

# Symphonies of Labour: Opera Traces Inside and Outside the Walls of the Factory

Laura Cesaro  
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia

**Abstract** This contribution intends to investigate how the investigative cinema of the 1960s and 1970s reinterprets melodrama in a radical way, taking it on as the main dramaturgical modality: for its aesthetics as a symbol of a culture, of a landscape; for its being a mass genre (in the century of mass communication); for its assumption of performance, of the register of representation, as the constitutive ontological principle of the device. The form of remediation enacted gives shape to a trace, according to the Derridean reading.

**Keywords** Labour. Trace. Derrida. Italian cinema. Dialogism.

**Summary** 1 Dialogism and Remediation: Towards a Stratified Media Experience. – 2 Textual Contamination: Opera and the Stratified Trace. – 3 Listening to Labour: Operatic Intrusions in the Soundscape of the Factory.

The collective intonation of the great Risorgimento hit *Va', pensiero* by both the common people and the police, the exploited and the oppressors; Manrico's *aria* and the chorus of armed men calling out "all'armi! all'armi" and the gallery of the *Fenice* erupting in collective patriotic enthusiasm: these two scenes taken from *Casa Ricordi* (1954) by Carmine Gallone, and *Senso* (1954) by Luchino Visconti are just two of the most cited examples of a tendency in Italian cinema to draw on opera, and particularly on Verdi's works, to narrate about communities with melodramatic register (cf. Verona 2016, 307-27). These are communities that, paraphrasing a successful work by Thomas Elsaesser, tell of 'noise and fury' in response to the shocks of modernity in the second half of the last century (Singer 2001). Intuition that finds ample scope in the seminal work of Peter Brooks (1976) to which we refer. Historical, political and cultural upheavals affected, according to Brooks, the very function of the melodramatic imagination, which is here intended as an aesthetic horizon for negotiating the anxieties of the time as much as the hopes of an era. The lens that is applied in the following analysis with respect to the valorisation of the individual sphere, of the ethical, but also psychological-emotional drama of the individual, refers to this intuition.



The kind of cinema attending to such a socio-historical scenario, as Lorenzo Marmo reminds us, narrates amongst others the disparity between the individual's position and the forces that oppress them. It does so by emphasising codes of excess to convey the repressed energy which cannot find an outcome due to the unequal struggle in which its protagonists – especially as a group – are involved. An aspect that emerges from a mapping of such stylistic excesses in Italian cinema of this period is undoubtedly the recourse to lyrical melodrama, particularly that of the composer from Parma. He is given a prominent place, finding in his works a strong 'Risorgimento' reference, serving as a sound commentary on a universe in which the outcomes of individual trajectories are no longer *a priori* guaranteed by the positioning of individuals and groups within the social structure. Instead, they arise from their moral and emotional conduct. This tendency is often presented as an intent to underscore a strong patriotic sentiment, recognising in operatic traces a heroic and libertarian significance. One might consider the studies by Carlotta Sorba (2015), who reflects on the role of melodramatic imagination in the formation of the Italian national sentiment, and analyses the transmedial dimension of the Risorgimento. She concludes that it is possible to find a central element of discourses and experiences regarding the sacrifice for collective freedom in the melodramatic mode, an especially the commentary – also proposed by films – on representative characters of an oppressed Italy, both politically and economically.

However, upon further analysis of the selection of case studies, we tend to align with what Daniela Goldin Folena has rather pointed out. In relation to opera, in particular the texts of Arrigo Boito and the music of Giuseppe Verdi, she treats it like “the symbol of a culture, of a landscape” (Goldin Folena 2013, 23), based not on didactic traits but on rhetorical affinities.

Starting with the study conducted for the filing and metadata of the files of the Italian film censorship archive from 1944 to 2021,<sup>1</sup> it emerges how this rhetoric seems to intensify in the 1960s and 1970s. The Opera becomes a preponderant tool for 'rebellious authors' – think of the filmography of Marco Bellocchio (cf. Verona 2016, 229) and Bernardo Bertolucci (187) among others – to narrate the disruptive charge of the conflict with the shared middle-class conscience; a cinema of denunciation against the culture of the past, based on the assumption that Massimo Mila succinctly summarises by stating that there is much of Verdi

in the fabric of our common consciousness of Italians. [...] Verdi as the father, even if today we feel he is so different from us, or rather, precisely because today we feel he is so different from us, of that chronological diversity of customs that accompanies the passage of generations and alienates children from the ideals of their fathers. (Mila 2012, 82)

**1** We refer to a project within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), *Mission 4 “Education and Research” - Component 2 “From Research to Business” - Investment 1.3, Extended Partnership “Changes”, theme 5. Humanities and Cultural Heritage as Laboratories of Innovation and Creativity*, identification code PE\_00000020 (CUP n. H53C22000850006), PNRR CHANGES - Cultural Heritage Active Innovation for Sustainable Society, Spoke 2. The database can be accessed at the following link: <https://filmcensorship.changes.unimi.it/index.php>.

An unprecedented attack is being launched against Verdi, who is considered both a symbol of a national identity and an emblem of a stale bourgeoisie, a remnant of the past from which we feel ensnared and from which it is necessary to free ourselves. This culminates in a desire for revolution against the withered and the faded, taking the shape of an unnecessary burden of a past that must be eliminated, of which the melodrama is a bearer: this is perfectly represented by director, Marco Bellocchio, in his debut film *I Pugni in Tasca* (1965). We refer to the continuous staging of death through exaggerated acting, typical of melodrama, and in particular to the last sequence of the film: Ale, after having exalted himself listening to the finale of the first act of *La Traviata*. The soprano's joyous high notes overwhelm the protagonist in the throes of an epileptic fit: in the last scene, we see his motionless body on the ground and the record player continuing to turn.

This film is paradigmatic of a kind of productions, where the blending of genres is not merely a reference but encourages the creative *mise-en-scène* towards figures of discourse that open up a horizon of thought able to raise critical inquiry, in terms of denunciation (about yesterday as well as today). The choice has been made to shape the theoretical interlude through non-canonical audiovisual texts in the study of opera in cinema of the 1970s. These are productions that find their place in an Italy - primarily in the North - punctuated by political and social demands, where opera, alongside the filmic image, serves as a trace, as we anticipate, to reflect on the sense of belonging.

In this essay, we want to suggest that associating melodrama with the imagery of conflict from the 1970s allows to frame the narrative of work as an element able to reflect gender dynamics as well as social expectations of that period. This connection highlights how these dynamics influence the experiences and identities of the characters. Through melodrama, in other words, the representation of work becomes a means to address issues of masculine and feminine identity, revealing the complexities of interactions between professional life and personal relationships. In this context, melodrama not only amplifies social tensions but also serves as a critical reflection on the expectations and roles that define the era.

Moving from these premises, in what follows we will seek for some structuring tendencies, which could be useful in better orienting an informed reading of the corpus in relation to the symbolic nexus labour/opera.

## **1 Dialogism and Remediation: Towards a Stratified Media Experience**

As Mariapia Comand reminds us, the osmotic relationship between different media allows, from a semiotic perspective, a dual or even multiple codification of the entire text: the dialogic play characterises the text at the level of signs (Comand 2001, 29). Let us therefore attempt, before proceeding, to borrow Comand's methodological suggestion and read this osmotic embedding through Bakhtinian dialogism. Firstly, it is worth reminding that Bakhtin highlights how the conscious or unconscious reference to another's word is not at all neutral, on the contrary, it activates a reciprocal influence with the discourse that frames it. This is not a "mechanical contact", but rather a "chemical combination" that unfolds on a semantic and expressive level

(Bachtin [1975] 2001, 148). The dialogism does not ask us to philologically uncover the precise source underlying a word or a mechanical discourse, but rather to certify that the dialogic encounter gives rise to a transformation and a mutual exchange, prompting us to undertake a rhizomatic journey, exploring what the processes and effects may be. The Russian linguist indeed speaks of stratification (Bachtin [1975] 2001, 119). We must be aware that we cannot isolate utterances from their originating environment, as “every word has the aroma of the context and the contexts in which it has lived its life full of social tension; all words and all forms are inhabited by intentions”. Consequently, in the game of embeddings, we must bear in mind that every segment “is not a neutral medium, which easily passes into the intentional ownership of the speaker” (Bachtin [1975] 2001, 101).

In our path, therefore, we must always remember that no word exists in isolation from others and from its social context, as it always retains signs of the other, even of those who may have used it previously. Since there are no isolated utterances separate from others, two concomitant operations become active, namely one of extraction and the other of embedding. To delve further into understanding our field of investigation, let us try to intersect the reading of the utterance with that of the media.

When it comes to the media, we take as a starting point the binary evoked by Bolter and Grusin: the pole of transparent immediacy – namely, the desire to create media that provide the illusion of immediate access to reality and thus present themselves as transparent, ideally tending to disappear, not to be noticed – and the pole of ipermediation, the pleasure derived from the compliant encounter of increasingly sophisticated mediation and therefore with media that, instead of dissolving into transparency, become opaque and invite our gaze to linger on their very functioning. This dual pattern can also be taken up in our study.

The blending of dialogism and remediation lies precisely in the response that Francesco Casetti (2012) gives when he speaks of relocation, where he centres the analysis of media not so much on devices and techniques, but on the type of experience they propose regardless of where this unfolds. This exercise invites us to read the fusion by tracing the passages of transposition, of shifting, the migration towards other devices, other spaces, other contexts of the above-mentioned “chemical reaction”. Applying this to the intermingling we examined, a process emerges. The latter is not unidirectionally oriented along a linear trajectory, on the contrary, it is bi-directional, in so far as both types of text are enriched: in this form of remediation, the text proper becomes less relevant and the emphasis is placed on experience, a territory that is complex and stratified by definition. We are aware of the existence of a vocabulary that is not yet fully shared regarding the activation, or rather, the questioning of cinema in relation to melodrama: scholars speak of citation, reference and presence. Labels that do not seem to us to fully represent the works that fall into the category of remediation outlined here.

It is thinking of this incorporation as *trace* that seems to us, instead, could allow us to raise stimulating inquiries as well as aid in a categorisation of practices. The trace is not referring as a product (musical trace, for example): here we identify trace as a process. In this way, it thus semantically carries the idea of a movement that is inherent in the etymology of the noun: *tractiare*, derived from *tractus*, the past participle of *trahere* ‘to draw’.

We therefore understand trace as an act that activates the production of meaning to describe and outline in a synthetic way with respect to the whole. This is not a system but rather, as Derrida reminds us, “an open strategic apparatus, upon its own abyss [...] a non-closed, non-closable, and not entirely formalizable set of rules for reading, interpretation, writing” (Derrida 1990, 446). The second aspect of interest: this is an incisive action. In *De la grammatologie* (Derrida 1967), the French philosopher justifies the choice of *trace* recognizing in it the specific function of presenting thought with a temporality removed from the dominance of the present. It is a movement that cannot occur in the fullness of a here and now, as it endows the alterity of a past that has never been and yet can never be experienced in the form, original or modified, of presence. These traces seem to carry the weight of memory: they transmit a complex structure.

And it is precisely this complex structure that characterizes the representation of the figure of the worker. A structure that becomes an articulated site of narration – both with regard to cultural identities and in relation to sociopolitical tensions – within the corpus of films we are referring to. A structure that emerges from the work relocated by cinema.

## 2 Textual Contamination: Opera and the Stratified Trace

Applying this interpretation to the field under investigation here, the trace leads us to consider that the textuality we are examining induces us not to distinguish between the two-source text, as they become one and the same. The text taken from musical theatre will not appear as a foreign body with respect to the rest of the film (or vice versa); especially if it manifests in the form of a sung text. It takes the shape of an ‘intrusion’ and it is never neutral. We can further build up on this thanks to the important contribution by Giulia Carluccio and Federica Villa, according to whom we can only attribute “a new and important function to the spectator, who is called upon to activate explicit and implicit relationships” (Carluccio, Villa 2006, 19), since the organisation of the word imprints itself in all its semantic layers, complicating its expression and influencing its entire stylistic physiognomy. The reference to opera thus invokes the spectator’s competencies, who is repeatedly called to undertake a hermeneutic task on the text, thereby becoming an active principle of interpretation: the use of what we would like to term a *pre-existing musical trace* and the degree of understanding of the metalinguistic function of the utterance, lead us to identify two types of traces.

The first trace pertains the level of meaning. The spectator recognises in that chemical mixture an extratextual context, that is, the belonging of the musical piece to a given cultural world, to a recognisable atmosphere to the spectator-listener. Let us rehearse this point, which we find of particular significance: even where there might be a completely ignorant spectator, unable to fully contextualise what they hear, we believe that the operatic intervention, through the profound linguistic shift it establishes within a

film, produces meaning (cf. Verona 2016, 32).<sup>2</sup> We might call such a meaning ‘superficial’, or better, a commentary within the diegesis. The spectator, in this sense, is not required to identify either the composer of the music, the opera in question, or even the precise dramatic moment: what matters is the fracture between cinematic narration and its immediate recognition as generic ‘lyrical music’ (cf. Verona 2016, 32).

However, opera theatre presents levels of complexity in that not only it encourages to investigate linguistic sedimentations, but also to look into the various narrative and dramatic implications. This is why the second type of trace we propose to identify is a stratified level in which the evolution of the narrative, and therefore the situational definition of the story, can be found in the intratextual reference. The trace thus leads us to break away from the idea of an autonomous, isolated text in favour of complex textualities, which, however – and here lies the importance of Derridian concept of trace – undergo an unstoppable process of transformation; and it is precisely in this significant movement that both the source text and the arriving text are enriched. This trace, in its dialogic bearing, becomes such only in the presence of someone capable of grasping and deciphering it, otherwise, it would not exist and would remain a textually inert reference. The melodramatic fragment can open up horizons that refer to both a historical and dramatic perspective. Let us therefore attempt to dissolve the distinction through the analysis of some chosen cases.

### **3        Listening to Labour: Operatic Intrusions in the Soundscape of the Factory**

In 1968 and during the ‘hot autumn’ of 1969, the theme of industrial labour assumes an unusual centrality in the public sphere: the spread of discourses on labour rights, as Lorenzo Marmo reminds us, translates into a new attention to the concrete physical experience of the worker (Marmo 2018, 52). Among the many audiovisual texts, including those outlined in the prologue, Elio Petri’s thought is certainly symptomatic of this attention. While in some of his works the emphasis is subtle, it is central in a piece that we could still define as current: *La classe operaia va in paradiso* (1971). The film, almost shockingly in some respects, is a true tribute to the body of the worker, subjected to the inhumane and repetitive rhythms of the factory. The protagonist of the film, Lulù Massa (Gian Maria Volonté), initially identifies with his role as a producer of goods: the iconic sequence, one of the first, in which the protagonist articulates his condition, offers a comparison between the functioning of the factory where he works and that of his own body, calling it “una fabbrica di merda” – the epithet he reserves for the two elements in dialogue: two factories producing waste and superfluous items – remember that the man declares his digestion and sexual appetite irreparably compromised; yet both are factories that produce goods.

After a workplace accident, Lulù changes his attitude and puts his keen intelligence at the service of workers’ rights. He is portrayed with immense

---

<sup>2</sup> It should be emphasized that this work stems from a close engagement with the doctoral theses of Dr. Francesco Verona and Dr. Lorenzo Marmo, works that have been partly published and partly – unfortunately – not yet published.

neurotic energy (both before and after his transformation) by Volonté. At the same time, the film's grotesque excess is actually functional to a lucid analysis of the complex interactions between workers, unions, and the student movement, where cultural distances and dynamics of idealisation seem to hinder fruitful collaboration in the struggle for the right to health. The film thus concludes with the image of a dead end: reinstated after being fired, Lulù finds himself demoted back to the assembly line, and in the final scene – amid the deafening noise of the machines – he recounts to his coworkers the dream of overcoming a tall wall and entering paradise.

Petri's cinematic vision makes the industrial worker the crucial figure for "a conflictual modernisation of society". And it does so with a dramatic and aesthetic foundation that is, we suggest, absolutely unparalleled. The frenetic, neurotic montages – this is the second chapter of the neurosis trilogy –<sup>3</sup> incorporate the dynamic energies of production rhythms, cutting from close-ups of the industry's functioning to Lulù's concentration on his operations within it. Alongside Ruggero Mastroianni's editing work, it is undoubtedly the rhythm of the sound commentary crafted by Ennio Morricone that prevails.

The strike sequence and the arguing with his wife following it is a case in point. Lulù has already lost a finger. Once appreciated by his superiors, he has become one of the instigators of worker unrest. He participates in workers' struggles, becoming the right hand of disorder in front of the factory: he becomes aware of his own alienation and considers his life miserable, thus aligning himself against what he sees as the blackmail of piecework, and joining the radical demands of students and some factory workers, in contrast to the more moderate positions of the unions. Following a union strike and a destructive clash with the police, he retreats home with some comrades. But if the body of the worker and the man are one, then the turmoil of the factory also translates into the home, via Lidia (Mariangela Melato). After a gesture in which the man accuses the woman of being fake (he gestures to remove her wig), she rebels against his remarks: "Workers! But this one is useless. I know workers, more than communism!" When he asks her to go buy eggs, thus assuming housewife duties, she adds, "There you go, your communism".

With her words, the triumphant march from Verdi's *Aida* begins. The *Marcia Trionfale* from Verdi's *Aida* is one of the most famous and spectacular moments of the opera, and it appears in the second act during the triumphant return of the Egyptian army, which has won against the Ethiopians. The narrative context concerns the moment when the victorious leader Radamès returns home with the prisoners and is received with great honour by the Egyptian court. The scene takes place in a large ceremonial space. Radamès enters with his army, accompanied by the Ethiopian prisoners, and is welcomed by the Egyptian court in a triumph of applause and salutations. The *Marcia Trionfale* is one of Verdi's most powerful and solemn compositions, and it is built with a grandeur that reflects the military

---

**3** Elio Petri, in the early 1970s, began working on what is recognized as the "trilogy of neurosis": *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (1970), *La classe operaia va in paradiso* (1971) and *La proprietà non è più un furto* (1973). The director explores a different aspect in each film: the obsessive need for control and dominance (i), existential struggles related to work and identity (ii), and the impact of wealth and the desire for money (iii). These films offer a comprehensive exploration of how social forces influence the lives of the characters, illustrating how power, work, and money shape and sometimes distort human experience.

triumph. The march opens with an imposing orchestral theme that evokes a sense of solemnity and power. It is characterized by the massive use of percussion, brass, and woodwinds, creating an atmosphere of magnificence. The music is marked by a regular, strong rhythm that simulates the step of marching troops. The orchestration is rich and majestic, with wide brass sections (especially trumpets and trombones) emphasizing the solemnity and honour of the moment. The brass, with their full and triumphant tones, are used to underline the sense of victory and triumph. The choral part is equally significant, with the choir entering to support the march, amplifying the solemn and celebratory character of the event.

There is no victory or triumph for the protagonists in Petri's film. Lidia continues her attack against the apathy of her comrades: "And if you come to power, what will you do? Without the bosses, what would you be? A starving beggar!". And then her comrades urge her to be quiet, not to speak. The overlap of narrative timelines seemingly has no connection. On one hand, Verdi's synopsis tells of a victory - that of the Egyptian people over the Ethiopian people - and the glories and honours reserved to the commander Radamès at the start of the second scene of the second act. On the other, Petri's female character tries to bring forth her voice, in direct contrast to that of the majority, only to be immediately silenced.

Reminiscent of Derrida's perspective as we outlined above, we shall suggest that the trace featuring the sequence, should not be read as a tangle but as a space for action, one that reminds and compels the subject to respond to the situation in which they find themselves:

the absolute difference of the immemorial past of a trace so conceived does not, therefore, lead to the oblivion of indifference, nor does it drive toward meaninglessness, but rather incites or opens up [...] to a non-indifference to this difference. (Petrosino 2010, 10)

In our case study, Petri's choice seems to take on a symbolic value to the viewer: against the immobilisation and narcotised stupor of the guests, against a flat narration of the revolutionaries' habits, the triumphant march - recognisable even to those unfamiliar with it - signals to the viewer the need for an element of disruption. In summary, in Petri, the *Marcia Trionfale* is not a piece of great visual and sonic impact, but it also serves to highlight the suffering of the protagonist, making tangible the dramatic intensity of the moment.

Of a completely different intent is Lina Wertmüller's use of opera in her storytelling,<sup>4</sup> as seen in many of her films, where the intersection between private and public life is constant, often featuring romantic inserts. Many examples could be cited, but the very first film that showcases this is *Mimi metallurgico ferito nell'onore* (1972). The title is self-explanatory: on the one

---

<sup>4</sup> The director has not only staged several operatic productions, including *Carmen* and *La bohème*, but she often enriches her films with clear operatic references, which become particularly evident when they create a true sonic tapestry that accompanies the images. Lina Wertmüller's extensive filmography represents a valuable case, still to be explored, for approaching the presence of opera in Italian cinema.

hand, it defines the young Carmelo 'Mimì' Mardocheo <sup>5</sup> as a metalworker ('metallurgico'); on the other, it characterises him as being wounded in his 'honour' ('ferito nell'onore'). This reflects the values inherent in (Southern) Italy patriarchal structures. The protagonist is a Sicilian man who arrives in the North, in the grim city of Turin, in search of work. His first encounter with the city is marked by the sinister sadness that characterises the orchestral introducing the fourth part of *Il Trovatore*. The punctuating bassoons vividly describe the man's new condition, accentuated by a shift in perspective, landscape, and hues: from the warm colours of the south to a photograph tinted in greys and leaden tones (cf. Verona 2016, 33).

Mimì finds himself at a crossroads. While this initial movement might tempt us to interpret it as a signifying trace, the words of Ruiz upon arriving with Leonora at Aliaferia resonate: "We have arrived; here is the tower where the prisoners groan...". The overlap between the two narratives is strong. The eye of the camera - Ruiz's double - guides the viewer/Leonora to meet Manrico, imprisoned in the castle and ready to be executed the next day. Like Manrico, Mimì is alone, imprisoned, with vehicles obscuring his body multiple times, and the wide shots alternating with closer ones: thus, the escape to the big city is ominously characterised from the start. A foreboding negativity hangs in the air. By paying attention to the commentary verse - even without knowing the entire Verdian work - the director signals to the viewer that the melodrama will not merely serve as accompaniment; it manifests as an artificial construct.

The film presents a construction that indeed takes on the traits of an illustrative commentary but, at a higher level of interpretation, is simultaneously able to "taking on the interiorised emotions of the characters, thereby conveying messages that are less direct but still coherent with the generating sources" (Miceli 2009, 651). This constitutes a use of the operatic text in a somewhat uncritical manner.

As seen with the use of the *preludio* from *La Traviata* which supports the narrative of the love story at several moments: it serves as a sound glue for the romantic skirmishes of the two lovers, Mimì and Fiore, characterised by rapprochement followed by abrupt separations (Verona 2016, 34). It is precisely the romantic entanglement of Violetta and Alfredo, made up of meetings and partings. As the film progresses, this harmony between narrative demands and their corresponding atmospheres intensifies, presenting the stylistic hallmark that Miceli labels as the narrative "livello critico esterno" (2009, 652). This is understood as commentary "with discordant solutions generating... a semantic short circuit that negates the viewer's expectations, prompting them to take on an active, interpretive role" (652). Here emerges a layered understanding of the mechanisms employed by the director, which involves a substantial use of certain famous passages from *La Traviata*. We can only highlight the celebrated "Libiam ne' lieti calici", pleonastically underscoring the cheers at Mimì and Fiore's

---

**5** The first dialogue between Mimì and Fiore is marked by a clear reference to a duet from *La bohème*: when the woman asks the man what his name is, he replies, "Mardocheo Carmelo, but my friends call me Mimì", to which Fiore, unable to contain her surprise and amusement, retorts, "Then you should call yourself Lucia". Wertmüller's intent is not to parody Puccini's opera, but to create, through a misunderstanding born from the man's ignorance, a play of misinterpretations typical of comedy: in fact, Mimì, not grasping the reference, is offended to see his Sicilian virility mocked and belittled (cf. Verona 2016, 110).

son's baptism; then "Sempre libera degg'io" echoes during the couple's first encounter; and finally "Ah! tutto, tutto finì, or tutto, tutto finì" from "Addio del passato" comments on the film's concluding sequence that seals the definitive separation between the two lovers (Verona 2016, 33). The clear reference to a bourgeois context, juxtaposed with the precarious images of the two protagonists' domestic environment, serves as a denunciatory commentary, driving the encounter between the two characters. The same purpose is reserved for the Prelude of the third act when the two lovers spend their first night together: the music begins with the sorrowful *pizzicati*, then interrupts before the trill of the violins, on a close-up of Fiore (Verona 2016, 34-5). The physical pleasure is inextricably linked to Violetta's illness and the suffering brought on by her condition. While the semantic level may seem asynchronous, the continuation of the narrative leads us to reread this as an act of refined skill on Wertmüller's part: the pleasure experienced by Fiore is, in fact, nothing else than the doorway to a painful journey that will lead her to suffer in solitude, much like the courtesan character. The piece evokes the poetry and seduction exerted by a life of violent and dramatic contrasts, joy, frequent vicissitudes and continuous excitement. Precisely because it is an open strategic apparatus, the trace used by Wertmüller allows for numerous in-depth interpretations, ranging from context analysis to the psychology of the characters. Each possible scenario within this dynamic terrain can only coincide with the subject's experience.

Whether it is semiosis for purely expository purposes, or a diachronic approach focused on textual genealogy, the encounter and clash between foreign, diverse objects inevitably brings to mind, time and again, this overlap we have called a trace - a protean textuality. By 'protean' we mean that the trace, living as much in presence as in absence, can produce diverse forms; through these different outcomes, it allows us, each time, to better savour hidden facets, to write and fix latent instances. In doing so, it will never annul the base element, which, in the space of mediated relocation, will continue to fully live out its most intrinsic identity. In forms still awaiting exploration.

Mod. 129 (A)

  
 REPUBBLICA ITALIANA  
**MINISTERO DEL TURISMO E DELLO SPETTACOLO**  
 DIREZIONE GENERALE DELLO SPETTACOLO



**Domanda di revisione**

Il sottoscritto AUPELIO ROSSI residente a ROMA  
 Via le Rossini, 7 legale rappresentante della Ditta  
EURO INTERNATIONAL FILMS S.p.A.  
 Tel. 872841 con sede a Roma domanda, in nome e per conto della Ditta stessa,  
 la revisione della pellicola dal titolo: MIMI! METALLURGICO FERITO NELL'ONORE  
 di nazionalità: Italiana produzione: "EURO INTERNATIONAL FILMS S.p.A."  
 dichiarando che la pellicola stessa viene per la prima volta sottoposta alla revisione.  
 Lunghezza dichiarata metri ..... accertata metri 3294 nel 1744. dep. 3277  
 Roma, li 14 FEB. 1972 p.l. EURO INTERNATIONAL FILMS - S.p.A.  
*Luigi Ferro*

**DESCRIZIONE DEL SOGGETTO**

Regia: Lina Wertmüller  
 Interpreti: Giancarlo Giannini, Mariangela Melato, Turi Ferro, Luigi Diberti.  
 Carmelo Mardocheo, sottoproletariato siciliano, decide di votare senza obbedire agli ordini della mafia locale. E la mafia onniscente lo costringe ad emigrare a Torino. Nel Nord dopo traumatizzanti esperienze nel giro cottimista dei mafiosi, riesce ad entrare in una grande fabbrica. Diventato metallurgico e sindacalista s'innamora di Fiore con cui mette su una seconda famiglia. Rosalia, la moglie trascurata, durante l'assenza del marito subisce graduali cambiamenti divenendo una donna moderna. Carmelo e Fiore hanno un bambino. Il giorno del battesimo, nel caffè dove stanno festeggiando il lieto evento succede un regolamento di conti tra mafiosi. Carmelo si salva per miracolo ma per paura non rivela alla polizia il nome del mafioso, che è lo stesso che lui incontrò al suo arrivo a Torino. Da Torino, Carmelo viene trasferito a Catania a pochi chilometri da casa portando con sé Fiore con il bambino. Il menage di Carmelo tra le due famiglie ha però breve durata. Rosalia colpita dalla freddezza e dall'indifferenza del marito, allaccia una relazione con Amilcare Finocchiaro, brigadiere di finanza con moglie e 5 figli. Durante una concitata spiegazione Rosalia confessa a Carmelo di aspettare un figlio dall'altro. Carmelo studia una sua vendetta: corteggia e seduce la grassa moglie di Amilcare, e poi quando lei gli ha ceduto, le confessa le sue intenzioni di vendetta. La mette incinta, poi pubblicamente comunica al paese lo scandalo. Una domenica mattina, sulla piazza principale, davanti alla chiesa, fa la scena madre. Amilcare che è armato reagisce ed un Killer, che la mafia ha messo alle calcagna di Carmelo con il compito di sorvegliarlo, lo uccide, lasciando però la pistola nelle mani di Carmelo che viene così incriminato ed arrestato. All'uscita del carcere, ritrova le tre famiglie ad aspettarlo. Carmelo è terrorizzato e vorrebbe rientrare in carcere, ma alla fine accetta di far parte del giro mafioso e di non combattere più lo stato di cose che all'inizio lo aveva costretto ad allontanarsi dal suo paese.

Titoli di testa:

La Euro International Films presenta (marchio) - un film di Lina Wertmuller - prodotto da Daniele Senatore e Romano Cardarelli per la Euro International films - Giancarlo Giannini in - Mimi' Metallurgico ferito nell'onore - con: Mariangela Melato - Agostina Belli - Luigi Diberti - Elena Fiore - Tuccio Musumeci Ignazio Pappalardo Rosaria Rapisarda - Umberto Lentini Salvatore Savasta Andrea Maugeri Salvatore Centamore Sara Micalizzi Antonia Micalizzi Ottorino Russo Francesco Pellegrino Gianfranco Barra Giovanni Cori Giovanni Pulone C.S.C. CLAudio Trionfi C.S.C. - e con la partecipazione straordinaria di Turi Ferro - Operatore alla macchina Blasco Giurato Assistente Operatore Giancarlo Martella Fotografo di scena Antonio Benetti Aiuto Regista Giovanni Arduini Assistente alla regia Sergio Mazio Segretario di edizione Giovanni Siragusa - Ispettori di Produzione Paolo Gargano Hermes Gallippi Amm/re Cassiere Antonio Mastronardi Assistente Montatore Pierluigi Leonardi Aiuto Montatore Luigi Zita Ufficio Stampa Nella Garozzo Capo Truccatore Michele Trimarchi Capo Parrucchiera Rosa Luciani I° Truccatore Alfredo Tiberi I° Parrucchiera Marisa Centanni Fonico Mario Bramonti Microfonista Giulio Viggiani Mixage Franco Bassi - Scenografo Amedeo Fago Arredatore Emilio Baldelli Si ringraziano i Sigg.ri Gino Persico e EFI KOUNELLIS per la collaborazione ai costumi - I costumi della Sig.na Mariangela Melato sono stati disegnati da Enrico Job - Alcune scene sono state girate presso: Stabilimento Fiorentini di Roma Stabilimento "La Milanese" di Carbone S;p.A. Catania S.N.T. F.lli Gondrand - Catania Negativi Eastmancolor sviluppo e stampa Technochrome - Teatri di posa Stabilimento De Paolis Attrezzature Tecniche ONIA Costumi G.P.17 Parrucche Rocchetti Carboni Registrazione sonora Fono Roma - Soggetto e sceneggiatura Lina Wertmuller - Montaggio Franco Fraticelli - Musica Piero Piccioni edizioni musicali Bixio Sam - Direttore della fotografia Dario Di Palma - Regia di Lina Wertmuller -

La V<sup>a</sup> Sezione della Commissione di Revisione Cinematografica revisionato il film il 17.2.1972, ed ascoltato, come da richiesta, i rappresentanti della Ditta interessata, preso atto che i medesimi si sono impegnati ad effettuare al film stesso le seguenti modifiche: a) alleggerimento delle scene di Mimi a letto con la moglie; b) alleggerimento della scena di Mimi a letto con Fiore; esprime parere favorevole alla proiezione in pubblico senza limiti di età. La Commissione ha accertato l'avvenuta esecuzione dei tagli, per complessivi metri 17, il 18.2.1972.

*Corrado*  
*Paolini*      *lo*      *fr*

Vista la legge 21 aprile 1962, n. 161;

Vista la ricevuta del versamento in conto corrente postale n. *241*

dell'Ufficio *Roma 6* intestato al Ricevitore del Registro di Roma per il pagamento della tassa di L. *84.670*

SU CONFORME parere espresso dalla Commissione di revisione cinematografica di 1° grado

DECRETA

NULLA OSTA alla rappresentazione in pubblico del film *Mimi Metallurgico ferito nell'onore*

a condizione di non modificare in guisa alcuna il titolo, i sottotitoli e le scritte della pellicola, di non sostituire i quadri e le scene relative, di non aggiungerne altre e di non alterarne, in qualsiasi modo, l'ordine senza autorizzazione del Ministero.

Ai fini esclusivi della revisione, se ne autorizza anche l'esportazione.

Questo film non è soggetto a revisione per l'esportazione.

Roma, li *19 FEB. 1972*

IL MINISTRO

*1972*

N. B. - Il presente modulo non è valido se non munito del timbro del Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo - Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo.

Figures 1-3 Faldone 59798, *Mimi Metallurgico ferito nell'onore*, 16/02/1972. Direzione Generale Cinema e Audiovisivi, Roma, Archivio della censura cinematografica

## Bibliography

- Bachtin, M. (2001). "La parola nel romanzo". *Estetica e romanzo*. Torino: Einaudi, 67-230.
- Braghetti, C.; Carter, J.; Marmo, L. (eds) (2021). *Italian Industrial Literature and Film. Perspectives on the Representation of Postwar Labor*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Brooks, P. (1976). *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Carluccio, G.; Villa, F. (2006). *L'intertestualità. Lezioni, lemmi, frammenti di analisi*. Torino: Kaplan.
- Casetti, F. (2012). "The Relocation of Cinema". *Necsus*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.5117/NECSUS2012.2.CASE>.
- Citron, M.J. (2011). "Visual Media". Greenwald, H.M. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*. New York: Oxford University Press, 921-40.
- Comand, M. (2001). *L'immagine dialogica. Intertestualità e interdiscorsivismo nel 'cinema'*. Bologna: Hybris.
- De Pascalis, I.A. (2017). "Sfidare i confini dell'inquadratura: il corpo e i costumi di Mariangela Melato". *Arabeschi*, 10, 372-76.
- Derrida, J. (1967). *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit.
- Derrida, J. (1990). *Du droit à la philosophie*. Paris: Galilée.
- Elsaesser, T. (1992). "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama". Mast, G.; Cohen, M.; Braudy, L. (eds), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 512-35.
- Goldin-Folena, D. (2013). "Melodramma o Risorgimento". Bissoli, F.; Ruggiero, N. (a cura di), *"Viva l'Italia forte ed una". Il Melodramma come rappresentazione epica del Risorgimento*. Napoli: Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa, 15-35.
- Grover-Friedlander, M. (2005). *Vocal Apparition: The Attraction of Cinema to the Opera*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Marmo, L. (2018). *Roma e il cinema del dopoguerra. Neorealismo, melodramma, noir*. Roma: Bulzoni.
- Miceli, S. (2009). *Musica per film. Storia, estetica, analisi, tipologie*. Milano: Ricordi.
- Mila, M. (2012). *Verdi*. Milano: Bur.
- Mosconi, E. (2007). "La nuova vita delle antiche cose: l'opera sullo schermo e il 'Don Giovanni' di Peter Sellars". *Philomusica on line*, 6(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.6092/1826-9001.6.95>.
- Petrosino, S. (2010). "La traccia in filosofia". *Comunicazioni Sociali*, 1, 7-12.
- Rigoletto, S. (2014). *Masculinity and Italian Cinema: Sexual Politics, Social Conflicts and Male Crisis in the 1970s*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Singer, B. (2001). *Melodrama and Modernity*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sorba, C. (2015). *Il melodramma della nazione. Politica e sentimenti nell'età del Risorgimento*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- Todorov, T. (1990). *Michail Bachtin. Il principio dialogico*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Verona, F. (2016). *Forme della citazione del melodramma operistico nel cinema italiano: 1960-2015* [PhD dissertation]. Padova: Università degli Studi di Padova.
- Verona, F. (2019). "'Verdi come il padre'? Identità italiana e messa in crisi della tradizione verdiana nel cinema degli anni Sessanta". Parigi, S.; Uva, C.; Zagarrò, V. (a cura di), *Cinema e identità italiana*. Roma: Roma University Press, 91-100.