusing on its several specific features, reflecting on research issues and on educational strategies.

They have played an important role in both these activities, writing essays, lecturing in seminars or schools, and demonstrated how the Holocaust needs to be dealt with in a specialized and pedagogically efficient way.

On October 27th 2017 two teachers, who have been engaged in the Holocaust education for years, graduated from the Master, presenting their dissertations, two extremely interesting studies on the Holocaust education and on memory. Francesca Rennis discussed her work *Aspetti di didattica della Shoah*, where she examined the building and the development of the Holocaust

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\* Literature and History Teacher, *Liceo Classico Virgilio*, Rome, Italy, E-Mail <stefania.zezza@gmail.com>.

education, focusing on some issues which the scholars and the teachers have coped with in the last two decades.

During the debate with the supervisor, Professor David Meghnagi, director of the Master, Mrs. Rennis explained that her purpose was to reflect on the pedagogical and methodological meaning of the Holocaust education and on “the potential which derives from the interconnection between the Holocaust education and the teaching of history.”

The discussion of Luigi Saito’s dissertation, *Sami Modiano e la sindrome del sopravvissuto*, was particularly significant since Sami Modiano and his wife, Selma, attended the lecture.

Sami had been deported from Rhodes to Auschwitz Birkenau when he was thirteen. He is the only survivor of his family and has devoted the last twenty years to be a witness in the schools and during the memory trips to the camp.

Luigi Saito has a deep affection for Sami: with him, for his personal experiences, he shares the burden of trauma, the effort and the need to readjust to life, the attention to the youngsters

To Luigi, Sami and his wife “have been a reference point, they have substituted the overturned parental figure, the elder the son has to take care of. I lived with Sami the most beautiful years of his life, as Sami defines them.”

These are the last years, that Sami has devoted to witnessing his experiences as a deportee and a survivor. He has generously shared his memories with the students, facing his past.

Luigi Saito’s work aimed at recovering “from Sami Modiano’s life his memories of the experiences he had lived, in the light of what he felt at that time ... it is the story of the soul of a man who tried to leave Auschwitz an infinite number of times.”

This is why Saito’s dissertation is focused on resilience: he identified in Sami Modiano’s biography the pathway to cope with “some traumas, even though they have never been totally overcome, starting from the places and the times that had interrupted his life continuum.”

This is what David Meghnagi defines *infranto*, the feeling of being broken, which all the survivors had to try to cope with, and whose devastating impact emerged as the survivor’s syndrome.

Luigi Saito has identified its symptoms in Sami and has proved that “it involves the family, both of the survivor and of the drowned.”

From this point of view, the presence of Selma, to whom a chapter of the dissertation has been devoted, was fundamental and extremely meaningful. To her and to her silent support were dedicated the following words, written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: "If one day you won't feel like talking to anybody, call me: we will be silent together."

Selma and Sami, silent, holding hands, listened to the discussion of the dissertation. Later they commented, talked with those attending, witnessing once again the bond among history, memory, humanity which has to inspire our work on the Holocaust.