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The Illusion of America: Seriality Across Media in Italian Cinema from Fascism to the Economic Miracle (1932-1968)



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# The Illusion of America:
# Seriality Across Media in Italian Cinema from Fascism to the Economic Miracle (1932-1968)

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Barbara Spackman, Chair
Professor Mia Fuller
Professor Noa Steimatsky
Professor Linda Williams

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the relationship between Italian cinema and the United States' imagery and bodily practices in the years between the fascist regime and the Italian "economic miracle." I analyze objects such as magazines, consumer goods and design furniture, the conditions of their consumption and production, and their presence in Italian films – from Mario Camerini's *What Scoundrels Men Are!* (1932), to Alberto Lattuada's *Without Pity* (1948), and Elio Petri's *The Tenth Victim* (1965). Across different historical contexts and cultural products I examine the arc from Italy's infatuation with "America," to disillusionment. These two extremes are epitomized by the emulation of Hollywood stars during the fascist *ventennio*, as embodied by women's magazines, all the way to the rejection of serial design furniture on the part of students protesting against American designers at a Milan Triennale exhibition in 1968. In between these two periods, the end of World War II and the Allies' "liberation" brought about the physical exchange and contact between Italian civilians and US soldiers and consumer goods, partly thanks to the Marshall Plan. I argue that seriality – a mode of production and consumption, as well as an aesthetics – binds together the periods under analysis, is the engine for this exchange, and acts upon the portrayal and interpellation of women (actresses, readers and spectators) according to a precise visual grammar and narrative, rooted in Hollywood's spectacle.

Thanks to the exploration of films, magazines, and archival material, I observe the clear-cut break between fascist cinema (the so-called "telefoni bianchi"), and the "year zero" of neorealism under the lens of consumption and the presence of the United States. I then advance a hypothesis of continuity between the two periods, and between the aftermath of fascism and World War II, and the economic miracle. Framed by a new idea of continuity, the work of directors such as Camerini, Lattuada, and Petri, as well as Pier Paolo Pasolini and Michelangelo Antonioni, sustains my larger claim about Italian art and film's historiography. I illustrate for instance how these directors are joined, during the years of the economic miracle, by visual artists such as Ettore Sottsass and Giosetta Fioroni, mapping the birth of a specialized branch: industrial design. Following its heyday in the early and late 1960s, the new industry deflated on its own premises by the beginning of the next decade, carrying along, and away, the myth of America.

*A mamma, papà, Ago e Etta*

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**Acknowledgments**

I'm grateful for all the causes and conditions that have brought me from Milan, Italy to Berkeley, California, to earn a PhD. These causes and conditions go way back to the choices and efforts that my ancestors, grandparents, and parents have made, as well as the energy they have passed on to me, and the love they have given me, together with the people that I have encountered and that have surrounded me throughout my life

The inspiration for this thesis came from five of the graduate seminars I have attended at UC Berkeley in both the Department of Italian Studies, and that of Film & Media, all of which were taught by one of my four dissertation advisors. My three chapters are respectively derived from the seminars on seriality (*World Enough and Time*, Fall 2014), fascism (*Theorizing (Italian) Fascism*, Spring 2015), neorealism and the 1960s (*Year Zero: Neorealism*, Spring 2015; *Film and Visual Culture: Italy 1960-1975*) and the 1930s (*Anni Trenta: Fiction and Film*, Fall 2016), taught respectively, and in this order, by Professor Linda Williams, Mia Fuller, Noa Steimatsky, and Barbara Spackman. It was first in the occasion of Linda Williams' seminar *World Enough and Time* that I was coming to know the concept of seriality as an ever-shifting term, more so than a fixed concept relegated to nineteenth century installment novels or contemporary tv series. For a presentation early on in the semester I resorted to speaking briefly about research I had conducted in Italy at the Rizzoli publisher archives for my BA thesis. That presentation would plant the first seed for a more complex dissertation project in the semesters to come: in the magazine *Novella*, I could recognize seriality at play as an aesthetics, as a mode of production and of consumption, and shed light on fascism as a historical phase that, especially coming from an Italian academic context, begged to be delved into and explored from within the intellectual freedom and scholarly tools of a US academic institution.

The day of my oral exam in November 2015 I could not believe my luck, sitting at the seminar room table with Mia Fuller, Barbara Spackman, Noa Steimatsky, and Linda Williams. Since then, I have engaged with the four of them in an intellectual conversation that I deem invaluable to my life as a scholar and as a woman in the world. To my committee, and dissertation advisors: thank you.

Mia: thank you for your example as a prolific writer, teacher, and thinker, and for your generosity; I have learned a lot from you, about fascism and the mafia, about teaching, and about living as an academic in the wider world. Thanks for the inspiration and support you have provided, and for your passion for your field of study, and, naturally, for showing me *The Sopranos* in a new light; Barbara: I will never forget feeling that during the proseminar (Fall 2013) my brain was growing in size week after week: Marx, Foucault, Butler, Althusser, and so on. It all made complete and sudden sense. Thanks for your intelligence, wit, and example as a teacher. I admire your work very much, and I feel lucky to have you as my dissertation chair. Noa: your seminar on neorealism changed the course of my PhD, and my life as a scholar and filmgoer. Thanks for teaching me how to watch movies, and how to talk about them. Thank you because you make every film speak about art and life, and vice versa. For your warmth and for opening your doors to me in many ways, for showing me how to wear and love bright colors, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Linda: thanks for encouraging me to make my paper on *Novella* become a dissertation. I admire your energy, vitality, and realness; your curious questions and interest when it came to my work (and of course the fact that you are swimmer). I worship *The Wire* because of you, and I'm thankful for all the insight you provided on films and television shows, new and old. I consider myself lucky to have learned from you.

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Thank you to my professors in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Oregon - where it all began: Natalie Hester, Gina Psaki, Massimo Lollini, and Leah Middlebrook. A particularly warm thank you to Sergio Rigoletto, who taught me the difference between auteur and author, showed me the films of Roberto Rossellini, Claire Denis and Michael Haneke, and made me aware of my passion for cinema. From my Oregon years I also thank my good friends Kevin, Miguel, Caitlin, Elena and Charlotte.

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# INTRODUCTION

This dissertation investigates the relationship between Italy and the United States between the mid-1930s and the late 1960s through the industries of film, consumer goods and industrial design. Two boycotts bookend the time period under investigation: the first one presented itself as Hollywood turned down the possibility of a partnership with the Italian – namely *fascist* – film industry, on the occasion of Vittorio Mussolini's visit to the Metro Goldwyn Mayer studios in 1937. After traveling all the way from Rome to Southern California, Vittorio Mussolini, who was the Duce's son and a cinephile, arrived in Hollywood to seal the agreement for an Italian-American partnership with Hollywood producer Hal Roach. The two were supposed to sign a deal for a transoceanic partnership under the label "Roach and Mussolini" (RAM), an Italian-American film production company. Despite the celebratory terms of media coverage in magazines such as *Cinema* and *Life,*[1] the partnership never came into being, partially due to the fact that a group of exiled anti-fascists disrupted the visit by initiating a demonstration against the regime and the Ethiopian war during Mussolini's visit.[2] The second boycott awaited, this time, American designers who, thirty years after Hollywood's rebuttal of Italian cinema, had travelled to Milan to showcase their work at the architecture and design Triennale of 1968, titled *The Great Number*,[3] and dedicated to industrial design. The exhibit's inauguration was postponed due to students' protests against the presence of American designers, and, joined by artists and factory workers, the occupation of Palazzo dell'Arte, home of Milan's Triennale.

Overall, in the history of Italian politics, the time span under investigation comprised the years of the fascist regime (1922-1943), the Marshall Plan (1948-1951), the "economic miracle" (1958-1963), the first phase of the "years of lead,"[4] and the student movements (1968). In my chapters, these historical milestones will be touched upon to convey the shift from Italy's infatuation to its disillusionment with respect to the United States. In terms of Italy's and Hollywood's cinematic histories, the period led to the inception of the Cinecittà studios (1937) and their affiliated film school, called Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (Experimental Center of Cinematography); the institution and end of the Hays Production Code (the US censorship system in effect from 1930 to 1968), and the long course of what is known as the "golden age" of classical Hollywood cinema. The Production Code had an impact on the gradual change in the United States' cinematic self-perception, imagery and creative possibilities. Alongside the political upheaval of fascism, the war, and the postwar "liberated" nation, cinematic and political changes pertaining the United States reflected on, and affected, Italian cinema, striving all along to achieve its own momentum and world-wide recognition.

My thesis contributes to the understanding and reevaluation of Italian film history by analyzing films made between 1932 and 1965. I consider these films alongside art and design exhibitions that expressed the state of Italian visual, conceptual and performing arts around and within cinema, as well as a number of magazines, that help illuminate the material exchange between Italy and the United

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[1] *Life*, October 1937 and *Cinema*, n.5, 1936.

[2] More about Vittorio Mussolini's trip to Hollywood in Giovanni Sedita, "Vittorio Mussolini, Hollywood and Neorealism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 15, no. 3 (2010): 431-457. At the time of Mussolini's visit, Italy was involved in the second Ethiopian war (1935-37). Sedita quotes from an article written by Vittorio Mussolini for *Cinema* in September 1936 : "We Italians should feel closer to them [the American public], instead of hailing the distinctly conservative tendency that permeates all European filmmaking," 433.

[3] A RAI documentary tells the story of the student protests: "Il 30 maggio 1968 venne inaugurata a Milano la XIV Triennale, ma la sede del Palazzo dell'Arte fu subito occupata da un gruppo di contestatori costituito da studenti, artisti e operai, che impedirono lo svolgimento della mostra per tutta la prima metà di giugno, invocando 'la gestione democratica diretta delle istituzioni culturali e dei pubblici luoghi di cultura'." (Translation to English mine: "On May 30th, 1968, the Milan XIV Triennale exhibition was inaugurated, but the Palazzo Dell'Arte was occupied right away by a group of students, artists, and factory workers, who delayed the exhibition for the entire half of June, invoking 'the democratic leadership of cultural institutions and public spaces for culture.'") https://www.raiplay.it/video/2018/02/La-Triennale-di-Milano-occupata-2727e443-5836-4a4c-b70f-156dfec7a81c.html

[4] See Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy. 1943-198* (London: Palgrave, 2003), and in particular the section "Anni di Piombo" (The Years of the Bullet), 379.

States. This work is the fruit of archival research conducted in Italy, first as an undergraduate at Università degli Studi in Milan, and more recently during periods of research as a PhD student at UC Berkeley (in Milan, Bologna and Rome), together with various seminars and lectures attended on campus. Whereas the initial concept for this thesis originated in Italy, it was only through the freedom and interest for studying the history and culture of fascism that one finds in the United States today, that my research on *Novella* – the object of my BA thesis (2011), and a women's film magazine that reached its popularity in the 1930s – became fruitful enough to justify its central role in my dissertation. I understood that what I thought of as a relatively unknown magazine I had discovered in Italy, and temporarily left aside, still held a remarkable power, especially when I observed it in relation to seminar topics such as seriality, fascism, and other instances in which Italy's politics and history were reflected or challenged by its own cinema.

The concept of seriality granted me access to *Novella* in deeper and more solid analytical terms, corroborated by subsequent term papers in the semesters that followed, namely on the presence of consumer goods brought by the Marshall Plan in postwar films, and of industrial design furniture in the cinema of the "economic miracle." The first way in which I understood seriality to be a powerful engine for this hitherto overlooked product, a volatile magazine that could be barely found in Italian archives, was that it precisely allowed the magazine to illuminate the relationship between Italy and the United States (a question I had found myself asking repeatedly while attending seminars during my PhD) from within the movies, that is, in their mise-en-scéne, characters, and intertextual elements, regardless of the critical reception and cinematic grammar of the feature films at hand. The second insight I gained was that the presence of seriality in its various forms, was a catalyst for the access of the American imagery in Italy throughout the 20th century and an indicator of its shifting popularity. This allowed me to draw an arc from infatuation with all things American (the 1930s) to disillusionment and rejection (1968), as symbolized by the two boycotts I have described above.

During the decades that are the primary focus of this dissertation, several Italian filmmakers inserted objects of American origin, appeal or manufacture in the texture of their films, and precisely objects consumed and used by characters *within* the films. Starting with Mario Camerini's film *Gli uomini che mascalzoni...* (*What Scoundrels Men Are!)* (1932), I was able to see the interplay between films made during the years of the fascist regime and women's magazines like *Novella* (Chapter One); moving on to American consumer goods brought along as part of the Marshall Plan aid (Chapter Two) as seen in Alberto Lattuada's *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity*) (1948); to end in the second half of the century with an analysis of the use of industrial design furniture in the films of the "economic miracle" (Chapter Three) especially in Elio Petri's sci-fi film *La decima vittima* (*The Tenth Victim*) (1965), as well as in pop art and design exhibitions. A study of film in relation to magazines and objects (hence a study pertaining to the field of material culture and cultural studies as much as to that of film studies) had been long overdue, overlooked or dismissed by the larger academic community. Throughout my dissertation, I point to how each of the phases of Italian history central to my chapters, while marked by the consumption of US produced commodities, has sustained a vibrant enclave of moviegoers fascinated by the Italy-United States exchange, and produced a spirited, passionate audience when given the chance.

Chapter One, "The Serialized Woman of Fascist Italy. Hollywood and the Women's Film Magazine *Novella*" starts out with an overview of illustrated periodicals in fascist Italy (1922-1943). It focuses in particular on the women's and film magazine *Novella,* which appeared in several films from the fascist *ventennio*, especially those directed by Mario Camerini. Camerini thought of the newsstand as a crossroad of urban life, where modern consumers would meet, and endowed his characters with access to illustrated magazines, often to signify their aspiration toward social upward mobility. Just as it appears in Camerini's films, *Novella* was a weekly magazine published by Angelo Rizzoli, who

organized his many periodicals so that they would accompany the daily life of its readers – above all women – and managed, with his publications, to slip under the radar of fascist censorship, while carrying along the sexualized imagery of Hollywood stars. Moreover, Chapter One shows how magazines acted as a platform for the launch of films, which would often come back to its pages in the form of stills or illustrated installment novels adapted from the films in what I argue is an unprecedented "intermedial circuit," or "circle of referentiality." As scholar Ruggero Eugeni writes of these magazines,

> nel complesso questo tipo di stampa ha una funzione diversa da quella critico-teorica o specializzata, perché non prescrive il bel cinema, ma racconta e fa spettacolo del cinema in sé e – si può aggiungere – di tutto quello che sta intorno al cinema, al fine di coinvolgere il più possibile nel suo mondo di favola il pubblico e stimolarlo ad andare al cinema.[5]
> (Overall, this type of press has a different function if compared to that of critical-theoretical or specialized press, because it does not prescribe for cinema to be beautiful, but it spectacularizes cinema in and of itself, and tells its story, and if it can be added, of the story of everything that revolves around cinema, with the aim of involving the audience as much as possible in its fabulous world, and stimulating people to go to the movies).

In the quote, Eugeni highlights the function of reinforcement and spectacularization of cinema performed by these magazines, and the tight bond between the two media of film and paper. So, why has material of such richness, been overlooked, and barely relevant to most scholars of the historicization of cultural consumption in fascist Italy? One of the answers lies in the fact that the Rizzoli headquarters in Milan were bombarded during World War II, and its archives were never reassembled. As a consequence, material such as illustrated magazines became, more so than a catalogued, searchable item, an antique market rarity. Today, thanks first and foremost to Raffaele De Berti and Irene Piazzoni's scholarship (both faculty members at Università degli Studi in Milan), Angelo Rizzoli is acknowledged as the "pioniere della contaminazione cinema-carta,"[6] and praised for adapting the editorial models launched in the early 20th century by his fellow Italian publishers Treves and Sonzogno, while opening up to US models such as the film magazine *Photoplay*. Correspondingly, in the US, the field of cultural studies in relationship to the exchange of Italy and the US in cinema and literature was established by Marcia Landy's *Fascism in Film* (1986)[7] and *The Folklore of Consensus* (1998); Marla Stone's *The Patron State* (1998); Victoria de Grazia's *How Fascism Ruled Women 1922-1945* (1992) and *The Culture of Consent* (2002); and Barbara Spackman's *Fascist Virilities* (1996), and her article on Mario Camerini's *Department Store*, "Shopping for Autarchy" (2002). Together with Stephen Gundle and David Forgacs, authors of *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War* (2007), these scholars have offered an approach to cultural history that looks at consumption (in terms of everyday

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[5] Ruggero Eugeni, *Film, sapere, società: per un'analisi sociosemiotica del testo cinematografico* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1999), 65. Translation to English mine.

[6] De Berti, Raffaele and Irene Piazzoni, ed. *Forme e modelli del rotocalco italiano tra le due guerre, x.*

[7] Marcia Landy, *Fascism in Film. The Italian Commercial Cinema, 1931-1943* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986),
and *The Folklore of Consensus: Theatricality in the Italian Cinema, 1930-1943* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998);
Marla Stone, *The Patron State, Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998); Victoria de Grazia's *How Fascism Ruled Women 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) and *The Culture of Consent. Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy.* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), and Barbara Spackman's *Fascist Virilities. Rhetoric, Ideology and Social Fantasy in Italy.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), and "Shopping for Autarchy," in Jacqueline Reich and Piero Garofalo, *Re-viewing Fascist Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2002); David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War* (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2008).

needs as well as cultural products such as cinema and literature) as the product of active choices at different levels of society, in terms of gender, social status, geographical specificity, and accounting for modes of reception and entertainment at the intersections of societal groups. By offering a comparative reading of primary archival material and existing scholarship, I create a more complex and nuanced picture of the multidimensional ever-changing topic of the presence of the United States in culture, consumer goods, women's bodily practices and cinema in fascist Italy.

This chapter joins the endeavor of the abovementioned scholarship, and while it is grounded in a cultural approach to fascism, it benefits greatly from the historical and anthropological studies provided by Mia Fuller and Ruth Ben-Ghiat.[8] Moreover, with this chapter, this dissertation aspires to move beyond the (mostly Italian) scholarship – by Giorgio Tinazzi, Lino Micchichè, and Philip Cannistraro[9] among others – eager to redefine the terms in which fascism is, and more often simply is *not*, spoken about, especially in Italy, where its history is still very much the object of an overall embarrassed silence, or summed up by reductive and cautious explanations. At a methodological level, by choosing a multidisciplinary approach I was able to trace the ways in which US culture and images emerged from within the movies: I add a special consideration of materiality and everyday usage of magazines and objects, willing to consider middle points and idiosyncrasies – observing the extent to which the everyday consumption of American objects shaped the creation of myths (as that of the Hollywood star system) and how these objects (from women's magazines to industrial design), came to participate in movements that reveal themselves, a posteriori, to be markers of cultural change and artistic innovation. More than anything, this chapter accounts for Angelo Rizzoli's astuteness in affirming himself in the film industry, and eventually transform it, as first argued by Raffaele De Berti in *Dallo schermo alla carta,* and in the biographies of Angelo Rizzoli and Valentino Bompiani written by Alberto Mazzucca[10] and Irene Piazzoni.

In the two following chapters, I engage with postwar Italian cinema. In particular, I deal with the periodization that has, so far, postulated a clear-cut divide between movies made before and after the end of the war. In doing so, I shed light on those elements that attest, instead, for continuity. Historically, and especially in Italian scholarship, as a result of the confining of postwar cinema under the umbrella term of "Italian neorealism," two cultural and historiographical phenomena have coexisted: firstly, a reductive overview of its main aspects as comprising location shooting, the use of non-professional actors, and that of children. Secondly, a tendency to gloss over a thorough exploration of film genre during fascism – often relegated to the "escapist cinema" of the "telefoni bianchi" (white telephones). This tendency prevented scholars from looking into how the films produced during the years of the regime embodied previous tendencies, as well as contributed to future developments, and hence to neorealism. As for the generation of Italian filmmakers and intellectuals that came of age in 1945, their deep connection and sense of urgency has bound them to their period, so that their cinematic predecessors, degraded to "white telephones," are studied as isolated products. Only in recent years, the scholarship of Giuliana Minghelli and Noa Steimatsky has laid the foundations for a study of neorealism from within the wounded Italian landscape, and, together with Karl Schoonover, paved the way for a study of corporeality and bodies – wounded, lost, broken, in assonance with the bombarded landscape.[11]

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[8] Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, *Italian Colonialism*. Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2008.

[9] See Lino Micciché. *Patrie visioni. Saggi sul cinema italiano 1930-1980*. Ed. Giorgio Tinazzi and Bruno Torri. Venice: Marsilio, 2010; Philip Cannistraro. *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e mass media.* Bari: Laterza, 1975.

[10] Raffaele De Berti, *Dallo schermo alla carta. Romanzi, fotoromanzi, rotocalchi cinematografici. Il film e i suoi paratesti* (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2000); Alberto Mazzuca, *La erre verde* (Milano: Longanesi, 1991); Irene Piazzoni, *Valentino Bompiani: Un editore italiano tra Fascismo e dopoguerra* (Milano: Edizioni Universitarie Di Lettere Economia Diritto, 2007).

[11] See Giuliana Minghelli, *Landscape and Memory in Post-fascist Italian Film*. London: Routeledge, 2016; Karl Schoonover, *Brutal Vision. The Neorealist Body in Postwar Italian Cinema.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012; Noa Steimatsky, *Italian Locations. Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Chapter Two, "American Goods and the Promise of Reeducation in Alberto Lattuada's *Without Pity* (1948) and Italian Postwar Cinema," offers an alternative to this historiographical impasse. It orients readers toward a more rounded vision of how neorealism drew from prewar cinema and in turn lent its representational power to the healing process and politics of Italian postwar bodies and identities. Alberto Lattuada's *Without Pity* (1948) attests to the US presence and influence within Italian neorealism. In particular, it accounts for how Lattuada expanded on the work of his contemporary Italian neorealist directors' – to which group he is thought to belong only peripherally – by opening up to the US presence and assuming a "global spectator." Lattuada's film embodied neorealism's traction for "unprecedented foreign audiences," by joining a cluster of films that would "internationalize pity's spatial order,"[12] as articulated at length by Karl Schoonover. *Without Pity*'s look at the reality of postwar Italy and the Marshall Plan positioned the displaced and wounded bodies of its protagonists (an African American soldier and an Italian woman) as central to and exemplary of the mechanism of the re-making of Italians after the war, namely by way of reeducation – via US objects brought along by the Marshall Plan.

In *Italian Locations,* Noa Steimatsky underlined the "limitations of hermetic neorealist definitions" that reveal themselves "once one looks beyond strictly thematic concerns or an abstracted median of 'period style'," adding that

> one must emphasize instead the productive openness of neorealism to the tensions and pain of its time, its self-consciousness as to the stakes in reconstructing a community, remaking the culture, revisioning an Italian landscape-image: negotiating breaks and continuities – but not as if nothing happened.[13]

Steimatsky's invitation to negotiate "breaks and continuities" has been crucial to the development of my chapter, together with her analysis of the photographic booklet titled *Occhio quadrato*,[14] an overlooked example of how Alberto Lattuada contributed to the aesthetics and preoccupation of neorealism. Lattuada's two most relevant neorealist films, *Without Pity* and *The Bandit* (1946), Steimatsky added,

> spoke eloquently to the contemporary scene – the ruins of war, the economic and social reality of crime and the black market, the Allied presence, the African American GIs – even as they drew on genre codes and dramatic manipulation, as on the aura of expressively lit settings and made-up stars.[15]

The coexistence of all these elements in Lattuada's film allowed me to reassess both the crucial role of the American presence in Italy during neorealism, as well as the hypothesis of continuity between pre-war cinema and neorealism.

Borrowing from Steimatksy and Schoonover, my analysis of *Without Pity* foregrounds the urgent question of the body of the male soldier, displaced, isolated, and lost, as well as of the actor Carla del Poggio. It does so in the light of the parallels between the filmic character's (Angela) reeducation, and Del Poggio's aspiring career as a Hollywood actress as recounted in the magazines. Lastly, when read alongside Roberto Rossellini's *Paisà* (1946) and other minor films like Jack Salvatori's *Umanità* (1946) and Giorgio Ferroni's *Tombolo, paradiso nero* (1947), *Without Pity* allowed me to explore

[12] Karl Schoonover. *Brutal Vision. The Neorealist Body in Postwar Italian Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xiv.
[13] Steimatsky, Noa. *Italian Locations. Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xv.
[14] Ibid., xviii
[15] Ivi.

discourses of race in postwar Italian cinema, and to reconsider the reality that, as Steimatsky argues, "the efforts of neorealism were geared toward national rebuilding and were restorative at that."[16]

The aid received by Italy from the Marshall Plan was conducive to its economic regeneration and industrial prosperity, which developed in a period known as "the economic miracle," at the same time embraced, fostered and contested by Italian filmmakers in the decade 1958-1968.[17] In 1965, Elio Petri directed *The Tenth Victim*, which is central to Chapter Three, "The Italian Cinema of the 'Economic Miracle': Design and Disillusionment in Elio Petri's *The Tenth Victim* (1965)." The chapter first shows the ties between the "economic miracle" and the Marshall Plan, namely by exploring *Italy at Work*, an industrial design exhibition that was commissioned by a US committee in 1951. At heart, the exhibition enforced the dichotomy, in the Italian arts and crafts, of the archaic and the new, the vintage and the "modern," the individual and the serial. In the chapter, I show how America "needed" to foster a narrative of Italy as an artisanal nation, for commercial reasons. Zooming in into the mise-en-scène of the *Tenth Victim* reveals "the structure of Italian industry," which, according to Paul Ginsborg, was characterized "on the one hand by a whole mass of small firms and artisan shops, and on the other by a quite extraordinary concentration of capital and production."[18] The tension between "mass" and "concentration," claimed Ginsborg, was the realization of the post-war settlement; that is, the settlement taking form as the organizers of *Italy at Work* celebrated the local, artisanal dimension of Italy, as safe and necessary for the American economy. The notion of "handicraft" supported and guaranteed the flourishing of a new market of design in 1950s, as a consequence of *Italy at Work*.[19] The scholarship of design historians Penny Sparke, Anne Massey, and Christine Rossi[20] helped me trace the artisanal arrangements necessary to the development of a "new market" for furniture, a project that the US government had kicked off since the days of the Marshall Plan aid. According to Sparke, the 1950s were a period of research and reorganization for the industries involved in the application of the materials in various sectors. This period culminated in the 1960s with an enthusiastic, often uncontrolled use of plastics, epitomizing the novelty and low-cost qualities of the "new market."

In the chapter, I propose a reading of *The Tenth Victim* alongside Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), and Michelangelo Antonioni's *La notte* (1961). Moreover, my chapter shows that with his sci-fi film, Petri influenced the work of authors like Marco Ferreri in *Dillinger is Dead* (1969), Antonio Margheriti in *Wild, Wild Planet* (1966), or Ferdinando Di Leo in *Milano calibro 9* (1972). Hence, analyzing Antonioni's *La notte* (1961) alongside Petri's film shows how Antonioni postulated design furniture

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16 Ibid., xiii.

17 In 1947, the threat of communism and declining economies pushed Truman and Marshall devise the ERP, in which $13 billion were poured into struggling economies of Western Europe, which was a turning point in American foreign policy, as much as it changed the course of Italian cinema and politics. Founded on president Woodrow Wilson's idea of 'multilateralism or international cooperation in economic and diplomatic affairs.' See Alexander D. Weissman, "Pivotal Politics. The Marshall Plan: A Turning Point in Foreign Aid and the Struggle for Democracy." *The History Teacher*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (November 2013): 111-129.

18 Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 73.

19 In 1947, the House of Italian Handicraft in New York City organized the exhibit "Handicraft as a Fine Art in Italy," consisting of objects conceived by architects and artists including Lucio Fontana, Renato Guttuso, Fausto Melotti, Giorgio Morandi and Ettore Sottsass. Reflecting on the loss of importance given to the artist as artisan, Rossi writes: "In stark contrast to the photographs and biographies of the artists and architects involved, the catalogue gives no details of the artisans who actually made the products. Their anonymity and the limitation of their role to that of executing another's ideas, rather than realizing their own, would both be hallmarks of the artisan's experience and representation in post-war Italian design more generally. It seemed that the artisan could not be left alone, and craft's economic and cultural significance would only continue if it was endowed with the contemporary forms of expression that only architects and artists could provide," 13-14.

20 Catherine Rossi. *Crafting design in Italy. From Postwar to Postmodernism.* Manchester University Press, 2015; Penny Sparke (ed.) *The Plastics Age. From Bakelite to Beanbags and Beyond* (Woodstock, New York: The Overloom Press, 1992); Anne Massey, *Hollywood Beyond the Screen. Design and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

and architecture as catalysts for class-based relations and acted as a legitimizing factor for class inclusion. Yet, in the film, the deeper significance of these objects, while palpable in various forms of use and consumption, is not questioned nor reflected upon. On the other hand, by showing its characters' physical relation to the objects, *The Tenth Victim* rebranded the theme of mass production (and consumption) within the context of the economic miracle, by enabling a satire of previous film production focused on spectacle or alienation. With respect to their use of furniture, *La notte* and *The Tenth Victim* approached the duality of "boom" and "riconversione" (two contrasting ways to think of the postwar periods foregrounding either economic growth or the need for reconstruction) from different angles – opposite and yet complementary. They rework the question of the lingering presence and potential transformation brought about by the war, its taxing impact, and the consequent presence of America, in bodies and objects, as a rescuer. Meanwhile, both films drew attention to *how* a "modern" household was to function, hinting at the constant friction between materials that were less or more modern, new and old consumption patterns and artisanal versus serial production. Both films, my chapter argues, reference the quintessential living room of the Italian cinema of the 1960s, namely in Steiner's house in Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), a space for philosophical conversations, and a retreat from society emanating a sense of lingering darkness both on the characters within the film, and on Italian society at large.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Serialized Woman of Fascist Italy: Hollywood and the Women's Film Magazine *Novella*

During the first years of the fascist regime, the film magazine *Al cinema* greeted the circulation of Hollywood films and stars with skepticism, accompanied by a dose of alarmism with respect to the endangerment of national Italian cinema.[21] In 1927, the magazine published the article "A Matter of Vital Importance"[22] to caution its readers against the "Americanization" of Italy and of its cinema:

> The truth is: Italy is being Americanized […]. The bad part is that Italy tends to absorb […] only what is exotic and damaging in the American image, as it seeps into the minds of the new generations. It is damaging because it was transplanted here, in soil of such different nature, even if it's not damaging in and of itself.

By adopting the metaphor of Italy as soil – in the allusions to the very danger of "trapiantare" (transplanting) and "infiltrare" (infiltrating), rather than to the danger of the American image in and of itself – *Al cinema* assumed that Italy would absorb exotic and damaging content only, thus implying a forbidden attraction toward Hollywood cinema, from which viewers were cautioned to stir away. In its final remarks, the article revealed the main cause of the disrupting presence of US images: "La causa? La principale almeno? Il cinematografo! Sissignori, il cinematografo!"(What is the cause of all this? The main cause? The motion pictures! Yes, sir, the motion pictures!).[23]

Archival research at the Biblioteca Luigi Chiarini in Cinecittà, Rome, and at the Biblioteca Renzo Renzi in the Cineteca di Bologna revealed a broad number of film publications that supported this preoccupation for – to top off the metaphor – cultural contamination.[24] One of the platforms for the diffusion of Hollywood cinema was the news-based film magazine, such as the *Bollettino della Fox Film Corporation*. The Fox "bulletin" boasted the successes of "la più grande casa del mondo" (the biggest production company in the world).[25] The eight-page publication was a direct line into Hollywood production and distribution. Each issue publicized two films, and targeted theatre owners, providing details about the "corredo reclame" (advertisement kit) distributed locally to movie theatres with the acquisition of the film's rights – a kit of posters and flyers in different sizes.[26] The bulletin aimed to promote the films *as* American, and yet capable of pleasing Italian audiences. It had no particular aesthetic value in and of itself (it was not meant to be purchased or consumed as a

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[21] See Giorgio Bertellini in *Italian Silent Cinema. A Reader* (Herts: John Libbey Publishing, 2013) and *Italy in Early American Cinema; Race, Landscape, and the Picturesque (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2010).* See also Stephen Gundle in *Mussolini's Dream Factory. Film Stardom in Fascist Italy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013).

[22] The original article is titled "Una questione vitale," signed by Nino Giannini; *Al cinema*, anno 6, n. 1, 2 January 1927: "La verità è questa: l'Italia si americanizza. […] Ma il male è che in Italia si tende ad assorbire […] solo quanto di esotico e di dannoso esiste nella mentalità americana, si infiltra nelle menti della nostra nuova generazione. Dannoso in quanto trapiantato qui, in un terreno di così diversa natura, anche quando non lo sia in sè stesso" (English translation mine).

[23] Ivi.

[24] See among other magazines, *Cine Romanzo* (1929-1933), *Cine Gazzettino*, *Cine miroir*, *Cinematografo, Cinevita, Lo schermo* – which I consulted at the Biblioteca Renzo Renzi in the Cineteca di Bologna.

[25] The *Fox Film Corporation Bulletin* was published from 1929 to 1935, see Biblioteca Digitale Luigi Chiarini, http://www.fondazionecsc.it/bib_biblio_digitale_detail.jsp?area=32&ID_LINK=148&id_context=6735

[26] The bulletin worked as a supplement to the "Fox Movietone" shorts – Fox's pioneering sound newsreel – which started its operation in 1927.

commercial magazine would be, after all) if not for its ads and comic strips, meant to entice local distributors.

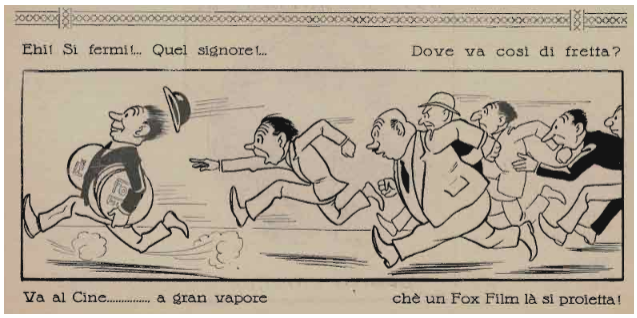


Figure 1a: *Bollettino della Fox Film Corporation*, 1 March 1929, n.5.


Figure 1b: 1 July 1929, n.7.

The vignette in figure 1a depicts a man (a Fox Film representative, perhaps) running and carrying film reels under his arms, chased by a group of formally dressed men. Why is he "così di fretta" (in a hurry)? Because, the caption reveals, the projection of a Fox film is about to happen. Hence, the formally dressed men – show business agents or cinema spectators – running after the reels to not miss out on the screening. In figure 1b, the "Duce" Benito Mussolini gives a speech, timely captured by a Fox Movietone recorder. Hollywood hovers over the Fox Film bulletin: whether as new American films distributed on the Italian market, or as state-of-the-art technology. However, the most astounding platform for the Italian readership's contact with Hollywood images and content were the local film magazines, which would confirm (and in much more complex ways) the worries expressed by *Al cinema*: Hollywood was infiltrating "the minds of the new generations," and the fascist regime, eager to preserve Italy's independence from foreign attractions, was at work to figure out how to properly respond to and engage with this contamination.

### *Cinema* and Italy's "Americanization"

Affiliated with the fascist government, since the first issue in July 1936, the film magazine *Cinema* had among its sections, similarly to the Film Fox bulletin, a column dedicated to the "latest news from America." A biweekly magazine subtitled "quindicinale di divulgazione cinematografica," *Cinema* (figure 2) was founded by Ulrico Hoepli and initially directed by Luciano De Feo (a fascist intellectual and director of the "Istituto internazionale di cinematografia educative"). Among its collaborators were Luigi Freddi (a key figure in the development of Italian cinema under fascism, and in the foundation of Cinecittà and its film school, and of the Istituto Luce), and intellectuals like Leo Longanesi. Sold for the price of two liras in "Italia e colonie," *Cinema* became the site of a rigorous dialogue on the state of Italian cinema (celebrating the foundation and success of the Cinecittà studios in 1937). It created a readership of people working in the field, as well as of moviegoers and film buffs at large. While defining the contours of a national cinema, *Cinema* positioned Cinecittà as an organic extension of Hollywood ("Anche quest'anno, a quanto sembra, la nota saliente della stagione cinematografica sarà il ruggito del leone Metro," This year too, apparently, the prominent sound of

the cinematographic season, will be the roar of the Metro lion) and Hollywood as a gold mine of possibilities and titles, turned toward Italy: "Cosa ci prepara l'America? I piani della Paramount per la prossima stagione sono largamente europei…" (What does America have in store for us? Paramount's plans for the next season are broadly European…).[27] In all, *Cinema* consistently praised "la scuola americana" for its cinematic achievements – except for "la leggerezza," the lightness, of some of its films[28] – for its variety of genres (gangster and western in particular).

If the covers (figure 2) tended to celebrate local movie stars, many articles dealt with the phenomenon of Hollywood stardom: a portrait of Frank Capra appeared in the first issue, and stories such as "L'ardua vita di Greta Garbo" and "Vita e miracolo della ragazza Joan Crawford"[29] became a staple feature of the magazine. In parallel, *Cinema* promoted the castings for the film school of Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia[30] – founded in 1935 by Luigi Freddi, and destined to become an appendix to the Cinecittà Studios, [31] a nursery for the next generation of Italian movie stars, all of whom were eager to learn from their Hollywood models.


Figure 2: Italian cinema on display on the covers of *Cinema*: Luisella Beghi (March 1940), Doris Duranti (July 1942), and Massimo Girotti (November 1942).

In 1938, Vittorio Mussolini, who was Benito's eldest son and a voracious cinephile, took on the direction of the magazine. Mussolini directed *Cinema* according to his creed that "real movies" were "American big entertainment, the real escapist fare that bore the Hollywood trademark." [32] The year before, his visit to the Metro Goldwyn Mayer studios in Hollywood as a spokesperson of fascism was driven by his "love of Hollywood and of the movies as big entertainment."[33] An issue of *Life* magazine

[27] *Cinema*, n.2, 1936.
[28] *Cinema*, n.5, 1936.
[29] *Cinema*, n. 8, 1936, "Greta Garbo's Tough Life," and n. 10, 1936 "The Life and Miracle of the girl Joan Crawford."
[30] "Bando di concorso per l'ammissione," *Cinema*, n.6, 1936.
[31] See in particular *Cinema*, n.11, 1936, "La città del cinema," which tells the story of the planning and building of Cinecittà, inviting readers to get their spirits up welcoming the occasion for Cinecittà to, at last "renderci anche in questo campo un primato che fu nostro" (to give us back the excellency that, in this field too, used to be ours).
[32] Sedita, *Vittorio Mussolini,* 431. See also archival video from the Istituto Luce: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRQZGUb8Jds
[33] Ibid.

recounted the visit in an article titled "Vittorio teaches Hollywood the Mussolini pose."[34] In a photo, Vittorio Mussolini stands in front of Producer Hal Roach, and, captured from a low angle, teaches him "the Mussolini pose," mimicking one of the Duce's signature postures. Meant to seal the agreement between the Italian film industry and Hollywood producers, namely by founding the production company Roach and Mussolini (RAM), the visit left Mussolini empty handed, as exiled anti-fascist protesters interrupted the celebrations.[35]Vittorio Mussolini's return to Italy and the beginning of his work as the director of *Cinema* transformed the magazine, according to Giovanni Sedita, into "a journal with a strong interest in the international film scene," that "would become a theoretical hothouse for the postwar movement of Italian neorealism."[36] The focus of the Italian film industry – at the time, more than ever before, centered around the fascist regime film – had shifted: from borrowing Hollywood formulas and importing its films, to instituting a legitimate Italian national cinema. The effort toward the inward re-centering of a national film industry was sealed by the institution of awards destined specifically to Italian films, in addition to the autarchy laws of 1938,[37] that drastically reduced the access of Hollywood imports into Italian theatres, and, supposedly, magazines.[38]

After Hollywood's rebuttal, *Cinema* resorted to a different perspective on the "myth" of Hollywood, which entailed progressively reckoning the need for Rome to have just as functional and productive a studio system as the Studios. In the article "Roma e Hollywood" Giorgio Vigolo proposes:

> If Americans have made us all live for a while in the nocturnal insanity of their Broadways, in the nightmares of their gangsters' exploits, why wouldn't we try to make others live under the influence of the Italic and Roman country, propagating a canon of beauty, and a measure and law of life, which in the end are those to which the world, through exhausting unrestrained contradictions, seems to fatally turn to?[39]

If the United States turned their back to the Italian film industry, Vigolo states, Italy could do nothing but enchanting American audiences with its "influsso" (influence) of canonic beauty and measure, a mission, in the end, much more honorable than the "nocturnal insanity" of American cinema's nightmares and gangsters.

Along the lines of Vigolo's article, between 1936 and 1943 *Cinema* refashioned the meaning of "national cinema"[40] – simultaneously accounting for the autarchic trend of Italian trades, and yet not renouncing to expand its reach toward Hollywood. The only caveat was that Italian cinema would have to meet the standards of the fascist regime by emanating a higher degree of maturity than the lightness of Hollywood films. This soon became a reason for pride: *Cinema* imagined its readers as

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[34] *Life*, vol. 3, year 15, October 11th, 1937.

[35] Sedita, 435.

[36] Ibid., 431.

[37] See Barbara Corsi, *Con qualche dollaro in meno. Storia economica del cinema italiano* (Le Lettere: Milano, 2012). Corsi mentions the 1934 Ciano-Hays agreement that limited American imports to Italy to 250 films per year. A similar measure reemerged in 1938 with the autarchy law, or Legge Alfieri, which withdrew distribution of MGM, Paramount, Fox and Warner from the Italian market, transferring monopoly to the Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche (ENIC), a branch of Istituto Luce that dealt with film production.

[38] See Daniela Manetti, *Un'arma poderosissima. Industria cinematografica e Stato durante il fascismo 1922-1943*. Franco Angeli: Milano, 2002, on the "decreto legge" of September 4th, 1938. The decreto limited the imports of foreign films, thus corroding the relationship with the four major US production companies, which interrupt commercial relations with Italy.

[39] *Cinema*, issue n. 10, 1936. Translation mine. The original article goes: "Se gli americani hanno fatto vivere un po' tutti noi nella notturna demenza delle loro Broadway, negli incubi delle loro gesta di gangsters, perchè non si proverebbe noi a far vivere gli altri sotto l'influsso del paese italico e romano, propagando un canone di bellezza, una misura e una legge di vita, che sono poi quelle cui oggi il mondo, attraverso affannose convulse contraddizioni, tende fatalmente a riportarsi?"

[40] See Andrew Higgson, "The Concept of National Cinema," *Screen,* Volume 30, Issue 4, 1 (October 1989): 36–47 where the author poses the question: "For what is a national cinema, if it doesn't have a national audience?"

fond filmgoers and announced that, by shedding the most shallow and lighthearted aspects of Hollywood cinema "la nostra industria, potenziata dall'apposita Direzione, si eleverà a quella maturità materiale e spirituale che aprirà la porta al più grande successo" (our industry, powered by its own directional committee, will elevate itself to that material and spiritual maturity that will open doors to the greatest success).[41] The message was twofold: to begin with, industrial prowess *could* be achieved locally,[42] with no need for American machinery or technology. Secondly, the American star system and its corrupted and carefree value system became useless when faced with the solid system of beliefs of the regime – which contained, by that time, the implicit promise of an Italian star system being nursed by the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. Vittorio Mussolini's magazine kept advocating for the development, in Italy, of viewing habits and commercial strategies inspired by the United States - for instance the commercial practice of the sneak preview, "le prime sperimentali che si fanno per tutti i film in America" (the experimental previews made for all films in America), to test the potential for success of a movie in its earlier stages of production.[43]

With the frequent intrusion of commercial and technical language within the more leisurely content (i.e. the lives of the movie stars), *Cinema*'s reader came to be interpellated as an individual moviegoer, as much as a consumer of a broader commercial enterprise – Italian cinema – the first always reinforcing the latter, and vice versa. This twinned address – individual fruition and collective commitment – was being embraced by, and determined the success of, film magazines of different caliber, much more prone to the dreaded "Americanization," rather than to the cultivation of a local film scene. Yet, as scholars have argued – from Barbara Spackman to Victoria De Grazia[44] – *Cinema* and its related magazines opted, more often than not, for including dissonant interpellations, rather than adhering dogmatically to an overt Americanizing or filo-fascist declaration of intents. These multiple interpellations were made viable by an attempt to translate Hollywood ideas and formats, rather than simply importing them – just as *Al cinema* had feared. This intentionality on the part of the magazine – obedience and openness – allows one to see the family resemblance between *Cinema*, and the film magazines central to the lives of many more readers than just cinephiles or film business men: an unprecedented lively audience of women readers and moviegoers.

**Angelo Rizzoli and *Novella***

By the time Ulrico Hoepli and Luciano De Feo founded *Cinema* in 1936,[45] another Italian publication had been reshaping the borders of hitherto traditional film magazines thanks to a hybrid, innovative

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41 *Cinema*, n. 10, 1936.

42 In his anthology *Cinema 1936-1943, Prima del neorealismo* (Rome: Fondazione Scuola nazionale di cinema, 2002), Orio Caldiron argues that *Cinema*'s educational mission was a combination of two previous models. The first one was the monthly publication *Intercine*, "la rivista internazionale del cinema educatore," (the international magazine of educational cinema) founded by Luciano De Feo, soon to become *Cinema*'s director. Caldiron writes: "*Cinema* è il primo periodico che appaia nel mondo interamente dedicato ad una vera divulgazione cinematografica: la scienza, la tecnica, l'estetica, le questioni sociali e legislative, gli indirizzi della produzione, le mille curiosità ignote al grande pubblico che danno uno specialissimo sapere al grandioso e pittoresco ambiente del cinema" (*Cinema* is the first periodical in the world truly dedicated to cinematography's divulgation: science, technics, aesthetics, the social and juridical questions, the production goals, the thousands of aspects unknown to the wider audience that give a very special flavor to the grandiose and picturesque environment of cinema). According to Caldiron, *Cinema* was the product of the encounter between the experience of *Intercine* and the scientific formula of *Sapere*, founded in 1935. See Caldiron's *Cinema 1936-1943, Prima del neorealismo.*

43 Alfredo Guarini, *Film,* n. 11, year 2, 18 March 1939.

44 See Victoria De Grazia in *The Sex of Things. Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), in particular Part 3, "Nationalizing Women," on the competition between fascist and commercial cultural models in Mussolini's Italy: "operating on a national scale… mass consumption would seem to engender a multiplicity of subjectivities," 337; Barbara Spackman in *Fascist Virilities*, and in particular chapter 2, "Fascist Women and The Rhetoric of Virility."

45 See *Cinema*'s resemblance to *Lo schermo* or *Motion Picture Herald*, in particular when these magazines are compared to *Cinema Illustrazione*, a magazine that presented strong elements of "intermediality." It was also the magazine that more than many others dealt the most with the passage to sound film, a self-reflective moment in Italian film history that became the catalyst for the articulation of different approaches to intellectual engagement and entertainment.

editorial formula: the women's film magazine *Novella.* Angelo Rizzoli bought the publication from his rival Arnoldo Mondadori in 1927 as part of a package of magazines on their way to bankruptcy.[46] In the previous years, he had matured his experience in publishing long before taking on *Novella*, working first as an "operaio" typographer at the Milanese agency Bernini until 1909, when he bought his first printing machineries, and founded a company named Angelo Rizzoli & C,[47] and then as an industrial graphic designer in Milan. Scholar Enrico Decleva, author of Arnoldo Mondadori's biography, recalls that Rizzoli paid forty thousand liras for the entire package of magazines, a low price symptomatic of Mondadori's publications stagnant state. Up to that point, *Novella* was a bi-monthly literary digest, barely different from the state in which Mondadori had purchased it himself in 1919 from the Casa Editrice Italia: a sober publication (figure 3a), whose title referenced the "short story," and would resonate for the reader with its Boccaccian and thus literary implication. The original formula for *Novella*'s installment novels, writes Decleva, was that of a "romanzo di intrattenimento fatto uscire con cadenze fisse" (entertainment novels published in regular installments),[48] inspired by 19th century examples of serial novels. In terms of aesthetics, the first *Novella* drew inspiration from turn of the century graphic design, such as Art Nouveau, and by newer Mittle-European premodernist tendencies (figure 3b).[49] Rizzoli's *Novella* would rapidly change, incorporating two intertwined novelties: at the content level, it would merge the pre-existing literary material with columns, articles, and images that would orient it in the direction of becoming a film magazine; at the level of cultural referents, it would open up to Hollywood's imagery and language.

With a "felice cambio di formula" (a fitting change of formula) Rizzoli and his team brought the magazines to new splendor: "un esito che Mondadori non si compiacque ovviamente mai di avere favorito" (an outcome that Mondadori was never proud to have enabled) establishing the brand as the major Italian publisher of magazines – together with *Piccola* and *Lei*.[50] *Novella* came to be advertised as a weekly-illustrated women's variety-magazine – as the cover read: "il settimanale più vario e divertente di letteratura narrativa. Illustratissimo" (the most varied and fun weekly magazine of narrative literature. Super illustrated). From a simple content index (figure 3a) on its cover, in the 1919 version, the digest started relying on illustrations, featuring close ups of renowned writers, framed by two marble columns, such as Grazia Deledda (figure 3b) and Ada Negri. The "fascicolo" (booklet) – such was at the time the preferred term for magazines and newspaper inserts – featured short stories by "i migliori scrittori italiani" (the best Italian writers): Alberto Savinio, Luigi Pirandello, and Carola Prosperi, prolific author of romance novels, and featured corny titles along the lines of *Segreti sul marciapiedi* (Secrets on the Sidewalk) and *Ci sono mogli oneste* (Honest Wives Exist).

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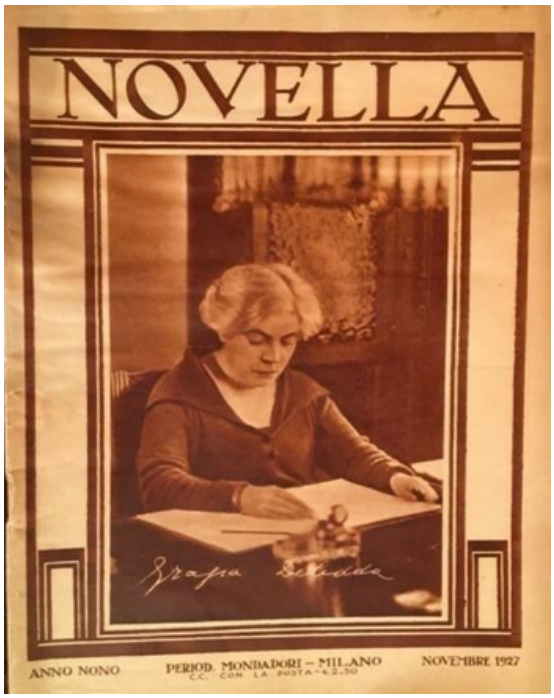
[46] With *Novella* came *Il Secolo illustrato*, *La donna* and *Comoedia,* that had previously been bought from Casa Editrice Italia. In *Il Secolo Illustrato*, five years after its acquisition on Rizzoli's part, Luigi Garrone wrote the article that that can be considered as the manifesto of the rotogravure printing technique, *Un giornale in 'roto*,' on July 30h 1932. See Raffaele De Berti's article in *La fotografia come fonte di storia* (Venezia: Istituto Veneto Di Scienze, Lettere Ed Arti, 2014) edited by Gian Piero Brunetta. Garrone and De Berti expand on the acquisition of images and pointed to the fact that Italian magazines received photos from agencies from all over the world.

[47] See Mazzuca, *La erre verde*, 17.

[48] Enrico Decleva, *Arnoldo Mondadori* (Milano: UTET, 2007), 179.

[49] See "The Genesis of Twentieth-Century Design," in Philip B. Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2005), 221-243.

[50] See Decleva, 113. The relationship between Arnoldo Mondadori and Angelo Rizzoli was convoluted and crucial to understand the birth of their two respective publishing empires. Two seminal works on the subject, as mentioned, are Enrico Decleva's *Arnoldo Mondadori*, and Alberto Mazzuca's *La erre verde*. Of particular interest is the two publisher's different approach toward the fascist regime. Mondadori was openly supportive, whereas Rizzoli always acted, as *Novella* reveals, in compliance yet not openly in agreement with the regime. In 1939 the two reached an agreement: Mondadori would shut down the publications of *Il Milione* and *Novellissima*; Rizzoli would do the same with *Gemma* – on top of which both agreed not to create any new periodicals. This shows the interdependence of the two brands, and how they were "sharing" the portion of market available for their products.


Figures 3a and 3b. Two issues of Casa Editrice Italia and Mondadori's *Novella*, 1920 and 1927 (with writer Grazia Deledda on the cover).

As a newcomer to the publishing world, Rizzoli embraced the example of his fellows Treves and Sonzogno, both based in Milan, publishers of illustrated magazines and installment novels.[51] To their formula, thanks to his experience as a typographer, Rizzoli added, as Raffaele De Berti writes, the intuition of the "differenza tra la rotativa e la rotocalcografia" (difference between rotary press and rotogravure) and "l'abbandono delle vecchie rotative dalle lastre di piombo per passare ai cilindri di rame dal rotocalco" (the abandonment of old rotary press with lead sheets to move on to the copper cylinders of the illustrated magazine),[52] and chose rotogravure.[53] If local entrepreneurial models and new technology granted him success, Rizzoli was able to not only to intersect the needs of *Novella*'s existing readership, but he managed to create a new audience for the magazine. The magazine's title came to allude to a serially constructed, ever-changing aura of "novelty," and its graphic and covers were as much the fruit of Rizzoli's attentive eye onto magazines like *Cinema* or *L'illustrazione italiana*, as they were a byproduct of a wider, international scene of illustrated film magazines. Despite their differences, Italian magazines that reached their success in the mid-1930s, such as *Cinema* and *Novella*, responded to the consolidation of power of the fascist regime first, and secondly to World War II. While doing that, they addressed the ever-changing relationship between Italy and the US, and their respective national cinemas, just as much as they were informed by it. In parallel, official fascist

[51] Treves founded *L'illustrazione italiana*, a series of booklets, and it published illustrated volumes of various types. On the other hand Sonzogno was specialized in "collane popolari a basso prezzo," (*low-price popular series*) "grandi opere a dispense illustrate," (*famous works in illustrated installments*) and periodicals. For an overview of the Milanese publishing scene after the turn of the century see Enrico Decleva, *Arnoldo Mondadori*, pp. 51-60.

[52] De Berti-Piazzoni, 4.

[53] Mondadori had been a pioneer of rotogravure since 1925, starting with the Secolo Illustrato, using the rotogravure technique, that had lowered prices from two liras to fifty cents: "Infatti è proprio alla fine del 1925 che Mondadori inizia la stampa in rotogravure di *Il Secolo Illustrato* […] L'utilizzo della tecnica a rotocalco consente di offrire a prezzi bassi riviste con molte fotografie: infatti *Il Secolo Illustrato*, con il passaggio alla stampa a rotocalco […] abbassa il prezzo da due lire a 50 centesimi." (De Berti-Piazzoni, 5)

magazines[54] portrayed Italian society as if in a vacuum, a narrative of autarchy and nationalism that denied all at once the existence – not mention the allure and influence – of Hollywood.

**Mother, Wife, Worker: *La donna fascista***

Archival research produced compelling proof of a fascist, self-referential and official aesthetics in the main magazine circulated by the party for the fascist woman, *La donna fascista*.[55] The publication dated back to the 19th century, when its title was *Il giornale della donna* (The Woman's Journal). In 1935, *Il giornale della donna* had to be "acquistato obbligatoriamente dalle iscritte alle organizzazioni del PNF"[56] (mandatorily purchased by those registered with the fascist party),[57] and became *La donna fascista*. The editorial office moved between Rome and Milan for a number of years until 1939, when, finally settled in Milan, an issue was dedicated to celebrating the fascist festivity "Giornata della fede on December 18th, 1939 – accompanied by the slogan "l'oro della fede femminile si tramuti nella virile potenza acciaiata dell'Impero" (the golden expression of the female faith must be transmuted into the virile steel power of the empire).[58] In Italian, "fede" means both faith/loyalty and wedding ring. Women were supposed to turn in their gold to the State, usually in the form of the wedding ring, and this was a day spent in "celebration" of the duty. In these and other special occasions for the regime, *La donna fascista* would not miss a chance to celebrate: from "giornata della Fede," to the Ethiopian campaign, and the Duce's visits in the Agro Pontino.[59] By providing women with a dedicated publication, *La donna* was proof of the effort on the part of the regime to control consumer culture in order to define women's roles, and give a tangible shape to the "culture of consent," as argued by De Grazia, and the complex discourse of dictatorship leisure. *La donna fascista* presented women, on various levels, with a gendered notion of time and space as shaped by fascist esthetics and dominant principles.

The cover of the magazine established (or imagined) a reality in which men and women, as rigidly gendered subjects, were aligned with pre-assigned, normative roles and aesthetic features indisputably appropriate for each of the two genders: the woman dedicated to the household, depicted while doing manual labor or taking care of her children in a rural setting (figure 4a) – echoing the title of another relevant fascist publication, *La donna, la casa e il bambino*[60] – or practicing physical activity as prescribed by the party (4b). *La donna fascista,* from its covers inward, established an apparent contradiction by interpellating its reader as the athletic *and* motherly woman (which coexisted and overlapped, rather than being mutually exclusive). The magazine contained news from the war ("La nostra guerra," our war), short stories, and columns like "La moda femminile in tempo di guerra" (women's fashion during wartime) "Rassegna cinematografica" (a cinema bulletin promoting films like *Pastor Angelicus* on the life of Pope Pio XII), "Confidenze tra noi donne" (secrets among us women) with "consigli utili" (useful advices) around the kitchen or laundry, "eleganza e autarchia." Although

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[54] See women's fascist magazines like *La massaia rurale* or *La donna, la casa e il bambino*.

[55] See online archive of the Biblioteca Digitale delle Donne in Bologna, Italy: http://www.bibliotecadigitaledelledonne.it/402/

[56] More on this in Rita Carrarini and Michele Giordano, *Bibliografia dei periodici femminili in Italia. 1786-1945* (Milano: Lampi di stampa), 44. The subtitle was: "Giornale delle organizzazioni femminili del PNF," spedizione in abbonamento postale: per i fasci e le tesserate lire 10, (*Journal of female organization of the National Fascist Party, sent by subscription, for the 'fasci' and card-holders, 10 liras*).

[57] During part of this period, Rizzoli's contender Mondadori – his brand's branch API (Anonima Periodici Italiani) – impressed a strong change to the publication. By acquiring periodicals associated with the PNF and GIL (*Il balilla*, *Passo romano* and *La donna fascista*), Mondadori promoted a "raffinata e disinvolta strategia," writes Irene Piazzoni, vis à vis the market and the regime, a strategy "che associa, senza coniugarle, la vocazione squisitamente commerciale e la cura dei rapporti politici." Irene Piazzoni, "*Irene, Luciana, Mura e le altre"* in De Berti-Piazzoni, 443.

[58] Piazzoni, 166.

[59] The magazine followed closely events such as the "giornata della fede" (day of faith) or "Oro alla patria" (gold to the country), which took place on December 18th, 1935; the magazine reported on the Second Italo-Ethiopian war lasted from 3 October 1935 until 19 February 1937. Lastly, the Duce was photographed during his visits in the Agro Pontino, a region in Lazio in which he had commanded a "bonifica integrale" of the marshes.

[60] Subtitle: "Rivista mensile di ricamo-moda-biancheria" (Monthly magazine of embroidery-fashion-garments). See Carrarini's book and Mariolina Graziosi's chapter in Pickering Iazzi, *Mothers of Invention*, "Gender Struggle," 26-51.

some elements repeat, it is with the covers that *La donna fascista* establishes itself as a serial product – in which patterns and formula are based on repetition, much more so than on difference.


Figures 4a, 4b and 4c: *La donna fascista* – issues 34 - 1941(4a), 16 - 1940 (4b), 11- 1940 (4c).

Upon closer inspection, next to the magazine's pursuit of realms specifically gendered as female, namely for the domestic, recreational and educational lives of women, one can't help but observe a looming male presence in many of the cover images of *La donna fascista*. A male figure – and authority – lingers in the images – at times even *in absentia* – inside the frame of the same cover that *contains* the woman. The Duce himself took center stage in various issues of the magazine. In some cases (figure 4c) he was presented at his most "institutional": a sculpture of his grim profile, captioned "civiltà imperiale" (imperial civilization). In the background, a stylized imperial eagle was superimposed on the outline of a fascio littorio (lictorial bundle), alternating with medium close-ups of women – all of whom wore either *massaia rurale* or *figlia della lupa* uniforms. Thanks to this overt display of gender roles, *La donna*'s message emerged blatantly: fascism, to cite De Grazia, "took as axiomatic that men and women were different by nature."[61] The regime "politicized this difference to the advantage of males and made it the cornerstone of an especially repressive, comprehensive new system for defining female citizenship, for governing women's sexuality, wage labor and social participation."[62] *La donna*, aligned with the regime's agenda, patrolled the borders of gender and safeguarded the feasibility of all "reproductive fantasies," as Barbara Spackman writes in *Fascist Virilities*. Despite the fact that in this instance the reader is gendered as female, as the covers show, the "node of articulation is virility," and "the moral significance is given in advance."[63] As per the magazine's interpellation, the *donna fascista* repeats, reinstates and sets apart identical aesthetic tropes of masculinity and femininity that mirror and reinforce those of the extratextual world (the lives and habits of fascist subjects). The covers offer a timetable of "female" activities, both outside and at home – including those extra-domestic activities

[61] De Grazia, *How Fascism*, 7.
[62] Ibid., 8; see also "Introduction" to De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent* for the gendered distribution and regulation of time, i.e. the "dopolavoro."
[63] Spackman, *Fascist Virilities*, "Introduction," x.

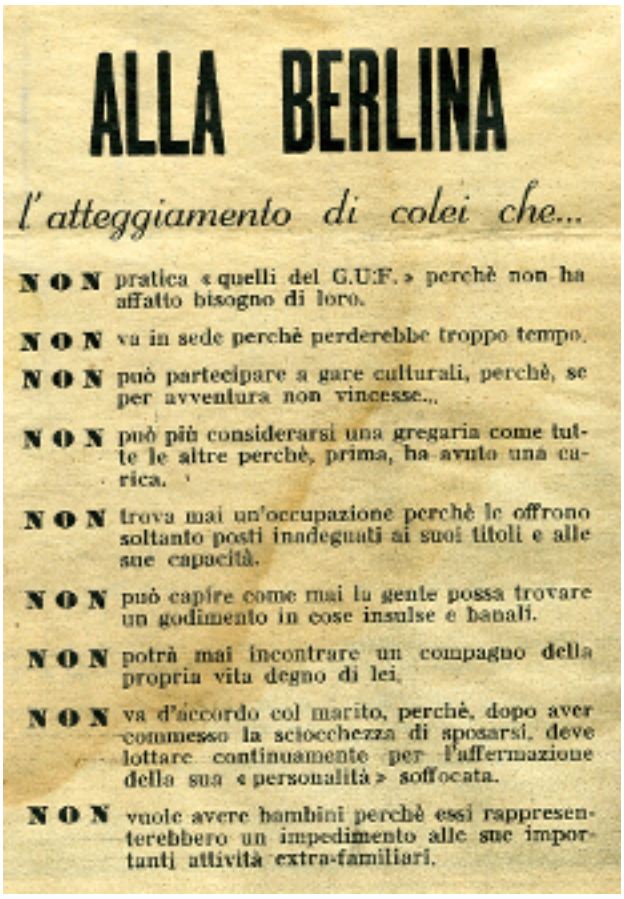
and associations enforced by the regime.[64] Contrary to the ambiguous stance of *Cinema* with respect to fascism, *La donna* doesn't leave room for interpretation: it *is* fascism. As such, it excludes individuality, whether psychological or esthetic, because regardless of the unique design of each cover, the reader of *La donna fascista* was to be encompassed by – and be able to mirror herself in – the norm as it is represented.

Moreover, in *La donna fascista*, fascist rigor, its esthetics, and most importantly its addressees, are collapsed into the politicized vision of a "totalitarian" society: women were interpellated as members of the "fasci femminili" (female fascist associations), and expected to follow the party secretary guidelines in the magazine's "fogli di disposizione" (instruction sheets). The magazine's columns included fashion and household tips with titles such as "geniali applicazioni autarchiche" (ingenious autarchic remedies), "piccoli segreti della massaia" (little secrets of the massaia), or "in cucina: ricette autarchiche" (inside the kitchen: autarchic recipes). When the war broke out in 1940, the magazine was reconfigured to include the column "osservatorio della guerra" (war observatory), and, in June of the same year, the magazine transcribed a speech by Mussolini, meant to remind women of their "compiti di natura eccezionale" (tasks of exceptional nature), as mothers, twinned to the more universal monito "combattere e lavorare" (to fight and to work), also insisted upon in the magazine.[65]

As for the rhetorical strategies employed by *La donna fascista*, the interpellation of observant female citizens was also expressed through prohibitions – behavior considered "alla berlina" (to be banned) (figure 5a) or stigmatization – "I nemici della donna fascista" (the enemies of the Fascist woman) (figure 5b). The "enemies" of the fascist woman were "vanità" (vanity), "paura" (fear), "civetteria" (coquetry), and "disobbedienza" (disobedience). Stay away from mirrors and beware of judgmental or flirtatious onlookers, the comic strip seems to suggest, as each woman was supposed to be unafraid of presenting herself proudly, while abiding by the rules. Hence, the magazine thought of itself as a safe space, within which a woman, if she behaved, could be protected in the space left open between respectful, proud self-fashioning, and careful obedience to established rules of conduct.

[64] The *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* was instituted in 1925, and absorbed all previously existing cultural and sport associations that predated the advent of Fascism. In 1935, the institution of the *Sabato fascista* (Fascist Saturday) sealed the role of the institution. The political roots of Fascism were those of national syndicalism. The sociopolitical core of such current remains – associationism, militarism, imperialism – indeed present as the fundamental organizational principle of male related conduct and daily life; it is therefore compelling to think of the void that the regime had to fill and structure, as, contrarily to other female movement, Italy seemed to have skipped the historical moment of female based syndicates on the model of the British suffragette. See De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent* and Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities*.

[65] Carrarini, 167.



# ALLA BERLINA

*l'atteggiamento di colei che...*

**NON** pratica «quelli del G.U.F.» perchè non ha affatto bisogno di loro.

**NON** va in sede perchè perderebbe troppo tempo.

**NON** può partecipare a gare culturali, perchè, se per avventura non vincesse...

**NON** può più considerarsi una gregaria come tutte le altre perchè, prima, ha avuto una cu-rica.

**NON** trova mai un'occupazione perchè le offrono soltanto posti inadeguati ai suoi titoli e alle sue capacità.

**NON** può capire come mai la gente possa trovare un godimento in cose insulse e banali.

**NON** potrà mai incontrare un compagno della propria vita degno di lei.

**NON** va d'accordo col marito, perchè, dopo aver commesso la sciocchezza di sposarsi, deve lottare continuamente per l'affermazione della sua «personalità» soffocata.

**NON** vuole avere bambini perchè essi rappresenterebbero un impedimento alle sue importanti attività extra-familiari.


Figures 5a and 5b: Illustrations from *La donna fascista*, n. 03, 14 January 1940 and n.04, 15 December 1942

Accordingly, in figure 5a, the anaphoric structure of the "non" repeated throughout the image reminded the reader what was *not* to be considered an acceptable behavior. In this case, similarly to 5b, the detailed description of forbidden pleasures – such as "godimento" (enjoyment), "attività extrafamiliari" (extra-familial activities), and "posti inadeguati" (inappropriate working positions)" was striking, to the point that sensorial details arguably risked undermining the words' didactic function. However, by connoting these deviant forms of entertainment or interest as "alla berlina," the magazine made its promise: to be the medium for a collective reassessment of individual bodily practices.[66] As it interpellated its reader, *La donna fascista* fostered its political agenda via propaganda and censorship, that made it function along an ideal continuum with oceanic mass gatherings, thus addressing the readers collectively: in the crowd applauding Mussolini's speeches in Piazza Venezia, in the collective gymnastic exercises, each subject was interpellated as a modular element of the whole. As in the words of Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, "in fascism, people constituted citizen-soldiers, never private persons […]. Particularity needed to disappear within the nation, the whole."[67] *La donna fascista* attempted to contain both instances – private citizens and citizen-soldiers, calling upon each reader while canceling

[66] For more on this idea of individuality versus collective unity, see Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2001). Ben-Ghiat links "Fascist modernity" to its archaic symbols. The symbol of Fascism was a bundle of rods tied around an axe to figure "strength through unity." The single unit was easily breakable, the bundle not so much.

[67] Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 35.

out individuality and idiosyncrasies. The annihilation of individuality also meant that culture, art, and entertainment, were peripheral components of an educational, didactic enterprise: "The idea of personal happiness was to be eliminated. The individual sketched by fascism rejected the material, the body, his/her own physicality […]. In an utmost exaltation of the spirit, the regime denied the body as the domain of hedonism and pleasure."[68] In Falasca-Zamponi's formulation, when it came to pleasure or entertainment – the body was, simply put, denied.

By contrast with *La donna fascista*, I propose to look at *Novella* as a product that could be purchased, touched and consumed (and contained a promise of more consumption), and, most importantly, that assumed a mechanism of identification and empathy on the part of an individual reader. The covers and content of *La donna fascista,* instead didn't activate the affective investment between the extratextual (its implicit reader) and the textual (the magazine), crucial to Rizzoli's editorial strategy and seriality. Because *La donna fascista* portrayed and instructed women within a limited array of roles and images – mother, athlete, *massaia* – that simply repeated (while at the same entailed a reader who could identify with those images), in the example of *La donna fascista*, seriality entailed no actual difference – that is no variations, except for those within the prescribed model of womanhood evoked by the title of the magazine, its graphic and content an invitation as sameness and repetition within the discursive limits of the regime.

### ***Novella*: Intermediality and the Circle of Referentiality**

With the launch of his new publishing enterprise, Angelo Rizzoli stood out with respect to regime endorsed print publications such as *La donna fascista*, *Il Popolo d'Italia* and *L'Avanti*. In an unprecedented synergy with both international magazines and Hollywood cinema – and exploiting the new rotogravure printing technique – Rizzoli gave life to a family of "rotocalchi" that included the titles that Mondadori's publishing brand had struggled to keep alive – such as *Comoedia* and *Lei*, among others – and that were sold as a package in 1927.[69] Rizzoli intuited the importance of reading *around* genres and the local press: he drew inspiration from French periodicals, such as *Vu* and *Regards,* and German titles such as *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* and *Die Dame,* all of which were known for their extensive use of photos, illustrations and film stills. Yet, once he was ready to restyle his newly acquired titles, he took as his main inspiration the Anglo-American illustrated magazine format – namely *Photoplay,* one of the first American film fan magazines, founded in 1911 in Chicago. *Photoplay* was renowned for its artwork portraits of film stars on the cover. With the advancement of color photography, the magazine began using photographs of the stars instead by 1937 (figure 6).

[68] Ibid., 122.

[69] Mondadori had inherited himself these magazines with the incorporation of the publishing house Italia in 1921. *Novella* was put under the direction of Alessandro Varaldo, who participated in Mondadori's aspiration to finally brings writers in contact with the "grande pubblico" (general public) and achieve strong circulation for their work.


Figure 6: *Photoplay*: Greta Garbo (August 1929), Joan Bennett (February 1933), and Katherine Hepburn (August 1933).

As Rizzoli remodeled *Novella* following the direction of American periodicals like *Photoplay*, he exploited the recent tune-up of the rotogravure technique,[70] which was cheap, high speed, and capable of long print runs – and the opened a market niche that allowed him to bring into existence a mass readership of women for installment novels and film magazines[71] – the same women that were receiving *La donna fascista*. Still, if *Novella* was itself not immune from a didactic overtone, it was certainly less concerned with the perils of cultural contamination, than with domesticating Hollywood cinema for the pleasure of Italian audiences. *Novella* perfected an editorial strategy that would appeal to the loyalty of its readership – who would keep coming back for more – a strategy that at the time was neither achieved by Italian highbrow literature (more sporadic and less affordable), nor by moviegoing (still a collective mode of consumption of often self-contained narratives). Rizzoli merged the two acts. Inspired by the use of seriality of nineteenth century novels (e.g. Charles Dickens), *Novella* employed cliff-hangers to increase loyalty to its installment novels, while it presented an unprecedentedly tight dialogue between Italian and Hollywood films, its pages, columns and fiction, and its devotees. In 1932, *Novella* was selling 150,000 copies weekly.[72]

If *Novella* was itself not immune from a didactic overtone, it was certainly less concerned with scaring away the perils of cultural contamination, than with domesticating the effects of Hollywood cinema for the pleasure of Italian audiences. *Novella* perfected an editorial strategy that would appeal to the loyalty of its readers – who would keeping coming back for more – something that at the time neither Italian highbrow literature (more sporadic and less affordable), nor cinema (still a collective mode of consumption of often self-contained narratives) would offer.

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[70] The rotogravure technique became successful in Italy in 1925, when Mondadori started using it for *Il Secolo Illustrato* (the price went from 2 lire to 50 cents), and it's immediately exploited for various declinations of popular press, sport, *varietà*, women's magazines, all united by the presence of images – illustrations, comic strips and mostly photography – and with a compelling graphic design attire, in a free play of inspiration from foreign models: "La rivoluzione consisteva [nel] poter riprodurre, grazie al principio del retino adoperato per la stampa rotocalcografica, le mezzetinte con grande fedeltà, a differenza della rotativa tipografica adibita alla stampa dei quotidiani." (The revolution meant being able to reproduce, thanks to new rotogravure technology, the different nuances with great fidelity, which was different from the rotary print of the daily newspapers.) The quote was pronounced by Arturo Tofanelli in 1959, in the occasion of a conference dedicated to *rotocalchi*, at the Vallecchi publisher headquarters. De Berti-Piazzoni, 4).

[71] See Guido Bonsaver, *Censorship and Literature in Fascist Italy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2007) and Irene Piazzoni (in *Valentino Bompiani* and in particular in the chapter "La morsa della censura") for an analysis of how the launch of a private, symbolic space of individual female consumption took place despite loud proclamations of the centralization and uniformity of fascist aesthetics, with the regime eager to nationalize and shape desires within precise discursive limits.

[72] See De Berti, *Forme e modelli*. The magazine went from selling 7,000 copies in 1919, to 150,000 in 1932.

In his keynote address to the 2008 conference *Forme e modelli del rotocalco italiano tra le due guerre*, dedicated to shapes and models of illustrated magazines in the interwar years, scholar Raffaele De Berti highlighted the audacity of *Novella*'s editorial project:[73]a multilayered composition, in which every part, from body product ads to Hollywood stars close-ups and columns, marked a paradigm shift, both for contents and graphics, with respect to existing periodicals. In what was one of the first effort to create a discourse around women's periodicals during the years of the regime, De Berti describes how *Novella* fostered a loyal readership, thanks to a repertoire of set photos and images of the stars themselves – often sold to the publisher in agreement with production companies.[74] For De Berti, *Novella*'s key to success was its potential for "fidelizzazione," that is the ability to "build brand loyalty," a strategy that revealed Rizzoli's awareness of market dynamics. This allowed for him to give life to a project made available for a responsive and fresh readership, thanks to a team of collaborators and products that would reach capillary distribution across classes and regions. Moreover, *Novella's* most crucial asset was that the magazine could be purchased, owned, and touched individually by each of its readers – while at the same time it would launch each reader within the wider net of collective film consumption across Hollywood and Italy. Thus, *Novella* is to be studied in the context of the other publications mentioned so far, as well as in its film nature. Needless to say, the mechanisms of ownership instated by the regular purchase of a magazine was deemed inappropriate by the regime, and much more aligned a dominant model advanced by US commercial culture, based, as explained by Victoria de Grazia, on the "predominance of individual acquisitiveness over collective entitlement," which "defined the measure of the good society as private well being achieved through consumer spending."[75]

Together with the intuition of consumer spending (thanks to the mechanism of seriality that will become clearer in the course of this chapter), one of Rizzoli's decisive intuitions was, not by chance, the necessity to merge publishing and cinema. One of Rizzoli's collaborators and screenwriters, Ettore Margadonna, claims that Rizzoli's acquaintance with producers of the major German film company UFA provided him with an early example of corporate brands bridging print and film, and prepared the ground for a similar operation in Italy. During the years of their collaboration, after traveling to Germany for business, Margadonna recalls sharing some insights from the UFA headquarter with Rizzoli: "Guardi che il più grande berlinese, che è anche un comproprietario dell'UFA, è proprietario dei più diffusi rotocalchi; in altre parole lancia i film grazie ai suoi giornali: produce film e pubblica le storie e le fotografie dei film sui suoi giornali" (Look, the greatest of all Berliners, who is also a co-owner of UFA, is the owner of the most widespread illustrated magazines; in other words, he launches his films thanks to his magazines: he produces the films and he publishes their stories and photos on his magazines). According to Margadonna, Rizzoli's empire was born the day he uttered the promise: "farò dei film," (I'll make movies) thus laying down the foundations for his film production company "Novella Film." The first feature made by Novella Film was *La signora di tutti* (Everyone's Woman) (1934),[76] the adaptation of an installment novel that author Salvator Gotta had published in *Novella,* directed by Max Ophüls and starring Isa Miranda as the protagonist. Throughout the years, Rizzoli would establish himself as a successful participant of the film industry, creating the distribution company Cineriz[77] (which would distribute, among others, Federico Fellini's *Otto e mezzo* (1960). Bringing film and paper together, Rizzoli sparked what I have called the "circle of referentiality" in which images on film and paper continuously echo each other. *La signora di tutti*

[73] Interview with Raffaele de Berti, November 3rd 2016, Milan.
[74] In 2011 the RCS media group organized an exhibition called *Lei e le altre. Moda e stili nelle riviste RCS dal 1930 ad oggi*, dedicated to the magazines: http://www.leiweb.it/speciali/leielealtre/
[75] De Grazia, *Sex of Things*, 5.
[76] The complete story of *Everyone's Woman* is told in the coda of this dissertation.
[77] Forgacs and Gundle, 99.

(1934),"un miserabile racconto che Salvator Gotta aveva scritto per *Novella*. Casualmente *Novella*, proprio per l'espansione naturale dei rotocalchi, era passato da 90 mila a 100.000 copie; Rizzoli fa coniare una medaglia d'oro…" (a cheap short story written by Salvator Gotta for Novella. By chance, *Novella*, due to the natural expansion of the illustrated magazine, had gone from selling 90 thousand to 100 thousand copies. Rizzoli had just printed a golden coin…).[78]Working closely with film meant that Rizzoli made the best of the rotogravure technique to employ images. Namely, the making of *La signora di tutti* attests to both Rizzoli's ability and luck. Despite the widespread intuition that the combination of the rotogravure technique would optimize the profits of the print industry starting in the early 20s, it was in Rizzoli's hands that prices dropped, while an "orientamento grafico modernista," (modernist graphic position) and pages structured as a "montaggio visivo" (visual montage) captured the attention of readers, this time interpellated as "spettatori cinematografici" (cinematographic spectators) proposing a whole new entrepreneurial model for the existing Italian scene. That is to say that *Novella* would include set photos or stills, determining, as Raffaele De Berti notes, a change in spectatorship:

> Più che a decifrare le parole, il lettore è invitato a guardare il foglio come uno spettatore cinematografico: il suo sguardo è calamitato da immagini inserite all'interno dei testi scritti, spesso posizionati senza alcuna correlazione con essi […]. Le fotografie – che non sono semplici illustrazioni del testo ma hanno spesso un significato autonomo – montate in serie vanno a formare un racconto per immagini: il nuovo periodico a rotocalco ha chiaramente uno stretto vincolo con l'abitudine del lettore ad essere anche spettatore cinematografico, a vedere più che a leggere.
> (More so than to decipher the word, the reader is invited to look at the sheet of paper as a cinematographic spectator: her gaze is magnetized by images inserted in the middle of the written text, often positioned with no correlation to it…. Photos – which are not simple illustrations for the text but often have an autonomous significance – assembled in a series form a story told through images: the new illustrated periodicals clearly have a strict link with the reader's habit to also be a cinematographic spectator, more than with reading habits.)[79]

The reader's gaze is "magnetized" (calamitato) by the images, De Berti states, which are often placed with no correlation with the texts themselves (figure 7): they bear an autonomous significance and they tell a parallel story. This treatment of the page hinges on the interpellation of the reader as a moviegoer – hence the same strategies are applied to "guide" the eye in an almost surrealist, aleatory perception, often, as in the example below, almost promiscuous - in ways that, on one hand align it with the cinematic moving image, and at the same time differ from it in the light of the modalities of consumption. The text "wraparound" in this image draws attention to the bold, dynamic-graphic interplay of text and images literally wrapping around Jean Harlow's arms, defining the borders of the tennis racquet, and creating a sense of mobility to the page that (while it recalls it) goes beyond the mere act of scanning the page from left to right when reading.

Many scholars have understood illustrated magazines in the light of their dynamic interplay of words and images, that is to say, their intermediality. At the inception of the new product, in 1927, Siegfried Kracauer had addressed the phenomenal growth of illustrated magazines in his essay

[78] Giorgio Tinazzi, *Il cinema italiano dal fascismo all'antifascismo,* p. 77. Conference held in Rome between February 15 and March 18 of 1964.
[79] De Berti-Piazzoni, 9.

"Photography." Kracauer described them as the cultural product in which "one finds assembled everything from the film diva to whatever is within reach of the camera and the audience."[80] This pointed to the pervasiveness of visual stimuli that the rising medium enabled, postulating a parallel between "watching" and "reading" images – on film or on paper, a symptom of the fact that, he argued, "the world itself has taken on a photographic face."[81]


Figure 7: A "puntata" (*installment*) from Salvator Gotta's *L'angelo ferito*, with text-wrap around images of "Jean Harlow a casa sua" (Jean Harlow at home) – from *Novella*, 26 January 1936, n.4.

A few years later, Walter Benjamin would pick up Karacauer's analysis posing the question of "*what* of the sound film had been then latent in photography"[82] – thus enabling the sense of a necessary lineage tying together different media,[83] and highlighting the relationship between still and moving

[80] See in particular Siegfried Kracauer's chapters "Photography," "Film 1928,""The Cult of Distraction" and "The Little Shop Girls Go to The Movies," for a critical analysis of the family resemblance between films and illustrated magazines, in Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995), 57.

[81] Ibid., 59.

[82] Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*. Transl. by Harry Zohn. New York: Random House, 2007, 217-252. Along this line, Dorfles writes: "senza il precedente avvento della fotografia, neppure le altre forme di fissazione e di trasmissione delle immagini si sarebbero potute conquistare" in *Il feticcio quotidiano* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1989), 123. On the same topic, Laura Mulvey underlines the contrast between moving and still images: "The reality recorded by the photograph relates exclusively to its moments of registration; that is, it represents a moment extracted from the continuity of historical time. However historical the moving image might be, it is bound into an order of continuity and pattern… The still photograph represents an unattached instant, unequivocally grounded in its indexical relation to the moment of registration. The moving image… cannot escape from duration." See Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (Reaktion Books: London, 2006), 4.

[83] Kracauer, "Why France Liked," 34. Kracauer expanded on this idea of a lineage of media, when he expresses his criticism vis-à-vis French cinema: "While the story they told was sometimes touching and of human interest, their methods of narration changed nothing of the normal image of the world," and he proceeds to observe that French films of those years "contained nothing but atmosphere"

images exploited by the magazines. In another formulation, Gillo Dorfles reformulated the notion of intermediality as a "new code," explaining how the use of different media would dictate for both its authors and consumers a "traslazione socio-cronologica" (operate a socio-chronological translation):

> It is a fact that the mentality and also the mechanics instituted by mass media has affected the writer and, indirectly, the reader. One writes keeping in mind how important certain fixed aspects taught to us by the media are: the simultaneity of events, the cinematographic flashbacks, repetition, discontinuity… and this implies, obviously, also a transformation of textuality.[84]

Kracauer, Dorfles and De Berti's insist, from different angles, on the "lettore-spettatore" (reader-spectator). Moreover, the formulation of these insights at such different times during the twentieth century, shed light on *Novella*'s longevity and adaptability: from 1919 to 1927 as a black and white basic literary digest; an illustrated weekly magazine until 1944; and, after a brief interruption due to the war and the bombardments of the Milanese via Carlo Erba headquarter, renamed *Novella 2000* in 1967, it is still running. *Novella*'s editorial team learned ways to interpellate the reader, never limiting the act of reading to its pages, but proposing a wider approach to consuming movies, bridging paper and film, striking generations of lettori-spettatori. As mentioned, an engine for this long-lasting brand loyalty was the use of seriality, as the repetition of certain known patterns, and as the establishment of a series of elements, deeply intertwined at the various levels of existence of the magazine: consumption, production, and its very aesthetics.

When considering Rizzoli's use of seriality (which I am understanding as connected to the concept of "intermediality"), it is useful to consider its relational quality. At a narrative level, in installment novels, for instance, seriality was one attribute of an ongoing story in which the familiarity with authors, characters, forms and situations – in a word, repetition – was kept alive and evolved through newness and variation – i.e. difference.[85] In the long history of *Novella*, textual (fiction, novels, short stories) and extratextual (columns, ads, fascist propaganda) elements created a *net*. These elements crossed and overlapped, materially, in the frame-page of the magazines, blurring the borders of the two realms. This net operated as a familiar formula, a grid, which content varied week by week.[86] Ultimately, it is crucial to understand, when studying *Novella*, how its particular use of seriality – which constructed a multilayered, serial system from each of its different elements – enabled the formation of a product *consumed* across media – intermediality – and discursively *produced* by what I propose to call a circle of referentiality across materials. Hence, in *Novella*, while seriality emerged at the time in its aesthetic and affective form, to a contemporary reader it reveals a fundamental "structure of feeling," part of the "dominant social character" [87] of the historical period under investigation –

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and "neglected the material details – all those objects and gestures that are so important on the screen, and that only the camera is able to detect and endow with significance

[84] Dorfles, *Il feticcio quotidiano,* 74. Translation mine: è un dato di fatto che la mentalità e anche la 'meccanica' instaurata dai mass media hanno contagiato lo scrittore e di rimbalzo il lettore. Si scrive già tenendo conto di quanta importanza abbiano certe costanti che i mass media ci hanno insegnato a utilizzare e ci hanno 'imposto': la simultaneità degli eventi, i flashback di tipo cinematografico, la ripetitività, la discontinuità…e questo comporta, ovviamente, anche una trasformazione della testualità.

[85] Deleuze and Guattari speak of the category of "repetition for itself," that is, repetition that is freed from being repetition of an original self-identical thing so that it can be the repetition of difference, in chapter 2 of Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[86] To a certain extent, the magazine itself was an advertisement for the film, "sostiene il consumo di film diffondendo immagini e notizie sui divi. Nello stesso tempo biografie, aneddoti, anticipazioni sul mondo del cinema fanno sì che aumentino le vendite dei rotocalchi, grazie al pubblico che affolla le sale e trova in quelle pagine la continuazione ideale di quanto ha visto sugli schermi" (See De Berti-Piazzoni, 9)

[87] See Raymond Williams, "The Analysis of Culture," in *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), 80, where the author insists on the idea that the "structure of feeling" is the fruit of the interaction among different social characters. This is evident in the dominant productive group, and that it has to deal not only with public ideals, but also with their omissions and consequences. I'm

undergirding the creation of a brand such as Rizzoli's, and at the same time informing the fascist aesthetic and imaginary.

If any use of seriality can be seen at the time of the fascist regime as ideological, as seriality was a crucial aesthetic component to the same imagery of the regime – its affective, relational qualities, so important in the case of *Novella*, would wane to the extent that its use served an idea of order and repetition informed by the fascist regime aesthetics. In the case of *Novella,* however, seriality became a catalyst for innovation (and problematic contents). This emerges especially when *Novella* is compared to periodicals[88] considered to be more aligned with the fascist regime, such as its official publications. It is crucial to understand where *Novella* stood within the bigger picture of its time, its sister and rival publication, and the sociopolitical backdrop of fascist Italy.


Figure 8: *Novella*'s covers portraying Katherine Hepburn (January 12th 1936), Bette Davis (March 1st 1936), Barbara Stanwyck (April 19th, 1936). Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016)

## The body and face of *Novella*

*Novella* was a multilayered product in which the serial elements of the magazine – the cover and pages, the faces and the bodies – register and reinstate the seriality of their transmission and consumption. At once, the cover framed the content of the magazine, and announced its novelty. Furthermore, the cover, quite literally in the case of *Novella*, was the face (usually of a Hollywood actress), the paratextual element through which the reader made eye contact with the magazine, week after week. When looked at in succession, the issues are tied together horizontally – cover after cover: the close-up of a face (sometimes two of them), separated from the body, a paratextual anticipation of the fragmentation (of installments, and images) to be found inside the magazine. The cover is thus a metonymic fragment of the whole: the face for the body. The face close-up on the cover of *Novella*, stood out as the unique (sometimes even exotic) and threatening "individuality" described by Falasca-Zamponi, going against

interested in the idea of a "dominant productive group," and how Williams could be used more in depth to understand the fact that popular products like magazines have been overlooked when bringing to the surface the main historiographical staples of the 1930s.

[88] In particular *Film. Corriere dei cinematografi*, founded in 1914 in Naples, and moved to Rome, and *Kines*, published in Rome since 1919. See the digital library of the Rome Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia's library, Luigi Chiarini, for more: http://www.fondazionecsc.it/bib_biblio_digitale_detail.jsp?area=32&ID_LINK=148&id_context=2207

the universal and generic, featureless "fascistized" female body captured in scenes of collective and domestic life (figures 4a, 4b and 4c) in *La donna fascista*.

*Novella*'s covers appeared quite frequently in Italian films from the time. In Mario Camerini's film *Gli uomini, che mascalzoni*…(What Scoundrels, Men Are!) (1932), Mariuccia is a young woman who lives in Milan with her father. In an early scene, she leaves her house to go to her retail job at a perfume shop. Before taking the train, she stops by the newsstand (Figure 9a). The newsstand is covered in magazines, among them is *Novella*. She buys *Piccola* and she reads it on the tramway (Figure 9b) while a young man, played by Vittorio de Sica, is chasing her train on his bike (9c). The scene is edited by cutting between the woman reading and glancing at the boy, and the man on his bike, seen from inside the tramway. When Camerini's protagonist reads, the face on the cover of *Piccola*, which has the same layout of *Novella* as its sister publication also by Rizzoli, is superimposed on hers. Camerini powerfully captures the superimposition of the single reader – across classes and age groups – and the mass-product.[89] The scene captures a moment of urban life which has a transgressive connotation, as Mariuccia embodies – as Barbara Spackman writes of Camerini's women protagonists – an "urban consumer,"[90] who is freely enjoying the attractions of urban life, including the images offered by Rizzoli's illustrated magazines, and its Hollywood imagery. Similarly, in a scene from Alessandro Blasetti's *Nessuno torna indietro* (1943) – set in a boarding school where a group of young women tries to attain freedom and independence within the rigid grid of a Catholic education – one of the girls, during a break from school, takes a train to go see her family in the countryside, and in an interstitial moment of freedom between the rigid institutions of school and family reads *Novella*. These two scenes, as well as the various cinematic instances in which a newsstand appears in Italian films (notably in Camerini's *Il signor Max - Mister Max*, 1937), register the power of the magazine to act as the catalyst for class subversion, and for the rules of conduct that the regime imagined for each of the women: the act of reading, purchasing and owning the magazine functions as a marker that unites readers across class,[91] while it carries an ideological stance against, or underneath the control of, the fascist regime. In Marcia Landy's words, Camerini works were concerned with the disruption of familial and class solidarity by the abuses of power, the malevolence of the upper classes against a consistently sympathetic view of the peasants and workers, so the question is how does Novella shake this system up?[92]

[89] See Noa Steimatsky, *The Face on Film* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016). *Novella*'s "whiteness" was remarkable, being Anna May Wong, one of the first Asian American movie stars, the only non-white star portrayed on the covers of *Novella* (as far as archival research has revealed).

[90] Spackman, "Shopping for Autarchy," 276. Women were interpellated by the regime as "rural mothers," hence the subversive stance of Camerini's characters, Mariuccia in *What Scoundrels Men Are!* (1932), and Lauretta in *Department Stores* (1939).

[91] See Bordieu, *Distinction*

[92] Landy, *Fascism in Film*, 272.

Figures 9a, 9b, 9c. The newsstand as a central site to the urban life of a young, fairly independent woman getting her fare of images from Hollywood, while playfully avoiding her suitor.

The inside of the magazine, its body, responded vertically to the horizontal level of seriality activated by the covers, by organizing different elements that at once advanced the weekly succession and familiarity of the issues as serial, and differentiated them (figure 10). This vertical level of seriality appeared to the reader in the dense layout of *Novella*'s pages, as seen in figure 7. As part of a diverse range of serial pieces, each component of the magazine was intertwined with the other. Moreover, in the photographs that accompanied literature installments, bodies expressed what the faces on the covers could only partially do: physical contact, sexuality, and playfulness. This sensorial charge was achieved by using stills and set photos from Hollywood movies. Departing from the trite politicized

jargon of *La donna fascista*, and, most importantly from its chaste and austere depiction of bodies, Rizzoli coined a *new* language, one that readers shared and recognized in their everyday lives: a vernacular apt for the expression – that is, verbal and visual – of the ever-arising new needs taking form in the bubbling waters of the culture industry. Contrary to *La donna fascista*, *Novella* proposed to embrace time as *change* – one of the basic conditions of serial narratives. It simultaneously offered its readers shelter from the very same threat of the passage of time: ageing, gaining weight, falling out of love, cheating on one's partner. Both a remedy and a companion to change, advertisement played a crucial role in the involvement of the reader within the vertical layers of the magazine.


Figure 10 – A page from *Novella* (n.3, 19 January 1936)

Usually wrapping around the text of articles and columns (figures 7 and 10), advertisements were a constant presence in *Novella*'s pages. Ads participated in the serial circuit, together with the abovementioned textual and extratextual components. It is in fact once the ads enter the circuit that way in which the reader is interpellated by the magazine – that is, an interpellation directed at an equally multifold readership – becomes clear. Ads for products for menstrual cramps targeted "giovinette abbattute nel periodo dello sviluppo" (young girls exhausted by puberty), alongside the digestive Magnesia Bisurata – which adopted the punch line "la cucina di vostra moglie non ne ha colpa" (your wife's cooking is not to blame). Other ads varied their tone from apodictic slogans "quello che ogni ragazza deve sapere" (what every girl should know), to contradictory messages about weight, ranging from "ingrassare è dannoso alla salute" (gaining weight is damaging to your health), to Tonol, a product "stimolante per la nutrizione. Rapido e potentissimo rimedio per ingrassare" (stimulating for nutrition. Quick and super powerful remedy to gain weight). Ads dictated every reader's needs, while projecting the illusion of freedom to choose and shape one's life and bodily practices. Gillo Dorfles has described this mechanism of ads as the imposition of choices as "condizionamento ideologico ed estetico" (ideological and esthetic conditioning):

> Advertisement becomes necessary as soon as the principle of serial reproduction of the industrial object, and the transformation of an artisanal market into an industrialized and monopolistic one, come into play. The introduction of advertisement based on photography (typographic, offset and in rotogravure) had to bring with itself a substantial transformation of the newspaper, the weekly periodical, and the magazine, all of which, most of the time, ended up being conditioned by the presence of advertisement pages, or lack thereof.[93]

According to Dorfles' formulation, *Novella* embodied the transformation "into an industrialized and monopolistic" market, and indeed ads transform the magazine and condition the placement of all surrounding elements. Magazines and their graphic were conditioned by ads to the extent that, Dorfles states, they became *integral* to the very reproducibility of these publications, after the advent of the rotogravure technique. In the case of *Novella*, it can be argued that ads – of body products, films, and other Rizzoli publications – affected modes of reading, viewing, and handling the magazine. In Rizzoli's strategy, ads had to do with owning and touching just as much as they encouraged the purchase of external products.

Film scholar Laura Mulvey wrote about how the "panoply of still images that could supplement the movie itself" were elemental to the genesis of the "possessive spectator," one who was "fetishistically absorbed by the image of the human body,"[94]that is, by the human body type emanating from the ads (healthy and fit), as well as the bodies of the movie stars which photographs filled the magazine. "All these secondary images," Mulvey argues, "are designed to give the film fan the illusion of possession, making a bridge between the irretrievable spectacle and the individual's imagination."[95] The illusion of ownership thus concerned the beauty products advertised, whose

[93] Dorfles, *Il feticcio,* 124-125. Dorfles sees the ads pages as a "nerbo fisico" (*physical nerve*) of the magazine and that they affect heavily the content of the print. There is a mechanism of osmosis and collaboration between the different levels (esthetic, ethic, political). Translation from to English mine. Original text: "La pubblicità diventa necessaria non appena si giunge al principio della riproduzione di serie dell'oggetto industriale e alla trasformazione di un mercato ancora artigianale in uno industrializzato e monopolistico […]. L'introduzione della pubblicità basata sulla fotografia e sulla riproduzione (tipografica, offset e a rotocalco) delle immagini pubblicitarie doveva portare con sé una trasformazione sostanziale anche del giornale, del settimanale, della rivista, i quali, il più delle volte, finiscono con l'essere condizionati dalla presenza o meno delle pagine pubblicitarie.

[94] Mulvey, *Death 24 x*, 11.

[95] Ibid., 161.

implicit promise was to make the reader live up to the beauty standards of the movies stars, often, not by chance, from Hollywood. The implicit agenda of a triangular system of reader/advertised product/film altered reading practices (certainly with respect to *La donna fascista*). It insinuated into the Italian editorial system a display of bodies and contents that allowed for the coexistence of contrasting ideological moves (after all, Rizzoli was only mildly affected in his editorial choices by fascist censorship up to 1936). This is evident when we compare the profile of *Novella* with figures 4a and 4b from *La donna fascista* which assume a female subject whose individual volition is shadowed by the priority of her loyalty to her duties and preferences as a citizen. Hence, the result of advertisement, photography, film, and other fictional elements in *Novella*, called into question the "ideological unity" of fascism, revealed, in Spackman's words by "the different ways in which different and specific interpellations [were] related to one another."[96]

Next to the ads were the columns. Among the most popular and lasting columns was the "Lettere a Mura" (letters to Mura) a love and life advice column hosted by Mura - pseudonym of Maria Assunta Giulia Volpi Nannipieri, a historic collaborator of the magazine. In Figure 9, the "Lettere a Mura" (in which we only see Mura's responses to her readers, rather than their letters) occupy the central vertical section of the page, from top to bottom, surrounded on both sides by ads of body products - specifically "Italian products." Mura gave advice on friendship and romance, as well as practical life guidance ("substitute chamomile for coffee," "take your makeup off at night and cleanse your face with eau de cologne") addressing her readers with their pen-names such as "Occhi verdi 19" (Green eyes 19), "Vittima di cupido" (Cupid's victim), "Anima triste 20enne" (Sad soul in her 20s), "Petit oiseau," and "Butterfly azzurra" (blue butterfly). Mura was a wise friend, her advice supported by the wide array of choice of body products advertised right next to her columns. In 1936, Mura would be at the center of a scandal that attested to the ambiguous relationship between *Novella* and the regime: the factors that made *Novella* popular (a team of collaborators and authors who knew how to bring readers back every week) ended up compromising its standing vis à vis the regime. The episode sparked the attention of fascist authorities, marking the beginning of *Novella*'s negotiation with censorship.

### *Novella* and Censorship: The Case of *Sambadù*

Besides her "posta del cuore," Mura was a protagonist of *Novella*'s life for her novel *Sambadù amore negro*. *Sambadù* was published as the tenth issue of the collection "I romanzi di *Novella*,"[97] sold in attachment to the magazine, and gathering in one volume the most successful installment novels. The novel created a scandal, which in turn reflected deeply on the story of the magazine: *Sambadù* was a novel so desecrating in its content (an interracial affair) and graphic rendition (images of the two lovers embracing) that Mussolini himself vetoed it. A shorter version of the novel had been published with the title *Niominkas amore negro* in the Milan based fashion magazine *Lidel* in 1930 (figure 11). In the first edition, the story ended with the marriage between Sambadù, a black man, and a young Italian widow. Four years later Rizzoli republished the novel as a paperback supplement to *Novella*. On the cover stood the protagonist Sambadù in elegant Western clothes and holding an enraptured white woman in his arms (figure 11). In this longer version, Silvia and Sambadù get married and have a mixed race baby, but "both protagonists discover their ultimate incompatibility. Sambadù decides that, despite his knowledge of European culture, the call of his tribal roots is still too strong and […] he goes back

[96] Spackman, p. x.

[97] "I romanzi di *Novella*" was a collection of novels sold in attachment to the magazine between 1932 and 1942. *Sambadù* was the tenth novel published in the collection. The "fascicoli" (booklets) gathered the installments of the most successful novels published either in *Novella*, or in other publications of Rizzoli's, such as *Piccola*. Through archival research in at the Emeroteca in Milan, I have counted 68 "romanzi."

to live in the wilderness of 'Dark Africa'."[98] In the novel, Silvia is horrified by the idea that her child will "carry the savage germs of a tribe of negroes."[99] The moral of the novel is thus in the end aligned with widespread white racist attitudes. In the last illustration appearing in the novel, the white woman is depicted as morally stronger, while she holds the baby, and superior to the black man, who is curled up in despair (figure 11). At a time in which Italy was attempting to expand its imperial territories, this was just enough to become a state affair.

Mussolini ordered the head of the police, Bocchini, to seize all copies of Mura's novel. Just a few days later, they set definitive procedures that from that day onward all publishers had to follow, requiring that they submit three copies of each publication to the local prefecture.[100] Mussolini's notice imposed a sort of pre-publication censorship on the publishing world, the so-called "censura preventiva." Thus "the Mura case acted as a catalyst that accelerated and gave an irreversible momentum to his policies."[101] The urgency with which this preventive measure was put together, without being turned into a full-fledged law until 1939 reveals the extent to which many of Mussolini's policies "appeared to emerge from a relatively inconsequential event."[102] In any case, that *Sambadù* had slipped through the censorship's net highlights the regime's lack of control over periodicals.

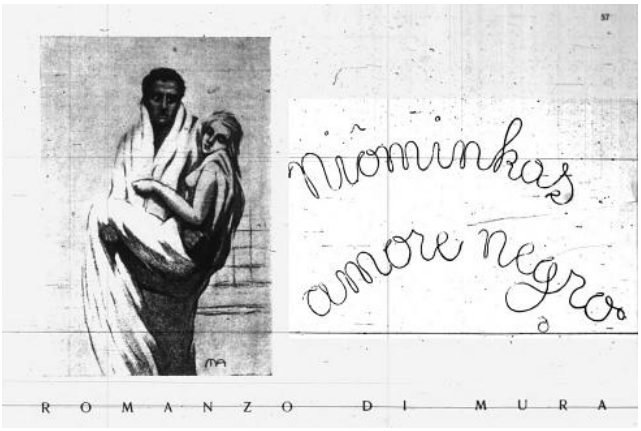



Figure 11: The evolution of *Sambadù*'s story.

[98] Bonsaver, *Censorship and Literature*, p. 99.
[99] Mura, *Sambadù amore negro* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1934), 20 (my translation).
[100] Mussolini ordered in a circular that publishers submit three copies of each publication to the local prefecture, which would keep one and forward the other two to Rome, one to the General Directorate of Public Security, and the other to the Press Office.
[101] Bonsaver, 103.
[102] Ibid., 102.

**Censorship, Propaganda, and Movie Stars**

If throughout the 1920s Hollywood was the land of the free compared to fascist Italy, with the establishment of the Production Code in 1930, and its enforcement in 1934, the industry's censors, led by William Hays and Joseph Breen and with the aid of the Catholic intelligentsia, took over the regulation of Hollywood's production and screenings. Just two years before the *Sambadù* scandal, and one year after the institution in Italy of the MinCulPop, as a spin-off of the Press Office of the Head of Government, or Minister of Press and Propaganda, Hollywood cinema was shaken at its foundation by the enforcement of the Hays Code, or Production Code. As Gardner recalls in *The Censorship Papers*, up to that point, "the artists and fast-buck experts who comprised the filmmaking community have always known that the right button to push to bring out the multitudes was marked 'sex,' and so, as the economy sank like a stone into depression, the movies rode a rising tide of sex and sensation".[103] The regulation had started out under the sign of the "compensating value" rule, in the light of which the final minutes of the film had to redeem the rest of the film's possible sexual scenes – "men could sin, so long as the sinner paid for his sinful ways. Evil must be punished. Give the moviegoer eighty minutes of delicious vice and in the last minutes deplore it."[104] Within the code pertaining classified sexual acts, on a scale of forbidden acts, interracial love figured as classified halfway along the chart. In *The Censorship Papers*, Gardner explains the process that would take place: "After reviewing a screenplay for a forthcoming film – which they always referred to as a 'proposed' film to gently imply that its fate was still in doubt – Breen would cite the code as holy writ. In its name ministers would be turned into laymen, fade-outs would be turned into dissolves, lines of dialogue would disappear, scenes would be moved from bedrooms to patios, prostitutes would be turned into dancers – all in the name of adherence to the code."[105]

The questions of how this new pattern may have affected Italian films, is answered in part through the magazines. If it's true that the code was posing new limitations to the imaginative possibilities of the industry, it is compelling to look at how, if at all, fascist censorship and the Code had similar outcomes, and how they overlapped, both locally and transnationally. Moreover, the relationship between Italy and Hollywood often played out at the level of intertextual references in the films and in the magazines (that is, Italian films emulating Hollywood). Drawing from Hollywood's repertoire of images, Italian films – and all the objects that surrounded them – were able to negotiate the existence of a fictional, less constricting realm in which to portray taboos such as divorce and extramarital affairs. The forbidden, the sensual and the extravagant were embodied and contained by the figure of the *star*.

In Italy, censorship was enforced to discourage magazines like *Novella* from publishing photos of Greta Garbo. Communications (veline) were sent in the form of short letters to editors, and would read as follows: "23.2.1933: è stato raccomandato ai giornali di non dedicare spazio all'industria cinematografica americana, ma a quella italiana," (it has been recommended that newspapers not pay attention to the American film industry, but rather to the Italian film industry), or "25.2.1938: non esagerare con Greta Garbo," ("do not overdo it with Greta Garbo").[106] Yet, in the same years, *Novella* would publish Garbo on its overs more than once (figure 12). In parallel, minor magazines such as *Al*

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[103] Gerald C. Gardner, *The Censorship Papers: Movie Censorship Letters from the Hays Office, 1934 to 1968* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1988), xvi.
[104] Ibid., p. xviii.
[105] Gardner, xx.
[106] See Ottaviani, Giancarlo. *Le veline di Mussolini. Le espressioni occhi bellissimi sono eccessive e bisogna evitarle.* (Rome: Stampa Alternativa, 2008), 19. In the same spirit, much attention was dedicated to the lexical choices of newspapers. The regime made sure that Italian words would prevail. As for fashion, the regime tried to favor the Italian textile industry and especially a style that would conform to the fascist woman described above. More than an ideological decision, scholars stress, this was also a commercial, economic strategy.

*cinema*[107] foregrounded – and played with – the fine line between warning and risk versus its elements of fascination, while at same time adopting a slightly patronizing tone – "Che cos'è il richiamo del sesso?" (What is sex appeal?), next to stories about the glamorous lives of Hollywood stars like Greta Garbo and Rodolfo Valentino.[108] So, if on one hand it is true that the body and the life of the star *contained* outrageous tendencies, on the other hand it is compelling to see how the regime started dialoguing with the magazines in order to break into the page-frame, and to disperse these forbidden images.


Figure 12: Garbo on the covers of *Novella*, 19 February 1933 and 25 September 1938.

A *velina* of July 17th, 1939 by Mussolini ordered: "Non pubblicare fotografie e disegni di donne raffigurate con la cosiddetta 'vita di vespa.' Disegni e fotografie debbono rappresentare donne floride e sane." (Do not publish photos and drawings of women portrayed with the so-called 'wasp waist.' Drawings and photos must portray prosperous and healthy women).[109] Starting in 1941, the regime extended its control to publications regarding Hollywood stars, with the prohibition "di pubblicare fotografie, articoli e notizie riguardanti i seguenti attori stranieri: Charlie Chaplin, Eric von Stroheim, Bette Davis, Douglas Fairbanks jr.,[110] Mirna Loy, Fred Astaire e la casa cinematografica americana

[107] A very interesting magazine published in Turin in 8-page format. It was a very opinionated publication about Hollywood fashion and habits, but also a sort of direct thread with Paramount and Fox.

[108] James Harvey wrote on the sexualized charge and 'perfect under every angle' appearance. See *Watching Them Be. Star Presence on Screen from Garbo to Balthazar* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), and *Romantic Comedy* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1987).

[109] Ottaviani, 11.

[110] And yet it is clear that these stars are still a topic of discussion. See correspondence between Doletti and Amerigo Gomez on timely articles commemorating the death of Fairbanks in December 1939: "I quotidiani si sono talmente scatenati sull'argomento, che non c'è proprio da sperare di far niente di nuovo" (Daily newspapers are so into the topic that there's nothing more we can hope to say about it) (17 December 1939. Material from Fondo Doletti).

Metro Goldwyn Mayer" (of publishing photos, articles and news regarding the following foreign actors [… ] and the American production company MGM).[111]

In 1936, the magazine started inserting messages of fascist propaganda and censorship (figure 13): usually separated from the magazine's text and images in a rectangular box, these messages would admonish women about the purity of their habits – "Italian women follow Italian fashion" – and remind them of their duties – "Is there anyone who still hasn't turned in her gold to the *patria*?"



Figure 13: censorship inserted in *Novella* (1936), directly in the middle of fictional stories and installment novels.

[111] See Ottaviani, p. 12. Other directives read: "Gli anglo-americani vanno definiti "nemici" e non "alleati," (Anglo-Americans must be defined 'enemies' and not 'allies..' (26 April 1943). Velina from March 1sr, 1941.


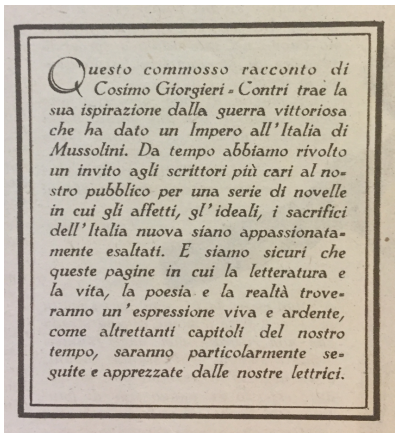


Figure 14a and 14b: *Novella*, April 16 1938 – around this period the prewar attitude changes, and the regime enters the space of the magazine.

Included within the complex vertical layering of the pages, these boxes anticipated the graphic solution soon to be adopted, in 1938, as wartime approached – accompanied by a series of even more radical changes that will be central to the Chapter 2. At that point, instructions on nutrition ("mothers, feed sugar to your children") (figure 14a), and new standards for the magazine: "gli affetti, gli ideali, i sacrifici dell'Italia nuova" (affects, ideals and sacrifices of the new Italy) (figure 14b) would be paired with light-hearted news from Hollywood and the film industry. Once the regime gained access to the magazine, Rizzoli's strategy of compromise emerged in all its flexibility and brilliance – allowing for the right amount of novelty and freshness, as well as pointing in the direction wished for by the regime, interpellating readers as "mamme" (14a) and citizens living up to "ideali" and "sacrifici" (14b). This type of admonishment became more recurrent as the war gained visual and discursive attention. As a consequence, *Novella* underwent a number of changes, in both graphic and mood: the war increased the magazine's control over representations of bodies and social practices.[112] In the interwar years in Italy, the gendered discourse of popular culture resonated as especially strong in disquisitions about "Americanization" and its dangers, as illustrated by the coexistence of the Hollywood imagery and fascist censorship. What American culture did to Italian readers through the pages of the magazine was to challenge the status quo division between elite and popular products. It also pushed against the boundaries of national cinema, merging ideas of local and national, with the foreign and cosmopolitan. Not least, Americanized leisure threatened to "transform" Italian girls, contaminating the model advanced by *La donna fascista* with American images of sexualized and independent female models. opening up to new past-times and the sense of urban modernity to which Mario Camerini's films lend representation:

> By the late 1930s, Italy's five biggest cities all had their own Rinascente, the Italian equivalent of Paris's tasteful Galeries Lafayette, and at least forty major towns had one of the plainer grandi magazzini belonging to the Standa or Upim chains. Young women might plan to stop by a dance hall to meet up with male friends, attracted by fashionably "foreignophile" names – Golden Gate, blue-room, Pincio Dancing bar.[113]

[112] In the second chapter I will think of the body of the soldier as "serialized," specially in the context of postwar cinema.
[113] De Grazia, *How Fascism*, 203

In all, the concept of the "serialized" woman of fascist Italy lent itself to both the imagery of the regime (with a strict model repeating itself and regulating consumption as well as time management for women and families) and that of the serial repetition, in much more layered terms, found within the magazines and drawing from American commercial culture. While embodying the multiple and contradictory interpellation of fascism, this duality contained the drive for emulation of American aesthetics, soon to merge with the discursive complexity of its presence within postwar Italy and neorealism.

## CHAPTER TWO

### American Goods and the Promise of Reeducation in Alberto Lattuada's *Without Pity* (1948) and Italian Postwar Cinema

> How might neorealism reinhabit modernity,
> revise it without effacing its achievements,
> harness its energies for remaking
> a landscape-image, for remaking cinema?
> (Noa Steimatsky, *Italian Locations*, xxii-xxiii)

In the final stage of World War II, the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture (MinCulPop) enforced its surveillance policy over women's magazines. Fascist censorship had hitherto granted them sparse regard, especially when compared with the rigid norms ruling over daily newspapers and satirical magazines.[114] Despite the forced shutdown of other magazines, such as Arnoldo Mondadori's *Il Milione* and *Novellissima*,[115] and Angelo Rizzoli's own *Gemma,* the Milanese publisher succeeded in keeping one of the gems of his editorial empire, *Novella,* afloat until 1944, when the magazine's publication temporarily drew to a halt. *Novella*'s winning shift in graphic and tone started from its covers. By 1941, Rizzoli's *prima pagina* came to embody the visual interdependence of the soldier in action and the movie star, incorporating their bodies in its pages. With a photo from the battle front next to the short story of the week, *Novella* disclosed Rizzoli's shrewdness in eluding censorship. By way of subjecting his prints to a drastic metamorphosis in tone, he maintained an esthetic and serial consistency, securing his audience's fidelity, and the regime's approval. Throughout the years 1941-1944, the bodily features of soldier and movie star merged on the covers, altering the serial pattern of the previous years, which limited the visual scope to that of the movie star. As seen in figure 1 the new cover ranged from close-ups of Assia Noris (May 18th, 1941) and Alida Valli (February 18th, 1942), to Red Cross volunteers (September 30th, 1942), soldiers at work (March 14th, 1943 and March 31st, 1943), and back to Greta Garbo (May 24th, 1944). This cycle gestures toward the idea that the realm of cinematic stardom was intertwined with that of the war: that is to say that Rizzoli's aesthetic consistency in including both realms was proof of their interdependence from a serial, esthetic and commercial point of view.

My first chapter argued that *Novella* was exemplary in terms of its mode of transmission of Hollywood imagery and aesthetics in fascist Italy. Throughout the 1930s *Novella* was a weekly magazine that brought together Italian writers (such as Mura, Luciana Peverelli, Giorgio Scerbanenco, and other prolific authors of installment novels) and Hollywood movie stars, captured in close-ups on the covers, as well as in full body images in the set photos and film stills inside the magazine. In the magazine, seriality worked as a narrative engine (for installment novels) and a mode of production and consumption (the print and purchase of a weekly issue). In the context of my second chapter, *Novella* calls for the application of a non-essentialist and interdisciplinary methodology for discussing the

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[114] Massimo Zannoni recalls that in January 1943, a note to the prefects of the reign imposed a 20% cut on prints. Rizzoli claimed a circulation of 497,500 copies for *Novella*, and 272,000 copies for *Annabella.* The birth of the Repubblica Sociale Italiana in Salò caused the shutting down of *Grazia*, though other women's magazines survived, including *Eva*, *Gioia*, *Piccola fata*, *Annabella* and *Novella.* Massimo Zannoni, *La stampa nella Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (Florence: Campo di Marte, 2012), 229. See also Ada Gigli Marchetti and Luisa Finocchi, *Stampa e piccola editoria tra le due guerre* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1997).

[115] David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society From Fascism to the Cold War* (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2008), 7. See their analysis of mass media and culture, with respect to the consolidation of national culture, 17. More on this in De Berti's chapter ("Figure e miti ricorrenti") in Vito Zagarrio, *Cinema fascista* (Venice: Marsilio, 2004), and in particular Zagarrio's own chapter "*Per una revisione storica del cinema fascista*," 308-309, for a description of how magazines were fostering the "American Dream" and affecting everyday habits through the diffusion of objects and consumer goods. See also De Berti, *I rotocalchi cinematografici e la casa editrice Vitagliano* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1991).

passages from fascism[116] to the war years, neorealism, and the Marshall Plan, all of which count as the socio-economic backdrop of Alberto Lattuada's high neorealism 1948 film *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity*),[117] starring Carla del Poggio and John Kitzmiller. Given that American cinema stood for Italy as a paradigm of efficiency and allure, for Italian scouts and agents, the effort "toward national rebuilding" meant discovering and forging new potential movie stars, to be trained at the Roman film school Center Sperimentale di Cinematografia – or CSC (Center for Experimental Cinematography), and launched on the international film scene, in some cases directly to Hollywood.

Correspondingly, *Novella* geared and fine-tuned its "circle of referentiality" between film and paper as the engine to produce new movie stars, and make them visible, all while reinforcing their connection to the body of the soldier, and in turn to contemporary Italian neorealist cinema. Rizzoli's flexibility in molding the magazine in accordance with the historical circumstances (the war) and to an up to date imagery (Hollywood cinema) allowed *Novella* to let in, rather than discarding, formal, esthetic, and metaphoric liaisons between the two realms of the soldier and the star. These liaisons thereby attested to the "continuity" between the 1930s and postwar neorealism,[118] bypassing the historiographical watershed of the *year zero* (1945) that implied a break from all that was past.

Archival research revealed that together with *Novella,* a few other publications of the time strived to be the platform for a Hollywood style Italian movie star's rise. Among them, was *Fotogrammi*, published in Rome between 1946 and 1948 under the direction of Ermanno Contini.[119] Throughout the 1940s, *Fotogrammi* would follow Carla Del Poggio's brief acting career, marketing her appeal to Hollywood in ways that unveil both the role of the magazine across the pre and postwar years, and the ultimate message of *Without Pity* itself, in which Del Poggio was the aspiring movie star,[120] and whose character's tragic ending in the film was in turn a grim take on the boastful rhetorical strategy of the Marshall Plan.

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116 An approach called for by James Hay, among others, in 1987, when the widespread interest in fascism was still growing among scholars in the US. See James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy. The Passing of the Rex* (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1987), 4.

117 Alberto Lattuada's relevance for neorealism's aesthetics was also attested to by the publication of his photographic pamphlet *Occhio quadrato* (Squared Eye)(Milan: Edizioni di Corrente, 1941). Noa Steimatsky wrote in *Italian Locations*: "*Occhio quadrato* located isolated figures in landscapes of refuse and ruin that prefigured neorealism's preferred locations and its itinerant beholders." See Noa Steimatsky, *Italian Locations. Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xviii. *Occhio quadrato* was mentioned by Steimatsky in her article "Elemental Housing" as an "an extraordinary photographic pamphlet," that "focused this future filmmaker's lens on the periphery of Milan, on the lacunary spaces that the war will aggravate, and where neorealism will find its location between urban modernity and the humble corners of quotidian life left out of fascist fare." See Noa Steimatsky, "Elemental Housing in the Postwar Imaginary," in *Arts and Artifacts in Movie. Technologies, Aesthetics, Communication* (Fabrizio Serra Editore: Pisa-Roma, 6, 2009), 48.

118 Scholars have explored some of the connections between pre and postwar years in terms of economics and consumption, as Emanuela Scarpellini did in *Material Nation: A Consumer's History of Modern Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011). At a cinematic level, Noa Steimatsky proposed a study of the presence of American films in Italy, "as part of the antifascist mission for the democratic remaking of Italy," in a seminar on neorealism at UC Berkeley, Spring 2015, to which this chapter owes its inspiration.

119 *Fotogrammi*, although less know when compared to other publications, documented in real time the making of neorealist films (articles on the "making of" of *Bicycle Thief*, *La terra trema*, *Il mulino del Po*) in between 1946-1948. Copies available at the archive Centro Apice in Milan.

120 American film fan magazines introduced "concorsi di bellezza" (beauty pageant) that were frequently emulated by Italian magazines, among which, in the postwar years, *Fotogrammi*. *Fotogrammi* also offered templates for writing fan letters in English to movie stars, in the column "Come si dice in inglese?" The column provided the addresses of the main production companies in Hollywood, where actors could be reached. (See for instance *Fotogrammi*, year 2, n. 25, 16 December 1947).


Figure 1: *Novella*'s transformation throughout World War II, and at the end of the war (1941-1944).
Photos from the Biblioteca Renzo Renzi archive in Bologna.

Directed by Alberto Lattuada, with a screenplay by Federico Fellini (who also co-directed the film) and Tullio Pinelli, and a musical score by Nino Rota, the film was produced by Lux Film. It debuted at the Venice film festival in August 1948 and won the little known Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists Silver Ribbon award. Overall, its critical reception was tepid[121] – earning a full page in the film news magazine Cinefestival[122] and sparse mentions in major film magazines. As a result, still today, in accounts of Italian film history, *Without Pity* has too often been dwarfed by more popular films of its time, and is significantly understudied. Indeed, many Italian and US film scholars alike seem to have rarely considered both the role of the cinema of the 1930s (disqualified as "telefoni bianchi") nor the role of Hollywood in informing and preparing the ground for neorealism (which in

[121] The film launched in France in 1949 with the title *Sans Pitié*, and in the US in 1950. https://pro.imdb.com/title/tt0040773/details
[122] Documents belong to the Fondo Mino Doletti, Biblioteca Renzo Renzi, Bologna.

and of itself prevented for a film like *Without Pity* from getting critical attention). On the contrary, a widespread understanding of neorealism was derived by André Bazin's writings,[123] which notably foregrounded the ideological posture of "the school of liberation."[124] Bazin's highly influential take crystallized the definition of neorealism as an expression of the postwar years' ethos (in which cinematic form was for him as much anti-studio, in the film he preferred, as it was antifascist) inextricable from the antifascist resistance.[125] Bazin claimed that Italian moviegoers had been so accustomed to the "white telephones" during fascism, that censorship – weighing on the quality of the films being produced – had made it impossible for them to appreciate "the moral spiritual components of everyday life" (which, on the contrary, he argued, was the fundamental mission of neorealism).[126] Thus, Bazin created a fissure between two types of spectatorship: those who had been exposed to escapist b-movies during the 1930s, and those who had shown up for the higher spiritual and ideological expression of postwar cinema – as if the two were mutually exclusive. This chapter argues that *Without Pity* (distant enough from the "white telephones") has been excluded from the cluster of canonic postwar films. Still, in the light of its hybridity, it bridged the war with the Marshall Plan, while it provided glimpses of postwar Italy. What is certain is that the film has not hitherto been deemed a film valuable and representative of the "school of liberation."[127]

As far as the historiography of neorealism goes, this chapter's exploration of *Without Pity* is attuned to the efforts made by scholars such as Marcia Landy, who spoke of the "lacuna" left by escapist cinema and turned her focus to the ways in which fascist and postwar cinema respectively managed people's desires,[128] and Christopher Wagstaff, who focused on continuity with respect to stardom and neorealism, rather than defining the latter as an ideological break from fascism.[129] In addition to Landy and Wagstaff, Bruno Reichlin in *Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture* (2001), Giuliana Minghelli in *Landscape and Memory in Postfascist Italian Film* (2014), and Noa Steimatsky in *Italian Locations* and her article "The Cinecittà Refugee Camp," have adopted landscape, locality and space[130] to map the effects of the war onto the Italian territory, shedding light on the importance of geographical specificity in *Without Pity* (shot on location, with post-synchronized sound). Lastly, two scholars from different periods have provided useful conceptual frameworks. Screenwriter and neorealism theorist Cesare Zavattini[131] proposed the notion of the "cinema of encounters," which is apt for the study of the layered connection between the two protagonists of *Without Pity* as a reflection of the wider political predicament of postwar Italy, as well as a type of cinema that encounters reality

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123 Bazin played a big role in enforcing the idea of the break, see "What is Neorealism?," in Bert Cardullo, *Andre Bazin and Italian Neorealism* (New York: Continuum, 2011): "It must have been paradoxically exhilarating for neorealist filmmakers to be able to stare unflinchingly at the tragic spectacle of a society in shambles, its values utterly shattered, after years of making nice little movies approved by the powers that were within the walls of Cinecittà," 20.

124Ibid., 31

125 Ibid., 21

126 Ibid., 25. Bazin claimed that the fact that in 1946, when Hollywood films flooded Italy again, people wanted to spend money on American movies was a proof of that overall distraction of the viewers, which taste had been spoiled by fascist era cinema.

127 Some of the main sources for understanding neorealism, such as Lino Micciché, *Il neorealismo cinematografico italiano* (Venice: Marsilio, 1975); Mario Verdone, *Il Cinema Neorealista, da Rossellini a Pasolini* (Milan: Celebes, 1977), Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986*. (1986); Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna Clara Von Henneberg, *Ascoli, A. Russell and Krystyna von Henneberg, eds. Making and Remaking Italy. The Cultivation of National Identity* (New York: Berg, 2001) exclude *Without Pity* among films that were significant for the period. Similarly, *Without Pity* is not mentioned by Bazin, and excluded by Gian Piero Brunetta's vast scholarship on neorealism: *Storia del cinema italiano dal 1945 agli anni ottanta* (Rome: Riuniti, 1982); *Il cinema Neorealista italiano. Storia economica, politica e culturale* (Bari: Laterza, 2009); *The History of Italian Cinema*. Transl. Jeremy Parzen. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

128 Marcia Landy, *Fascism in Cinema*, 6.

129 See Christopher Wagstaff. *Italian Neorealist Cinema. An Aesthetic Approach*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

130 See Steimatksy in Italian Locations: "One of its primary discourses comprised the reappropriation of Italy's landscapes - often in a minor, regionalist key, but sometimes in a major, monumental one - to serve as an anti-fascist national image," xi; see also Steimatsky's article "The Cinecittà Refugee Camp, 1944-1950." *October* 128, Spring 2009.

131 Zavattini is quoted at large in David Overbey, ed. *Springtime in Italy. A Reader on Neo-Realism* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1979).

on the spot, without studio preparation and mediation; Karl Schoonover in *Brutal Vision* (2012) contributed to the notion of a "global spectator" interpellated by neorealism, which, the scholar argued, was called upon as an active onlooker, and moved by empathy on a transnational level before the horror and ineffability left in the wake of World War II.

As a whole, this scholarship has allowed for *Without Pity* to become, in this chapter, the central kernel around which other movies have historically gained a privileged position in the canon – while overshadowing it – from Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (1945) and *Paisà* (1946), to Lattuada's own *Il bandito* (1946), the less known *Caccia tragica* (Tragic Hunt) by Giuseppe De Santis (1947), and finally minor titles like *Tombolo Paradiso Nero* (1947) by Giorgio Ferroni, and *Umanità* (1946) by Jack Salvatori.[132] Several among these films will be referred to in the course of this chapter, coming to terms with the question of *Without Pity*'s exclusion from scholarly accounts. A further observation makes the question of this exclusion resonate even more broadly: two films that usually bookend traditional accounts of neorealism are Luchino Visconti's *Ossessione* (1943) and Giuseppe De Santis *Riso amaro* (Bitter Rice) (1949). Both films embodied historical transitions, respectively turning away from the war and toward the process of liberation from fascism, and entering the postwar period known as the reconstruction; both films flirted with Hollywood cinema and US popular culture; lastly, both films adopted melodrama as their main mode and genre.[133] All these conditions arguably also underlied the making of *Without Pity* as an exploration of the US presence in postwar Italy (similarly to *Paisà*, for instance) that enclosed a neorealist aesthetics and mode (sense of urgency, location shooting, some local actors), while exploring the boundaries of gangster and noir films. Yet Lattuada's film ventured in discursive realms that neorealism had hitherto if not completely denied at least shied away from: the making of the movie star through film magazines (one of the elements of continuity between pre and postwar Italy); the Marshall Plan and its intended process of reeducation through the distribution of American consumer goods; and the discourse of race (as embodied by Jerry, an African-American Military Police, played by John Kitzmiller). The answers to these questions - which reveal in turn how *Without Pity* exceeded the canonical standards of neorealism – are woven together in the body of the protagonist Carla Del Poggio. Her character, her acting career and her personal life at once debunked the myth of the US Allies as saviors and embraced the interconnectedness of the two realms of soldier and star, as attested to by *Novella* and other illustrated magazines.

### ***Without Pity*** **and the Marshall Plan**

*Without Pity* is a gangster noir *all'italiana*. Angela (Del Poggio) is an unwed mother who has lost her newborn child and home as a consequence of the war. In the establishing scene, Angela welcomes the spectator while in motion on an empty freight train, looking disheveled and empty handed (figure 2). She is traveling through the Pineta del Tombolo,[134] a pine grove between the towns of Pisa and the port of Livorno, where a US military camp, in the film and at the time in reality, was the breeding ground for smuggling and prostitution. Her goal is to find her brother, who relocated in Livorno, and who, unbeknownst to her, has recently been killed. While on the train, Angela witnesses a chase: an African-American soldier is being chased parallel to the train tracks, gets shot and manages to jump aboard the train car Angela is traveling in (figure 2). The camera cuts right before Angela manages to get the train to stop so that the man can be assisted. The two strangers part ways, and the man remains

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132 *Umanità* is mentioned by Noa Steimatsky in her article "Elemental Housing in the Postwar Imaginary," 49, because the film uses as its location the Cinecittà refugee camp, where housing was obtained morphing the décor from previous films.

133 See Marina Romani's UC Berkeley doctoral dissertation, *Between Soundtrack and Performance: Music and History in Italian Film Melodrama. 1940-2010*; Summer 2015.

134 The Tombolo hosted a real US military base, in which, for the shooting, actors playing soldiers would be taken as deserters by locals. See Franca Faldini and Goffredo Fofi, eds, *L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano. Da* Ladri di biciclette *a* La grande guerra (Bologna: Edizioni Cineteca di Bologna, 2011), 229.

unnamed. The Tombolo pine grove fades out. This scene of in-betweenness (in which a sense of displacement towers over a traditional spatial establishing shot) evokes and mirrors both postwar Italy's state of scarcity, in the figure of Angela, and the crimes and instability brought about, together with the promise of aid and reconstruction, by the United States' presence. The frantic and disorienting establishing shot positions Angela, as well as the viewer, as witnesses of violence and brutality, echoing Karl Schoonover's "brutal humanism," in a space *in between* the land and the sea, the *hinterland* and the *elsewhere*.

Figure 2: *Without Pity*'s opening scene. Angela (Carla Del Poggio) travels on an empty freight train.
Angela assists the wounded African American soldier

When Angela arrives in Livorno, she is mistaken for one of the prostitutes – called "segnorine" in the film [135] – working around the military base, and she is put in a correctional facility.[136] She escapes the facility shortly thereafter, when Marcella, a local prostitute played by Giulietta Masina, encourages her to take advantage of an armed revolt organized by some of the women in the institution. Angela and Marcella walk around Livorno, the streets desolate and apparently populated solely by prostitutes, soldiers, and policemen. After spending the night at Marcella's friend's house, the two women find protection under Pierluigi, a local smuggler who manages gangsters and prostitutes, and whose main business is intercepting ships arriving from the US with Marshall Plan goods, to resell them on the black market. As Angela settles down in Livorno, her life and survival become entwined with those of the prostitutes and the soldiers. One day, while roaming around the port, Angela runs into Jerry, the soldier she had rescued on the train, and the two engage in a platonic love affair which initially shelters her from the local pimps who try to trick her into prostitution. Ambiguity reigns: is Jerry himself involved in the black market? Is Angela giving in to prostitution to make a living? The spectator is fed very little visual cue with respect to these questions: the absence of physical intimacy between Angela and Jerry, Jerry's heavily racialized presence (that tends to exclude him from the group of gangsters), Angela's growing dissatisfaction and groundlessness. All these elements entrust the core narrative of the plot to the smugglers, while Angela and Jerry's interactions and physicality, while revolving around the spaces of freedom left open by the gangsters, seem to comment on and embody the historical tension to which the films lends its representation. A sense of urgency and hyperrealism

[135] See Franca Faldini and Goffredo Fofi, 92ff. In *L'avventurosa storia*, actors and actresses speak of the making of *Without Pity*'s alluding specifically to the "segnorine" in the zone of the port of Livorno.
[136] See Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women,* specially the chapter "Women's Politics in a New Key" on internment camp and correctional facilities for women.

emanates from the geographical specificity of the film: the military base of the Pineta del Tombolo,[137] and the contemporaneity of the Marshall Plan's effects on Italian economics and its citizens' wellbeing unfolding before the camera. Lattuada's representation targeted the cultural and socioeconomic impact of the Marshall Plan, amid the poverty and dishevelment that General Marshall himself had deemed "a very serious situation," which was rapidly developing and "bode[d] no good for the world."[138]

The goods[139] – brought by the Americans, smuggled by the Italian gangsters – contained a promise that the film discloses as warped: the promise of healing and reeducation. Lattuada debunked the myth of Americans as saviors – a notion encoded in the narrative of the "liberation" from fascism – and problematized the celebratory nature of the American intervention "breath-taking in its size, [and] its ingenuity."[140] As Paul Ginsborg writes, "the arrival of every hundredth ship bearing food, medicines, etc., was turned into a special celebration."[141] In order to rebut any notion of success or "special celebration," Lattuada's cinematography dwelled on the contingency and material aspects of the transportation and sorting of consumer goods, and their illegal outlets.

On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall delivered the speech that would launch the Marshall Plan, or European Recovery Project,[142] which consisted in an injection of money and consumer goods to several European countries, each in charge of administering the aid received. As soon as the European Recovery Program began its operations on June 3rd, 1948, American objects and goods occupied Italians' everyday lives:

> The truth of the matter is that Europe's requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products – principally from America – are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help or face economic, social, and political deterioration of a very grave character.[143]

As the passage reveals, Marshall's speech was laden with the discourse of the superiority of America and of Europe's inferiority and state of need for "additional help," a need "so much greater than her ability" that, General Marshall declared, "she must have additional help."[144] Similarly, *Without Pity* was

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137 The "pineta del Tombolo" (Tombolo pinegrove) is situated in Tuscany, between Pisa and Livorno, where the US Army had a camp, and around which the black market thrived. See the article published in the *Corriere della Sera* in 2016, https://www.corriere.it/extra-per-voi/2016/11/28/storia-tombolo-pineta-toscana-che-50-anni-fa-fu-luogo-perdizione-a658c7f0-b4b5-11e6-87d0-f5151dd4f2bc.shtml

138 Moreover, General Marshall claimed in his speech that "the rehabilitation of the economic structure of Europe quite evidently will require a much longer time and greater effort than had been foreseen." I quote the speech from the General Marshall Foundation webpage, https://www.marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/marshall-plan-speech/

139 See Weissman, Alexander D. "Pivotal Politics – The Marshall Plan," in which the scholar lists among the initial aid food, fuel, machinery, to which fundings and investments followed.

140 Ginsborg, 115.

141 Ivi. For further information on the Marshall Plan and its history, see Ginsborg on UNRRA, a "system for credit for Italy to cover the Amlire (the Allies' military currency) spent by American troops", that "arranged Italy to receive benefits from UNRRA and tried to ensure a greater supply of foodstuffs for the peninsula" (41). Further research on rhetorical strategies and speeches of American middlemen would be of great interest: "James Dunn, the American ambassador at Rome, made sure that this massive injection of aid did not go unobserved by the Italian general public. […] Every time the port of arrival was a different one – Civitavecchia, Bari, Genoa, Naples – and every time Dunn's speech became more overtly political […] to speak in the name of America, the Free World and, by implication, the Christian Democrats."

142 "The European Recovery Program – ERP – was to last four years and receive $29 billion in American assistance […] In 1946 the United States, through UNRRA had already been providing the lion's share of Italy's imports" (Ginsborg, 78-79). Ginsborg underlines the powerful effect of this operation in the terms of the myth-making of Americans within Italian culture: "Between 1945 and 1948 the myth of America acquired new and even more impressive hues. The New World was voluntarily to pour its gold into the coffers of the Old", Ginsborg 79. See also Francesca Fauri, *Il Piano Marshall e l'Italia* (Il Mulino: Rome, 2010), 26-27.

143 Source: http://www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechatharvarduniversity5june1947.htm

144 See Ginsborg, 115: "The US administration designated $176m of 'Interim Aid' to Italy in the first three months of 1948. After that, the Marshall Plan entered into full operation. […] The arrival of every hundredth ship bearing food, medicines, etc., was turned into a

imbued with the notions of Italy being in a state of need. Yet, while the film revealed the imbalances of the plan, it played them out at the level of gender – Angela being the "she" in a state of lack, just like Europe in Marshall's speech – and complicated them with the consequences of the racial segregation of the African-American soldiers. To what extent the impact of these imported good bore fruit in the reconstruction of the social tissue of Italy, is illustrated both by Angela's story in the film, as well as by the career and life of actress Carla del Poggio.

**The "Making" of Carla del Poggio and Angela**

In the film, as Angela gets romantically involved with Jerry, she is exposed to a series of objects and practices that promise to reeducate her, namely by making her accustomed to American goods and bodily practices. This fictional trajectory begs to be read in parallel with Carla del Poggio's evolution from a young fledgling actress, known for her innocent facial features and young age, into a professional actress, ever-aspiring to Hollywood and often portrayed in film magazines. Despite these aspirations, she arguably reached the high point of her career with *Without Pity* itself. For Angela and Carla del Poggio alike, the promise of America turned out to be short-lived.

Del Poggio debuted as an actress under Vittorio De Sica's direction, when he cast her as the teenage protagonist of his comedy *Maddalena zero in condotta* (*Maddalena Zero for Conduct*) (1940), a part that launched her acting career and earned her media attention. After she appeared in a number of movies during the war, in 1948 Del Poggio's own husband, the director Alberto Lattuada, chose her as the protagonist of *Without Pity*, opposite John Kitzmiller. Meanwhile, she had become a consistent presence in film magazines starting in 1947, and she was arguably "produced," as it was common practice in the marketing of movie stars, at a symbolical level, by the magazines. In the magazines, her story is told with a marked preference for metaphors emphasizing her youth, and her growth "from chrysalis to butterfly," as in the 1947 *Fotogrammi* article "Da crisalide a farfalla, ovvero breve storia di Carla del Poggio."[145] The following year, her story would appear under the title "Luccioletta senza storia" (Little firefly with no past.)[146] Archival research unveiled several cut outs from magazines of the time: images of Del Poggio engaging in educational activities and sports punctuating her education, such as an afternoon of horseback riding (figure 3), on which, the attached article guarantees, she was accompanied by her mother.[147] By the time Del Poggio made the cover of *Novella* in 1951 (figure 4), she had outgrown the labels of "la più giovane attrice italiana," (the youngest of all Italian actresses) and had ceased to be praised for "la grazia della sua giovinezza," (the grace of her youth). In 1950 she acted in another of her husband's films, *Variety Lights* (1950), co-directed with Federico Fellini, as a cabaret dancer. Her acting career continued until 1956, when she left cinema to invest time and energy in her family, while she continued acting for television and theatre productions.[148]

If initially Del Poggio's young age and naivete were seen as a measure of her value and potential as a rising movie star, an innocence that symbolized a fresh start for the new, liberated Italy, it appeared that her "making" and education never succeeded in attaining actual stardom, as her film career came to an end shortly after her main roles in neorealist films. My reading shows that as an actress, Del Poggio participated in the making of, but didn't survive, the transition from pre- to postwar cinema.

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special celebration." See also Jaleh Mansoor, *Marshall Plan Modernism: Italian Postwar Abstraction and the Beginnings of Autonomia* (Durham: Duke UP, 2016).

145 *Fotogrammi*, Agosto 1947, "Da crisalide a farfalla, ovvero breve storia di Carla del Poggio."

146 *Fotogrammi*, 1 June 1948.

147 It is worth mentioning that before the end of the war, Del Poggio starred in Jack Salvatori's *Umanità* (1946), intertextually linked to *Without Pity* in terms of spectatorial engagement and an inconsistent fascination with American aid; as well as in Lattuada's *Il bandito* (1946).

148 The Fondo Mino Doletti, archived at the biblioteca Renzo Renzi in Bologna, contains a cut out from the cover of the French tabloid *Je vois tout* (23 July 1952, n.30), titled "la vedette italienne," in the occasion of one of Del Poggio's last roles in *Roma ore undici* directed by Giuseppe De Santis.

Interestingly, the launch of the Marshall Plan had endowed Italian cinema (financing directly the film school Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, attended by Del Poggio) with a sum of money for the refurnishing of the equipment lost in the war, according to an article in the film magazine *Cinema*:

> Even the future of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia is linked to the Marshall Plan. In the context of the European Recovery Program agreements, the Centro will receive from America all the equipment necessary to equip a laboratory specialized in optics, sensitometry and electroacoustic [...]. Today, one of its students, Alida Valli, attains worldwide fame from Hollywood, and one of its directors, Luigi Zampa, is the author of some of the movies that have paved the way for the international affirmation of our cinema.[149]

The article attests to the idea that the CSC had itself become a nursery for Italian actors to enable their transition into Hollywood. This was the case with Alida Valli, Del Poggio's film school peer, who, unlike Del Poggio, eventually made it to the American studios.[150]

Figure 3: the making of the Hollywood style movie star. Del Poggio learns horseback riding (fondo Doletti)

[149] Article on the reorganization of the originally fascist film school, Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, in *Cinema* n. 3, 25 November 1948. The article does not address the fact that the Cinecittà studios had functioned as a concentration camp, German at first, and taken over by the Allies after 1944. Original text: "Anche il futuro del Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia è legato al piano Marshall. Nell'ambito degli accordi ERP, il Centro dovrà ricevere dall'America tutta l'apparecchiatura per attrezzare un laboratorio specializzato di ottica, sensitometria ed elettroacustica… Oggi, una sua ex allieva attrice, Alida Valli, giunge da Hollywood a fama mondiale, e un suo regista, Luigi Zampa, è l'autore di alcuni tra i film che hanno aperto la strada all'affermazione internazionale del nostro cinema."

[150] More research and thinking to be done on the reasons for Del Poggio's short acting career. A working thesis is that of her inescapable past, the "corrupted youth" of the escapist era – De Sica's *Maddalena Zero for Conduct* being indeed one of the last "fascist style" comedies. And yet interestingly, her tragic death in *Without Pity*, and unbound characters is articulated as deviant and wild, and evocative of the all-American atmosphere of movies starring Ida Lupino and Rita Hayworth, among others.


Figure 4: Carla del Poggio on the cover of *Novella* (1951)

Ultimately, the making, heyday and ending of Carla del Poggio's career as an actress (figure 3 and 4) is mirrored by her character's trajectory within the film. Angela's relationships throughout the movie all contribute, from different angles, to her evolution into a consumer of American goods, and the failure of her reeducation. Angela's sustenance and growth are organized as commodity exchanges and transactions – while her death arrives precisely at the moment when she subtracts herself from being exchanged as a commodity herself. When becoming a prostitute with Pierluigi as a pimp seems to be Angela's last chance at survival, Jerry enters the picture, and the two plan to escape to America together. In a final attempt to rob Pierluigi and his gang (the goal being to gather enough money to board a transatlantic ship) Angela is killed and, shortly after, Jerry commits suicide. The failure of Angela and Jerry's plan to escape to the US stands out against Marcella's successful move to America.

Throughout the film, the spectator is given hints that point to a fundamental difference between the two women: whereas the allusion to prostitution pertains to both characters, Angela seems to resist the idea of getting involved, which never translates into her overt sexualization on screen. In two occasions in the film Angela is seen in the company of possible clients, at a nightclub and at a restaurant – although there is no explicit implication of her sexual involvement, and she appears in distress. Contrary to Angela, and depicted as more lighthearted in her choice, Marcella (not without emanating a sense of desperation) accepts the compromise of prostitution as a way to exploit the United States' presence, and to profit from it. Eventually Marcella finds her way to America – in one of the peak melodramatic scenes in the films, she embarks on the journey with her boyfriend, also an African American soldier (although Marcella brags that "il mio è meno scuro" – mine is less dark than yours – alluding to Jerry's darker complexion). Angela's resistance to selling herself sexually frames the failure of the Marshall Plan with respect to the film's critical terms, that is the gap between the boastful rhetoric of the plan and economic growth, and its actual impact on the lives of private citizen. Women's labor, racism, and smuggling, all act as the background. By refusing the moral compromise of her last resource, prostitution, and rather choosing to chase after "America" in and of

itself, Angela's life cannot but end tragically.[151] More importantly, Angela is all the while partaking in the other major exchange in the film, the consumption of American goods, of which Lattuada's film is not the first example, of a woman whose life and love interest founder because of the appeal of American objects.

*Without Pity*'s tragic ending connects the corporeality of American consumer goods (as this chapter will discuss briefly) to the state of poverty and destitution of previous characters and films of postwar Italy: because Lattuada added this external component, as a director he seemed to outgrow the historical accuracy of the socioeconomic message and impact of those neorealist movies that made "the canon." A crucial example is Giuseppe De Santis's widely studied *Riso amaro* (*Bitter Rice*) (1949), a film that, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, incorporated the presence of American goods and popular culture. *Bitter Rice* had a significant impact on how Italians' – and in particular Italian women's – "Americanization" would be historicized. With his film, De Santis, who had worked with Del Poggio in *Tragic Hunt* (1947), arguably took a condemning stance against the two protagonists' fatal attraction for American boogie-woogie, chewing gum, and glossy magazines, in the light of which their lives end tragically. Set in the rice fields of the Po Valley, the film follows Silvana (Silvana Mangano) and Walter (Vittorio Gassman)[152] and their scheme to steal a large quantity of rice from the fields that Silvana works daily with a number of women also seasonal workers. Silvana, who reads illustrated magazines and hangs cut-outs of Hollywood stars close-up by her bed, is taken by Walter's gangster-like lifestyle, until their plan escalates tragically with Silvana killing Walter, and committing suicide shortly after. The film merges De Santis's social realism (the field workers, women's labor, seasonal work) with the dimension of US popular culture – as the latter distracted and polluted the commitment, dedication, and political awareness implicit in the choice of portraying the workers. It follows that *Bitter Rice*'s critical reception remarked specifically upon the threat intrinsic to American goods, as dangerous and deviating.

*Bitter Rice*'s historicization has so far overshadowed *Without Pity*'s own critical reception. One example is film scholar Antonio Vitti's stance on *Bitter Rice*. Vitti has claimed that "the vast circulation of American commodities, from food products, to music records and moving pictures was promoting […] a profound and ultimately alienating Americanization of Italian lifestyle, particularly those of the lower class."[153] For Vitti – who also mentioned a general state of "fear" shared by many of his fellow film critics – the depiction of American goods was detrimental to the very texture of Italian society in terms of "alienation." Not surprisingly, and arguably because of criticism of this kind, films like *Without Pity* were not considered at large as representative of one of the many phases of neorealism.

**American Consumer Goods: New Techniques of the Body**

In *Without Pity*, the screen time granted to American consumer goods and how they are consumed is crucial to Angela's process of reeducation and her learning new techniques of the body. As mentioned, this process has a relational and social nature, in which it is thanks to the smugglers and gangsters, and the input they provide, that Angela first grows into an American consumer, and eventually suffers from her own transformation, which leads to her infatuation for Jerry, her aspiration to move to the US, and her violent death.[154] Throughout the movie, three main elements are representative means of

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[151] I owe to Linda Williams the insight that the melodramatic elements in the plot are crucial in terms as another element of "continuity" with neorealism.

[152] Silvana Mangano appears on the magazine *Fotogrammi* handing out American goods to foster home kids with the acronym CARE. The photo is captioned: "Silvana Mangano, stella del nostro firmamento consegna i pacchi della benefica istituzione CARE ai bambini di un istituto di educazione (*Fotogrammi*, anno 4, n.14, 13 aprile 1948).

[153] Antonio Vitti in *Riso amaro/Bitter Rice*, in *The Cinema of Italy*, ed. Giorgio Bertellini. London: Wall Wallflower Press, 2004, pp. 53-60.

[154] It is compelling to study Angela's growth emphasizing the "nature sociale de l'habitus", as in Marcel Mauss's definition. In his 1934 *Les Techniques du Corps*, Mauss writes: "Ces « habitudes » varient non pas simplement avec les individus et leurs imitations: elles varient surtout avec les sociétés, les éducations, les convenances et les modes, les prestiges. Il faut y voir des techniques et l'ouvrage de la raison

Angela's reeducation: wooden boxes as a recurrent visual reminder of the Marshall Plan being in action; Coca Cola, a quintessential American consumer good; and the Luna Park, as a form of entertainment.

One of the most recurrent visual elements in the film is the wooden crate – the *cassa*: the visual link between the Marshall Plan – the official aid – and the black market.[155] Boxes are first spotted in the domestic environment where Giacomo, Pier Luigi's right hand man, rents rooms, and runs his business through illegal smuggling and prostitution.[21] Some boxes bear the marks of their American origin ("U.S.A."), of a chewing gum brand ("Spry") or of medical supplies ("Medical Supplies Penicillin") (figure 5). In a propaganda poster, the box of "gli aiuti d'America" (aid from America) is sealed, covered in stars and stripes, and arrives *from the sky* imposing itself onto a map of Italy. American aid, says the poster, "wheat, coal, food supplies, medicines, help us help ourselves" (figure 6a).[156] In an outdoor scene at the port of Livorno, a low angle renders the same sense of goods as falling from the sky, when crates are unloaded on the docks, and shortly after intercepted by Pierluigi and his comrade gangsters (figure 6b).

Overall, the appearances of boxes in the film outnumber the chances the spectator gets to discover their content. In many occasions, when boxes are handled, their disclosure is delayed to the off-screen. When they eventually get opened, their content is problematic, has no exchange value, or the uselessness of the objects becomes even comical – as when Giacomo intercepts a load of boxes containing "100.000 mazze da MP," (100,000 Military Police batons). The objects that are actually brought on screen gain visibility throughout the film according to their monetary and exchange value – such as the scenes in which Jerry shares with Angela chewing gum, chocolate, or his Lucky Strikes cigarettes. In parallel, given that the content of the boxes is here only partially revealed, there can only be an assumption of their reeducating and healing function. If the assumption of the value of the boxes and their content works as an engine for the characters' actions throughout the whole narrative, the spectator is soon disillusioned. As the plot unfolds it becomes clear that many of the boxes carry value in their reference to an external reality (American goods) mainly imagined (that is, imposed as part of the Marshall Plan narrative), rather than actually experienced. Whereas the boxes hint at a certain promise of wellbeing, no actual content value is experienced by the characters.[22] This means that their imagined and affective value is rarely unpacked onscreen, and theoretically for the spectator, holding Angela hostage to a state of perpetual promise, confiding in the spectator to judge from her own historical perspective.

pratique collective et individuelle, là où on ne voit d'ordinaire que l'âme et ses facultés de répétition" (369). See Marcel Mauss, "Les Techniques du Corps", in *Sociologie et Anthropologie*. Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.

155 See Paul Ginsborg, 64, for a description of how the black market flourished, starting in the winter of 1944-1945.

156 The same poster appears in Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di Biciclette* (Bicycle Thief) (1948), precisely in the scene in which the bike is stolen. The protagonist, Ricci, glues a Rita Hayworth poster on top of the propaganda poster.


Figure 5: American wooden boxes at Giacomo's house


Figure 6a: An UNRRA pro-American aid poster
Figure 6b: Unloading boxes in Livorno

**Angela's American Reeducation**

Shortly after befriending Marcella and fleeing the correctional facility with her, Angela tries Coca Cola for the first time (figure 7). The scene has both an intimate feeling, and that of an initiation of sort. Marcella, the more experienced girl, walks Angela, naïve and lost, through her first taste of American flavors and carbonation. In the dim light of one of the local smugglers' room, Angela undergoes a rite of passage, and is made into a consumer entering the underworld of the sex workers and smugglers. When the camera pans and leaves the two women's silhouettes behind, the viewer takes in the piles of boxes of American goods and brands that physically substitute for the furniture, the promises they hide only made even more desirable after Angela's first sip of America. Moreover, in this scene the new consumer good, by giving way to a moment of social interaction, emphasized by the frontal,

symmetric framing of the scene, foreshadows the idea of a precise readjustment of time and space as dictated by new habits of consumption – Coca Cola being a drink for downtime with a friend, for instance, as a luxury embedded in the new order of things. Along the same lines, this entails a discussion of the visibility of commercial brands that, as mentioned, was crucial to the imaginative power of the boxes containing the goods – that is, containing a promise.[157] When trying Coca Cola, Marcella breaks the commercial value of the brand by confessing: "A me la Coca Cola non piace proprio" (I can't bring myself to like Coke), yet making a visible effort to consume it, while training Angela to do the same.

Figure 7: domestic spaces and new habits. Angela learns about Coca Cola.

The redefinition of time and space according to new social habits re-emerges later on in the amusement park scene, Angela's and Jerry's first date. This time too, in her contact with Jerry, Angela is enriched with skills, taste, mannerisms – all of which will become part of her "cultural capital," as in Pierre Bourdieu's formulation, habits and skills that are acquired "through accessing the lifestyle of a particular social group"[158] as discussed in *Distinction*. At the Luna Park, mirroring Bourdieu's analysis, the characters' sharing of a common public space determines the foundation of – and their inclusion within – a collective identity and social group positioning. This inclusion has as its premise Angela's training. She is taught by Jerry how to shoot (figure 8), they ride a carousel, and eat ice cream. She watches Jerry winning games and prizes and within the time frame of their first date becomes acquainted with new practices, as when she finds herself giving away bills and coins to the kids attracted by the presence of Jerry – a black soldier, wearing a uniform, a winner of all the games – expecting money and treats from him, the American.

[157] In this instance of reeducation, it seems crucial to account for it from the point of view of what Marcel Mauss calls "enumeration biographique des techniques du corps" (Mauss, 376), which he lists in the order a human being experiences them. A crucial question is that how fascism and how it is entitled to a compensation in terms of organizing space serially.
[158] See Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 26.

Figure 8: new techniques of the body at the Luna Park. Angela learns shooting and rides a carousel

In the amusement park scene, the relationship between the two characters appears to be of an intricate nature. Jerry teaches Angela new "techniques of the body," as in Marcel Mauss' definition, and Angela learns; Jerry buys her a meal, and she reciprocates by teaching him about Italian coffee (figure 9) and pastry and the Italian hand gesture for "good luck" – a sort of premonition of the bad luck that is to come; the date ends with no other physical interactions other than the amusement park activities and eating. Rather than displaying each other's affection, the two continue talking: upon ending the night, Jerry remarks in broken Italian "Io piace te perché tu mai fare niente per soldi" (I like you because you never do anything for money). What is he alluding to? Jerry has arguably been buying his way into Angela's friendship, through the acquisition and transmission of skills meant to "conquer" Angela and bringing them closer to each other. At this point, the exchange begs to be read as gendered, in that it is precisely Angela, as a woman, who needs to be impressed, rescued, fixed, recomposed, and reeducated. Moreover, the sexual charge and implication of this first date become sublimated in the consumption of objects – which enables one to read with more clarity the reasons behind Angela refusal to becoming a prostitute.[159] Yet, while Jerry praises Angela for *not* doing anything for money, and because the two are arguably out on a date and have a love interest for each other, Jerry's appraisal of Angela reads as a reassurance that his aim, as a US Military Police stationed in Italy in accordance with the Allies' "liberation", is to provide for Angela by way of material comfort, meant to help and heal (at an individual as well as collective level). By way of freezing their interaction at the material level, declaring almost performatively in front of the camera that this is not prostitution, not only is the taboo of miscegenation forestalled, but so is that of prostitution, and the lingering possibility for Angela to enter Pierluigi's circles is evoked by Jerry's own excessive remarks. We do not see the characters kiss or hug – and, at least in the first part of the film, they seem to live up to the narrative of the Marshall Plan and its promise of reeducation. All the while, Lattuada plays with the biggest threat: a mixed couple, doing, at a diegetic level and on screen, what they would never be allowed to do in American films and society: be *seen* together.

[159] More to think about, and more research to be done on the actual feasibility, in terms of the moral codes and matters of cinematic censorship, or the interracial couple on screen. See Gardner, *The Censorship Papers*.

Figure 9: espresso and pastry Italian style.

**The Movie Star Goes to War**

Angela's and Jerry's social activities punctuate *Without Pity* and unveil the visual interdependence of the realms of the movie star and the soldier, as in the initial example of the covers of *Novella*. In the opening scene, when Angela rescues Jerry on the train, and in the amusement park date and coffee shop scenes, the bodies of the soldier and of the actress merge. They are brought together by their common consumption of American goods, by teaching each other new social and cultural practices, and by the roles they have been assigned by the relationship between Italy and the US. Their bodily interactions – which arguably sublimate and stand in for their muted display of affection and sexual practices – epitomize the "cinema of encounter,"[160] as in the definition of Cesare Zavattini, a category that has often been employed for neorealist films and deserves to be applied to *Without Pity*. As stated above, scholars of neorealism, following in Bazin's critical footsteps, have hitherto overlooked the interdependence of the two aesthetic realms of the star and the soldier, a reading of neorealism cinema that has underplayed both Lattuada's film crucial stance with respect to the American presence, and the racial and gender discourse that this presence triggered, as in the scenes that are analyzed in this chapter, in the very historical reality that films like *Rome Open City*, *Paisà* and *Bitter Rice* were portraying. Not by chance, postwar magazines survived because they recognized the interdependence between the two realms, and yet were dismissed, as in the case of Massimo Zannoni's volume on postwar magazines like *Novella,* and its bringing together the soldier and the movie star:

> These images [the soldiers] have no connection whatsoever with the magazine's content, in which the war feels far away, even if it may materialize between the lines of a short story […]. It may be that the publisher Rizzoli is attempting to endow the publication with an aura of patriotism, knowing that the sword of Damocles hangs over women's magazines.[161]

[160] In "Alcune idee sul cinema," and "Tesi sul neorealismo," Cesare Zavattini points to the material embracing of the real as a "powerful dynamic of attention to things: a desire for understanding, empathy, participation, co-habitation." See Mino Argentieri and Cesare Zavattini, *Neorealismo ecc.* (Milan: Bompiani, 1979), 114.

[161] See Zannoni, 117. In the occasion of Christmas of 1944, the government authorized the publication of some "numeri unici," (*single issues*) for magazines like *Novella*, on the condition that 50% of the material published should be of "intonazione patriottica" (*patriotic intonation*). Original text: "tali immagini non hanno nessun tipo di collegamento con il contenuto della rivista, in cui la guerra sembra lontana, anche se magari si materializza tra le righe di un racconto […] Può darsi che in questo modo l'editore Rizzoli cerchi di circondare

On the one hand, *Novella*'s survival, as Zannoni maintains, was mostly due to Rizzoli's far-sightedness, but it was also, on the other hand, a unique place to observe a mechanism of continuity across two phases of film production, two aesthetics, conventionally separated by a jaded historiography and periodization solely based on their drastic visual differences, that it to say the trope of the "break" of neorealism from everything – esthetically and ideologically – that came before.

If one applies this argument to *Without Pity*, it is clear that the deepest implication of Rizzoli's intuition of the commercial continuity and interrelation, dictated that the two realms not only coexisted as convergent in representation, but also shaped and *made* each other, as other film magazines observed. "La guerra," wrote film critic Francesco Pasinetti in *Cinema* in 1948, "fa scaturire la 'pin-up girl'"[162] – the war brings the pin-up into existence. In his "Notations on American Cinema," Pasinetti furthered that this fact was not merely artistic. On the contrary, it contributed in good part to the industrial solidity – and, consequently, to the possibility of large runs of Hollywood films in Italy, of which *Novella, Cinema* and *Fotogrammi*, among others, became discursive and commercial platforms. Pasinetti argued for a recodification of the movie as a consumer good that would highlight its nature as a "product," *made*, in fact, by a producer, as well as consumed at even intervals by readers.[163] Such recodification of the movie as a consumer good is inherent to the passage from pre- to postwar cinema. Pasinetti's reflections foregrounded the film's exchange value and commercial ends. His take on the matter of "industrial solidity" postulated that the war was a sociopolitical and structural asset that *produced* its own self-referential discourse – that is, a discourse that addressed the reality of the women and men, civilians and in the military, from within the war. Yet, at this stage, in *Novella*, the war became deeply entwined with that of the movie star.[164] At the time, mimicking the language of Hollywood, Italy still strived for the establishment of its national cinema as a "nursery" for stars.[165] Yet, it is significant that, starting in 1947, the fascist discourse of autarchy and demographic growth transitioned into, rather than broke with, the boastful rhetoric of the Marshall Plan. The plan was willing to feed Italy new goods, to be consolidated as habits,[166] and this was in part aimed at producing new arms and faces for the national cinema,[167] in a way a continuation of Mussolini's motto "cinema arma più forte" – cinema is the strongest weapon.[168]

In 1942, the Rome-based magazine *Film* launched a subscription campaign inviting movie stars to sponsor a six-month gift subscription to the magazine for the benefit of five soldiers who would each receive the weekly issues at their outposts or military mail addresses. As seen in a letter to actress Maria Denis – a star of fascist era classic comedies, such as Mario Camerini's *What Scoundrels Men Are!*

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la pubblicazione di un'aura di patriottismo, sapendo che sulla stampa femminile pende la spada di Damocle ministeriale." Translation to English mine.

162 *Cinema*, October 25th 1948, 12. It is the first issue of the "nuova serie," and an article titled "Alcune note sul cinema nord americano degli ultimi anni" (*A few notations on North American cinema of the recent years*) underscores the importance of industrial solidity and the need and desire to "give birth to stars that can be loved by men," (desiderio di far nascere qualche "star" che possa in certo senso "essere amata dagli uomini"). More research needs to be done on the figure of Pasinetti as a documentarian, and a friend of Antonioni's.

163 Cinema n.2, 10 novembre 1948, short article on Alessandrini, the first Italian director to work on an American production, the film *Rapture*, and the production company is Voyagers.

164 Note two mentions of Italo-American production companies, "Ameritalia" in *Films in anteprima*, fascicolo 22, 1947 and "Trans World Film," for "import-export" and production of Italian and American films, mentioned in *Fotogrammi*, n.2, 1946.

165 Paul Ginsborg reflects on the theme, "the fact that Italy is for America a "trading partner and outlet," "at the end of the war ¾ of the world invested capital and 2/3 of its industrial capacity were in the US" (78), unveiling the fundamentally commercial operation, although rarely discussed of, of Italian postwar cinema.

166 More reflecting needed on how I can bring in seriality here.

167 See Steimatsky: "Italy's ambiguous position as a vanquished nation whose defeat was cast as liberation entailed a moderate anti-fascist agenda" (*Italian Locations*, xiii).

168 The mutual support between film and star was not new to the period - as it had been a staple of American culture during the war years that movie stars (from Marlene Dietrich to Rita Hayworth) would visit troops at military bases. What is new to the Italian landscape is that magazines that wed this double aesthetics of the war and the soldier have different political affiliations: if *Cinema* was more explicitly affiliated with fascism, *Novella*, and certainly *Fotogrammi* gathered people of a more liberal political orientation, in terms of openness toward American culture.

(1932), *Film*'s director Mario Doletti describes the initiative as an *omaggio*: "vuole soltanto costituire una partecipazione morale alla lotta che i nostri soldati sostengono" (this initiative is simply meant to be moral support for the fight that our soldiers endure).[169] Whereas the magazine had been so far mostly commercialized and gendered as female, meant to be gazed at by a female audience,[170] this act of moral support on the part of a movie star produces a male reader and audience for a product originally destined for a female audience.[171] Yet this reckoning of interconnectedness of the two sides of a gendered audience, shed light on the actress as a commodity, "created" by the war, and to be owned serially by the soldier, thus confirming Pasinetti's confinement of the movie, and its byproducts, to the realm of commercial products.

Among the many stars chosen by Mario Doletti's pro-war fundraiser,[172] was Irasema Dilian, Del Poggio's co-star in Vittorio de Sica's *Maddalena Zero for Conduct* (1940), as in the example of a letter that reinforced the sense of a mutual involvement and interdependence between war and stars:

> Dear *signorina*, one of our loyal readers, currently stationed in Northern Africa, has decorated his tent with cut outs from *Film* magazine. He has written to us, and begged me to let you have this photo, and to invite you to mail him (Lieutenant Pilot Mino Baltramba) a copy of the photo we have published, and that, as you can see, he holds on to very dearly.[173]

This letter positions the soldier as a "consumer" of the magazine, as well as of the star, in his own temporarily decorated domestic environment – the tent. As has been discussed, with the Marshall Plan, the introduction of American consumer goods reversed the direction of the exchange between goods and consumer, making the soldier into the donor of new objects to be consumed freely by the female subject, to be reeducated and entertained. In Lattuada's film these exchanges became more complex as they incorporated discourses of racial and sexual otherness, serial consumption and reproducibility, and notions of ownership. With Angela and Jerry's story, Lattuada upset the most obvious representation of the lack of agency of the recipient of the goods, a representation based on the model of the Marshall Plan. The novelty of his approach is to be read in the light of similar encounters between civilians and soldiers portrayed by Roberto Rossellini's *Open City* (1945) and *Paisà* (1946), respectively in the figures of the protagonist Pina, played by Anna Magnani and in two of *Paisà*'s episode, set in Rome and Naples. Backtracking to the early phases of neorealism, and considering these two movies, allows this chapter to provide further considerations on *Without Pity* as a movie bypassed by the canon, while revealing the presence of America *within* the canon, especially in *Paisà*. *Paisà*'s portrayal of the African American soldier helps reading *Without Pity*, providing elements that contribute to the understanding of racial and gender politics as presented by Lattuada.

## The *Paisà* Effect

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169 *Film*, 8 March 1942. Maria Denis's handwritten reply comes in attachment to the 110 lire necessary to renew the four subscriptions to *Film*. The same exchange happens on February 17th, 1943. This time, the sponsoring star is Isa Miranda, for "cento abbonamenti semestrali."

170 Further research awaits on a male readership for magazines like *Novella*, which emerge from some of the advice columns, in which letters were signed by men.

171 I discuss this politics of the gaze at length in my first chapter. Material culture scholar Bill Brown writes about the directionality of commodity exchange, and how it alters consumption patterns in "Thing Theory" (*Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Autumn, 2001), pp. 1-22). In this case, the question is about the materiality of images, more so than about the materiality of the actual objects.

172 Ginsborg 116. Similarly, the film industry intrudes into politics, as Paul Ginsborg recalls "Hollywood stars recorded messages of support, rallies were held, and more than a million letters were dispatched to Italy during the election campaign

173 "Cara signorina, un nostro fedelissimo lettore, combattente in Africa Settentrionale, ha addobbato la sua tenda con fotografie ritagliate da *Film*. Egli mi ha scritto pregandomi di farvi avere questa fotografia e di indirvi a spedirgli (s. Ten. Pilota Mino Baltramba - Aeroporto 709 - Posta Militare 3700) una copia della fotografia che noi abbiamo riprodotta e che, come vedete, egli ha molto cara."

During the Allied invasion of 1943-45, Italy had its first direct experience of the American way of life – thanks to the physical presence of the soldiers – "violent," as Paul Ginsborg described it, "in many ways, but also incandescent with its bonhomie, benevolence and jazz."[174] Although prewar movies had, to a certain extent, prepared the public for this encounter,[175] what was striking in the immediate postwar years was the physical presence of America soldiers in Italy. In the following years, between 1945-1948, the *myth* of America as fervid and benevolent acquired innovative contours – which only apparently traveled parallel to neorealism. Propositions like Paul Ginsborg's reinforced the historiographical given that "only the US could and would offer Italy the aid necessary for recovery from the devastations of the war,"[176] echoing General Marshall's speech. The fallacy of this type of historiographical thinking is to posit the aid as materially (although only partially) involved in the blossoming of neorealism's film production, without penetrating their texture, content and imagery. Adopting the narrative[177] of a clean break from prewar films, enforced among others, by Gian Piero Brunetta and Andre Bazin, the relationship between Italy and the US was outlined cinematically in terms of the binaries of necessity and availability, poverty and prosperity. These elements became reflected in Rossellini's films' character and spatial choices.

Neorealism's founding and most iconic film is Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (1945), a film that promptly intervened on a traumatic period still weighing the consciousness of Italian citizens. At the time of its shooting, Rome was still in ruins, and the studios were being used as provisional refugee camp.[178] In his depiction, Rossellini made no effort to monumentalize or glamorize Rome, while he adopted strong melodramatic components that made of the city the stage of the civilians' state of loss and misery. According to David Forgacs, the making and reception of *Rome Open City* incarnated two tendencies. On one hand, it was a byproduct of Italian misery and desolation,[179] which landed on Italian spectators with a sense of historical urgency. On the other hand, *Open City* was a commercial film available to US cinematic consumers by Americans and for Americans, in fact a box office sensation. Archival research showed how critics from the time of *Open City* introduced a fissure, rather than accepting the coexistence of the tendencies pointed out by David Forgacs. In *Fotogrammi*, Adriano Baracco pointed to the mutual exclusion of local films versus "divi americani." *Rome Open City*, Baracco writes:

> [...] arrived precisely when the audience, after years of separation, had newly found the *divi americani*, and was in awe before their exploits; and the *divi americani* had to give way to that humble movie shot in a warehouse, with bad expired film, half the amount of lighting needed and performers of limited – if not absent – reputation.[180]

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174 Ginsborg, 79.

175 An example of a (quite debated) film that contained elements of American culture is Luchino Visconti's *Ossessione* (1943).

176 Ginsborg, 79.

177 See, as mentioned, André Bazin (mainly in his writings from *What is Cinema?*, translated to English by Bert Cardullo in his anthology *André Bazin and Italian Neorealism*, 2011); see also Gian Piero Brunetta and Lino Micciché, promoter of the Pesaro Conference in 1974.

178 See Noa Steimatsky, "The Cinecittà Refugee Camp."

179 See David Forgacs, Sarah Lutton and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, eds, *Roberto Rossellini Magician of the Real* (BFI: London, 2001).

180 *Fotogrammi*, n.6 1948, original text: "vi arrivò proprio nel momento in cui il pubblico aveva ritrovato dopo *anni di separazione* i divi americani, e si beava delle loro prodezze; e i divi americani dovettero cedere il passo a quel dimesso film realizzato in un magazzino, con cattiva pellicola scaduta, la metà della luce necessaria e interpreti di rinomanza limitata, o nulla." Many accounts are given on how *Open City* sells in America, as *Cinelandia*, 28 aprile 1946: "*Rome Open City* il successo del giorno (in America)" (Open City, *the big hit of the day, in America)*, or see article by Mario Gromo ("con Open City inizia la 'ecole italienne' e apre le porte all'America," (Open City *inaugurates an Italian school of cinematography, and unlocks its doors to America*) in which he argues that Rossellini brought Italian cinema to America and Italian cinema greatly benefitted from it. *Cinema*, October 25th 1948, 6. See also the polemical take on this commercial operation in the article "Roma città troppo aperta," *Cinema* n. 2, 10 novembre 1948. On the role of Adriano Baracco in shaping postwar magazines, see De Berti, I rotocalchi cinematografici, 397.

To debunk Baracco's binary, one can refer to the positive reception of *Rome Open City* upon its US release in February 1946, which prompted local producers to invest in Rossellini's following feature, *Paisà*. As a matter of fact, soon after the film's release, Rossellini's filmmaking became supported by the American show business, namely in his often-underestimated working partnership with producer Rod Geiger, who, after seeing *Open City*, proposed to commercialize *Paisà* as "Seven Stories From the US," referring to the seven episodes (which ended up being six) that would make up the film. Thanks to Rod Geiger,[181] *Paisà* made use of American money. In *Paisà*, Rossellini chose to foreground the role of US military forces in supporting the liberation from Germany's invasion, in close contact with the resistance,[182] striving for a "realist construction of a country" and thematizing "the polarization of attention and blame that it is still discussed today."[183] *Paisà* was released in 1946, when the Italian ban on Hollywood films (discussed in Chapter One) ended, and American movies allowed once again into Italian theatres.

In the Naples episode we meet Pasquale, a street-urchin, *scugnizzo*, surrounded by other street kids: the kids roam around Naples – a city still completely in ruins. The Military Police is patrolling the city to no avail, while the kids seem to reign over the city, smuggling any kind of consumer goods. When the police arrives on the scene, the kids disperse, and Pasquale and Joe, an African American MP that a kid is trying to sell,[184] walk away together. They first stumble upon a marionette theatre (figure 10a), later on they sit on a pile of debris and empty Campbell soup cans (figure 10b). Joe is drunk, and he starts rambling and singing: the African American spiritual he hums is "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen. Nobody knows my sorrow,"[185] subsequently he starts daydreaming about his return to America "as a hero," flying over New York City in an imaginary airplane he mimics with his own body. Snapping out of his drunken monologue, Joe becomes gloomy, and seconds before passing out, he mumbles: "I don't want to go home."[186] The struggle of the African American soldier is laid out for the spectator. Joe, Pasquale and the spectator observe in each other the unfolding of suffering and annihilation as byproducts of the war. The scene provides crucial information about the reality of displacement and loss of the African-American soldier – presenting the spectator with what would become a racialized stereotype, that of the soldier who has left America in a state of poverty and under the brutal Jim Crow laws and cannot return home. Joe's more or less explicit explanation of the historical circumstances of African Americans in the US sets the backdrop for Jerry's character development, and provides the spectator with indications on how to read *Without Pity*'s racial politics, other than the charged affair between Angela and Jerry.[187] Moreover, the scene marks the triumph of the bittersweet "brutal humanism" that Karl Schoonover defined as "the strange symbiosis of violence and humanitarianism, spectacular suffering and benefaction."[188]

Rossellini's timely response to the years immediately after the war is articulated in the passage from *Open City*'s "restorative" qualities (according to a quality intrinsic to neorealist films, in Noa Steimatsky's words), and the portrayal of the devastating impact of the German forces in Rome, to *Paisà*'s take on the collaborative effort of the liberation. In between these two films lied a shift in terms

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[181] See Tah Gallagher's article in the BFI edition of *Paisà*'s dvd, describing the relationship between Rossellini and Rod Geiger.

[182] Especially after his fascist trilogy – that Noa Steimatsky has called a "shift of affinities" from Rossellini's later neorealist films (in a lecture at UC Berkeley, Spring 2015).

[183] Noa Steimatsky, in *Italian Locations*. See also "The Cinecittà Refugee Camp."

[184] Joe is played by Dots Johnson, an African American film and stage actor. In *Fotogrammi*, an article on Luigi Zampa's *Vivere in Pace* (1947), played by John Kitzmilller, reads: "per *Vivere in pace* la Lux avrebbe voluto quello di *Paisà*, ma era partito" (for Vivere in Pace, Lux wanted the guy from *Paisà*, but he had left Italy.)

[185] See Marina Romani, *Between Soundtrack*, 47.

[186] On the theme of black soldiers returning to America after the war, see Mudbound.

[187] On racial laws and xenophobia under fascism see Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (Routledge: London, 2014); Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, *Italy 1922-1945* and Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, *Italian Colonialism* (Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2008).

[188] Karl Schoonover, xix. The book portrays "brutal humanism" as the "interest in detailing the brutalized human body [that] underwrites the emergence of a new visual politics of liberal compassion," xiv.

of spectatorial engagement, which would affect *Without Pity*'s viewers alike,[189] interpellated as "witness[es] of the global empathy of cinematic corporeality."[190] That is to say that the corporeality of *Without Pity*'s encounters echoes that of Naples episode, while it demands the sensibility of a spectator who understands the interrelation of Italian neorealism and the American presence precisely as mapped onto the bodies seen on screen. To what extent can Joe and Jerry - and the terms of their relationship with Pasquale and Angela - be compared? How does the latter (Angela and Jerry) build on the first (Pasquale and Joe)? The Naples episode steers away from the portrayal of Americans as saviors and educators, on the premises of which, on the contrary, *Without Pity* wove its narrative. Joe's inability to help and reeducate Pasquale – succumbing to a sense of helplessness in the final scene of the episode – is the dramatic climax of the entire film. This state of desperation, common to African American soldiers as well as to Italian Civilians is sewn together by Rossellini's camera: the traumatized civilians' bodies and the destitute homeless soldier – imposes an impasse that freezes the humanitarian mission of the soldiers and prevents them from any further action. When he sees where Pasquale lives (the caves of Mergellina), Joe leaves, no longer able to feel, backtracking to his own song of inexpressible suffering – "nobody knows my sorrow." The interactions among bodies, and the film itself, stands as a body in which the sense of horror shows through the very fabric of filmmaking, paralleling Joe's and Pasquale's storytelling.

The traumatic mode of representation – as described by Noa Steimatsky and Karl Schoonover – seen at play in *Paisà* was essential to the making of *Without Pity*[191]– although Lattuada focused on the objects and consumer goods, and on the criticism toward racial politics in Italy and the US. If Schoonover invoked "pity" as a spectatorial mode, the title of the film mobilized *pietà*, alluding both to its lack, in the shrewdness of the action, and to a way of seeing, as the epigraph in the opening credits of Lattuada's film made explicit:

> This film wants to be a testimony of truth. This story takes place in Italy, but it might as well take place in any other place in the world, where the war has made human beings forget about pity.[192]

[189] The Cinecittà studios were used as displaced people camp, requisitioned by the Allies after June '44, central to Noa Steimatsky "The Cinecittà Refugee Camp."
[190] Schoonover, xiv-xx.
[191] It is compelling to relate this argument to Roberto Vivarelli "Winners and Losers," *October*, Vol. 128, Spring (2009), which questions the ambivalence intrinsic to the narratives of liberation and destruction narrative, and ask to pose the question of how cinematic instances change hand in hand with ideological master narratives. In this respect, *Without Pity* is a film of total defeat, political and moral.
[192] Translation to English mine. Original version: "[…] Questo film vuole essere una testimonianza di verità. La storia si svolge in Italia ma potrebbe svolgersi in qualsiasi parte del mondo, dove la guerra ha fatto dimenticare agli uomini la pietà."

Figure 10a: Joe and Pasquale at a marionette show.
Figure 10b: Joe and Pasquale chat on a pile of can and debris in *Paisà*'s Naples episode.

This epigraph positions the spectator as a witness of "truth," and acknowledges a state of displacement, serving as a reminder of compassion and ethical engagement on either sides of the film, that is, across the film, from the characters to the viewers. Regardless of geographical specificity, this paratextual "lapide" (commemorative stone, in the definition of Adriano Aprà[193]) urged the spectator to gain perspective on the material consequences of the war, and the embodiment of the struggle of the reconstruction. Conversely, the Marshall Plan had instructed Italian citizens that bodies gravitated around objects, objects filled a void amid bodies, and that objects and bodies cured each other. However, throughout the movie, Angela's and Jerry's attraction toward each other's bodies (displayed through an exchange of objects) results in an effect of disorientation – alternating between density and emptiness, possession and lack. So is the truth (the same to which Lattuada alludes to in his epigraph) revealed: human beings have forgotten about pity. Yet, one deeper truth behind the impossibility of physical proximity and affect between the two characters (and the fact that objects eventually fail to heal them) asks to be acknowledged in an act of spectatorial responsibility as the gendered and racialized connotations weighing on the two protagonists, thus revealing "how urgently neorealist films attempt to thematize ethical viewing as a form of action."[194]

**John Kitzmiller and *The Negro Soldier***

Throughout the film, the theme of racial segregation and the condition of destitution of African Americans in the US hovers upon many of the dialogues involving Jerry. Halfway through the film, Jerry is confined in a prisoner camp, arguably for his involvement in the black market (which we see him getting tricked into, as a result of a scheme played out by the Italian smugglers). While imprisoned, he is bullied by his fellow convicts who intercept his correspondence with Angela and mock their romance by way of derogatory terms and racial slurs. Eventually, Jerry manages to flee the facility, and rejoins Angela, who, meanwhile, desperate to find a way to get to America, has overheard a conversation about a load of money being moved by Pierluigi's gang, and convinces Jerry (in a highly stylized, dramatic scene taking place at a disheveled shack on the beach) to rob them, and, with the money, board a ship to cross the Atlantic.

193 Adriano Aprà, *Alberto Lattuada: il cinema e i film* (Venice: Marsilio, 2009).
194 Schoonover, xvii.

In the animated conversation, the two characters, finally back together discuss their future as a "free" couple. "What would happen to you if they catch you?" asks Angela referring to Jerry's escape from the camp. "Hanging," replies Jerry. When "escaping on some boat" becomes the only viable option, Angela declares: "I'll come with you. I can't stand it, anyway! This is no life. You're right, Jerry, it's rotten, let's escape together." The scene is packed (with dialogue) and at the same time registers as incomplete (for the lack of physical affection or allusion to a sexual, romantic nature to the relationship). Lattuada plays with the viewer: when Jerry kneels down, the camera cuts to Angela's frightened expression, to which the dialogue adds: "I don't want to." Where the gesture of kneeling down, followed by silence, replace what in a conventional narrative would be a proposal, Jerry's words reassure the viewer as well as Angela: "Ti voglio bene, sono come un fratello, non ti lascio più" (I care for you, I am like a brother, I won't let you go). It is only at this point, where the threat of a sexualized and romantic relationship of the biracial couple is once again forestalled, that Jerry's fantasizing of America starts, reminiscent of Joe's monologue in *Paisà*. Jerry promises Angela:

> You will see, Jerry è un forte compagno… Io conosco un posto molto lontano, grandi posti, nessun uomo…it's just like that, grandi fiumi, beautiful country… (You will see, Jerry is a strong companion… I know a place far away, a big country, no men in sight… it's just like that, big rivers, beautiful country…)

Angela replies, while nodding: "yes, let's go to a place where nobody knows us." Intertextually linked to the scene from *Paisà* described above, the melodramatic peak of Lattuada's film reveals the illusory nature of Jerry's and Angela's fantasy – America as a place of unlimited space and anonymity, a fantasy directly linked to the narrative of abundance, in this case of land and anonymity, hence freedom, supported by the Marshall Plan. Although the film does not make any specific reference to the struggle faced by African Americans and the racial segregation in the United States, *Paisan* has illustrated it as the subtext of the Joe's (and hence of Jerry's) monologue. It is crucial to remember that, in the immediate postwar period, Italy was still grappling with fascism's racial politics, and the widespread racism present in Italy with respect to African Americans is made explicit in the film when Pierluigi refers to Jerry in derogatory terms. As mentioned, Marcella too describes her boyfriend as "not very dark," simply "just very tanned." In all, the extent to which Lattuada exposes racism in Italy and the United States determined the mixed reception of his movie.[195] Moreover, the film hints, through Angela's and Jerry's relationship, to a sense of a shared victimization that unites in a common cause black soldiers and ordinary Italian people, both victims of an unjust society.[196]

The final scene of the film seals the tragic turn of the story. Jerry surprises Angela inside a dilapidated church, where they are reached by the gangster they have previously robbed. When one of Pierluigi's men opens fire, Angela covers Jerry with her body, is hit by a bullet and dies. It's the failure of the ultimate escape, and of an attempt to take advantage of a corrupt system. Shortly after, Jerry drives with his truck down a cliff, bringing Angela with him in his death – tragically fulfilling the common destiny that the characters had hoped for with their attempted escape. Meanwhile, Lattuada pronounces his final sentence on the imagery the "American dream," closes the curtains on the

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[195] Linda Williams pointed to a cluster of films that engage directly, in more recent years, with the presence of African American soldiers in Italy after WWII: Lewis Milestone's *Pork Chop Hill* (1959), Antwone Fisher's *The Tuskegee Airmen* (1995), Spike Lee's *Miracle at Sant'Anna* (2008), as well as Marco Spagnolo's documentary *The Italian Jobs. Paramount Pictures and Italy* (2017). These films arguably pertained strictly to the war rather than including romantic and sexual affairs.
Schoonover writes:"It appears that these films use a raced body to signify American intervention, but further study is required to adequately address this issue," 258.

[196] The film doesn't shy away from racial slurs as well as allusions to Italian colonialist racism on the part of some of the men affiliated with Pierluigi's gang and who spend the evening with Angela.

feasibility of a potentially successful American, Marshall Plan fueled, paradigm of consumption in Italy.

Behind Jerry's character, John Kitmziller was living in Italy and pursued a career in acting, and lived in Rome up to his death. Archival research reveals his presence in film magazines. Before he started working as an actor, Kitzmiller was an engineer for the US Army, which brought him to Italy with the African-American 92nd Infantry Division. He was discovered by director Luigi Zampa. Zampa recalls noticing him at a poker game, and casting Kitzmiller for his film *Vivere in pace* (*To Live in Peace*) (1947), for the part of the MP Joe. After his first role, Kitzmiller acted in forty European movies, most of which dealt closely with the physicality of the racialized body of African- American soldiers. These films included *Tombolo Black Paradise* (1947), where he is the MP Jack, and *Without Pity* as the MP Jerry.[197] Among his roles, the one in Giorgio Ferroni's *Tombolo Black Paradise* shared a remarkable intertextual relation with his role in *Without Pity*. In *Tombolo*, the title's allusion to "black paradise" refers to the abovementioned Pineta del Tombolo, with a play of words on blackness: the black market, the presence of African-American soldiers, and lastly the film's inspiration within the tradition of the noir film, or, as Bazin has defined it, "noir realism." These three elements are indeed present in *Without Pity* as well, raising the possibility of an exploration of Kitmziller's career as a serial character – the African-American MP – which he rediscovered via many roles across his career.

The magazine *Fotogrammi* first praised Kitzmiller for his role in *Tombolo*: "tutti volevano fare il film di Tombolo," (everyone wanted that part in Tombolo),[198] where in another article, the same magazine presented the actor as "Il capitano Kitzmiller, degradato dal cinema," (Captain Kitzmiller, downgraded by cinema) alluding to his roles as a simple MP in many of the movies – he was in fact a captain – but also to his lack of professionalism as a military person, and the choice of an alternative acting career.[199] Similarly, in various articles *Cinema* was critical toward the phenomenon of the "importation of movie stars," as in the article "Dive prefabbricate e di importazione" (Prefabricated, imported divas), which downplays Kitzmiller's career, and attributes his success to the mere fact of being black. The article starts out by criticizing the presence of foreign actors in general, before tapping into Kitzmiller's specific problem:

> Here goes Kitzmiller, excellent person and excellent actor, who in the beginning worked because certain films required a black person; and now he works because, in movies where there is absolutely no need for a black character, they appositely make up a part for him.[200]

The article outlines a narrative of exclusion that needs to be articulated more in depth. According to this narrative, the character, soldier and actor – namely the African American – stands in for another, possibly white and more deserving person, simply in the light of his racial profile. And yet this goes against the sociopolitical reality of the sense of loss that many African Americans experienced as the war ended: the impossibility both of a return to their domestic reality, harshly taxed by the war, in the US, as well as the hardship of integration. Kitzmiller's life and character as a black soldier can be framed within an analysis of the representation of the serialized body of the soldier. This is of particular interest if investigated against the documentary feature *The Negro Soldier* (1944)[201] (figure 11), a

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[197] Kitzmiller stayed in Italy after the war and died in Rome in February 1965. In 1957, he was the first black actor to win a best actor award at the Cannes Film Festival for his role in the Slovenian film *Valley of Peace*.

[198] *Fotogrammi,* n.17, 17 August 1947 and n.19, 20 September 1947

[199] *Fotogrammi,* n.43, 2 November 1948

[200] *Cinema* n. 4, 1948 "Qui c'è Kitzmiller, ottima persona e ottimo attore, che in principio lavorò perchè in dati film era necessario un negro; e adesso lavora perché, in film dove di negri non v'è affatto bisogno, creano una parte apposta per lui…"

[201] Hondon B. Hargrove, *Buffalo Soldiers in Italy. Black Americans in WWII* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1985). The book focuses on the 92nd Infantry (Buffalo) Division, the only so-called "black" infantry division to see combat in Europe: "Created in a season

propaganda film produced by Frank Capra, as a follow up to his series *Why We Fight*,[202] which foregrounds serving in the army as an opportunity for African-Americans to reach personal success and contribute to their love for the flag and the uniform. In *Without Pity*, Jerry wears his uniform until he escapes from prison, when he goes back to wearing civilian clothes. Interestingly, in the posters of the American, Spanish and French versions of the film Jerry is portrayed wearing civilian clothes.[38] In compelling ways, the uniform – as *The Negro Soldier* claimed – implied a strong identification with a set of values that, in the film, Jerry ceases to embrace as he gets closer to Angela and absorbs in turn her disillusionment. And yet this is a peculiar take on the life of the black soldier, derived from a strictly Italian perspective, since in a film as much as in reality, a black soldier would never be allowed to have an interracial love affair, in a military uniform, in the United States.

In all, Kitzmiller's acting career remains relatively unknown up to this point, given the many accounts of his film roles as a disruption within the struggle for the recreation of an Italian postwar film industry. Similarly, the idea that Americans may be depriving Italy of its own richness and resources is encountered in magazines and popular culture. Such is the case of the cartoon *Razzia – "Raid"* by Gino Boccasile (figure 12a). *Raid* plays with the exaggeration and caricature of colors and facial features. Its blatant racism finds leverage in the myth of the pure, classic, marble white beauty of the Italian artistic patrimony and women. The trope of American soldiers invading, stealing and raping women is at the center of literary work such as *La pelle* (*The Skin)*, by Curzio Malaparte (1948), made into a film in 1981 by Liliana Cavani. This is also in conversation with later images of American soldiers physically *conquering* and parading statues of female bodies (figure 12b), as in a series of photos taken by American soldiers at Anzio in 1944 and published in *Life*.

when complete segregation was prevalent in America, it was beset continuously by controversy because of the same rigid policy of segregation in the Army," vii. The film began shooting in 1943. The movie crew traveled the United States, visiting over 19 different army posts. The final movie totaled 43 minutes long and received official support in 1944. At first, *The Negro Soldier* was intended for only African American troops; however, the creators of the film decided that they wanted to distribute the film to a wider military and civil audience.

[202] I'm thinking about the body of the soldier in terms of biopolitics, as in Agamben's models of sovereignty and right to life, in *Homo Sacer*, 1995. *Donne senza nome* (1950) by Géza von Radványi comes to mind.

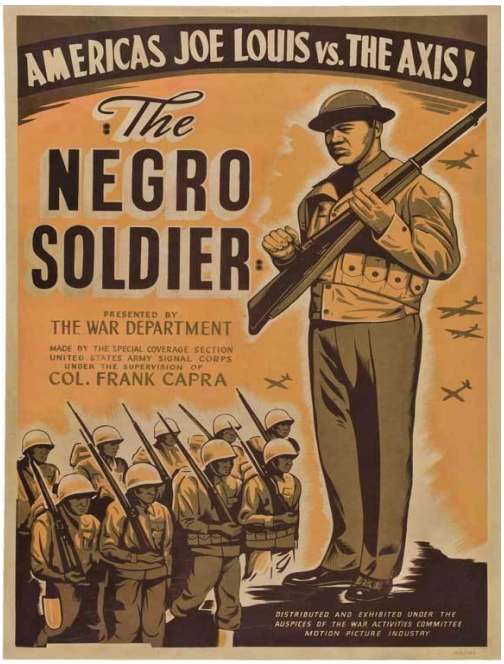


Figure 11: *The Negro Soldier*

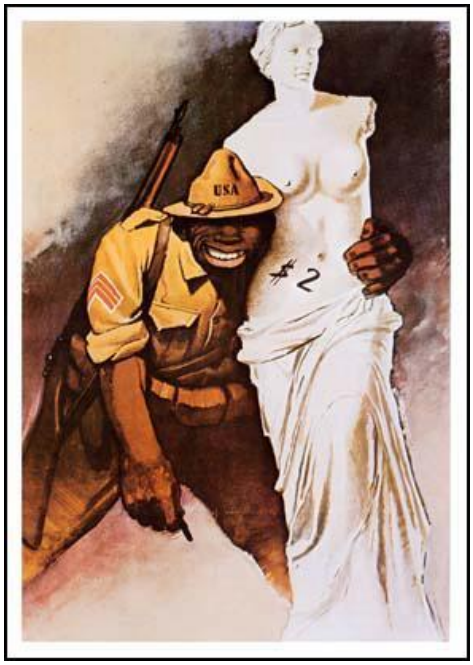


Figure 12a: *Razzia*, cartoon by Gino Boccasile.
Figure 12b: American soldiers relax with their mascot, "Axis Sally", which was "liberated" during the battle for control of the Anzio beachhead 1944.

**Conclusions**

*Without Pity*'s texture and plot brought to their extreme the difficulties inherent to its protagonists' status as subjects of strict ideological and political paradigms. As an audacious portrayal of an interracial relationship which interpellated a global spectator, the film imagined such spectator to be able to understand the criticism directed against the Marshall Plan and Italian, as well as American, racial politics. The postwar period, tinged with the proliferation of goods that would culminate in the "boom" or "economic miracle" of the late 1950s, planted the seeds for a middle-class standard of living, historically assessed by the amount of material possessions owned, which assured the ultimate redemption and reeducation from the hardships of the war. While in Lattuada's story none of the characters attains this type of redemption, everyone – civilians, American soldiers and local gangsters – is partial to keeping the wheel of consumption spinning. Hence, within the critical limits explored by the film (although the Marshall Plan did have a significant impact in the reviving of the economies it was trying to heal), reeducation fails (or at least the democratic ideals of social good and humanitarian aid to which it is connected) precisely because it merely allows for characters to "rebuild" themselves independently from their adherence to the compromise with American culture and objects. In reality, no aspect of the encounter between American goods and Italian goods measure up to the standards and boastful tone of General Marshall's speech. This failure proved to be lethal to the same conditions that made it possible – consumption and desire. Where in *Without Pity* Angela enters the network as "innocent" and astray, gradually, her only option becomes selling her body as the ultimate exchangeable commodity. Her refusal to sell herself to the black market, causes her, instead, to tragically trade her life for her freedom.

And yet, Lattuada's visit to the realm of American culture – and the fascination for foreign genres, as in the unique packaging of his exotic late neorealist story, which draws elements from the gangster film genre – does not go unobserved, nor is isolated in the cinematic landscape of the time. In the September 1948 issue of *Cinema*, journalist Carlo Mazza writes:

> Perhaps, if things stayed the same, each one of them [movie directors] will accept every single movie proposal they receive from America, and we will see De Sica making a film about the life of a horse thief in Arizona, with John Wayne and Lind Darnell as the main characters. But after that, because truly astute people do not accept compromises, even Americans will be embarrassed by these directors, and will relegate them to making mystery movies of little importance […]. This is the sorrowful conclusions to which our own cinematographic successes bring us in 1948; a posthumous revenge for the *telefoni bianchi* and for those actresses that measured the importance of a part by the meters of close-ups they would get on film. (signed B.)[203]

Mazza's ironic remarks indeed indicated an opening toward the hypothesis of continuity, retracing, although in diminishing terms, the lineage between "telefoni bianchi" and neorealism, following the thread of foreign genres, relevant for both phases of Italian film history. In more constructive terms, Christopher Wagstaff – mentioned at the beginning of this chapter as one of the scholars who

[203] *Cinema*, n. 5 1948. Translation mine. Original text in Italian: "forse, perdurando il presente stato di cose, ognuno d'essi accetterà le proposte ricevute dagli americani, e vedremo De Sica realizzare un film sui ladri di cavalli dell'Arizona, con John Wayne e Linda Darnell nelle parti principali. Poi, siccome l'ingegno vero non accetta compromessi, anche l'America si troverà imbarazzata da questi registi, e li relegherà alla direzione di gialli poco importanti… Questa è la sconsolata conclusione a cui portano i nostri successi cinematografica del 1948; una rivincita postuma dei telefoni bianchi e delle attrici che misuravano l'importanza d'una parte, dal metraggio dei primi piani che essa offriva" (firmato B.).

considered continuity among historical periods – extended his invitation toward a critical reading of neorealism as "participation," both in terms of spectatorship and historicization, in order, he wrote,

> to steer attention to the extent to which neorealist films participated in a continuity with the rest of Italian cinema, both that which preceded and followed neorealism in time and that which surrounded it during its heyday.[204]

Neorealism, Wagstaff adds, was "both in tension and in continuity with the cinema around it."[205] Wagstaff's take on continuity helps subverting the stance of the "school of liberation," in that he calls attention to continuity between periods of film history, and cinematic models. This is attested to by *Without Pity* in the figure of Carla Del Poggio, who, after the war, is "made" into a Hollywood star, as much as in the film Angela undergoes a process of Americanization.

Right after the first half of the century, the pessimistic stance on American culture on the part of Italian left-wing intellectuals, took center stage in cultural debates. Blaming its entanglement with America, intellectuals like Pier Paolo Pasolini reconceptualized the radical stance of neorealism commonly attributed to the "school of liberation," by scholars.[206] Pasolini's aim was to deconstruct the mechanics of periodization ruling over the division between pre and post-war by keeping track of those factors which were not merely "historical" – such as the *end* of the war and of the regime, observing the changes affecting the superstructure that followed these political and historical breaks. Pasolini defined neorealism as follows:

> It is useless to delude oneself about it: neorealism was not a regeneration; it was only a vital crisis, however excessively optimistic and enthusiastic at the beginning [...] it is the price for a lack of mature thought, of a complete reorganization of the culture.[207]

The thematization of the "crisis" (as opposed to a regeneration, bearing an optimistic connotation) is a fertile terrain for understanding postwar aesthetics, and it supports my hypothesis of continuity. At the same time, it can be applied to the changes that the portrayal of the star system underwent across the pre and postwar periods, and that we saw waning and re-emerging in the pages of *Novella*.

The critical wave initiated by Pasolini will continue up to the 1960s, when movies such as *Un americano a Roma* (An American in Rome) (1954), directed by Steno and starring Alberto Sordi – echoing *Un americano in vacanza* (A Yank in Rome) (1946) by Luigi Zampa – made up a stock character for the *americano* in the form of a caricature of excess – signaling the end of a "period," and of a particular structure of feeling.[208] By the time *An American in Rome* was released, consumer goods had long lost their connotation as responding to needs and had become, in the case of US produced goods, a symptom of wealth and American cultural imperialism – especially as the Cold War was shaping up,

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[204] Wagstaff, 7.

[205] Ivi.

[206] Andre Bazin in *What Is Cinema. Volume 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.*

[207] Citation from Mark Shiel, *Italian Neorealism: Building the Cinematic City* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2006), 8. On the same topic, see Pasolini's reflections on Fellini's *Le notti di Cabiria* cited in P. Adam Sitney, *Vital Crises* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), chapter 8.

[208] The break in periodization between postwar Italy and the "economic miracle" will bet central to the following chapter. In the assessment of bodily practices that the economic miracle brought along, I will continue adopting Marcel Mauss' take on "seuils" (thresholds) of feelings, desired and expectations in relation to education and class (*Les Techniques du Corps,* 1950). Moreover I will consider Raymond Williams' notion of the "structure of feeling" as a decisive factor for periodization (*The Long Revolution*, 1961): "one generation may train its successor, with reasonable success, in the social character or the general cultural pattern, but the new generation will have its own structure of feeling, which will not appear to have come from anywhere." (65)

and the United States had a decisive impact in the 1948 elections on the Christian Democracy's victory. The physicality of Alberto Sordi in *An American in Rome* – a baseball fanatic who lives in Rome, would love to be from the US, pretends he speaks English and is nostalgic for all things American – paved the way for the choir of characters and authors mocking the American imagery – its excess – and materials, led by Pier Paolo Pasolini. Culminating in his *Scritti corsari*, published in Italian newspaper *Corriere della sera* throughout the 70s, Pasolini will be writing and filming his way toward the formulation of a radical stance toward America, a mixture indeed or fascination and revulsion, that will lead to his cinematic plastic fantasy *La terra vista dalla luna* (*The Earth Seen from the Moon*) (1967), which will be central to my third chapter, together with other Italian films from the "miracle."

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Italian Cinema of the "Economic Miracle." Design and Disillusionment in Elio Petri's *The Tenth Victim* (1965)

Early in Elio Petri's sci-fi film *La decima vittima* (*The Tenth Victim*, 1965), a group of functionaries from the Ministry of the Big Hunt confiscates a living room's furniture – mainly composed of brightly colored plastic items, and op art installations hanging on the otherwise bare walls. A woman named Valentina accompanies the officers around the apartment, as they confiscate her lover's belongings in compliance with the norms of the dystopian society they work for. At the sight of the emptied apartment – what seems to be an attic, walls painted deep purple – she exclaims merrily: "Ci siamo! Finalmente cambiamo stile! – It was about time! We are finally restyling the house!" Unshaken by the requisition, she picks up the phone and places her order for "un arredamento per cinque stanze neogotico – furniture for a five-room house, neo-gothic style." Meanwhile, in the lower left corner of the frame, the male protagonist and house owner Marcello Poletti lounges in front of a television set (figure 1). He barely acknowledges the presence of the functionaries carrying away the colorful and plastic items from his invaded Roman house, located at the imaginary "Lungotevere Fellini," (Fellini Tiber embankment). He is absorbed in the live streaming of the celebration for the most recent title of "decathlon," conferred to a man in Hong Kong,[209] an appellative for those who partake in and win the Big Hunt, a global competition Marcello is also part of. His only request to the functionaries is "to take the TV last," uninterested in the idea of losing the rest of the furniture.


Figure 1: The apartment on Lungotevere Fellini; functionaries confiscating furniture while Marcello watches the parade on TV; Marcello, Valentina and a functionary watching the celebration for the third decathlete in history, live from Hong Kong.

Marcello and Valentina's respective reactions to the confiscation prefigure the portrayal of domestic objects and design furniture in *The Tenth Victim*: endlessly available, volatile, and easily replaceable. While Valentina takes advantage of the range of choices in furniture across styles, historical period, and world regions, and is opinionated about the confiscation, Marcello reacts by displaying boredom and distrust toward the episode. With this twofold reaction, early on in the film, Elio Petri addresses the flaws in the narrative of the "miracle" or "boom economico" that Italy is undergoing at the time

[209] As Marcello is watching the news, after an update on students' protests, the announcer speaks of the official celebrations for Chu-Tzu, the first Asian man in history to have reached the glorious goal of killing ten victims, taking place in Hong Kong: "all China has stood up as a single person to honor its new hero; the parades will last for days and he will be awarded all the special privileges which our society can bestow upon him for his courage and greatness. Total tax exemption, a state automobile, free admission to all theaters, discounts on railway and airplane fares." The prize is also summarized in the establishing scene of the film, in New York City, by an announcer of the Masoch club, who describes it in less glorifying terms as "money and fame."

that the film is made.[210] Rather than celebrating the economic and industrial prosperity of the nation, *The Tenth Victim* – which takes place in a dystopian future – alludes to its historical backdrop by highlighting the battle for civil rights and the widespread socioeconomic imbalance among strata of the society. This battle was tackled in different terms in the Italian cinematic landscape of the time, most notably in the cinema of Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. In the six-year period of the Italian "miracle," between 1957 and 1963, as historian Paul Ginsborg puts it,

> manufactured goods increased sixfold; the degree of economic integration of the major industrial countries reached new heights; and mass production for mass markets, both internal and external, produced an unprecedented level of prosperity. Fordism (the automated mass production of consumer goods) and consumerism became the twin gods of the age.[211]

The increase in manufactured goods began in the Italian North East, where factories began the mass production of motorized vehicles, with companies like FIAT producing the cars known as 500s, and Piaggio producing Vespa scooters. Moreover, in the same area, firms such as Zanussi[212] and Candy specialized in "elettrodomestici," electric kitchen appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines, and television sets, the same that Italians had learned to love watching US movies. In Ivrea, in the Metropolitan City of Turin, the Olivetti[213] manufacturing company had been giving shape to a market niche for its world-renowned typewriters, which as early as 1952 had deserved an exhibit titled "Olivetti: Design in Industry" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, followed by a show mounted by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1969. Also helping convey a sense of mobility across the nation[214] was the completion of the Autostrada del Sole, the "sunny freeway" connecting Milan to Naples, in 1964,[215] while in 1957 the Trattato di Roma (Rome Treaty)[216] sealed the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC), which allowed for Italy to reorganized its commercial strategy within the new Common Market, and caused exports to grow annually by 14% during this period. Of particular value for exports, was the fact that during the years of the "miracle," Italy was 5th in the world production scale for plastics. By the early 1960s, the Italian industry was up to second

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210 A recent exhibition in Milan, *Boom 60*, described the historical period through an account of the "global image" that took shape as the Italian "economic boom" was projected worldwide – boasting the production of Piaggio Vespas, FIAT cars, and kitchen electronic appliances. The exhibition took place at the Museo del Novecento, in Milan, Italy between October 18th, 2016 and March 31st, 2017. http://www.museodelnovecento.org/en/mostra/boom-60

211 See Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 212

212 In 1959 Zanussi launched the first "Supermarket" fridge with automatic defrosting and two compartments with separate temperature controls. At the end of the 1950s, Zanussi launched its "Tropic System" featuring a rounded style. Meanwhile, the washing machines were already into the second generation, with front-loading, and five washing programmes, developed with an eye for the requirements of the important German market.

213 In 1950 Olivetti had launched the world-renowned typewriter Lettera 22, designed by Marcello Nizzoli. Later, Ettore Sottsass directed design for the brand. Sottsass designed the Tekne 3 typewriter (1958) and the Valentina portable typewriter (1969). Between 1955 and 1964 Olivetti developed some of the first transistorized mainframe computer systems, such as the Elea 9003. See Jonathan Woodham, *Twentieth Century Design.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 160.

214 In *The Plastics Age*, Penny Sparke argues that plastic is a material "at the intersection of high culture and mass culture," 11. It is interesting to think of this in the context of the film as one sees materials "capable of mirroring many of the values within contemporary society," 11. Penny Sparke, ed., *The Plastics Age. From Bakelite to Beanbags and Beyond.* Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1993.

215 See Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*. Ginsborg writes: "In a few years Italy went from being a rural country, to unprecedented economic growth. The materiality of Italy's wealth was palpable, although many historians speak of a 'chaotic rebirth'," 210.

216 See Paul Ginsborg, in particular Chapter 5, "Christian Democracy in State and Society," 160 and Chapter 7, "The Economic Miracle': Rural Exodus and Social Transformation. 1958-1963."

place in the rate of growth on the world level. From 1950 to 1960 there was an increase in internal consumption of 825%, and leap in exports of 4850%, whereas imports increased 900%.[217]

The peak in the production of furniture, international trade, and internal mobility that Italy experienced in 1957-1963 became itself a brand: the "Made in Italy," sustained by the narrative of the "boom," as if it were a sudden explosion.[218] Barely a decade after the war, consumerism seemed to dictate a new trend in how Italians organized their lives and domestic environments. The "boom"[219] was helping Italy projecting a new image of itself, that of an easy life of newly found abundance. In reality, the streamlined production of objects and furniture in the Northern industrial triangle, the triumph of the "Made in Italy," and the image of prosperity projected by cinema not only were for the exclusive benefit of a portion of the nation, but were also the fruit of a slow process that sprang from the rehabilitation of factories, from war industry to peacetime mechanical engineering industries, such as Pirelli and Breda.[220] This phenomenon, together with the restoration of the lacerated building stock, marked a period generally known as "ricostruzione."

Providing a lucid analysis of the period, Paul Ginsborg claimed that the strong economic growth of the miracle[221] produced "a number of grave structural imbalances," such as "the distortion of consumption patterns," and, due to "export-led growth of private consumer goods," no "corresponding development in public consumption."[222] In addition to this, Ginsborg addressed the theme of internal migration from South to North, yet another symptom of the general imbalance and a proof of the fact that what was painted as a widespread wave of wellbeing, was in fact a phenomenon for the mostly already established, industrial and bourgeois classes.[223] Together with Ginsborg, David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle proposed a reading of the "miracle" as "largely illusory," by way of a specific "narrative agenda."[224] By the same token, in *Material Nation* Emanuela Scarpellini, highlighted types of consumption that were peculiar to the period that she called the "Golden Age of Capitalism,"[225] and depicted how they structured Italian life and defined the boundaries of class, gender, and generations, and geographical areas. Along the same lines, in *Irresistible Empire*, Victoria De Grazia argued that ever since the US established "the world's first regime of mass consumption," Italian citizens underwent fundamental changes in the way they satisfied the "mounting demands for a decent standard of living."[226] Lastly, scholars Kristin Ross and Catherine Rossi cut through the traditional historiography of the period and its narrative by foregrounding aspects of product industrial design – in their respective works *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995) and *Crafting Design in Italy* (2015). As a whole, and from different angles, this scholarship echoes Elio Petri's critical stance in *The Tenth Victim,*

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217 See Sparke, *The Plastics Age*, 80. Video on the economic miracle (*Il boom economico italiano*) available in the online archive of Istituto Luce: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjlxzoYe8Ks.

218 The 1960s laid the foundation for the merchandise mark "Made in Italy" indicating that a product is all planned, manufactured and packed in Italy, especially concerning the design, fashion, food, manufacturing, craftsmanship, and engineering industries, that was officially patented in 1980. See www.italtrade.com for a list of companies closely associated with the brand, and Grace Lees-Maffei and Kjetil Fallan, eds. *Made in Italy: Rethinking a Century of Italian Design.* London-New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.

219 See Vittorio De Sica, *Il boom* (1963).

220 Several Italian films from the time include mass production factories in their cityscape: the mechanical manufacturing Breda plants in Milan, in Michelangelo Antonioni's *La notte* (1960), and the Alfa Romeo luxury car manufactory in Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960).

221 The Communist Party commissioned a film called *Il prezzo del miracolo* (The Price for the Miracle), made in 1963, which painted a grim picture of the life and working conditions of the immigrants from the South, and encouraged them to join the party's activities and syndicate. The film can be found in the Youtube page of the Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKoaCZzbQno. See John Foot, 218.

222 Ginsborg, 216.

223 John Foot wrote extensively on the South to North migratory fluxes during the "economic miracle," especially with respect to Italian cinema and the city of Milan, as in *Milan Since the Miracle: City, Culture and Identity* (Berg Publishers: Oxford, 2001), and in his article "Cinema and the City. Milan and Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and his Brothers* (1960)", June 1999, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 4, 209-235.

224 David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War,* Indiana University Press, 2008, 27.

225 Scarpellini, "Society during the Golden Age of Capitalism," in *Material Nation*, 125-175.

226 Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 5.

by merging an analysis of patterns of consumption and industrial production, while foregrounding research on usage and the effective impact that industrial growth had on people's lives.

To unveil such illusoriness, the satirical tone of *The Tenth Victim* drew from the beating heart of the new esthetics and symbolic power of industrial design, as promoted and postulated by mass media – comics, genre films, and magazines.[227] Design magazines in particular were reflective both of traditional artisanship (locally made, unique pieces) and contemporary technology (the serial, Fordist supply chain alluded to by Ginsborg), and often stood as a hybrid product of their time, at the intersection of art and technical magazines.[228] In the design and architecture magazine *Domus*, for instance, the "narrative agenda" of the boom was inflated and foregrounded via ads and weekly columns. Just as in the scene of the confiscation in Marcello's apartment, several ads in magazines boasted the availability of cutting-edge designs for cars and electric appliances. Ad campaigns (figure 2) for the Fiat 500 and Singer refrigerators – in sizes that attested to the changing scale of objects in proportion to the human body, and therefore of comfort – adopted as their respective slogans "L'auto sempre più per tutti" (the car more and more for everyone), and "Per questa famiglia, per tutte le famiglie" (for this family, for all the families). Another ad campaign published in *Domus*, for the Elam[229] kitchen furniture, promoted "molte composizioni a scelta" (multiple choices of composition). A weekly column interpellated a generic subject buyer and householder, exploiting the impersonal form: "per chi deve scegliere i mobili in serie" (for those who need to pick their serial furniture). In its various iterations, the column – whether it addressed the serial production and consumption of "lampade" (lamps), "ufficio" (office), "mobile in giunco" (reed furniture) or "tavoli in pietra" (stone tables) – presented the reader with a plethora of possible purchases, guided by the idea of "componibilità" (modularity), thanks to streamlined serial production. These commercial moves were imbued with, and dependent on, the rhetoric of a collective "boom," in which "tutto" and "tutti" – *anything* available for *anyone* – was central.

[227] On the historical proximity of the births of design and cinema, see Anne Massey, *Hollywood Beyond the Screen*. Oxford: Berg Publisher (2000), and Bruno Di Marino in *Film Oggetto Design*. Milan: postmedia books, 2011: "Del resto il cinema e il design nascono più o meno nello stesso periodo: la seconda metà dell'Ottocento […]. Ciò che lega i due campi è il loro aspetto ontologico, la loro riproducibilità in serie," 15. (Translation mine: After all, cinema and design were born more or less in the same period: second half of the 19th century […] What connects the two fields is their ontological nature, their serial reproducibility.)

[228] In the pages of *Ferrania*, a magazine dedicated to the technical aspects of filmmaking, set photos confirmed the link between the film and the furniture industry. *Ferrania* was also a photographic film manufacturing company that had its American plants in Weatherford, Oklahoma. Similarly, other magazines at the intersection of technical and artistic fields were *La fiera del cinema* and *I quaderni di Ikon*.

[229] Elam system is world famous company from the Lombardy industrial area of Brianza, and a historical Made in Italy brand since 1954. It is specialized in top range design kitchens. In 1999 Elam merged with the industrial design group Tisettanta.



Figure 2: Ads for "la nuova" Fiat 500 (1957) and for Singer refrigerators (1964). The key element is availability, "sempre più per tutti" (more and more for all) and "per tutte le famiglie" (for all families.)

**The Plastic Revolution**

The discourse of availability – industrial design "per tutti" – supported and shaped the "myth" of the miracle. This myth had the effect of ironing out the peculiarity and connotations of different materials, forms and uses – lamps and tables, stone and wood – in the light of their modularity and reproducibility. In response, *The Tenth Victim* emphasized the imbalances between the public portrayals of the boom – celebratory, boastful – and the "illusory" reality underlined by Forgacs. The film depicted its characters' affinity to their time, through their troubled relationship to the materials and the furniture. The most representative material for this relationship was plastic: recently added to the Italian furniture industry, it gained access – and a privileged position – within the production and consumption chain of the "miracle" boasting the "componibilità" (modularity) and "serialità" (seriality) of the ads seen above. Plastic was colorful, cheap, and easily produced in series and massive quantity thanks to molding.[230] These objects punctuate *The Tenth Victim,* and, as seen in the confiscation scene described above, their quality of abundance and accessibility allows us to interpret the characters' indifference toward their – plastic, colorful, exaggerated – belongings. Throughout the film these objects become, more so than a background, a platform and support, sometimes even in prosthetic terms, around which the characters move and act. Marcello's encounters throughout the movie – whether having to do with family, spirituality, or romance and the sense of instability (personal and collective) that will emerge from these encounters, are anchored within the bright palette of plastic objects that crowd Petri's shots.

What is now commonly known as plastic was the result of the work and research of the Italian chemist Giulio Natta. Natta discovered polypropylene, and granted it international copyright as an Italian brand, in the crucial stages of the development of the material copyrighted as "Moplen" in 1963. For this, Natta won the Nobel Prize in 1957,[231] overturning Italy's backward position in terms

[230] See interview with product designer Eliana Lorena, who highlighted the importance of "matrici" (matrix) and "stampi" (molds) "come chiave di svolta dell'industria" (as the key element of the industry). (Interview conducted in Milan, November 2016).

[231] See Giampiero Bosoni, "The Italian Way to Plastics," in Penny Sparke, ed. *The Plastics Age*, 75-91. See also Paul Ginsborg, 214-215 for a contextualization of plastic production in the Italian industrial landscape.

of industrial production. Polypropylene's most common shaping technique was injection molding, used for parts such as cups, cutlery, vials, caps, containers, housewares, and automotive parts such as batteries. Natta's discovery of this cutting edge material was soon adopted as a quintessential "American" plastic material, as US industries had privileged plastic derived materials[232] for serial production, as for Tupperware.[233] Petri's film portrayed plastic products as bearing the fruit of the "industrial design revolution," as they stood "at the intersection of high culture and mass culture," and are "capable of mirroring many of the values within contemporary society."[234] Design historian Penny Sparke stressed the importance of the efforts on the part of many Italian designers to find an authentic form for plastic products, which were initially created as substitutes for luxury materials, in increasing demand and diminishing supply. Moreover, Sparke highlighted the crucial divide between plastic products and "traditional craft materials," which will become central to this chapter:[235]

> After the Second World War plastic products became associated with the concepts of inauthenticity, cheapness, low quality and bad taste. In contrast to the traditional craft materials, clay, stone […], they were downgraded and seen as essentially inferior – a reputation that they have been trying, with the help of designers, to throw off ever since.[236]

In the effort to define a new use and reputation for plastic, Sparke concluded, "the designer created an image of the future, epitomized by the style dubbed 'streamlining'"[237]:

> with the freshness of a country new to industrialization, Italy took, from the start, a positive approach towards the new materials and Italian manufacturing companies – among them Pirelli and Kartell – commissioned young, talented designers to work on the forms of such banal, everyday objects as buckets and washing-up bowls.[238]

Where on one hand, plastic responded to new needs for domestic objects and comfort, and stimulated the creativity of designers, on the other hand the ease with which it was purchased and produced devalued the more immediate necessities pertaining to other realms of existence for many Italians (overshadowing urgent problems such as the "delay" of the South with respect to the North, and the

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232 The first fully synthetic plastic was first invented in its primal form in 1907 and known as Bakelite, after the name of its inventor Leo Baekeland. Marketed as "the material of a thousand uses," Bakelite could be shaped or molded into almost anything, providing endless possibilities. During World War II plastic production in the United States increased by 300%, with materials like nylon and plexiglass being patented and used as substitutes for natural materials. In the postwar years there was a shift in American perceptions as plastics were no longer seen as unambiguously positive. *Plastic* also gradually became a word used to describe that which was cheap, flimsy, or fake. In *The Graduate*, one of the top movies of 1968, Dustin Hoffman's character was urged by an older acquaintance to make a career in plastics, misplaced enthusiasm for an industry that, rather than being full of possibilities, which made audiences cringe at a symbol of cheap conformity and superficiality, rather than endless possibilities. See Joseph L. Nicholson and George R. Leighton, "Plastics Come of Age," *Harper's Magazine,* August 1942, p. 306; Susan Freinkel, *Plastics: A Toxic Love Story* (New York: Henry Holt, 2011), 4.

233 See Penny Sparke, ed., *The Plastics Age. From Bakelite to Beanbags and Beyond.* Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1993; Alison J. Clarke, *Tupperware. The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America.* Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999; Tom H. Fisher, "What We Touch Touches Us," *Design Issues*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 20-31; Ezio Manzini, "And of Plastics," *Domus* 666, November 1985.

234 *The Plastics Age*, 80

235 Ibid., 9

236 On the importance of plastic, see Sparke, *The Plastics Age*: 3. American designers such as Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, and Loewy conducted the research that helped the Italian postwar industry develop. During the war years, new processes were studied in the US: transfer molding, low-pressure molding, injection molding, and new materials like silicone, polythene, and resins.

237 Ibid., 35.

238 Catherine Rossi, *Crafting Design in Italy. From Post-war to Postmodernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 38.

divide between cities and their peripheries and rural areas. With respect to Italy's overall "positive approach" to design, Catherine Rossi remarked: "for most people Italian design was only experienced through magazines, exhibitions and shop windows."[239] Rossi thus explains how, whereas most could afford plastic objects and artisanal furniture, "industrial design" differed from artisanal furniture in being endorsed by a commercial brand, hence much more expensive and less affordable. Hence, industrial design – its intrinsic nature as a luxury – epitomized the discrepancy between industrial expansion, that is, in the North East, and a correspondent widespread upgrade in life quality across classes and regardless of geographical specificity. The plastic fantasy of Italian industrial design remained, for most, precisely that, a fantasy to be consumed in magazines and films.

Figure 3: Marcello and Caroline's first encounter – inflatable plastic chairs, comic books, and superheroes characters.

**The New Italian Mise-en-scène: From Artisanal Furniture to Industrial Design**

The mise-en-scène of *The Tenth Victim* juxtaposes two kinds of furniture design. The first kind is exemplified by the first encounter between Marcello Poletti and Caroline Meredith, which takes place at the rooftop cafe of the Ministry of the Big Hunt's headquarters. Marcello and Caroline hang out around inflatable plastic armchairs – in the film still a generic chair, soon to become branded as *Blow* in 1969 by De Pas, D'Urbino, and Lomazzi for Zanotta.[240] The scene is shot on location on top of the Palazzo dei Ricevimenti e dei Congressi at the EUR in Rome, where Bernardo Bertolucci would notably set his asylum in his later film *Il conformista* (1970).[241] Marcello lounges on an inflatable chair reading a comic book, when Caroline, who is played by the Swiss movie star Ursula Andress, arrives. Caroline too partakes in the Big Hunt and has been assigned Marcello as her death match. The Big Hunt is a killing game played worldwide by common people and celebrities alike. Each participant takes turns and is either matched with a victim by a computer – hence a hunter – or *is* the victim.

[239] Ibid., 5

[240] In addition to the *Blow* chair, in the film rubber foam chairs similar to what will be branded as *Lady* by Marco Zanuso for Cassina appear in one of the domestic environments.

[241] The palazzo was designed by Adalberto Libera for the 1942 Universal Exposition. Construction started in 1938 but was cancelled due to World War II. It was completed in 1954.

Whoever kills his or her "tenth victim," wins the game, and gains fame (as per the parade that Marcello is watching on TV when visited by the omnipresent functionaries of the Big Hunt) and a sum of money. In the scene, Caroline has just flown to Rome from the United States to kill Marcello. She approaches him, holding a camera and pretending to be a journalist conducting research on the sexual habits of Italian men (figure 3). While Caroline wears a bright pink two piece, Marcello wears sunglasses and a black suit and pants. The two seem to mirror their surrounding – the plastic chairs, white aseptic architecture, and comic books. Petri thus stages the first direct encounter between its characters, and consequently of Italy and the America, within a setting, enriched by the characters' clothing, reminiscent of comic book and superheroes. What is more, in the scene Marcello Poletti is positioned right away as a parodic version of Mastroianni's previous characters – for instance Marcello Rubini in Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), and Carlo Pontano in Michelangelo Antonioni's *La notte* (1961): if on one hand he is familiar for a spectator of the time, his bleached air and almost cartoonesque demeanor function as a statement with respect to the Italian cinematic tradition of the miracle, acknowledged, yet challenged.

Mastroianni's look is an indicator that in *The Tenth Victim,* his character (a sort of mock-up, more modern version of the suit and tie and dark sunglasses high-life connoisseur and journalist he plays as Rubini, in *La dolce vita*) bridges aspects of the intertext between *La dolce vita* and *The Tenth Victim*, starting with the initial letters of the words in the titles of the two films, as in the Italian title *La decima vittima*. Petri readapts various aspects: the presence of paparazzi, the Roman location, and most notably, in a later scene he assembles a group of "tramontisti," a cult that worships the sunset in a mass celebration at a beach in Ostia, reminiscent both of the Ostia beach scenes in *La dolce vita*, and of Fellini's signature "miracle scene" in which a large crowd gathers to witness the apparition of a madonna. In the macrotext of the film, Petri overcomes *La dolce vita* with his satire – displaying the absurdity and vacuity of certain trends with his direct allusions to Fellini's film, while the encounter between Marcello and Caroline becomes the ground for a reflection on the growing distance between Italy and the United States when it came to societal tensions, consumption, and civil rights..

Back to the rooftop scene: next to Marcello, Caroline presents herself as an American "liberated" woman, who stands out against her Italian female counterparts as sexually liberated – a woman who talks freely about divorce and handles guns. She engages right away in a conversation that brings to the forefront themes like sexual mores and divorce. From this scene on, Caroline becomes an emblem for the United States' "progressive" views, bringing out Marcello's old-fashioned ideals with respect to marriage and gender equality, as Caroline responds with surprise to the idea that he has "only been married once" – hinting at the fact that divorce was legalized in Italy in 1970, whereas it had been legal for decades in the United States. But the conversation has only began. Just a few scenes later, in one of the many living room scenes in *The Tenth Victim*, Petri introduces one of the most irreverent moments of his film, continuing his discussion of family and politics. Marcello and Caroline are now back at Marcello's place: as Caroline roams around the house, the interiors reveal more of the plastic furniture described above, this time in an orange palette, some chalk mannequins, blown up photographs of body parts such as a woman's bikini, and a room with optical targets and shotguns hanging on the wall (figure 4). Caroline picks up a shotgun and shoots - and centers – two of the targets. What initially seems like a wall, opens to reveal an old-fashioned living room – the second kind of design present in the film, hidden behind the first type of "industrial design" furniture – where Marcello's parents are playing cards. The dialogue that follows between the characters makes it clear that parents are an aging commodity – in this case, one to be given away just as much as the old furniture should be substituted: "What on earth are you doing with your parents anyway? Why haven't your turned them over to the state?" asks Caroline, to which Marcello responds: "In Italy we are for the family no matter what the laws are. Almost no one turns in his parents. We keep them hidden. Sometimes we fix them up to look like teenagers." Caroline concludes: "Incredible, then you

love them very much." This moment of familiarity, intimacy, and an antiquated pastime is an extreme portrayal of any older design style – seen from the vantage point of "the boom," not dissimilar to what Valentina had meant by purchasing neo-gothic furniture for her lover's apartment.

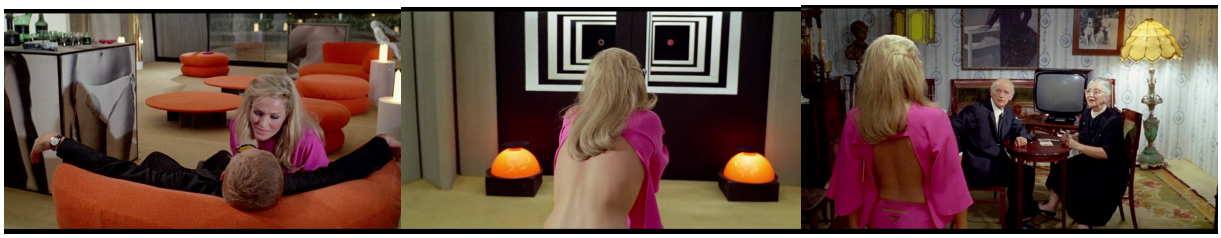

Figure 4: Caroline visits Marcello's house, and the lounge in the living room; Caroline finds a rifle pointed at two targets; as she centers the target, a door opens onto an old living room, where Marcello's parents are playing cards.

With these two scenes, Petri set up the duality of modern and vintage within his characters' interactions with furniture. Catherine Rossi advances that there were two terms at play in the transition that Italy was undergoing: the present of plastic industrial design, seriality and technical reproducibility was sailing away from "Italy's small-scale, family-run craft workshops,"[242] which, Rossi specifies, was still a mainstay of Italian manufacturing. Artisanal crafts played a fundamental role in shaping the phenomenon of Italian industrial design – at least in the period between 1945 to the early 1980s – and remained a constant reference point for Italy's architects, producers, commentators, and consumers. In the *Tenth Victim*, the undisciplined attraction toward objects of the house, and the coexistence of "small-scale" furniture and industrial design reflected a shift – a sense of disillusionment in the relationship toward American society and culture – that intellectuals like Pier Paolo Pasolini were also parsing out.

**Plastic Fantasies in Pasolini's *The Earth Seen from the Moon* (1965)**

The interior domestic scenes of the apartments in *The Tenth Victim* were echoed, two years later, by the setting of the protagonists' shack in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Earth Seen from the Moon* (1967), at the Fiumara di Fiumicino, "a peripheral neighborhood at the mouth of the Tiber."[243] The episode's three protagonists are a recently widowed man and his son, Ciancicato and Baciu Miau – played by Totò and Ninetto Davoli – and a deaf mute woman named Assurdina played by Silvana Mangano. The three form a new family and create a household in the periphery of Rome. Pasolini's camera dwells on houses in ruins and colorful huts around the Circonvallazione Ostiense. After Ciancicato marries the woman, the three move into a shack that looks dishevelled and inhospitable.

As Noa Steimatsky writes in *Italian Locations*, the making of the shack into a domestic space gives way to a scene in which ruins and remnants of war meet "with fond memories of an earlier popular culture, but also with postwar vestiges of consumerism."[244] The scene, in Steimatsky's words, "reconsacrates the ramshackle, marginal world, seeing its humility as grandeur, its muteness as eloquence, its tragic-comedic resourcefulness as a 'desperate vitality'."[245] Ciancicato refers to the shack as "il nostro nido" (our nest) in a "zona panoramica" (panoramic area), with "luce, fogne, acqua

[242] See Catherine Rossi, *Crafting design in Italy. From Postwar to Postmodernism*, in particular the chapter "Craft and the Birth of Postwar Italian Design."
[243] See also Noa Steimatsky, "Elemental Housing in the Postwar Imaginary," 45.
[244] Noa Steimatsky, *Italian Locations. Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema.* Minnesota University Press, 2008.
[245] Ibid., vii.

potabile" (electricity, drainage system, and drinking water) (figure 5). Soon, Pasolini's cinematography crosses over into the fantastic and the absurd. Assurdina goes through a pile of old objects hoarded in the shack overflowing with objects (figure 6): clothing, a few dead bats, furniture, a hand grenade, a cash register, a skull, a living child dressed up in typical Chinese garments (sporting a mustache), and a framed photograph of Charlie Chaplin. The woman rearranges the shack in what Steimatsky has called "a colorful bricolage,"[246] after being unimpressed by the pile of assorted items, but lightening up when seeing plastic. Using exclusively plastic objects, she recomposes the house: "Che meraviglia, sembra di stare a San Pietro!" (How marvelous, it's just like being in St. Peter's!), comments Ciancicato upon seeing the transformed space. In the second half of the episode, the characters try to gain access to a "castle" seen within the vicinity of their shack – a "a mock-fantasy" or "would-be-villas"[247] which both allows for Totò to unleash his comedic power (as he makes Assurdina stage an attempted suicide from the top of the Coliseum to extort money from people) as well as the more resigned overtone of the film, in that while performing his scene, Assurdina slips on a banana peel and dies.

Figure 5: Assurdina and Ciancicato, just married, walk through the "panoramic area" on their way home, while Baciu plays the harmonica; Assurdina catches a glimpse of the "castle," hoping it's where they are headed; the arrival at home, a tin shack covered in hay.

Figure 6: A "new" shack, after Assurdina's rearrangement. Plastic objects on the wall, colored glass windows, plastic curtains.

Thus, in his "fiaba," Pasolini merged the ruins left behind by the war – the physical, material displacement of many citizens who found themselves homeless – with the overabundance of the latest, modern material kitsch, cartoonish, and generally plastic:

[246] Ivi.

[247] Ibid. Steimatsky writes of Pasolini's choice of found objects for the film: "Out of found and fabricated objects, fragments, ruins that reach back to pre-Fascist, even premodern lore, he conjures up an image of Italy as at once humble and parodic pastiche of contemporary excess."

> just as Mangano's bricolage of discarded residues - drawing on an overabundant cycle of commodities that still cannot solve the economic or housing predicament of these characters - is raised to a phantasmic order akin to the filmmaker's craft, so Pasolini out of this landscape, with its refuse of modernity, assembles a precise, obverse vision of Italy's contemporary condition.[248]

As Steimatksy's quote renders vividly, while Pasolini anchored his story within the comedic style in vogue at the time - through Totò, the omnipresent Ninetto Davoli, and the film star Silvana Mangano – he also pointed to the absurdity of the production of plastic (the objects in the film seem merely ornamental) in which Italy seemed to be investing more than on substantial house reconstruction, especially in the peripheries. Assurdina, Baciu, and Ciancicato never manage to thrive within their freshly-"reconstructed" environment, unfulfilled by their superficially colored new belongings. Pasolini foregrounded "ricostruzione" and "riconversione" in the periodization of this socioeconomic phase, often minimized by accounts that posed the words "boom" and "reconstruction" as interchangeable terms. Moreover, at a cinematic level, Pasolini offered that "riconversione" and "reconstruction" were necessary discursive tools for a historicization of the cinema of the years between the war and the "miracle."

In *The Earth Seen from the Moon*, the need for an authentic portrayal of historical reality was embossed in the use of plastic to make up the characters' household. As Penny Sparke writes in a quote mentioned above, plastic "was almost always made to look like something else, something more expensive and hard to fabricate," and known "as an imitation, rather than a wonderful new substance to be exploited for its own good looks."[249] Within the film, Pasolini gestured precisely toward the disproportion between the exchange value of plastic (as an "imitation" of something "more expensive") and its use value (in the absurd, merely decorative use of plastic objects in Assurdina's shack). As the shared sensibility of *The Tenth Victim* and *The Earth Seen from the Moon* reveals, together with Pasolini, Petri too strived to parse out the imbalance between modernity (plastic, "American"-objects of serial production) and tradition (artisanal, unique pieces). The scenes from the films analyzed so far allow us to gauge the scope of Italy's professional and industrial transformation during the postwar period, and the consequent readjustment of the relationship with the United States, symbolized by the coexistence of "new" and "vintage" design, which becomes, as seen above, a catalyst for Petri's discussion of Italian society and the narrative of the miracle.

In his foundational book, *Problems of Design* American designer George Nelson spoke of a new professional category, that of Italian "designers and manufacturers who years ago could have been craftsmen."[250] Nelson pointed to the creation of a "new craft" *tout-court*. "With technology moving slowly," he wrote, "tradition becomes the main guide towards suitable form […]. Once developed, forms settle into fairly rigid molds and 'design' would be described more precisely as imitation of standard patterns, with individual variations."[251] Nelson postulated the birth of a "new craft," a *new* professional category of "industrial designers," that was trying to overcome older traditions, while maintaining them as their "main guide." In Italy, this meant that many emergent designers of the time had been trained under the Rationalist architectural school, while in the United States they were trained under the school of modernist architecture. For the purposes of an exploration of Italian cinema at the time, Nelson's point on the relationship between tradition and innovation fits the type of engaged approach to cinema demonstrated by Pasolini and Petri, visible in their choice of a "less traditional" genre, dissonant with the unequivocally acclaimed cinema of the moment (from which they still draw

[248] Steimatsky, x.
[249] Sparke, *The Plastics Age*, 29
[250] George Nelson, *Problems of Design*, Whitney Publications 1957, vii.
[251] Ibid., 9

materials, as from Fellini's and Antonioni's films), and with a more explicit political engagement. Aware of the rarity and rigor of their intellectual role – thus echoing the possibility of a well-rounded, more aware type of designer – able to embrace the dialectic of the artisanal and the modern and who in Nelson's words "exist[ed] now only in the narrow cracks left between really large-scale industries"[252] – directors like Pasolini and Petri turned toward America.

For Italian intellectuals, opening up to US culture and cinema meant engaging critically with the image of "international breadth" that American curators were striving to project when it came to Italian culture and design. Starting after the end of World War II, in a series of exhibitions, American artists, designers, and curators joined the effort toward the preservation of an artisanal feeling to all things Italian, and spread the "culture of the home in Italy" throughout the 1960s. Hence Pasolini's and Petri's awareness of US culture (as seen in *The Tenth Victim*), responded to the global scope that Italian design, thanks to American intervention, was acquiring. And in both films, the excess of modernity (i.e. plastic) was played out against the survival of a traditional design, mimicking a wider market operation, regulated by the US, that had at heart the preservation of an artisanal tradition of design, for a wider, international consumer, as described by Penny Sparke:

> After the war the emphasis was, simultaneously, upon both continuity and change. Within the new Italian republic artisanal work played a cultural, as well as an economic role, its continued presence helping to define, for Italy, a new sense of modernity which was inward-looking and nationally defined in nature but international in its visibility and purpose.[253]

Sparke depicts the operation as being simultaneously "inward-looking" and "international in its visibility and purpose": the combined effort of global market laws and local artisanship defined the Italian economic structure of the decade of 1955-1965 – and of its predicaments. By reckoning the global nature of the advent of industrial design, Sparke described the launch on the market of new, serially produced objects (i.e. design furniture) that steadily introduced new *needs* and circumvented – if not obscured – the urgency of older and more basic needs still pending as a consequence of the war. For instance, Sparke acknowledged the severe cost of housing still burdening low and moderate-income working households, and examined the function and significance of artisanal design within that context. As has been discussed above, this reflection was also at the heart of Pasolini's and Petri's films, made visible in their use of the new materials as an instrument of social criticism. At the same time, their focus on reconstruction provided international breadth to previous films such as Vittorio De Sica's *Il tetto* (1954), *045 Ricostruzione edilizia* (Vittorio Sala, 1952),[254] or Fellini's *Le notti di Cabiria* (1957) – not by chance all products of the period between neorealism and the boom. The emphasis on cinema and design, and of design *in* cinema, allows us to engage in depth with the role of American politics in shaping the discourse of the Italian boom. As a preliminary move, it is necessary to turn back to the postwar years to understand how American aid functioned first and foremost to guarantee the US' own growth and wealth.

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[252] Ivi.

[253] Penny Sparke, "The Straw Donkey: Tourist Kitsch or Proto-Design? Craft and Design in Italy, 1945-1960," *Journal of Design History*, 11, no. 1 (1998), 59-69.

[254] See Noa Steimatsky, "Elemental Housing in the Postwar Imaginary," in *Arts and Artifacts in Movie. Technologies, Aesthetics, Communication.* Fabrizio Serra Editore, Pisa-Roma, 6, 2009, 48. Steimatsky expands on the reality of people living in caves, or "making their home among neglected ruins." In particular, in his short film De Sala documents the struggle of a family that is assigned housing (number 045 being the municipal number) inside the Terme di Caracalla.

**The Marshall Plan (1948-1951) and the *Italy at Work* exhibition**

As illustrated in the previous chapter, in 1948 the Marshall Plan initiated a process of reeducation and healing for war-torn Italian citizens and cities. A close reading of General Marshall's original speech unveils the narrative of an Italian "rebirth" – made possible by US aid, and in the US' interest – at the heart of the plan. The speech presented American aid in absolute terms, such as "truth" and "logic:"

> The truth of the matter is that Europe's requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products are coming principally from America, and they are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help, or face economic, social and political deterioration of a very grave character. [255]

The logic of the speech positioned the US as a savior: "It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace."[256] The articulation of the plan created a divide between America and those in need – that is, "the world" – while dictating an *aut aut* between mutually exclusive possible outcomes: "economic deterioration" and "assured peace." Of the two, of course, only one was presented as viable. This formulation is fundamental to understanding Sparke's remark on the "international visibility" of Italy's design industry a decade later, and assists in recognizing the US' pivotal role and interest at the heart of the narrative agenda of Italy as an "artisanal" nation[257] – based on the non-mechanized production of off-series goods, using craft materials and embodying a strong sense of regional specificity – which lasted into the 1960s.

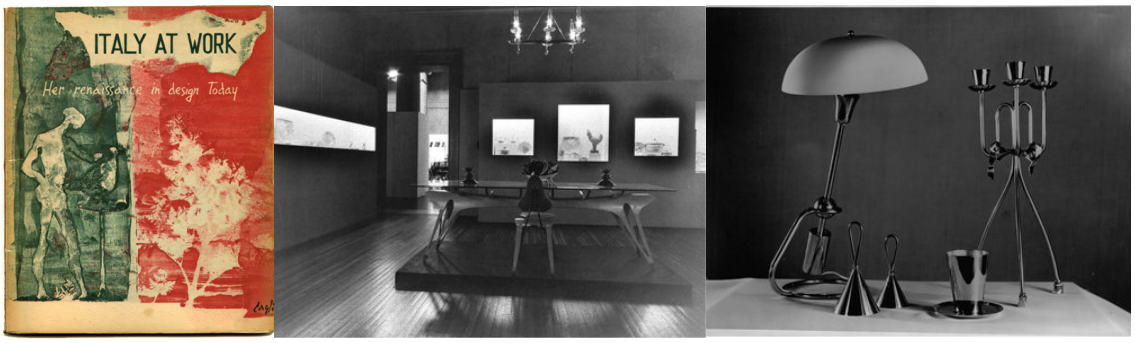


Figure 7: The cover of the exhibition catalogue; a dining room, a set of lamp and chandelier.

During the third and final year of the Marshall Plan operation, a committee of American curators brought to life an exhibition titled *Italy at Work: Her Renaissance in Design Today*. The exhibition opened at the Brooklyn Museum in November 1950 (through January 31, 1951)[258] and toured twelve galleries

[255] The speech by General Marshall can be found in the official website of The Marshall Foundation: https://www.marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/marshall-plan-speech/

[256] Ivi.

[257] See Penny Sparke on the concept of the artisanal, in "The Straw Donkey": at the time of the exhibition, Sparke writes, "Italy still has rural and artisanal roots," hence artisanal work at the time has a nostalgic significance, and, on the part of the US can also "be seen as a means of legitimizing, and indeed making "Italian," a role for primitivism within contemporary visual culture…", 60.

[258] May 1951, IX Milan Triennale International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts and Modern Architecture opens in Milan, with the theme L'unità delle arti. Catherine Rossi writes in *Crafting Design*: "The Italian architect and artist organisers attempted to project a unified image of post-war modernity, but this was clouded by internal conflicts that reflected wider political turmoil. While

and museums across the country, over a period of two years (figure 7).[259] The exhibition – proposing, as the catalogue states, to shed light on "this new and vital flowering of ancient Italian traditions" – was singlehandedly responsible for the reworking of the dichotomy between the artisanal and the traditional, as modeled a decade later in the films *The Tenth Victim* (1965) and *The Earth Seen From the Moon* (1967). Christine Rossi wrote:

> Primarily American conceived, funded and organized, *Italy at Work* aimed to boost Italy's post-war reconstruction by presenting the nation's handmade wares to the American consumer. Despite the word 'design' in the title, craft materials and techniques dominated the two thousand five hundred exhibits and the five room sets designed by architects including Carlo Mollino and Gio Ponti.[260]

As the story goes, Italy was "at work," which complied with General Marshall's speech assertion that Italy would have to "help herself." The teleology implicit in the show's title – rebirth via work – bound Italy to allow the US to operate its "re-discovery." The exhibition showcased Italy's "new design image and ideology, which owed much to the Fordist mass-production/mass-consumption model that was injected into the Italian context along with the US funds."[261] American architect Charles Nagel acted as chief curator, and with a jury, embarked on a three-month tour of rural Italy to select samples of Italian industrial art, "seeking out the Italian craftsmen in the odd places where they live and work."[262] The jury included Meyric R. Rogers, Curator of Decorative Arts of the Chicago Art Institute, and industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague. Travelling across Italy, the American delegation was struck by the persistent presence of artisanal shops and saw an opportunity to capitalize on materials that – still in vogue in Italian local contexts – had disappeared from American design trends, such as ceramic, glass, and silverware.

Such a sense of "re-discovery" emanated from the exhibition. The curators describe the unearthing of art treasures that had been hidden to Italians due to two factors: on one hand, it is in the nature of the "poor Italian artisan to be unaware of the commercial value of her own artifacts," and on the other, it is only under a liberal state and free market that "the vigorous flowering of an early spring, an upsurge of the Italian vitality" can take place, a vitality "that seems to have stored itself up during the long, grey Fascist interim, waiting for this day of sun again."[263] Rogers and Teague pointed to this hidden value, seizing on the potential for a liberal Italy, on "this day of sun," calling for its assimilation into US capitalism. In several passages the viewer was reminded, that "all this" wouldn't have been possible if it hadn't been for the Marshall Plan.[264] As for the coexistence of the artisanal and the mechanized, the curators stated:

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industrial design was present, craft remained the mainstay for Italy's exhibits, and both were given multiple roles by competing visions for the nation's post-war future," 10.

[259] The preparation of the exhibition before its American tour took place in the Uffizi, in the basement of the Gallery.

[260] Rossi, *Crafting Design*, 10.

[261] Sparke, *The Straw Donkey,* 65. See also *Serie/Fuori Serie* by Silvana Annichiarico, who analyzes how Fiat and Olivetti, among other brands, use the Fordist model so that industrial production received energy from spontaneous experimentation: the mass production of commodities was implemented in a discontinuous manner, and the off-series, as an experimental prototype, constituted the basic scenario in which standard products were the exceptions, and not vice versa" (35). The book is the catalogue of an exhibition curated in 2003 by Andrea Branzi at the Triennale in Milan, on the off-series products made by industries that would become important producers of series furnishing.

[262] Walter Dorwin Teague, ed. *Italy at Work. Her Renaissance in Design Today* (Rome: Compagnia nazionale artigiana, 1950), 9.

[263] Ibid., 10.

[264] "No recent visitor to Italy can overlook the immediate effectiveness of the aid given by the Marshall Plan [...]. Ways must now be found to make this temporary aid permanently effective in creating an autonomous economy" (*Italy at Work*, 14).

> The prevalence of handicraft or semi-handicraft production in relatively small units characteristic of Italy's individualized output does not exclude the development of highly industrialized production where it is essential. In order to complete this picture of contemporary design it was therefore considered necessary to include some examples of her attainment in the purely industrial phase. Given the right conditions, it is here that the universally recognized scientific and mechanical skills of the Italian people combine most effectively with their ingenuity and sense of form.[265]

What's more, this remarkable catalogue text often took the form of journal entries, describing travels "up and down" Italy. The descriptions evoke the "bomb-blasted walls" as the backdrop to artifacts' original location, attesting to "an intensity of significance that, fine as it is, it can never have elsewhere." That is, in light of the war and its wake of devastation, the curators capitalized on the "bomb-blasted walls," suggesting a "quick" role attributed to the war, as a contributing element in the display of modern, contemporary design. The catalogue orients the artifacts within the process of being rescued and reconstructed. With American help, Italy's new "highly industrialized" spirit of design was left to negotiate its place with old school "handicraft," as seen in the exhibition as well as in the settings of Italian films of the period, such as in *The Earth Seen from the Moon*. By providing a well-rounded "picture of contemporary design," *Italy at Work* "invented" a new Italy, while remarking on pre-existing cultural staples including the nuclear family, and the house as the site where the order is maintained, in its sections dedicated to "dining room" and "lighting apparatus," without excluding more luxurious goods such as "ceramics," and "costume jewelry."[266]

This material also reveals how *Italy at Work* was as much a "trade show as a cultural event," in Sparke's words, and thus part and parcel of the program of economic support that the US was providing for Italy at the time. Under the umbrella of the Marshall Plan, five million dollars were made available to stimulate the work of the Italian craft industries. Yet, as seen, this operation went well beyond "economic support," as "Italian artifacts were being shown in the USA as a means of stimulating consumer desire in the American marketplace, thereby assisting in promoting trade links between the two nations and helping the economies of both countries."[267] That is to say that the more Italy stayed "artisanal," the more it would benefit the American marketplace, embodying, as Rogers put it, a "necessary counter-balance to the lifeless monotony of purely mechanical production."[268] According to Sparke, the exhibition and its surrounding rhetoric repeatedly "construct Italy as America's non-industrialized, non-modern 'other' in which the spatial separation between America and Italy, and the former's superior economic and industrial might, is translated into a temporal difference."[269] Finally, Rossi highlighted how, as an article on the New York Herald Tribune from the time states, the US promoted *Italy at Work* as a way "to enable Italy to help itself more successfully in the effort to shield the country against misery and Communism."[270] Yet, if Rogers and Teague constructed Italy as the "other," they maintained that America could help it fill in the gaps left open by the war. As seen in Italian films of the time, *Without Pity* (1948) and *Tombolo, paradiso nero* (1946), and as discussed in Chapter 2, widespread corruption and an active black market – already present as a consequence of the war – were concealed behind the boastful rhetoric of the Plan. The narrative of "healing" worked in favor of America only at a symbolic, discursive level, rather than having an impact

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265 *Italy at Work*, 48.

266 Gio Ponti and Carlo Mollino designed living and dining rooms for the exhibition *Italy at Work* (see catalogue, 60). New concerns with the "image" of a household, and new habit changed the way a household was to function – what could be *done* in a kitchen or displayed in a living room – while altering notions of time and space as measured in the house.

267 Sparke, *The Straw Donkey*, 60.

268 Rogers in *Italy at Work*, 60.

269 Rossi, 21.

270 Ibid., 10

on the way in which Italy recovered from the war as both a nation of artisans, and the inventor of industrial design.

As a spin-off of the exhibition, in 1951 a New York City Macy's branch opened a temporary section called "Italy in Macy's." Catherine Rossi recalls that

> Inside the Herald Square branch was a model replica of St Peter's Cathedral in Rome, a full-sized Venetian gondola, a donkey cart adorned with paintings of Harry Truman and Marshall alongside displays of straw-covered glass bottles, and sales clerks in Italian costumes alongside Italian artisans practicing their crafts.[271]

While *Italy at Work* promoted its vision, with different degrees of explicit connection to a commercial interest (as in the case of Italy in Macy's), the physical presence of Americans in Italy after the war reinforced the exhibition's discursive power. As observed by Christina Rossi in her book chapter "Craft and the Birth of Postwar Italian Design,"[272] the year 1951 marked both the final year of the Plan, and the peak in the flow of American artists settling down in Italy. The phenomenon of a community of American artists and filmmakers in Rome flourished as early as 1949, which comprised war veterans who after the end of the war, had chosen to remain in Rome, fleshing out the presence of American consumer goods as spurred by the Marshall Plan. Among the artists were William Demby – an Army veteran and celebrated novelist who returned to Rome after the war, in 1947[273]; literary critic Hoyt Fuller, translator Ben Johnson, and novelist Richard Wright. This art scene would become central to films of the 1950s such as Michelangelo Antonioni's *Le amiche* (1955), whose story revolves around the art scene in Turin at the time. The existing community of American artists in Rome thrived under the leadership of Leo Castelli,[274] among others, an art dealer who fostered the development of an American art market of works, specifically made in, and conceived for, Italy, as a bridge between the two cultures (in design, visual arts, and cinema).

In the years that separated *Italy at Work* and *The Tenth Victim*, American artists living in Italy gained visibility, including Jasper Johns, who dominated the scene at the 1958 Venice Biennale, and Robert Rauschenberg, who was granted a solo exhibition in Rome in 1959. This attests to the growing momentum of pop art in those years, which would strongly inform Petri's film. The next section of this chapter will return to Petri's film: given the trajectory of the relationship between the US and Italy outlined so far in the years that led up to the movie, it will become clear how *The Tenth Victim* is highly significant as it stands at the intersection of Italy's postwar years (of which the highest cinematic expression was neorealism), contemporary Italian cinema (as in Fellini's *La dolce vita* and Antonioni's *La notte*), and American pop art. *The Tenth Victim* embodied these historical tensions and their aesthetics and culture, retaining a lucid and critical stance toward them (both the US and "the miracle"), and appropriating, artistically, the quest for an unbounded artistic expression. How *The Tenth Victim* is representative of Italian pop art, and how its analysis allows to shed light on the passage from neorealism to the miracle, and on the tension between rejecting and assimilating tradition and

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271 Ibid., 28. 25,000 people showed up to the first day of Italy-in-Macy's

272 Ivi.

273 After the war, Demby returned to Rome to study art history at the Università degli Studi di Roma, worked in the Italian motion picture industry and in 1950 wrote his most acclaimed novel, *Beetlecreek* (Jackson: Banner Books, 1998). During his decades living in Rome, Demby worked for many important Italian film directors, among them Federico Fellini, translating Italian screenplays and films into English. He was assistant director of dialogue on Roberto Rossellini's film *Europa 51*, starring Ingrid Bergman. Demby also wrote for various American magazines, among them *The Reporter*.

274 The crucial figure for the development of an Italian Pop Art is Leo Castelli, who opened his gallery in Rome in 1955, and was close to Roy Lichtenstein, at the time working on his *Interiors,* directly in Rome – mocking Van Gogh's bedroom. Other figures of passage and communication between Italy and the US were Massimo and Lella Vignelli. In Rome, remarkably there were many galleries that permitted the exchange, such as l'Obelisco and Marlbourough. See also how another important figure for postwar Rome was William Klein, *Roma 1959*, active in cinema as well (Fellini had called him to Rome to work on *Cabiria's Nights* in 1956).

modernity has to do with Petri's own vision of America, his interest in the historicization of neorealism, and in turn of the Italian art scene at large.

**Elio Petri and America**

The cold opening of *The Tenth Victim* establishes Manhattan, and New York City, as a symbolic place of origins, while it captures the final moments of an armed chase between a victim and his hunter.[275] It's an ordinary scene, in the fictional world ruled by the Big Hunt. In the opening scene, Caroline is the hunter – in a plastic white mini skirt, and sci-fi outfit reminiscent of comic books.[276] She is running after her ninth assigned victim, an Asian man – the streets of New York City are their war zone – whom she ends up killing by way of a bra that features a shooting device (figure 8) after performing a striptease in a private club called Masoch Club.

Figure 8: The cold open in New York city: the hunter; Caroline running away through a construction site; the killing scene through a special bra.

This initial, isolated episode stands out against the rest of the film, as action quickly moves to location shooting in Rome, and extravagant interior scenes, in the dystopian future portrayed by the film (figure 9). As Marcello and Caroline get closer, through their respective Italian and American perspectives and their interactions with the mise-en-scéne, themes such as abortion, divorce, and gun rights are discussed, fought for, and challenged. As the Ministry enforces its rules and pressure and regulates rights to life and death with the Hunt, within the unstable Italian society, in a futuristic Rome, Petri stages the last act of Italy's fascination for America and its ever-present state of novelty and progress.

As the opening scene unfolds, a viewer can't help but recall the desolation of the streets of many neorealism films – namely Roberto Rossellini's Berlin in *Germania anno zero* (Germany Year Zero) (1948) or the curfew-ridden Florence of *Paisà*'s episode (1946). Hence, what is also perceived as a "work in progress" visible in the streets of New York, with signs and machinery that allude to roadwork, unequivocally recalls the strife of the reconstruction and the past in the scarred and bombarded Italian cities. By producing this immediate sense of estrangement in the viewer, Petri accomplishes a move against current stereotypical views of Italianness and, crucially, bridges neorealism with the 1960s film production. That is to say that Petri's film enables a sense of continuity between the cinematic, social, and political contexts of postwar Italy (neorealism) and the economic miracle, thus paving the way for other intellectuals of the time to engage with the same questions of periodization and historicization, as this chapter will show. In a number of films from the time, starting with *La dolce vita* (1960) – which only partially engage with the theme of the reconstruction in relation to the urban periphery – storylines are specifically built around issues of housing such as Luchino

[275] The film was released in Italy on December 2nd, 1965, and in the US on December 20th, 1965.

[276] In addition to this, it links the character of Ursula Andress to the imagery of the American star – reminiscent of her previous Hollywood hits, and anticipating upcoming roles such as Jane Fonda's in *Barbarella* (1968). Moreover, the exaggerated use of guns in *The Tenth Victim* echoes debates on gun rights in America, and will resurface three years later in by *Barbarella*'s opening phrase: "Why would anybody want to invent a weapon?"

Visconti's *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (Rocco and His Brothers) (1960), Francesco Rosi's *Le mani sulla città* (Hands Over the City)(1963), Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1965). Hence, these films are echoed by the empty streets and housing projects visible in Petri's opening, which bridges a film like *Germany Year Zero*, specifically about ruins, with films from the miracle in which housing is one of the angles and entry points into a period otherwise epitomized by luxury goods and industrial design.

By choosing New York City, the film captures the skyscrapers, the empty streets dwarfing, if not replacing, human figures, as the ghost-downtown Manhattan gets emptied of its aura of cosmopolitanism. The camerawork here recalls the celebratory shots of New York City in Alberto Lattuada's *Mafioso* (1962) with their low-angle shots – but empties the narrative of any celebratory, overpowering stance. Standing as an isolated episode, the opening contrasts with, and prepares the viewer for, the remainder of the film, shot either in domestic interiors or in Rome. Moreover, the opening scene challenges the traditional view of America: by not fulfilling spectatorial expectations of traditional American aesthetics and symbolism (a crowded land of abundance) and focusing instead on the Big Hunt as a statement on contemporary Italian society, it also comments on the terms of the American presence in Italy (i.e. the art community and the soldiers in Rome, substituted for by Caroline's departure for Rome as she is assigned a random victim).


Figure 9: Plastic, color, art installations in public places (the headquarter of the Ministry of the Big Hunt, and the Masoch Club) and in domestic interiors.

*The Tenth Victim* was a film adaptation of *The Seventh Victim,* which appeared as a short story on *Galaxy Science Fiction* in 1953, signed by Robert Sheckley.[277] When the film premiered in 1965,[278] critics were taken aback by its non-conforming qualities and unusual subjectmatter. In the following years, *The Tenth Victim* was shadowed by the more explicitly "political Petri," made famous by films like *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (*Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* )(1970) or *La classe operaia va in paradiso* (*The Working Class Goes to Heaven*) (1971). Unlike in his later production, in *The Tenth Victim*, by adopting a critical stance with respect to Italian films, Petri also took a stance regarding the US. The contact with America (namely in the relationship between the two main characters) has an ambiguous undertone – of fascination and repulsion, for each other and for their respective cultural backgrounds: the US is a mirror against which Italy can define the state of its own discourse on civil liberties. Many have overlooked the specifically "political" role of genre and design in the film: Italian film scholars Lucia Cardone and Jean Gili, labeled the film as "apolitico," and attempted to categorize the film anew. Not pertaining to his "cinema politico," the film was read in the light of the "straniamento cognitivo" (cognitive estrangement)[279] that it provoked, while, it was said, it offered a "pop reportage" of Italian life. Cardone underlined how Petri was targeting "i desideri "all'americana",

[277] After *The Tenth Victim* came out in 1965, Sheckely produced a novelization of his short story, to be followed after twenty years by the sequels *Victim Prime* (1987) and *Hunter/Victim* (1988).
[278] In his adaptation, Petri director applies a particular filter to Sheckely's original material, one that "multiplies." As Cardone notices, "tra *Seventh Victim* e la trasposizione per lo schermo approntata da Petri si stabilisce una sorta di equivalenza iperbolica, una distanza fondata sulla proliferazione degli oggetti e sulla pulsione caleidoscopica dello sguardo che li mette in scena" (Cardone 39). In this quote, Cardone speaks of Petri as resorting to "hyperbole" and "proliferation of objects," as well as to a "kaleidoscopic gaze."
[279] See Lucia Cardone, *Elio Petri impolitico* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2005).

"la nascente e vacua ansia di consumo," and argued that Petri moved across a "superficie consapevolmente pop" (a consciously pop surface).[280]

Whereas Cardone's dismissal of Petri as "apolitico" was easily rebutted by the evident presence in the film of a sociopolitical stance, her reckoning of the material presence of American culture – wanted by Petri as a reference to a "pop surface" – pointed to a crucial engine of the film. How Marcello and Valentina moved around and felt about their belongings mirrors the distortion of consumption patterns impacting Italian consumer and pointed at by the film. As mentioned, in Paul Ginsborg's words, such distortion was caused by "export-led growth," which meant "an emphasis on private consumer goods, often of a luxury nature, without any corresponding development in public consumption."[281] The emphasis on "consumer goods" as everyday objects and low products was also central to the pop art movement. Along these lines, the *Tenth Victim* adopted the visual and thematic referent of comic books and magazines, which likens it to the imagery of American pop art (figure 10): the work of art as a window onto an increasingly corrupted and globalized world, which Petri portrayed by employing the elastic boundaries of the sci-fi genre, and the exhaustion of everything that responds to a "tradition."[282] During the confiscation scene mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, when the functionaries threaten to take away the house's book collection, Valentina complains: "No, i classici no!" (No, not the classics!*),* and, turning to Marcello for support, she sighs: "they are going too far, if you permit them to take my classics, what will I read?"[283] Similarly, during their first encounter, Marcello and Carolina are both rendered as characters from comic books, in their looks, as Marcello reads a comic book. Petri's fictional universe imagines a world where comic books have become "the classics," and regulated killings will help people vent, and prevent wars. If this unconventional take on Italian society justifies Italian critics' traditionalist – and dismissive – approach toward *The Tenth Victim*, it simultaneously credits it for carving a niche within the Italian film tradition of its time.

To the imagery of sci-fi, Petri added yet another layer of contemporary culture, that of advertisement. In the opening scene at the Masoch Club in Manhattan, where Caroline shoots and kills her victim (figure 9), a sales representative for the Ming Tea company approaches Caroline and hires her for what promises to be a remarkable commercial deal: that her next killing would be caught on camera, namely for a Ming Tea ad. Shortly after Caroline accepts, she is assigned Marcello Poletti as a victim, and she travels to Rome with the Ming Tea staff to conduct location scouting for the commercial which will include the killing of her victim. Once the location is established - the Tempio di Minerva - Caroline works her way to the killing, with the added value that the event will be captured live on camera. In the spirit of pop art's critique of commercial culture (in particular the commodification of art), the Ming Tea commercial, with its event caught on camera, resonates with the theme of presence and the event, as in *La dolce vita* – hinting at the impossibility of an event with no commercial ties. While Petri imagined a cognitive universe in which icons from pop art and comic books had become "the classics," his film also disqualified any possibility of taking "tradition" seriously – as happens in the clash between Marcello's futuristic interior design, and his parents' old

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[280] Cardone writes: "Il fascino sgargiante di quest'opera in Technicolor ne ha determinato una lettura in termini di moda, come se si trattasse di un inno al glamour, al design, agli oggetti più in voga. Ma a ben guardare, con *La decima vittima* Petri intende prendere di mira proprio queste realtà, le nuove merci, i desideri "all'americana", la nascente e vacua ansia di consumo"(10). In the quote, Cardone refers to the "gaudy charme" of the film has caused for many to read the film as a "hymn" to fashion, whereas, she concludes, Petri targets the new reality of new objects, "American-style desires" and the "anxiety of consumption." Cardone offers a reflection on the choice of the sci-fi genre, "lucido e distorto legame col reale, che indossa maschere come quella del genere" (*alert and distorted link to reality, which wears masks such as that of genre*) (23).

[281] Ginsborg, 216

[282] Massey specifies how *Forbidden Planet* (1956) was the first of many Hollywood films that used the latest trends in interior design as the backdrop for their domestic comedies – from the romantic comedies, and women's films to science fiction.

[283] Marcello brags about his collection of comic books with a functionary: "Do you realize I have a *Flash Gordon in the Gold Kingdom*?" thus signifying the new referent, the new tradition – a mention to the books that Pontano showcased in his Milan apartment in *La notte*.

furniture and pastimes. This dismissal of "tradition," (while referencing it and incorporating within the filmic text), was a staple element of pop art, and also applied to Petri's view of Italian cinema.

Figure 10: Roy Lichtenstein, *In the Car*, 1963; Marcello and Caroline in the car (*The Tenth Victim*, 1965). The effects of flatness and reflections on glossy surfaces point, in these two frames, to concepts such as appearances and surfaces targeted by the criticism of the miracle as an illusory narrative.

In order to better understand the political nature of *The Tenth Victim*, it is crucial to highlight how Petri's film gestured in three directions with respect to Italian and American film and design: the first one is his response to contemporary Italian films, namely to Michelangelo Antonioni's *La notte* (1961) and Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960),[284] from both of which Petri cast the same actor protagonist, Marcello Mastroianni. The second direction is the US, namely the dialogue Petri initiated with Pop Art and industrial design, namely in the work of designer Ettore Sottsass, and in the inspiration that the imagery of *The Tenth Victim* provided for US films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*; the third direction is Petri's perspective on Neorealism and the postwar Italian cinematic landscape.

**Petri and His Contemporaries: Antonioni's *La notte* (1961)**

Besides *La dolce vita*, when it comes to Petri and his relationship to Italian contemporary cinema, the most compelling intertextual reference emerges in the encounter between *The Tenth Victim* and Michelangelo Antonioni's *La notte*.[285] With his 1961 film, Antonioni turned his camera toward the reality of the wealthy, and zeroed in on the social milieu that most expressed "the pattern which the boom assume[d] […],"[286] the Milanese industrial bourgeoisie. As for this pattern, Ginsborg claimed that "individual and familial roads to prosperity" were fostered, while "collective and public responses to everyday needs" were ignored.[287] In the first part of the film, Antonioni's cinematography pays homage to the encounter between the rising industrial landscape of Milan[288] – the newly built and at the time tallest building in the city Grattacielo Pirelli (Pirelli Skyscraper), as the camera, descends toward the city. The Milanese locations traversed by the protagonists in the less than 24 hours of the story – a hospital room, a social event at a publishing house, the home, the streets, and a night club –

284 Petri engages with *La dolce vita* in particular, of which Petri steals the initials for the original title, *La decima vittima*, the location, and the protagonist, and which he quotes in multiple occasions in the film.

285 Antonioni's films like *L'avventura* and *Red Desert* also deserve to be mentioned with respect to the director's use of space and his penchant for science fiction that allow him to explore ultra-stylized shots.

286 Ginsborg, 215

287 Ivi.

288 Bertellini reflects on the centrality of Milan in the discussion of design and publishing in 1960s Italy in *The Cinema of Italy* (New York: Wallflower, 2004) – and on the impossibility of assuming that the same was true for the rest of Italy.

all culminate at the end of the "road to prosperity," with a party taking place in a villa in the wealthy Brianza area, owned by an industrial bourgeois family. How Antonioni built up toward the inclusion of "collective and public responses," while recounting the story of a married couple in a crisis, is central to the relationship between *La notte* and *The Tenth Victim*. In one of the first scenes, the protagonist couple, Giovanni and Lidia, arrive at a clinic in downtown Milan, to visit their dying friend Tommaso. In his last moments, Tommaso looks around at the room, and says: "Che bel posto qui. Tutto ciò che odiavo in fatto di arredamento... Non avrei mai immaginato una conclusione così di lusso. Verrà un giorno in cui le cliniche si faranno come i night clubs. La gente vuole divertirsi, fino all'ultimo." (What a nice place this is. It is everything I have always hated in terms of furnishing… I would have never thought of such a luxurious ending. There will be a time when clinics will look like nightclubs. People want to entertain themselves until their last moments.) On his deathbed, Tommaso hints at the concept of "divertirsi" (to be entertained), "arredamento" (furniture), "night clubs," "lusso" (luxury), and the porous borders of a space – the clinic – supposedly for death and illness, transformed into an event by the presence of a public, and by the higher standards that require "ospedali di lusso" (luxury hospitals).[289] Before the couple leaves, never to see Tommaso again, two nurses offer champagne to the ill man and his visitors (figure 11).

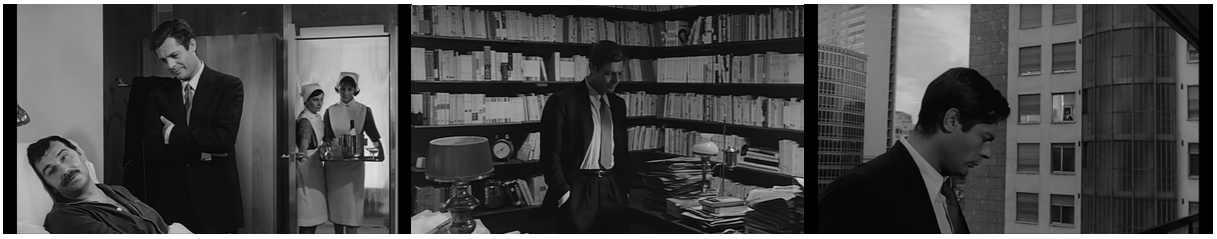

Figure 11: Giovanni Pontano at the clinic, in his Milan apartment, overlooking other buildings.

Giovanni and Lidia, saddened by the sight of their dying friend, leave the clinic and head to Giovanni's latest book launch and cocktail party at the Bompiani publisher's editorial office in downtown Milan – in a scene where intellectuals of the time, such as Salvatore Quasimodo, Valentino Bompiani and Umberto Eco starred in roles as themselves, praising Pontano's book, titled *La stagione* (The Season).[290] As the uneventful party wanes, the two go their separate ways: Giovanni retires at home, while Lidia decides to wander around Milan. The camera crosscuts between the Pontanos' central apartment – dwelling on the art works, design objects, and electronic appliances – and the peripheries of the city where Lidia ends up during her exploration. Alone and surrounded by his books (figure 11), Pontano moves through the house, furnished in the bourgeois taste of the educated "high society" of Milan, the recipient of marketing strategies of American-like industrial design and contemporary art. In this scene, the art and furniture stick out as an asset and an index of social prestige: as Pontano gets home, a record is playing in the background, and so is an English lesson from a course on tape, while the maid is working in another room (and trying to learn English). Despite its smaller size, the house, and in particular the living room, evokes the interior scenes at Steiner's house in *La dolce vita*, where the Roman high society indulges in parties, echoing Tommaso's premonition, "la gente vuole divertirsi fino all'ultimo." In the mise-en-scène of *La notte*, chairs and lamps are the quintessential *oggetti firmati*

[289] In *L'eclisse* (1962) there is a similar allusion to leisure and idle times, accompanied by a deep sense of estrangement, and a reflection on the primitive and the archaic.
[290] The literary event at Bompiani's headquarter see to allude to the bestseller by Alberto Moravia *La noia*, published the year before by the same Bompiani.

of interior spaces, such as the *Arco* lamp by Castiglioni, and the *Lady* chair by Zanuso, in rubber foam (figure 12).

Figure 12: *Lady Chair*, by Zanuso; *Arco* by Castiglioni; *Eclisse* by Magistretti.

Meanwhile, Lidia roams from the city center to the periphery. She walks the viewer to the wounded parts of the city – an excuse to invite the camera along for a tour of what has hitherto been unseen: some bombarded building still awaiting reconstruction, the periphery where street kids get in fights and play with fireworks, and the Breda steel plant in Sesto San Giovanni. The dichotomy of public space (broken, wounded, a lonely infant crying alone in the street), and the domestic space, spotless, resonates throughout the film.

In *La notte*, the home, and in particular the living room, is the core of the bourgeois, Americanized home. Not by chance, one of the core messages advanced by *Italy at Work* in 1951 was the assumption of the "living room" as the symbolic heart of the nuclear family – a place for intimate as well as social gatherings. In Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), Steiner's living room in his EUR apartment, or the Ostia beach house living room in the final scene, portray the vacuity of the bourgeois intellectual Roman elite, similarly to the party villa in *La notte*, constructed as a space for showcasing social prestige (although, admittedly, Antonioni's villa teases out a certain truth and emotional expression from the characters). The mise-en-scène of the Pontanos' living room is designed according to the refined bourgeois furnishing style and packed with what Silvana Annichiarico describes as "unique-mass produced objects,"[291] in this case owned by the alienated bourgeois intellectual as a prosthetic element – attached to the body and yet external, valued for its prestige and privilege rather than for any emotional attachment.

The Pontanos' house helps in reading Petri's radical response, and his decision to collapse the boundaries between private, domestic life, and the exterior world. In the futuristic society imagined by Petri, the outside world appears to be a continuation of the domestic environment – as in the Ming Tea advertisement, in which the sci-fi comic book overtone seems to take over the city of Rome – rather than showcasing a different reality, and a gap between the private and the public, as *La notte* does. On the contrary, Petri's sci-fi dystopian parody engaged critically with the prestige of owning: that is, it exaggerated the settings through the multiplication of serially displayed objects in garish color and modern plastic, shiny materials, similarly to Pasolini's take on Assurdina's shack.[292] Both *La notte* and *The Tenth Victim* welcome the viewer as a guest inside the homes and parade their interior spaces: stressing ownership in Antonioni, and interacting with them in Petri. By postulating a fixed space linked to social rank, Antonioni revealed the distance from the moving, vibrating and much messier reality of the street; while Petri's satire imagined no actual difference between the inside and outside, as the city is used as a setting for advertisements, and ruled by the Orwellian Ministry of the Big Hunt, that is in movement, in a constant, open struggle between life and death, surviving and killing. Once Giovanni and Lidia Pontano have obtained the right to their bourgeois taste, they are trapped in their social circle: this is made harder to accomplish in Marcello and Caroline's case, who are standing in for Italy to confront its shifting values with the more advanced – and controversial – American lifestyle.

**An Italian Pop Art?**

Although from different angles, *The Earth* and *La notte* initiated the conversation between "high design," exterior locations, and those pockets of society untouched by the modernizing wave of design: the peripheries, the ruins, and the lower classes. Together with *The Tenth Victim*, the movies shared the common goal of rethinking the possibility of a "new" domestic space – how it should look, how it is inhabited. *The Tenth Victim*, as said, imagined an "absolute present" dressed up as a dystopian future, resorting to the Pop Art esthetics that was gaining popularity in the wider scene of industrial

[291] Annichiarico, *Serie Fuori Serie* (Milan: Electa, 2009), 19.

[292] See also Michelangelo Antonioni's criticism of the environmental repercussions of the use of plastics and new industrial materials in *Red Desert* (1964). See "Una casa ed un lavoro sul mare," article on *Domus* 416, July 1964.

design. One year before Petri's film release, grappling with the same questions, two main design and architecture exhibitions showcased state of the art industrial design and furniture for Italian people, and for the US artistic communities disseminated around Italy and Rome in particular. The first exhibition was the 13th design and architecture Triennale in Milan, inaugurated in September 1964 and themed *Tempo libero* – translatable as "free time," or "leisure" – which was soon renamed "la Triennale pop."[293] In addition to the Triennale Pop, the year 1964 defined the new terms of the relationship between Italy and the US first and foremost at the second exhibition in question, that is the XXXII Venice Biennale of design and architecture,[294] also known as "Biennale della irregolarità."[295] *Domus* dedicated a special issue to the two exhibitions, pointed to the strong bond between the two disciplines at the heart of the exhibit, and boasted that "una architettura moderna non ha significato se non è integrata da una produzione moderna d'arredamento" (modern architecture has no meaning if it's not integrated within a modern production of furniture).[296] The US presence at the two exhibitions specifically pushed this agenda of a combined reflection on design and architecture, domestic spaces and buildings – a link which has been examined above in the films.

Creating a link with *Italy at Work*, thirteen years later, the Triennale US pavilion's catalogue expressed the nation's "gratitude" for the opportunity to join in an international exchange of cultural expressions in the "useful arts": "over the years, such exchange can only strengthen mutual understanding and raise the standards of good living among us all."[297] The message was signed by "the President of the United States of America," Lyndon B. Johnson. The patronizing tone made the theme of "mutual understanding" central to how the Biennale and Triennale of 1964 were striving to describe the relationship of Italy and America, while it simultaneously sealed the hegemonic role of American art in the Italian scene. That year, Robert Rauschenberg won the "Premio Internazionale della Biennale," supported by the presence of Leo Castelli,[298] the gallerist who was the crucial enabler of this exchange, coordinating the contacts with the New York based artists of the Pop Art. Despite the portrayal of an American triumph, in an article published in the volume *L'ecologia dell'arte*, artist and critic Enrico Baj wrote:

> La giuria internazionale supinamente accettò di dare il gran premio della Biennale Rauschenberg perché così si aveva da fare. Ma quando il verbale era già steso e il premio deliberato, ci si accorse che entro il recinto della Biennale non era esposta neanche un'opera di Rauschenberg, che la si dovette di corsa e in gran segreto recuperare e mettere in mostra nel padiglione americano.[299] (The international jury passively accepted to assign the Biennale Grand Prix to Rauschenberg, because it was what needed to be done. But when the report had already been drafted and the prize assigned, it became clear that within the

[293] A special issue of the architectural magazine *Domus,* dedicated two sections to the exhibition "vacanza" (*vacation*) e "arrivo al mare" (*arrival at the beach*).

[294] To note also that the exhibition was preceded by Sottsass's trip to the US in 1962, contact with Abstract Expressionism and Pop artist. As Sparke remarks this gave rise to counter-design movement.

[295] In 1964, the Biennale had welcomed Italian art, and Giosetta Fioroni appeared in Venice next to her fellow artists Franco Angeli, Tano Festa, Mario Schifano, all representing the "scuola di Piazza del Popolo," the hotbed of Italian style Pop Art.

[296] *Domus*, 417, August 1964, 80.

[297] The US catalogue explains how "the designers have created an appropriate environment for the presentation of innovations in design – an experiment in the manipulation of space and light by means of an elastic nylon fabric […]. The stimuli to creativity come from all sides – from technological ingenuity, from the economic challenge of marketing, from the needs of everyday life, from the ventures of insight – to give American life the almost infinite variety of expressions it requires." Excerpt taken from the booklet: "United States of America Section at the Thirteenth Triennale of Milan 1964."

[298] Annie Cohen-Solal wrote Leo Castelli's biography, *Leo & His Circle* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010). See in particular the chapter "La Biennale dei Beatles," (267-283). See also Alan Jones, *Leo Castelli. L'italiano che inventò l'arte in America*, trans. F. Vuerich, S. Sapuppo (LIT: Rome, 2012).

[299] Enrico Baj, *L'ecologia dell'arte* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1990), 214.

Biennale's walls there wasn't even a single work by Rauschenberg, to the point that they had to rush to secretly get and exhibit one of his work for the American pavilion.)

Figure 13: Castelli in 1960 with works by Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, Lee Bontecou, Edward Higgins, and Robert Rauschenberg.

"It needed to be done:" thus Baj emphasized the hype for American art at the Biennale, underlining the commercial quality of the operation, and symbolic power of American art, naturally perceived as the winner – passively (supinamente) accepted by the international jury. This process of foregrounding American art and costumes had its root in the postwar period, and in this light, as scholar Alberto Abate claims, the American "conquest of Venice" ended a period that started in the 1950s, when, at the beginning of Cold War, the American government decided to oppose the URSS, and the US became the symbolic heart of the Western world. Abate contends that at this specific point, Italy – thanks to personalities like Leo Castelli, in contact with Nelson Rockefeller and Hay Whitney – gave back what Americans had lent through the Marshall Plan, signaling the conclusive act of a troubled historical process.[300] Meanwhile, Italian artists like the Roman gallerist and photographer Plinio de Martiis, outlined the link between Italy and America in terms of a joint-venture, in which the "essential ingredient," "vedendo che film è alla base del Pop, era la presenza di una cultura cinematografica tra le più vibranti del mondo. Come una co-produzione tra Cinecittà e Hollywood, l'arte Pop si stabilisce come una 'joint-venture' tra Roma e New York."[301] (The essential ingredients is that "films are the basis for Pop, and the presence of a cinematographic culture among the most vibrant in the world. As a co-production between Cinecittà and Hollywood, Pop Art established itself as a 'joint-venture' between Rome and New York) (figure 13).

[300] See also Alberto Abate, "Venezia 1964, nasce la pop art," in *Corriere del Veneto*, 2 November 2009. https://corrieredelveneto.corriere.it/rovigo/notizie/cultura_e_tempolibero/2009/2-novembre-2009/venezia-1964-nasce-pop-art--1601944871830.shtml

[301] Ivi.

Figure 14: Ugo Mulas, *Biennale di Venezia* (1964), from left to right, Robert Rauschenberg's winning work (added after the prize had been assigned) *Studio Painting* (1960-61), and Jasper John's *Double Flags* (1962).

The "conquest of Venice" at the XXXII Biennale sealed the triumph of Pop Art, and established its link to cinema. As mentioned, in a few scenes of *The Tenth Victim*, Ursula Andress and Marcello Mastroianni's characters are made to look like a superheroes – characters from a comic book, or from a Roy Lichtenstein, the American pop artist whose work defined the premise of pop art through parody and was exhibited at the Leo Castelli gallery in New York City. Like Petri, Lichtenstein often used advertising and comic-book derived esthetics to suggest how the current facility of mass-circulated imagery informed the encounters with fine art, and vice versa. In perfect Pop Art style, Petri took parte in the "gioco di prelievi" (where "prelievo" translates as "borrowing") between "artisti, designer, registi e scenografi"[302] (artists, designers, directors and set designers) collapsing the distance between movies and reality, museums and houses, private and public. It is crucial to understand that within the film, Petri transposed the questions raised by Pop Art in terms of the cinematic swerve from Neorealism (as closer to the everyday reality of the lower classes) to genre film, namely in his choice of sci-fi. According to film scholar Elliot Chayt, sci-fi films in the mid-60s revealed "post-neorealist cinema's general tendency toward embedded sociopolitical analysis," and, at the same time, they had the power to mobilize "a more specifically science fiction valence rooted in cognitive estrangement and an interpretative horizon of critical dystopia."[303] The "post-neorealist" cinema of Elio Petri, and its sociopolitical analysis, allowed the director to draw from Neorealism, and has its roots in his coming of age as a director, as Giuseppe De Santis's helper and writer, and as a collaborator with the magazine *Città aperta*.[304] Not by chance this concern with Neorealism places Petri in a privileged place for the assessment of the past cinematic tradition. Petri's "superamento" (surpassing) of Neorealism, incorporating the key features of Pop Art coming from the US art scene, often showcased in Italian galleries, gestured towards embracing contemporary trends, as a symbol of the exhaustion of society. That is, on one hand, Petri took a stance with respect to his times by

302 Della Casa and Viganò, eds. *Pop Film Art. Visual Culture, moda e design nel cinema italiano anni '60 e '70* (Rome: Edizioni Sabinae, 2012), 12.

303 Eliot Chayt, "Revisiting Italian Post-Neorealist Science Fiction Cinema," *Science Fiction Studies* (Vol. 42, No. 2, Italian Science Fiction, July 2015), 322.

304 Created in 1957, Città aperta was a dissident communist journal. The editor in chief was Tommaso Chiaretti, Petri collaborated with the journal during its two years of existence. See Elio Petri and Jean A. Gili (ed.), *Elio Petri. Writings on Cinema and Life,* trans. Erica Marina Nadir, Camilla Zamboni (New York, Contra Mundum Press, 2013).

historicizing neorealism, and with it Italy's past; while on the other hand he opened up to pop art, as a movement that would channel his dissatisfaction with the current system.

**1964: Reflections on Neorealism**

The year of the Biennale and Triennale Pop, 1964, registered a return of critical attention toward the years from WWII to the postwar years. A number of directors and critics united in the attempt to historicize the cinematic shift from "fascist" to "anti-fascist" films, namely the so-called "School of Liberation," that was Neorealism. While Robert Rauschenberg won the Venice Biennale, and the American community in Italy was as strong as ever, two main events attested to film historians' rediscovered interest in Neorealism, right at this time. One was the conference chaired by film historian Giorgio Tinazzi, *Il cinema italiano dal fascismo all'antifascismo* (Italian Cinema from Fascism to Antifascism) that took place in Rome in February and March of 1964.[305] In the course of five meetings, film critics and filmmakers gathered to screen and discuss films ranging from Mario Camerini's *Il signor Max* (1937), to Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (1945). Throughout the conference, the critical assessment of the passage from *fascismo* to *antifascismo* was narrowed down to the trite narrative of a "cinema di evasione" (escapist cinema) producing films labeled as "piccolo borghesi" (petit-bourgeois) during the ventennio, to a moment of reflection, resistance, and "polemica anti-borghese" (anti-bourgeois polemic) that took off with the end of the war. Tinazzi led his team of critics to reinforce the critical contours of a periodization that flattened twenty years of cinema to "escapism": the conference participants posited escapism as the product of suffocating class relations and argued for the impossibility of retracing the existence and value of a "genre system" within the Italian cinema of the 1930s. Tinazzi's methodological proposal illustrated a fundamental historiographical fallacy, because it entitled "fascism" – as if it were an entity in and of itself – with an absolutely "negative" effect on cinema: proposing "feticci" (fetishes) and spurring "evasione piccolo borghese" (petty bourgeoisie escapism),[306] thus postulating the film production of the ventennio as a self-sufficient and self-referential system - as opposed to asserting its development at the intersection of the war, political propaganda, and American consumerism, all aspects that can be found in the early films of Roberto Rossellini, Alessandro Blasetti, and Mario Camerini.

An analysis of Tinazzi's own work as a film critic makes for a much more compelling read, thanks to his ability to detect zones of ambiguity, for example when he advanced a "proposta dall'interno […] di un discorso sul linguaggio cinematografico, esigenza di sprovincializzazione che il cinema di propaganda aveva lasciato da parte" (a proposal from within […]of a discourse about cinematic language, the need for de-provincialization that propaganda cinema had left behind).[307] With this, Tinazzi gestured toward a hypothesis of continuity between escapism and neorealism, and helped comprehend the continuity from Neorealism to postwar movies - joining the effort made, a year later, by Elio Petri in *The Tenth Victim*, with his layered intertext hinting both at neorealism and at the different degrees to which his contemporary filmmakers were reconstructing the postwar years on screen.

To make of 1964 the year of neorealism was also the first Pesaro Conference, organized toward the end of the year, and kicked off in Pesaro in 1965, under the name of *Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema*. In his initial declaration of intents, Lino Micciché, founding father and director of

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[305] Giorgio Tinazzi, *Il cinema italiano dal fascismo all'antifascismo. Atti del seminario organizzato a Roma* – 2/15-3/18 1964 (Venice: Marsilio, 1966). The conference was divided in five meetings and had a keynote speaker. Among the films that were screened, *Il signor Max* (1937) by Mario Camerini, *Luciano Serra Pilota* (1938) by Goffredo Alessandrini, *1860* (1934) by Alessandro Blasetti, *Uomini sul fondo* (1941) by Francesco de Robertis, *I bambini ci guardano* (1944) by De Sica, *Ossessione* by Visconti (1943), and Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (1945).

[306] Ibid., 29

[307] Ibid.

the festival, explained how the direct or indirect influence of neorealism on Italian filmmakers and intellectuals still proved to be tangible, thus calling for a reassessment of its significance, almost twenty years later. Focused, as its title suggest, on the idea of a "nuovo cinema," the festival included screenings and a conference, which would plant the seed for the historical 1974 edition, focused on neorealism. Considering the exhibition, Saverio Giovacchini and Robert Sklar write: "Pesaro offered the opportunity for a comprehensive examination of nearly fifty films and a space for the exploration, revision, and critical reexamination of a fundamental moment in Italian cinema […]. Pesaro turned Neorealism into an object of historical analysis."[308] Despite his dedication to a reformulation of neorealism, Elio Petri did not make it to the festival that year,[309] yet in his writings Petri demonstrated his effort to establish continuity across the postwar period and the years labeled as "the miracle." Within continuity, Petri foresaw a dialectic relationship of debt (with a past tradition, and cultural and economic system) and surpassing of that same past tradition as the engine for a more authentic, less arbitrary, periodization based on ideological breaks. In his reflections on cinema, on the legacy of World War II, and of neorealism, Petri wrote:

> Il Neorealismo, se non è inteso come vasta esigenza di ricerca e di indagine, ma come vera e propria tendenza poetica, non ci interessa più [...]. Occorre fare i conti con i miti moderni, con le incoerenze, con la corruzione, con gli esempi splendidi di eroismi inutili, con i sussulti della morale: occorre sapere e potere rappresentare tutto ciò.[310] (Neorealism, if it's not meant as an extended need for research and investigation, but as a true poetic tendency, no longer interests us […. It takes dealing with modern myths, with incoherences, with corruption, with the splendid examples of useless heroisms, with the shocks of morality: it is necessary to know how to, and to be able to represent all of this.)

"Representation" – poter rappresentare – was a moral imperative for auteurs like Petri, steering away from films that displayed a "poetic tendency," and it read as a departure toward (rather than away from) incoherence and modern myths, to be known and to be represented. This short manifesto is reminiscent of Pier Paolo Pasolini's cultural agenda and his films throughout the 60s, and not by chance finds the two directors in close contact thanks to their films, as in the case of *The Earth Seen from the Moon*, which, together with *The Tenth Victim*, outlined a critical stance with respect to the past, not surprisingly making of the 1960s a period of new challenges as well as of reclamation of previous battles. Whereas in the case of *The Tenth Victim*, the "old" resurfaced as a surprising and desecrating scene, as mentioned above, *The Earth* tackled the question of the "older generations" in more explicit terms, addressing Italy's war-torn peripheries, alluding to Neorealism as "esigenza di ricerca e di indagine" (need for research and investigation). Repeatedly in *The Tenth Victim* "neorealisti volgari" (crass neorealists) is embraced as a derogatory term. In particular, in a scene in which the tramontisti meet to worship the sun, Marcello Poletti acting like a priest, shields himself with a plexiglass panel, against which protesters, whom he calls "neorealisti volgari," throw eggs. In this highly symbolical scene, eggs are being thrown to new cinema (i.e. Fellini's *La dolce vita*), by those who are demanding for the plexiglass panel – shielding the new from the past – to be taken down.

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[308] Saverio Giovacchini and Robert Sklar, *Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of a Film Style* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 170. The author quotes the two conference of Perugia (1949) and Parma (1953), in which neorealism had been discussed while still under the effects of heated postwar political and ideological controversies.

[309] *The Tenth Victim* was only nominated for the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists, for the role of Marcello Mastroianni as best actor in 1966.

[310] J.A. Gili, ed. Elio Petri, *Scritti di cinema e di vita* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2007), quoting from *Città aperta*, 4-5, 25 luglio 1957, 56.

Further signs of the renewed interest in neorealism that started in 1964 can be found in the field of art photography: Ugo Mulas, Gianni Berengo Gardin and Cesare Colombo among others captured the urbane landscape of Milan and other cities. Their photo reportages recalled the images of urban peripheries seen in Antonioni's *La notte*, as well as in Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) – recuperating the idea of location shooting, and the unfiltered unspectacular reality of Neorealism films (and of Petri's opening scenes in New York City) that Alberto Lattuada had first proposed in his pamphlet *Occhio quadrato* in 1941. These reportages often included – in the vastness of the landscape or amid the city lights – human figures, common bystanders going about their day. At the same time in which photography lends itself to the exploration of the city, visual artists, and architects and designer embraced the investigation of the domestic space as well as of the city. These portrayals embody the growing tension toward the narrative of the economic miracle, and societal patterns of consumption as well as of the art market, and will be central to the final part of this chapter.

**Giosetta Fioroni's Pop Art Installation *Spia ottica***

Receptive to and aware of this renewed tendency – capturing the mundane, "kitchen sink realism,"in sync with the recent re-discovery of neorealism illustrated above – young visual artist Giosetta Fioroni decided to turn her camera toward interior domestic spaces. In her work, Fioroni maintained the search for an expressive portrait of everyday life – thus reformulating a typical concern of neorealism, while, in the foreground, she built on the anxieties and questions of her time, as a member of the Italian pop art scene. Fioroni had grown as an artist in Rome, where she had been mentored by painter Toti Scialoja at the Accademia delle Belle Arti, thus becoming closer to the Scuola di Piazza del Popolo with Tano Festa, Mario Schifani and Franco Angeli, up to the XXXVIII Venice Biennale, where she became closer with artists like Cy Twombly. In 1964, she had mounted an installation at the Venice Biennale, which was then moved, in 1968, to the Galleria La Tartaruga, directed by Plinio de Martiis in Rome.[311] Her work, titled *Spia ottica* (The Optical Spyhole), was conceived as "a performance with a social theme."[312] The work demanded the active participation of the viewer, who could spy from a peephole into a bedroom (figure 14)[313] – namely Fioroni's own bedroom, recreated in the gallery, where an actress "mimed the life of a woman" – waking up, reading the newspaper, dressing, smoking a cigarette, and into the continuum of the other banal and quotidian gestures up to the moment of putting on a coat and leaving the house.

[311] The installation was recently recreated for the Fondazione Prada in Milan, and different versions of it were seen before at Galleria la Tartaruga in Rome. Plinio De Martiis brought his reflection on an Italian Pop Art to the forefront and wrote *L'arte pop in Italia* in which he reflects on a "new world of objects" that derives from the possibility of moving to the furniture realm new, hitherto not thought of as industrial materials. De Martiis had an active role in the definition of the merging of "high" and "low" culture, attributing to pop art the byproduct of popular culture. Plinio De Martiis, *L'arte pop in Italia* (Rome: Galleria d'Arte Niccoli, 1999), 20.

[312] From a 2017 interview with the artist by Frieze Projects at Frieze New York, which this year recreated the installation: ahttps://vimeo.com/214636004

[313] Thanks to Noa Steimatsky for suggesting the reference to Marcel Duchamp's contemporary *Étant donnés* (1946-1966) a tableau, visible only through a pair of peepholes (one for each eye) in a wooden door, of a nude woman lying on her back with her face hidden, legs spread, holding a gas lamp in the air in one hand against a landscape backdrop.

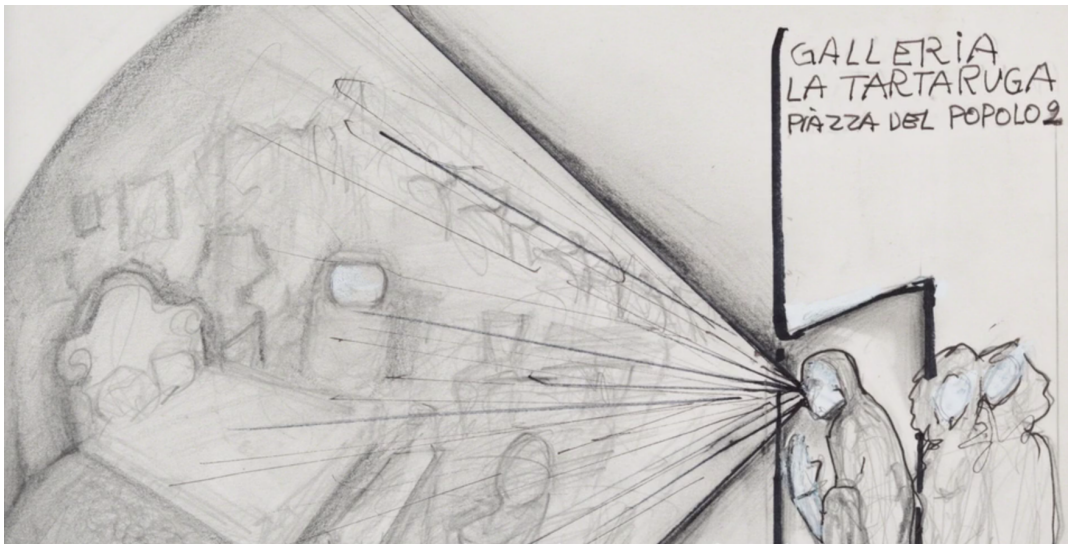


Figure 15: sketch in preparation for *La spia ottica*'s installation

To the Biennale visitor, this promised to be a room that, as by surprise, opened in quite cinematic fashion into the life of its inhabitant – in which the quotidian is promoted to spectacle (been seen, deserving to be seen, been found), similarly to neorealist domestic scene (a visit, an incursion, the sense of everydayness that comes with non-professional actors and houses) and to the hidden old fashioned living room in *The Tenth Victim*. Giosetta Fioroni thought out her "camera da letto" (bedroom) in which an actress spends her day "compiendo gesti privati" (carrying out intimate gestures): "Volevo raccontare una storia sulla vita moderna. La ragazza della tv non è una star, ma una giovane qualsiasi, scelta come simbolo del fascino femminile ancestrale della televisione" (I wanted to tell a story about modern life. The girl is not a star, she could be any young girl, chosen as the symbol of feminine ancestral charm of television).[314]Fioroni's choice of a "giovane qualsiasi" is reminiscent of concepts illustrated in my previous Chapters 1 and 2:[315] magazine reportages on the everyday life of the movie stars (Chapter 1), as well as of the anonymity granted by neorealism – the focus on the lowlife, the contingency of everyday gestures (Chapter 2).[316] Yet *The Optical Spyhole* work resonated as well with the disruption of the artistic tradition to be found in pop art work, and as seen in the *Tenth Victim*."[317] In particular it anticipated the concept of Andy Warhol's *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1965) (figure 14), an experimental film that captured the day of a young woman in her bedroom, dwelling on the woman's actions and habitual gestures within a confined space.[318]

Similarly, in *The Tenth Victim*, the characters move around between public space and private, slightly constricted environments, such as Marcello's parents' living room - with vintage furniture - hidden behind a screen door. In a later scene of the film, Caroline tries to lure Marcello into her

[314] Article on *Corriere della Sera*, "I sillabari di Giosetta," September 2017 (needs a page number and date). Fioroni's earlier work is crucial: she started out by working on her *Argenti* or *Quadri d'argento*, unknown faces she would often draw from magazines, interested in a detail or smile – echoing the photographic project as well as the magazine's essence.

[315] This type of reportage was also visible in magazines, for instance "a day in the life of Alida Valli," mentioned in my second chapter. The nearest allusion is the photographic reportage, American style, in which the latest big deal is seen at home.

[316] Both aspects will be expanded on in the coda of this dissertation.

[317] In her photographic history of "Postwar Narratives," Maria Antonella Pelizzari writes that between 1954 and 1956, social documentary photo essays were launched by Guido Aristarco, along the model of 'a day in the life of…'. Antonella Pelizzari, *Photography and Italy* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2011), 109.

[318] See Noa Steimatsky, *The Face on Film* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017).

scheme (as she tries to kill him) into a yellow hemisphere shaped container, supposedly the changing room used by Marcello to change into the leader of the tramontisti. Caroline manages to sedate Marcello, and transport the emisphere to the Tempio di Minerva, where she plans to kill him. The claustrophobic ending – being confined to a constricted space, where one is seen – alludes to the same sense of suffocation, and yet, in its banality, it becomes a spectacle, an event. Moreover, what is striking in this work – in the context of industrial design and pop art – is the emphasis on inhabiting the domestic space, both as a reflection on the intimacy of a domestic space, in this case inhabited freely by a young woman, and on the spectacularization of the private. Both ideas connect to a sense of loss and disconnect present in the films I have analyzed so far.

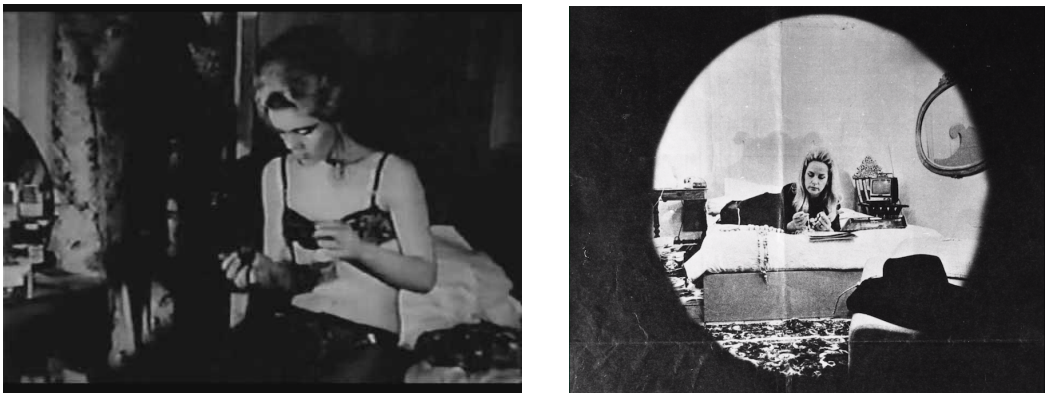

Figure 16: Andy Warhol's *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1965) and Giosetta Fioroni, *Spia ottica* (1964), a young girl hangs out in her "camera da letto," here intent at reading magazines.

**Disillusionment in Urban and Domestic Landscapes**

While Fioroni turned inward, into the home, and Mulas captured street life with his photo-reportages, pop art affiliated architects and artists, led by Ettore Sottsass, proposed to portray the "implosion" of the private space, exhausted and saturated by the proliferation of objects, colors, and shapes, namely in the elaboration of a new urban landscape, that of futuristic urban spaces. As Catherine Rossi writes, "Sottsass notes that craft becomes a 'problem' at the very moment that machine production was introduced in Italy and in other modern craft contexts, craft is loaded with a series of symbolic and cultural values as a result of this larger industrial condition."[319] In all, as an artist involved in industrial design - Sottsass worked for Olivetti, and other major brand - Sottsass was able to combine his participation in the system with an active criticism of the same.

Up to that moment, several exponents of the Roman art communities – including Fioroni and all those in contact with Pop Art - had addressed the issue of cities, nature and people: in *Natura modulare* (Modular nature) (1966), Gino Marotta had explored the connections between trees and cities. With the same questions in mind, the sculptor Mario Ceroli, with his serial silhouettes in his work *Faccia a faccia* (Face to face), explored the loss of contact between a natural vision of humanity and people in space. Sottsass echoed these artists' concerns, and took the lead: crafts, Sottsass argued,

[319] Rossi, 4.

became a "problem" the very moment that machine production was introduced in Italy. As a result, crafts were loaded with a series of symbolic and cultural values embodying the predicaments of an extended industrial condition.[320] In the effort to rethink the dichotomy crafts/technology. Sottsass drew from the imagery of sci-fi, and developed *Il pianeta come festival* (The Planet as Festival) (figure 16). The booklet was a short, illustrated sketch of a world "with no production problems,"[321] a "pop utopia" project published in the design magazine *Casabella*,[322] which included a manifesto and a number of drawings, denouncing "the explosive decentralization of consumer goods distribution [that] has pulverized the cities, has eliminated them from the face of the earth."[323] On this planet, everyone is an artisan-artist. According to Sottsass's pop utopia, in the decentralization between the artisanal system and the serial production, and between the geographical areas where production and consumption took place, the reverence toward the artist was in danger, and that is why Sottsass took on the task of imagining a new figure: "In this way we have all become artisan-artists, furnished with super-instruments for doing what we feel like by ourselves."[324] "We," Sottsass wrote "are freed from the factory, the bureau, the supermarket, the bank, the street, the pavement, the tube, the crystal entrance-hall, the crippled door-keeper, and all this type of thing."[325] By foregrounding freedom of movement, Sottsass advocated for a reconsideration of lived space – in terms of cities and furniture. Moreover, influenced by Sottsass's reflections, at the end of the 1960s,[44] a new generation of architecture students reassessed the validity of this exchange with respect to their field, continuing in a way the critical discourse started by Petri's film: several *studi di architettura*, such as Superstudio and Archizoom (figure 16) – echoed by Archigram in the UK, engaged in the production of sketches, manifestos, and projections of future cities and utopias, along the line of Sottsass's freedom from the constraints of work and class relations as postulated by the US capitalist system.

320 "In Italy, craft does not sit in ideological opposition to industry, but in a servile position to design" (Rossi, 4)
321 Ettore Sottsass, "Il pianeta come festival," *Casabella*, issue 365, 1972.
322 http://socks-studio.com/2011/09/08/ettore-sottsass-jr-the-planet-as-a-festival/
323 Sottsass, 47.
324 Ivi.
325 Ivi.


Figure 17: *Il pianeta come festival*, Archigram (UK), and Archizoom (Florence).

These collectives drew inspiration from visions of future environments seen in *The Tenth Victim,* and targeted an idea of design geared toward the creation of isolated objects. These studios participated in the ideation of *whole* environments, as opposed to decontextualizing items in the light of their monetary or social values (i.e. *La notte*) typical of a bourgeois conception of industrial design. If the isolated object was downgraded due to its lack of socio-political engagement and functionality, the whole environment allowed one to rethink notions of use, interaction, and everyday life.[45] In the light of these projects, Petri's use of New York City as the opening of *The Tenth Victim*, hinted at his own preoccupation with urban environments as spaces where the history of the country could be mapped, acknowledged, and continued in its entirety – with its scars, as well as with its potentiality for new technologies and sociopolitical advancements.

*Il pianeta come festival* and the exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* marked, with the year 1972, a turning point in Italy's stance toward the US. Up to that point, the "miracle" was still operating its effects on the Italian economic and industrial texture. Throughout the 1960s, filmmakers and designers had addressed both the abundance and the anxiety of the time: women, students, and artists were united in their effort to portray and challenge the status quo. In *The Tenth Victim* Elio Petri embedded the demands and struggle of the civil rights movements within the sci-fi genre, positing a dystopian future as his offering for, as advanced by scholar Lucia Cardone, a "lettura nell'oggi della

malattia di domani" (a reading of today in tomorrow's malaise).[326] Through the encounter between Caroline and Marcello, Petri staged, in gendered terms, scenes of the relationship between the US and Italy. In her role of an American, sexually liberated, vocal woman, Caroline held up a mirror to the Italian patriarchal, conservative society, and allowed Petri to assess his nation's wealth and wellbeing underneath the fuss of the "miracle." Viceversa, by sticking to more conservative rules about divorce and gender roles, Marcello points out the exaggeration intrinsic in some US customs. The realm of comic books and superheroes à la Lichtenstein inhabited and played out by the protagonists – combined with the extravagant colored plastic mise-en-scène – worked as a coded language for Petri to express both Italian and American dysfunctions, in turn pointing to the exhaustion of their cultural exchange. This sense of exhaustion is reflected in the ambiguous last frames of the *Tenth Victim* (figure 17).


Figure 18: the couple is held at gunpoint on the wedding airplane. The second to last shot (a point of view shot of the gun), is followed by an eruption of (perhaps plastic) flowers, the final shot of the movie.

[326] Cardone, 40.

As Caroline's scheme to kill Marcello fails, the two decide to escape from Rome together, boarding a "wedding plane" (apparently to Marcello's surprise) where two functionaries have the authority to declare couples "husband and wife" row after row – yet another type of seriality. As Marcello finds out that his destiny (marrying Caroline) is inescapable, the camera quickly cuts to a gun pointed at the two of them, a point of view shot in extreme close-up, and then to the very final frame of the film, an abstract, slightly out of focus floral composition. This puzzling ending seems to hint at the absence of an absolute winner: Italy had turned out to be "backward" when compared to the US, especially when it came to women's rights. The Big Hunt and its onscreen killings – a form of "death control" – mirrored the debates on abortion, birth control, divorce, and individual freedom, anchored to strict Italian traditional beliefs by Catholicism, among other forces. Yet, with their future-oriented and hyper productive capitalist system, the US had saturated homes and films with objects and goods.

Signs of disillusionment and discontent toward the US surfaced as early as 1964, woven into the texture of pop art, and its presence in films and at major art exhibitions around Italy. The aforementioned 1964 "Triennale Pop" in Milan, focused on inserting design within an increasingly saturated media culture, was the fruit of Ettore Sottsass's transoceanic breadth of experience as a designer and a critic. By traveling to the United States in 1964, Sottsass had direct experience of the work of pop artists such as Claes Oldenburg,[327] Robert Rauschenberg, John Chamberlain, and Roy Lichtenstein. Insomuch as after his trip Sottsass created the conditions for a dialogue between US pop art and its Italian counterpart – especially in the figures of, among others, Giosetta Fioroni, Michelangelo Pistoletto,[328] and Alberto Burri – he pointed to the fundamental lack of useful premises for a true pop art to plant solid roots in Italy. In his analysis, Sottsass shed light on the contamination between auteur films and industrial design, by observing the use of and aspiration to American objects as denoting social status. With his contribution to the debate on the possibility for Italy to have "its own" pop art movement, Sottsass's writings were strikingly in sync with Petri's dystopian portrayal of "Americanization." Whereas Petri set his pop fantasy in the heart of Rome, Sottsass declared the inexistence of the "premises for pop" within the Italian imagery and habits:

> […] probably in all of Italy, the premises for Pop painting do not exist, there is only this oppressive and invincible weight, no American coke, no Vermouth Perlino, no vamps, not much use of deodorant, people still sleep in their pajamas, people still cook pasta, squeeze the tomatoes, people still do all those things. At the Bar Torino on Piazza San Carlo you sit on little baroque chairs to eat lots of gelato but not much 'ice-cream.[329]

Playing with the idea of translating words, as well as concepts ("gelato" becomes "ice-cream") Sottsass unveiled the inauthenticity brought about by the US' presence in Italy, and, more importantly, of Italy's attempted emulation – such as imports (Coke, Pop art, vamps), translations, or, as in *The Tenth Victim*, costumes (the sci-fi genre, the pop art aesthetics). Starting in the late 50's, America artists had been put on a pedestal with a number of solo exhibits in various Italian galleries,[330] culminating in Rauschenberg's hollow victory at the 1964 Venice Biennale. Nevertheless, the social tension portrayed in *The Tenth Victim*, and the feeling of exhaustion and inauthenticity expressed by Sottsass, grew parallel

[327] Notice how Charles Oldenburg had responded to the Italian industrial trend of typewriters, as said strongly represented for by the Olivetti brand, with his series of Soft Typewriters (1963)

[328] Article by Ettore Sottsass on Michelangelo Pistoletto, "Pop e non pop: a proposito di Michelangelo Pistoletto," *Domus* 413, May 1964.

[329] Sottsass, *Pop e non pop.*

[330] See Plinio de Martiis, *L'arte pop in Italia.*

to the pop wave, and eventually surfaced in 1968,[331] at the 14th Milan Triennale of design and architecture. Titled "Il grande numero," the exhibition,[332] meant to illustrate the relations between serial production in 'large numbers' and its supposed effect on the new state of widespread "well-being," was contested, vandalized and shut down by student protests, hours before the grand opening.

**Conclusions**

Despite the clear-cut message conveyed by the Italian youth – America was no longer welcome, let alone to be emulated – and some twenty years after *Italy at Work*, a new exhibition on Italian design took on the MoMA in New York City. The title of the 1972 exhibit, curated by Emilio Ambasz was *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*.[333] As mentioned above, the exhibition marked a peak, and point of no return, in the contact between the US and the Italian art communities. If Italy was first constructed as "artisanal" in 1951, and thereafter thought of itself as on a path of emulation of the US, in 1972 Italian designers disrupted this narrative once and for all. In the exhibition's press release, Ambasz detailed the birth of the "counter-design" approach: "designers who believe no more objects should be added to our cluttered consumer-dominated culture, and that social and political changes are needed before we can change the physical aspect of our society."[334] Part of a new community of "contestatory and reformatory designers," Cini Boeri, Ugo La Pietra, and Gaetano Pesce among others, believed, Ambasz writes, "that an object can no longer be designed in terms of environments" and strived to "propose objects that are flexible in function and permit multiple modes of use and arrangement."[335]Among these objects were the *Sacco*, or bean bag chair (1969), by Gatti, Teodoro, and Paolini, and the *Multi Chair* and *Tube Chair* by Joe Colombo (1970) (figure 18): "these objects, in some instances, assume shapes that become whatever the users want them to be, thereby providing an open-ended manner of use."[336] This "open-ended" manner endowed objects with a fluid, lively nature, allowing them to adapt to the user, and viceversa, rather than being conceived of as fixed forms to be attained or emulated. The emerging idea of the serially produced "unique" piece responded to the pervasiveness and futility of streamlined objects, as seen in the films *The Tenth Victim* and *The Earth Seen from the Moon*. Rather than focusing on the social prestige of *owning* objects of design, Italy's "new domestic landscape" – as suggested by the collective of counter-designers – entailed use, and foregrounded a corporeal and affective bond between the object and its user.

331 Year of the first Conceptual art exhibition held in Vancouver and organized by Lucy Lippard.

332 See Casetti's article from IKON, 10 1970 on the theme of "mass-media e contestazione," in which the scholar thematizes the repercussions of students' protests onto underground cinema. See also http://variety.com/2018/vintage/news/cannes-1968-student-protests-festival-closed-1202797967/ on the 1968 protests at the Cannes film festival.

333 Emilio Ambasz, *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972).

334 See press release: https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_326797.pdf, 1 Emilio Ambasz

335 Ibid., 2

336 The exhibition catalogue continues: "To the traditional preoccupation with aesthetic objects, these contemporary designers have therefore added a concern for an aesthetic of the uses made of these objects. This holistic approach is manifested in the design of objects that are flexible in function, thus permitting multiple modes of use and arrangement. […] Such objects can be offensive, because they refuse to adopt a fixed shape or to serve as reference to anything. […]" Emilio Ambasz, Preface to *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, 13.

Fig 18: Joe Colombo, *Multi Chair* and *Tube Chair* (1970)

For the exhibition, Sottsass designed "micro-environments in plastics, each on casters so occupants [could] easily re-arrange them to fit their needs."[337] These environments paid special attention to "new forms emerging as a result of changing patterns of life style,"[338] thus bridging the work of designers and architects and their quest for "whole environments." With his concern on "more informal social and family relationships and evolving notions of privacy and territoriality",[339] Sottsass was the head of a new generation of designers and thinkers, aware of the Italian crafts tradition, and yet no longer serving American capitalism and its overproduction tendencies, all the while engaged in the exploration of new materials and production techniques.

[337] Exhibition's press release, 2
[338] Ivi.
[339] Ivi.

# CODA

## The Making of the Star

A persistent theme throughout my exploration of the contact between Italian and American culture has been the belief that Italy could be "made" into something it was no longer or was not yet in existence. Some of the ways in which this transformation was imposed by the United States, were illustrated in my chapters: the making of the Hollywood-like Italian diva in the 1930s, the making of Italian newly educated, finally healed, citizens after the war, and the making of Italy into an artisanal "local" reality meant to act as a stabilizer and counterpart for the United States' industrial development. At different moments during the historical times I have explored in my chapters, illustrated magazines acted as a platform for the diffusion of aesthetic and behavioral models – with respect to how or what a reader *could* become thanks to the consumption of specific products. The relationship between Italy and the US, and between cultural production and consumption was thus expressed through a specific medium – the illustrated magazine – which, as seen in my chapters, traveled parallel to the development of Italian cinema, while preceding and exceeding its boundaries.

In this coda, I propose to take a deeper look into one of these models or ways of "making." The goal is to foreground a specific trend – that of the movie star as a commodity produced and consumed serially – which in turn was an expression of the oscillating relationship between Italy and the United States in the mid-1930s, marked by Italy's utter fascination for all things American. While departing from my first chapter's exploration of the 1930s magazines, this coda refers back to my Chapters Two (the making of Carla del Poggio), and Three (Giosetta Fioroni's installation), and the many ways in which the female body has become represented, commodified and marketed throughout time, by cinema, and by extension, by the magazines. I will focus on the making of the Italian actress Isa Miranda into a movie star first at the Roman CSC, and a Hollywood star later on. The making of Isa Miranda can be detailed thanks to issues of *Novella* published in 1938-1939, and the epistolary exchanges of Isa Miranda's agent Eugenia Handamir, who mediated between the actress and Hollywood producers, as well as with Italian magazines. Other than *Novella*, different issues of the magazine *Film* call for further exploration of the dynamic of the making of Italian stars during the late 1930s. As a conclusive move, both to this coda and to my dissertation as a whole, in the final paragraphs I will expand on, and propose new venues of investigation on how (if at all) the dynamic of the making of the Italian actress pertained to neorealism (in the case of Anna Magnani), as well as to Italy during the "economic miracle."

In *Novella*, the serialization of the female body relied on a solid machinery, whose branches extended across media and realms of referentiality (as illustrated in Chapter One). *Novella*'s readers participated actively in what I have called an intermedial "circle of referentiality" between film and paper, by purchasing the magazine, and by writing to *Novella*'s advice columns with questions that spanned from housekeeping to romantic relationships. In Chapter One, I have argued that, as a whole, advertisements, columns, installment novels, and set photos, triggered a serial circuit that had among its effects that of sparking in readers a desire for emulation. That is to say that *Novella*, while steering away from fascist esthetics and rules, embodied the promise for any reader to *be made* into – more so than *becoming* one – a star, emulating Hollywood actresses rather than the rural mother model prescribed by fascism and epitomized by the fascist party magazine *La donna fascista* which I have discussed in Chapter One. The serial apparatus of *Novella* and *Film* can be explored in the light of its prescriptive power and as a response to the question: how can a woman – *any woman* – be made into a movie star?

The making of Isa Miranda, the Italian actress who, more than any of her colleagues embodied the governing principles of the circle of referentiality (and whose success was built as a result of the

intermediality between film and paper), stands out as an exemplary response to the question. Isa Miranda, born Ines Isabella Sampietro, came of age as an actress with her first role in the 1933 thriller film *Il caso Haller* (*The Haller Case*) directed by Alessandro Blasetti. Her rise to fame came with her role as the protagonist of *La signora di tutti* (*Everybody's Woman*), a 1934 film by Max Ophüls, the first title produced by Rizzoli's production company Novella Film.[340] Rizzoli's magazines advertised the film as "una drammatica vicenda di passione e d'amore, che si svolge nella tumultuosa cornice della vita moderna" (a dramatic sequence of events, passion and love, that takes place in the tumultuous context of modern life).[341] Before it became a film, *Everybody's Woman*'s original story was published in installments in *Novella* in the course of five months throughout 1933, soon to become a volume for the collection "I romanzi di *Novella*," and it represented a crucial instance of the publisher's intuition for "la prima moderna industria culturale italiana a carattere di integrazione mediatica" (the first Italian modern cultural brand with characteristics of media integration).[342] As illustrated in Chapter One, the "circle of referentiality" between film and paper first kicked off when Rizzoli understood that he could at once use paper and film as two separate media platforms, and, within his publishing house, made them connected and interdependent.

The story of *La signora di tutti* is one of intermedial transformation: at first it came out in the magazine as an installment novel signed by Salvator Gotta, at the time a frequent collaborator of the magazine. Archival research has established that the first advertisement of the series appeared in *Novella* of March 19th, 1933, and the first installment on March 26th, 1933, with the last installment published on August 13th. The installments were then published as one novel at the end of 1933. Excerpts from the novel were published in the magazine to advertise the book, whose success led to the making of a movie by Max Ophüls, which debuted in theatres on August 13th, 1934. The movie then returned to paper in *Novella*, in the form of stills from the film, and set photos decorated the pages containing installments of other novels and acted as ads for the film itself. It is clear that thanks to Rizzoli's vision, the two media of paper and film became each other's continuation and launching platforms.[343] What is more, this circle of referentiality contributed to a further passage, that of the making of Isa Miranda into a Hollywood style movie star. *Everyone's Woman* dealt, in and of itself, with the question of fame, as embodied by the film's protagonist Gaby Doriot (Miranda). Through a series of misadventures, among which the forbidden love for a married man, Gaby reaches fame as a movie star, but she is eventually a victim of the loneliness that comes along with stardom. Internally, the story itself recalls the correspondence between the life of the star and her mechanical reproducibility, as in the last, striking scene of the film, in which after Gaby's death, the rotogravure machine printing posters of her close-up stops operating.

In *Novella* of June 21st, 1936, for instance, Isa Miranda took center stage on the cover of the magazine ("si parla ora con vivo interesse americano, dopo il caldo successo de *La signora di tutti* a Nuova York" - everyone in America now talks with vibrant interest, after the hot success of *Everybody's Woman* in New York City) proclaiming the success of *Everybody's Woman* in New York City, after its premiere on March 15th, 1936. If *Novella* had traced the initial steps of Miranda's Hollywood adventure since the day she had sparked the interest of the American audience, in the beginning of 1938 the magazine was ready to reassure Italian readers of Isa Miranda's fabulous Hollywood life. *Novella*

340 In 1956 Angelo Rizzoli founded Cineriz, a media company involved primarily in the production and distribution of films.

341 On *Lei*, October 24th 1933.

342 De Berti, *Forme e modelli*, p. 55.

343 The relationship between short stories, novel and their filmic adaptation varied accordingly to the works. In an interview, De Berti explained that the story could come out even before the film, as in the case of *Gli uomini che mascalzoni*..., whose first title was *Taxi*. In other occasions, De Berti argues, the magazine article and material would come out of the script, whereas after the war, it wasn't uncommon to reprint old or published material. Dorfles speaks of "realtà esistentiva," that is an adaptation of images and bodies to the medium, "preventivamente manipolati, quasi costruiti ad hoc, fatti per essere trasmessi" (previously manipulated, built ad hoc, made to be transmitted), 77.

published a "saluto" (greetings) from Hollywood by the actress, in the form of a short insert in a page of the magazine and dedicated two covers to Miranda's face. In February 1938, a caption on the cover, in the low right corner, reads: "Questi volti d'America di Isa Miranda confortano le nostre migliori speranze. Se tanto ci dà tanto, *Zazà* e *La signora dei tropici* saranno sul serio due film da vedere (Paramount)" (These faces from America of Isa Miranda support our biggest hopes. Given what we have seen so far, *Zazà* and *La signora dei tropici* will be two must watch films). *Novella* thus merged its own signature close-up cover, with Miranda's new status as a "volto d'America" (a face of America), auspicious for the success of her upcoming Paramount films. Ironically, both films would be at the center of a much more complex story.



Isa Miranda's 'greetings from Hollywood," and her face on the cover of *Novella* of February 20th 1938, anno 20, n.8.



*Novella*, April 3rd 1938, year 20, n.14 and December 10th, 1939

In April 1938, *Novella* changed its cover design. The first issue with a new look presented Isa Miranda "from Hollywood," on April 3rd. Next to her autograph, a caption read: "Abbiamo trepidato per lei,

al primo annuncio del disastro di Hollywood; per fortuna non ha corso alcun pericolo, e la lavorazione di *Zazà* non sarà forse nemmeno rinviata" (We have been anxious along with her, at the first announcement of her Hollywood disaster; luckily she didn't run into trouble, and the making of *Zazà* may not even be postponed). The "disastro di Hollywood" referred to the backstory of the making of *Zazà*. In 1939, George Cukor had hired Miranda to play the part of a *chanteuse parisienne* in the Belle Époque. However, after shooting a few scenes, Isa Miranda was replaced by Claudette Colbert, who had taken over the role of the glamorous singer Zazà, due to Miranda's rudimental English and strong Italian accent. The film eventually came out with Claudette Colbert as the protagonist opposite Herbert Marshall, depriving Miranda of her second chance at a Hollywood film. However, the actress would get a second chance at starring in *Zazà* in 1944, as the protagonist of a homonymous Italian film directed by Renato Castellani.[344]

Italian magazines glossed over the *Zazà* "disaster," blaming a car accident that would have prevented Miranda from acting in the film. One of the main promoters of Miranda's continued career was Eugenia Handamir – a writer, and agent of Miranda's – who, in 1939, reported from Hollywood about the making of *Hotel Imperial*, a drama directed by Robert Florey, alluding tangentially to the "incomprensioni di *Zazà*," (Zazà's *incomprehensions*). Handamir proceeded to describe Miranda's great ability in her acting, and the special aura of admiration that surrounded her at the Studios: "E a Miranda non sono mancate le attestazioni di stima e di simpatia dei dirigenti della Paramount […] che hanno voluto rinnovare anticipatamente il contratto […]. Hollywood crede in Miranda" (Miranda did not lack for attestations of esteem and sympathy from the Paramount executives […] who have insisted upon renewing her contract ahead of time […] Hollywood believes in Miranda).[345] In a separate report, Handamir recalled how Bob Florey, while directing her on the set of *Hotel Imperial* (Miranda's only real Hollywood success), would call for Miranda's attention on set before the scenes, by "allegramente ordinando, in italiano: silenzio!" (cheerfully commanding, in Italian: silenzio!),[346] reassuring the readers that the problem of language was at that point long gone.

According to *Novella*, during the making of *Hotel Imperial*, Miranda *became* American – she bypassed the "problem of language" that the magazines had started anticipating with the advent of sound and dubbing.[347] *Hotel Imperial* was never distributed in Italy. Yet *Novella* insisted in presenting Miranda's process of Americanization as effective, stating that to the actress, Italy had become simply a place for vacations. On the cover of *Novella* of December 10th, 1939 (figure 12b), the publisher announced: "Un cordiale saluto a Isa Miranda che torna in Italia per un periodo di vacanze dopo aver girato felicemente il suo secondo film americano *I diamanti sono pericolosi*," (warm greetings to Isa Miranda who returns to Italy for a period of vacation after happily shooting her second American film, *I diamanti sono pericolosi*).[348] The caption referred to the film *Adventures in Diamonds*, directed by George Fitzmaurice and produced by Paramount and released in 1940, later translated to Italian as *La signora dei diamanti*, possibly to echo the title of Miranda's first success. The movie was never distributed in Italy due to the fascist embargo against Hollywood movies. Shortly after, Miranda returned to Italy. As to Miranda's presence in the magazine, strikingly the Italian press strived to *own* the merits of her success abroad, a success whose incubation started out on the magazine and its attachments.

Next to Eugenia Handamir, detailing the making of Isa Miranda, was Mura, who, on the side of her fictional writing, worked as a correspondent for various magazines, among which *Film*. Mura

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344 See Elena Mosconi, *Isa Miranda. Light from a Star*. (Cremona: Persico, 2003).

345 *Film*, year 2, n. 3, 21 January 1939.

346 *Film*, n. 6. Handamir will also report from Hollywood in the occasion of the second movie with Isa Miranda: *Madame Mistery*, on Film n.8, 1939.

347 See *Cinema Illustrazione* for an ample documentation on the advent of sound film (specially issue 41, October 1930).

348 An article on *Film* (10, 1939) by Eugenia Handamir, "Isa Miranda tornerà in Italia a settembre per un breve periodo di vacanza," also presents three stills from *Hotel Imperiale*.

travelled to Hollywood in 1939, and reported on her "viaggio alla Mecca del cinema" (journey to the Mecca of cinema).[349] Scholar Elena Mosconi wrote about the experience of agents and writers such as Handamir and Mura, who found themselves reporting from Hollywood as external observers: "si tratta di un viaggio che in realtà sottende il confronto fra due mondi, due tipologie di spettatori, due concezioni spesso diverse della vita, e che si risolve solitamente in chiave di amara consapevolezza circa l'inconsistenza del fatuo ambiente americano." (It is a journey that, in reality, underlies the comparison between two world, two typologies of spectators, often two different conceptions of life, and that usually resolves in the bitter awareness of the fatuous inconsistency of the American environment).[350] Interviewing Isa Miranda for the magazine *Film*, Mura described the actress' Hollywood villa, commented on the extravagant mixture of architectural styles, and concluded that Miranda was the only star able to decorate her house, at the same time, "femminilmente e latinamente" (in a feminine and Latin fashion).

One of the obstacles to Isa Miranda's career accomplishments, was the issue of language, which kept her anchored to her Italian identity and got in the way of making her total acting persona into a Hollywood star. How did Italian magazines deal with the compromises of sound – dubbing and foreign accents – and the Americanization of the Italian actress, making her into a star who could still retain some of her original, local, features? The answer lay in magazines like *Film*. *Film* was founded in 1938 and published in Rome by Mino Doletti. In 1939, the magazine started regularly publishing a page of close-ups of some fifty Italian stars in a check pattern with the caption: "Bisogna creare un divismo italiano. Cominciate intanto, col ricordarvi questi nomi e questi volti" (We must create an Italian star system. For now, start by remembering these names and these faces).[351] Around the same time, Italian publishers fostered the same mechanism: an Italian star system had to be created, and the system *needed* a star.[352] The magazine became the equivalent of a familiar place to be visited for inspiration, but also, and more importantly, a platform that could help make the aspiring star's dreams come true, as Mondadori understood very well, when he refashioned one of his magazines, *Grazia*, with the subtitle "Voi non siete una nostra lettrice: siete una nostra amica" (You are not just a reader of ours, you are our lady friend).[353] The model was initiated by *Photoplay*, an American magazine founded in Chicago in 1917 and a clear referent for *Novella*'s graphic, which in the same years, had started including columns dedicated to celebrity "look-alikes."[354] *Photoplay* created a subgenre within the film magazine as a wider category. It proposed serial installments such as "The Secret Life of Greta Garbo" or a page dedicated to a Hollywood "best party." Another common format was the "biographical article," with a preference for stories that accounted for the transformation from underdog to film star, as in "The dramatic rise of a self-made star," Joan Crawford. Italian magazines followed this example and adopted the same formula to celebrate film stars' lives post mortem, as in the *Film*'s series between 1938 and 1939, the column dedicated to the death of Jean Harlow, "ricordo di Jean Harlow," (in memory of Jean Harlow), echoed by *Cinema*'s installments *Vita e miracolo della ragazza Joan* (The Life and the Miracle of Joan).

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349 Elena Mosconi in "Irene, Luciana, Mura e le altre," 458. Mura writes about it on *Film* n.33, 19 August 1939.

350 Ibid., p. 458.

351 See *Film*, n.5, 1939.

352 In the same years, the correspondence between Mino Doletti and Eugenia Handamir attests to the "making of" the star. Strikingly, in 1936 film *Una donna tra due mondi* (A Woman Between Two Worlds, by Goffredo Alessandrini) anticipates this double identity in and out of Italy.

353 See Decleva's description about *Grazia*'s launching in 1938, "essere un'amica a fianco delle lettrici" (239). Rizzoli "responded" launching *Annabella* the same year. But the editorial war wasn't over yet: in May 1939 Mondadori proposes *Novellissima*, directed by Carola Prosperi, as an alternative, but slightly better – as indicated by the suffix –issima, the superlative form of Italian adjectives, to *Novella* (240). The same allusion to friendship was being proposed by *Il secolo illustrato*: "lancia un appello a tutti i dilettanti fotografici, dei quali vuol diventare il più grande amico," (addresses all the amateur photographers, of whom it wants to become the biggest friend) (n.3, 2 gennaio 1927).

354 See Mosconi, 458.

This idea of "possibility" was fostered by various magazines in two ways: by collecting stories and advice on *how* to become a star; and letting the stars themselves tell stories about making it. In 1939, *Novella Film, strenna estiva*, a special summer edition of *Novella*, published the article "Come si crea una stella?" (How is a star created?): "è sulle spiagge, per le vie, nei salotti, che noi dobbiamo puntare il nostro sguardo […], dobbiamo gettarci alla ricerca dei nuovi astri, con la stessa scrupolosa passione con cui un astronomo ricerca nell'immenso firmamento, una stella nuova" (it's at the beach, in the street, in the living rooms, that we must direct our gaze […], we need to throw ourselves into the search for new stars, with the same scrupulous passion with which an astronomer looks at the immense sky, a new star).[355] The article used the metaphor of the star (*astro*, in the Italian expression for film stars in the making), dim at first, and luminous and renowned later on, to tell the story of Vivi Gioi, a young Italian actress who had debuted in the 1930s and reached fame in the years of postwar cinema: thanks to the right "forme pubblicitarie" (advertisement) her "*lancio*" (launch) brought her to success: "bisogna fotografarla, bisogna scoprire e mettere in evidenza la sua eleganza, i suoi atteggiamenti, le sue espressioni" (she must be photographed, her elegance must be discovered and highlighted, and the same for her manners and expressions). Then, the article continues, there was the assignment of the "ruolo adatto" (the right part) on the part of the director; and then, finally the roles of the makeup artist, the tailor and the hair-dresser. It was only at that point, the article concluded, that the question could be posed: "Forse una stella?" (a star, perhaps?), to which the answer was affirmative: "Abbiamo una attrice" (We have an actress).

Becoming a star was possible, these articles seemed to suggest. In *Cine*, we read of a lesser known actress, Diana Dardo, in the column "Vita di Hollywood" (Hollywood's Life):

> fra le attrici che figureranno nei films parlati e cantati della Italotone film productions, la grande società italiana di produzioni cinematografiche testé costituitasi in Hollywood, vi è Diana Dardo, la bellissima e vivace attrice dello schermo che già molto successo ha riportato nelle sue interpretazioni in alcune delle grandi produzioni delle maggiori case americane […]. Essa si trova in America da qualche anno e parla l'inglese alla perfezione, tanto che anche dopo l'avvento della cinematografia parlata ha continuato ad essere in domanda negli Studi di Hollywood, mentre la grande maggioranza delle attrici straniere hanno dovuto cessare la loro attività perché non parlavano l'inglese o lo parlavano male […]. Essa è oggi una delle attrici straniere di Hollywood meglio quotate per il rango di 'star' nella prossima annata cinematografica. [356] (Among the actresses who will soon star in the talked and sung films of the Italotone film productions, the big production company born in Hollywood, is Diana Dardo, the beautiful and vivacious actress who has already had a lot of success thanks to her role in productions by the American majors… She has been in the US for a few years now and her spoken English is perfect, to the point that after the advent of the talking pictures she has continued to be in demand by the Hollywood Studios, whereas the majority of foreign actresses had to quit because they didn't speak English, or they spoke it poorly… She is now one of the foreign actresses in Hollywood who best responds to the label of "star" for the next cinematographic year.)

[355] The article continues: "Una piccola stella che si confonde perché brilla di pochissima luce, ma che domani, una volta che sarà bene individuata, potrà apparirci in tutta la sua luminosità […]. E quando si è trovata una stella, sia pure nascente, bisogna essere i primi noi a saperla valorizzare, a farle segnare una scia luminosa tale da richiamare l'attenzione del pubblico, che più tardi dovrà fare di lei il proprio idolo." The author is Amedeo Castellazzi, issue n.50, June-October 1939, "supplemento a *Novella*." On the cover, Assia Noris.
[356] *Cine*, year VI, n.15.

If the example of Diana Dardo suggests that Hollywood was ready to notice and include those who aspired to a career in the field, many articles proposed on the side cautionary tales about the component of "hard work" that had to be taken into account in the formula, as attested to by Hollywood stars. Ginger Rogers' testimony appeared in *Film*: "Ho faticato per diventare una stella" (I struggled to become a star):

> Se volete diventare una stella, provvedetevi di un conto aperto in banca, siate ferma e decisa, di una tenacia e di un umore che non subiscano variazioni di sorta […] Se avete talento e un certo garbo, vi sono probabilità anche per voi, ma dovete prendere la via giusta […] Fate vedere a tutti che siete una creatura viva e non soltanto una pupattola dello schermo. Se alla fine, non vi dimenticherete di lavorare con tutta la vostra forza, avrete molte probabilità per diventare un giorno una stella!
>
> (If you want to become a star, get yourself a bank account, be fierce and determined, of a tenacity and mood that undergo no variations of any sort […] If you have talent and good manners, there will be some chances for you too […] but you have to take the right path […]. Show everyone that you are a lively creature and not only a doll for the screen. If, in the end, you don't forget to work with all your strength, you will have many chances to become a star one day!) [357]

By reading Ginger Rogers's advice, it is striking to observe both the delusion of open-ended possibilities for anyone to succeed, and the nod to "natural" qualities that were the *conditio sine qua non* to attain stardom. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 1, advertisement was often employed to the same end. Two different toothpaste ads published in *Novella* in 1938 and 1939, resort to a close-up (reminiscent of that dedicated to the diva on the cover, or the page of close-ups in *Film*). With the close-ups comes the product pitch. The toothpaste brand Kolynos advertises, with a woman smiling close-up framed by a star: "Denti come quelli delle 'Stelle' di Hollywood," claiming that all stars know that their success is due to the "incanto del loro sorriso" (enchantment of their smile), while Colgate sells "il fascino di una candida dentatura" (the charme of pure white teeth). Allusions to purity and innocence recall the treatment of the "making" of Carla del Poggio I have explored in Chapter One. Together with other elements of the magazines, ads acted as a bridge between the everyday woman and the star: purchase and consume the right products, and you'll look just like a Hollywood star.

[357] *Film* n.6, 1939, Copyright Trait d'Union Press.


Toothpaste ads - from 1939 *Novella Strenna estiva* (June-September), and from *Novella* of Feb. 20th 1938.

This circle of referentiality, collapsing paper, the onscreen, and external reality, interpellated the reader both as an observer and a consumer, and as the object bought, touched and gazed at, with the underlying promise that "anyone" could become a star, that is, be made into a star. And yet (as seen in the distance between *Novella*'s implicit reader from that of *La donna fascista*, in Chapter One), a precise subject position was implied by the magazine, especially with respect to consumption, narrowing down the possibilities of success and of bridging the glamorous and the ordinary.[358]Laura Mulvey partially addresses this issue: "the cinema has distinguished itself in the production of ego ideals, through the star system for instance. Stars provide a focus or center both to screen space and screen story where they act out a complex process of likeness and difference (the glamorous impersonates the ordinary)."[359] Mulvey's idea of "likeness and difference" is illustrated in the column, in *Film*, dedicated to "come si veste…" (How does one dress…). The column enabled at the same time an effect of recognition or mirroring and of emulation, and, more prominently a separation between what *they* – the stars, like Barbara Stanwyck – wear, and what "noi," *us*, wear.

[358] See Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* on woman as a "bearer, not maker, of meaning" (15)
[359] Ibid., p.18.


*Film*, n. 9, 1939 and *Film*, n. 12, 1939, *How does Barbara Stanwyck dress – How we dress.*

In 1935, Rizzoli's magazine *Piccola*, published the outcome of a referendum conducted in Hollywood to "stabilire la graduatoria dei divi e delle dive nei gusti del pubblico mondiale," (establish the ranking of male and female stars in the taste of the world's public).[360] According to *Piccola*, the public's vote had allegedly left both Mae West and Janet Gaynor upset by their position in the popular vote, while Garbo's eleventh place had been "the big surprise of the 1935 referendum" (Garbo è undicesima e questo costituisce la grande sorpresa del referendum 1935.") *Piccola* speculated on Garbo's low levels of popularity: "Are Americans mad because Greta went back to Sweden?" ("Americani indignati perchè Greta è tornata in Svezia?"). Apparently inconsolable about her eleventh position, Garbo was only able to cheer up upon hearing of her victory at the Venice film festival (for her role in *Anna Karenina*), but the magazine reported that the disappointment for the referendum had overcome Garbo's joy for having won the Mussolini Cup: "si dice abbia pianto" (rumor has it that she cried). Moreover, as a consequence of Shirley Temple's referendum win – followed by Clark Gable, Will Rogers and Joan Crawford – "pare che March e Gable e Harlow e Crawford non si salutino più in seguito ai risultati del referendum [...]. Harlow accusa Crawford di aver girato città per un mese per farsi vedere, distribuito fotografie, assunto impiegati per rispondere alle lettere" (It seems like March and Gable and Harlow and Crawford no longer speak to each other following the results of the referendum […] Harlow accuses Crawford of having toured around different cities for a month in order to be seen, that she has distributed photos and hired employees to reply to fan letters). *Piccola* created a narrative according to which visibility in the magazine, and the prestige accorded by the public were fundamental to the effectiveness of one's self-fashioning, and, more importantly, that public attention from magazines was as relevant an indicator of popularity as film revenues and contracts.

With World War II, magazines like *Novella* had to operate a drastic change to their look in order to survive, namely by incorporating the realm and aesthetics of the war, and the reality of male workforce

[360] *Piccola*, 1935 (Anno VIII n.39).

employed in the battlefields, as I have discussed in Chapter Two. At the end of the war, in 1946, while including the body of the soldier, *Novella* displayed the culmination of the process of invasive gazing in the life of the star – yet another way to collapse the distance between the cinematic medium, the magazine, and reality – in the occasion of an article on Alida Valli – who was starting out her career, and would gain fame in Hollywood acting for Alfred Hitchcock among others – with photos from her own villa in Hollywood surrounded by dogs, *all'americana*.[361]That the magazine would not only incorporate the star, but push in a hitherto unexplored direction, is telling of two directions: one is the continuation of the making of stars, as in the example of Alida Valli (or Carla del Poggio), the other is the inevitable confrontation with the wounded body of Italy and of the possibility of celebrating the movie star as an icon of beauty and glamour.

Pina's obscenely lifeless body in *Open City*

With the spur of neorealist cinema, the body of the actress was marketed in Italian magazines in a way that favored corporeality (as attached to external historical circumstances as the war). That is to say that the wounded, traumatized body of the actor and character is invested of a function that is, in all, more relevant than the performative body of the star. Taking as an example Anna Magnani's defenseless body in the streets of *Rome Open City,* which at the time in Roberto Rossellini's film epitomized the sense of loss and helplessness of immediate postwar Italy, one can explore the internal contradictions, within the period, between the desire to "make" the Hollywood star and that of creating a soberer and more apt figure of national suffering and restoration. Shot by a German soldier, just when the *body* of the nation was still reeling with the presence of fascism, Pina's motherly figure shocked the spectator and, within the densely metaphorical texture of the film, signifying the next moves of Italian society, left room for the next generation, as per the final scene of the film, in which children take on the city of Rome. With respect to the 1930s star, Pina's figure has so far begged to be taken as a powerful symbol for the break between fascism and neorealism.

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361 Raffaele De Berti defines as such a new model based on "continuità biografica," (*biographical continuity*) as a loyalty model to "build" a diva or star: the attachments and special series worked toward the construction of a full character, week after week. *Cinema illustrazione*, for instance, proposed biographies of stars in installments, and attachments, the same it's true for *Novella*: "Elissa Landi. La carriera artistica e la vita privata di questa popolare attrice sono narrate dalla biografia che troverete in vendita a una lira in tutte le edicole: 36 pagine, 42 foto, due copertine a colori, un ritratto sciolto" (*Elissa Landi. Artistic career and private life of this popular actress are narrated in the biography*…) (19 January 1936). See for that model today the podcast *You Must Remember This*, http://www.youmustrememberthispodcast.com/ - which tells weekly stories often in installments, of the lives of Hollywood stars from the 1930s.

Yet, historical readings have overlooked the corporeal surplus of her body on the ground, and how this may connect with the body of the star and with questions of authenticity.[362]

The "making" of Carla del Poggio, especially through *Novella* and *Fotogrammi*[363] – the two magazines that more than any other were trying to elevate her to the stature of a star – did not grant her the degree of success that they seemed to promise. *Fotogrammi,* in particular, briefly assigned an advice column to Del Poggio, featuring photos of the actress responding to fan mail. Yet, as early as 1952, with Del Poggio's appearance on the big screen in Giuseppe De Santis's *Roma ore 11* (the last movie she shot in Italy, before vanishing from the big screen in 1956) she vanished from the magazine. She reemerged in a magazine just a few years later, when *Tempo*[364] (this time an illustrated weekly news magazine) published an article about Del Poggio's decision to leave cinema and dedicate herself to theatre: "finalmente riuscirò a far ridere" (I will finally be able to make people laugh). Carla del Poggio retired shortly after to dedicate herself to motherhood and family, according to an article in *Tempo*, decorated with photos of Del Poggio holding her newborn. Further research will help connect the lives and acting careers of Anna Magnani with Carla del Poggio's story, as I have begun to outline in Chapter Two. So far, I have begun to explore the many levels of difficulty for the postwar Italian actress to be made into a star (or the arrested development of that same process), within the wider backdrop of neorealism and the postwar years. In the years of the "economic miracle," as seen in the case of *The Tenth Victim* and *The Earth Seen from the Moon*, a new type of cinema – comedy Italian style, had emerged, allowing for a new generation of actors, that bore little to no visual and discursive connection to the war and its aftermath, to become one of the components of the Made in Italy bran, and on the contrary projecting an image of lighthearted spirit onto the reinforcement of a national cinema.

362 See Sergio Rigoletto, "(Un)dressing authenticity: Neorealist stardom and Anna Magnani in the postwar era (1945-48)" in the *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media* (Vol.6 Number 8, 2018): 389-403.
363 Assia Noris in Hollywood (see *Fotogrammi*), Valentina Cortese a Hollywood (Fotogrammi). Fotogrammi dedicated room to these actresses as well.
364 *Tempo*, 22 July 1954.

## CONCLUSIONS

The time-span I have considered in this dissertation – 1932-1972 – has an hourglass shape: the physical presence and the American aid in the years of the Marshall Plan are the central point, where two periods merge: the Italian infatuation for American aesthetics and imagery in the 1930s, and disillusionment toward the same culture, exemplary of the declining relationship between Italy and the United States in the late 1960s.

How did this fluctuating relationship come into being and unfold? The socioeconomic premise underlying the discourse of Italy's Americanization and disillusionment is the notion of the United States as an "irresistible empire," as formulated by Victoria de Grazia in *Irresistible Empire. America's Advance Through Twentieth Century Europe* (2005). In the book, the author pinpointed the United States' "imperialismo informale, basato su consenso e svago" (informal imperialism, based on consent and recreation).[365] According to De Grazia, the "tentacles" of the American empire have reached the economic heart as well as the culture and institution superstructure of the countries that, due to political circumstances (as in Italy's case after World War II) fell under its influence, molding a subset of production and consumption rules (in this case extending, as in the hourglass shape, before and after the Marshall Plan). For the purposes of this dissertation, I have explored the unfolding of this exchange under the lens of the media of paper and film. In this intermedial exchange, the United States went from generating a desire of *emulation* in many Italian cultural realms to a sense of *disillusionment* toward its overall values.

Adopting a material approach based on films and archival material, and focused on objects and bodily practices, I reached the conclusion that the engine of this exchange – and hence of the "irresistible empire" in and of itself – was, starting in the 1930s, the progressively higher value attributed to producing, consuming and *owning* objects of American origin or style, because of their quality as markers of "modernity." The question of how the United States came to embody the quintessence of modernity resonates with Fredric Jameson's intuition of the widespread "illusion that the West ha[d] something that no one else possesse[d] but which they ought to desire."[366] In this case, and as seen in my chapters, the *ideas* of America and of the West seem to, at least conceptually, become one, thus making America tantamount to desire of material ownership and emulation. Yet, turning back to Victoria De Grazia's foundational book, the United States' cultural and economic hegemony "was born in Europe." According to De Grazia, the now socio-economic givens of consumerism, serial production, and desire (halfway between need and addiction) were first put into practice, rehearsed, and tried out in the "old world."[367]

That is to say that Italian people, both through production (as in Rizzoli's market strategy) and through consumption (of magazines, consumer goods, and industrial design) enabled and created a narrative of the United States as irresistible – a dynamic conjoined with the American operation of undermining national local industries in the territories where its products were marketed.[368] The two dynamics (Italy's internal narrative and commercial strategy, combined with the United States's soft power creating a globalized sense of modernity) conceived of the consumer goods beyond their mere

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365 De Grazia, *L'impero irresistibile*, p. xix.

366 *Ibid.*, 8.

367 About the appeal of the US see Mario Soldati: "Some people assert that Hollywood is based on European brains. Certainly, Hollywood IS based wholly on European brains. But in exactly the same way as America as a whole is based on Europe. America is the land of European fugitives and rebels. "A vast republic of escaped slaves" as Lawrence said with a very happy turn of phrase. America is not simply a part of the world. America is a state of mind, a passion. And any European can, at any moment, catch the American complaint, rebel against Europe, and become American." Excerpt found in Mario Soldati's notes for his lecture at UC Berkeley in 1972, at the Centro Apice archive in Milan.

368 De Grazia, p. xxi.

material and practical qualities, and made of the availability and ownership of such goods, or lack thereof, an instrument to gauge a nation's well being and advancement.

In the 1930s, Italian women needed an American "other" as a site of emulation and escape, as much as the regime needed them as "urban consumers" (as argued by Barbara Spackman in "Shopping for Autarchy"). The US, thanks to the thriving of Hollywood cinema, was providing a space of representation and a degree of freedom (through images that instilled a whole new beauty canon) simply inconceivable under fascism. Angelo Rizzoli's commercial strategy rode the wave of limitation and dissatisfaction of the Italian female readership, bypassed censorship, and created new needs. Rizzoli intuited that magazines were a medium of the time, as symbolized by Mario Camerini's abundance of newsstand, from *What Scoundrels Men Are!* to *Mister Max*. What are the elements of this type of cinema that appeared subsequently in neorealist film?

When the war erupted, Italy first spiraled down in destruction and political upheaval, and eventually found itself in close contact with American culture and soldiers as a result of the Allies' intervention and the Marshall Plan. Dynamics of ownership and consumption (by donation, in the case of the Marshall Plan consumer goods) of US consumer goods on the part of Italian civilians, became one of the ways in which America solidified the image of Italy as in a state of need. In parallel to the distribution of American aid starting in 1948, US designers, thanks to the exhibition *Italy at Work*, created a narrative of Italy as able to contain an artisanal, backward mode of production, specially of furniture, as well as that of a country slowly developing modern technology, material and industrial design. In this moment of close contact between the two cultures lie some of the possible new venues of exploration for a deeper understanding of the role of American capitalism in the development of the economic miracle.

When the six-fold industrial growth hit Italy, the divide between those who could benefit from industrial growth (the Pontanos in Antonioni's *La notte*) and the working class or Southern portion of the population (portrayed in Pasolini's *The Earth Seen from the Moon*, and in Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers*) generated a sense of gradual disillusionment - detaching people from objects, while consumption of new technology gained traction. By the time the "economic miracle" took off, filmmakers lent images to this skepticism, and unveiled a dynamic somehow linked to the false premise and promise of American goods, an illusion for the few, as epitomized by *The Tenth Victim*. As Petri's film illustrates, disillusionment ensued, generating a sense of estrangement toward the more progressive and future oriented stance of the US with respect to divorce, abortion, and other civil rights being discussed in Italy.

In all, the films I have analyzed all have in common a relatively niche position within the field of film studies, yet they open up venues for future studies, in which following actors and filmmakers, in parallel with their filmography and what surrounds that, sheds new light on the history of film. The most fruitful example of this type of investigation would be Vittorio De Sica, who in and of himself was living proof of the continuity between "the white telephones," neorealism, and the economic miracle, as his career first as actor and later as a filmmaker bridged all these periods. Less discussed in this dissertation is the figure of actor Alberto Sordi, who helps trace the arc (and coexistence) of full participation and redefinition of Italian cinema, while manifesting the sense of disillusionment toward the US. In *Un americano a Roma*, Sordi conveyed a sense decadence and fall of ideals, and the comic subtone connects the film to a family of films among which *The Tenth Victim* and *The Earth Seen From the Moon*.

In a photo exhibited at Boom 60 in Milan, Sordi sticks his head in a "nudo" by Alberto Viani at the Venice Biennale in 1958: "In 1958 Alberto Viani exhibited abstract nudes at the Biennale, with holes with a tactile and metaphorical value. A famous photo of a skeptical Alberto Sordi, sticking his head through one was published in *Oggi*, and dozens of satirical cartoons in those years identified

sculptures with holes in them as embarrassing emblems of an all too cryptic modern art."[369]In *Il boom,* the play with branding and icons contribute to the overall. "C'è il boom o non c'è?" – *is there a boom or there is not?* – is one of the most pungent lines about the supposed materiality and tangibility of a socioeconomic phenomenon unable to reach the far away stretches of rural Italy. In the film, the commercial logo becomes the part for the whole of the new times – playing with dimensions and almost in a cubist representation - just as the gesture of inserting his head in a nudo stands for the commercial aspect of industrial design (only useful in a performative sense).

Together with the push toward Hollywood, the films of the 1960s stated again and again that the artisanal days were over – as the temporality of labor seemed eclipsed by that of instant gratification, hence replacing artisanal with serial production. The anonymity of those involved in the making of industrial design, the gradual loss of the artisan experience and its very commercialization were targeted by the many discourses invoked by *The Tenth Victim*. In the film, Elio Petri went straight to the materiality of the "boom": he used industrially produced furniture as a mean to highlight the palpable changes in people's reality brought about by the "miracle." Yet, the same objects he showcased in the mise-en-scéne of his film helped him unveil the imbalances in the way this material wealth was portrayed, distributed, and used to attenuate the weight and memory of the war. In the mise-en-scéne, objects by designers such as Zanuso, Magistretti, Gardella – "simple furniture design, fabricated in series, compact and flexible enough to be of maximum use in limited space,"[370] thanks to new materials like tubular steel and plastic – typified what Sparke calls the "Janus nature" of Italy at this time, "looking back towards craft and forward towards a modern design aesthetic and therefore serving a key transitional role in the path towards postwar modernity."[371]

[369] From one of the exhibition's descriptions.
[370] Sparke, 187.
[371] Ivi.

In 2016, an exhibition in Milan at the Museo del Novecento, titled "New York New York. Arte italiana. La riscoperta dell'America" (New York New York. Italian Art. The Re-discovery of America) brought together artists from different styles, generations, and nationalities. While it emphasized the fact that the contact between Italy and the United states entailed a new language as "linguaggio della modernità caratterizzato dalla sua internazionalità" (a language of modernity, characterized by its international breadth), the exhibit built on top of an idealized version of this contact. That is to say, the exhibit implied that Italy and America were, in 2016, *still* in close contact, in terms of their art and politics. Moreover, and in synch with the wider context of this dissertation, the renewed contact between Italy and the United States was thematized as a "riscoperta." In the first place, this label mobilized trite formulations about the patronizing view of "America" as a blank space, to be "discovered," that is, colonized by Europeans. Secondly, the title of the exhibit posits Italy as the active agent of a rediscovery of the cultural exchange with the United States. Interestingly, curators merged "America" and "New York" as if they were one thing, just as *The Tenth Victim* had done in its cold opening in the deserted streets of Manhattan. Amid much ambiguity, these kinds of cultural initiative still ensure abundant resources for an understanding of a cultural contact, in the form of material and artistic exchanges, that has been taking on different shapes for almost a century.

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