

Industrial Writing and Anticolonial Discourse in Italy,  
1955–1965

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates the intersections between industrial literature produced in Italy between 1955 and 1965 and the anticolonial discourse and debate which was circulating around Italy and Europe in those same years. Adopting a transnational and transdisciplinary approach, it shows how anticolonialism was far more vividly present as a discourse in Italian industrial intellectual milieux and in industrial literature than previously acknowledged, thanks to the mediation of key figures such as Giovanni Pirelli, Giovanni Giudici, and Franco Fortini, among others. It also traces a strong conceptual link that was established in those same milieux between colonial situations of occupation, exploitation and oppression, and industrialisation in Italy.

Following an Introduction that provides essential contextual details and describes the aims, scope, and method of the dissertation, Part One looks at how colonial and anticolonial questions were addressed between 1955 and 1965 in a cluster of periodicals related in various ways to industry: from industrial company publications (for example, *Il gatto selvatico*), to militant anticapitalist journals (*Quaderni piacentini* and others), to literary reviews (such as *Il menabò*). What emerges is a sense of the awareness that Italian industrial intellectual milieux developed in relation to colonial dynamics and anticolonial movements in the contemporary world and also of the different interests that these milieux pursued in committing (or not committing) to anticolonialism.

Part Two identifies and scrutinises a cluster of keywords and narrative tropes that the anticolonial and industrial discourses shared (such as ‘alienation’, ‘paternalism’, ‘race’) that allows us to trace key lines of affinity between the two spheres. An anticolonial reading of six Italian industrial novels by Ottiero Ottieri, Paolo Volponi, Goffredo Parise, and Giovanni Pirelli that deploy clusters of these keywords and tropes is then proposed, supported by the findings presented in previous chapters. It is argued that Italian industrial writers proved so receptive to anticolonial thought because they were obliged to tackle analogous sets of questions in industrial settings.

The conclusion summarises the most significant findings of the dissertation and suggests future related lines of research.

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# INTRODUCTION

This introduction aims to define the coordinates of the field – or set of intersecting fields – addressed in this dissertation. Moreover, it provides essential contextual information relevant to the analysis pursued in Part One and Part Two. For the purpose of clarity, it is structured around six condensed questions – what, who, where, when, why, and how – that delineate the scope, aims, and method of this dissertation.

## 1. WHAT

The research questions on which this dissertation is built and which drive it are focused on the field of Italian industrial literature of the 1950s and 1960s and aim to connect this field to contemporary discourses of anticolonialism. In using the label ‘industrial literature’, I refer to a cluster of textual works of fiction and non-fiction, predominantly from the 1950s to the 1970s, commenting on a newly industrialised Italy, produced by writers who often worked within industry and saw it from a critical perspective.<sup>1</sup> These authors will be referred to as ‘critical industrial’ intellectuals.

Some initial attempts at this genre had already been produced when the early industrialisation process began in Italy between the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Futurist literature can also be considered – however contentiously – to be ‘industrial’ to a certain extent.<sup>3</sup> However, Italian industrial literature developed organically and was eventually codified and

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<sup>1</sup> On Italian industrial literature as a collective phenomenon, see: *Letteratura e industria: atti del XV Congresso A.I.S.L.L.I., Torino, 15–19 maggio 1994*, ed. by Giorgio Barberi Squarotti and Carlo Ossola, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1997); Piergiorgio Mori, *Scrittori nel boom: il romanzo industriale negli anni del miracolo economico* (Rome: EdiLet–Edilazio, 2011); *Cinquant’anni dopo: letteratura e industria* (= *Levia Gravia*, 14 (2012)); Pierpaolo Antonello, *Contro il materialismo: le ‘due culture’ in Italia: bilancio di un secolo* (Turin: Aragno, 2012); Daniele Fioretti, *Carte di fabbrica: la narrativa industriale in Italia 1934–1989* (Pescara: Tracce, 2013); *Fabbrica di carta: i libri che raccontano l’Italia industriale*, ed. by Giorgio Bigatti and Giuseppe Lupo (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2013); *From ‘Otium’ and ‘Occupatio’ to Work and Labor in Italian Culture*, ed. by Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme (= *Annali d’italianistica*, 32 (2014)); Emanuele Zinato, *Letteratura come storiografia? Mappe e figure della mutazione italiana* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2015); Giuseppe Lupo, *La letteratura al tempo di Adriano Olivetti* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2016); *Letteratura e lavoro in Italia: analisi e prospettive*, ed. by Carlo Baghetti (= *Nótos: espaces de la création*, 4 (2017)); Emanuele Zinato, ‘Il romanzo industriale’, in *Il romanzo in Italia*, ed. by Giancarlo Alfano and Francesco de Cristofaro, 4 vols (Rome: Carocci, 2018), IV, pp. 233–246; Paolo Zublena, ‘Il rovescio del benessere’, in *Il romanzo*, ed. by Alfano and de Cristofaro, IV, pp. 87–98; Jim Carter, ‘Salaried Intellectuals: Fortini, Giudici, Ottieri, Volponi, and Buzzi at the Olivetti Company’, *Italian Culture*, 37.1 (2019), 47–63; *Italian Industrial Literature and Film*, ed. by Carlo Baghetti, Jim Carter, and Lorenzo Marmo (Bern: Peter Lang, 2021), forthcoming. Bibliography on single industrial authors will be provided at later stages of the dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Carlo Bernari, *Tre operai: romanzo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1934), and Roberto Tessari, *Il mito della macchina: letteratura e industria nel primo Novecento italiano* (Milan: Mursia, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> See Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, pp. 53–138; Claudio Panella, ‘Le scritture dei lavoratori tra dispute ideologiche e spartizioni di campo nella prima metà del XX secolo’, in *Letteratura e lavoro*, ed. by Baghetti, pp. 12–27.

canonised as a genre as a consequence of the Italian ‘economic miracle’ (1958–1963).<sup>4</sup> In particular, it was notoriously from two issues of Elio Vittorini and Italo Calvino’s journal *Il menabò*, which were published between 1961 and 1962, that a systematic collective reflection and debate on the relations between literature and industry was triggered and then raged for several years thereafter.<sup>5</sup> The questions discussed in *Il menabò* and around it related to many different themes: from the positions that intellectuals should take in relation to capitalist industry to the new challenges and literary materials offered by industrialisation; from issues of representability and literary value of the first- or second-hand experience of the factory to the question of alienation; and from the renewal or overcoming of a poetics of realism to the new relationship between industrial cities and the countryside, to cite only the most prominent aspects.

This set of questions was tackled in a series of theoretical writings and in narrative prose and poetry in the pages of *Il menabò* (and beyond), by intellectuals, novelists, poets – and, more sporadically, also by factory workers and unionists – who contributed to the debate by engaging with Vittorini’s call for an ‘industrial’ literature. Such a category was interpreted in turn as a literature that dealt with the material and immaterial aspects of industrialisation and its aftermaths, or as a literature that was (and for some writers had to be) stylistically informed by industrial patterns.<sup>6</sup>

Immediately before the debate in *Il menabò*, industrial literature had already been produced in the late 1950s, both by the authors who went on to participate in the journal’s discussions and by other writers variously involved in industrial companies. Most of these early industrial writers worked in different roles for the Olivetti company, which was based in Ivrea (Turin) and famously designed and produced typewriters and other office devices.<sup>7</sup> Between 1932 and 1960, the company was run by one of the sons of its founder Camillo, Adriano: an example of what we might call an ‘enlightened’ entrepreneur.<sup>8</sup> Adriano Olivetti’s broad and deep cultural interests and his belief in the enriching potential of industry led him to involve a number of artists, writers, and intellectuals in the life of his industrial company in order to make culture accessible to employees and factory workers and to turn the factories into cultural

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<sup>4</sup> See Guido Crainz, *Storia del miracolo italiano: cultura, identità, trasformazioni fra anni Cinquanta e Sessanta* (Rome: Donzelli, 1996). For a problematisation of the ‘economic miracle’ see Marco Pivato, *Il miracolo scippato: le quattro occasioni sprecate della scienza italiana negli anni Sessanta* (Rome: Donzelli, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> On *Il menabò*, see *‘Il menabò’ di Elio Vittorini (1959–1967)*, ed. by Silvia Cavalli (Rome: Arago, 2016); Silvia Cavalli, *Progetto ‘menabò’ (1959–1967)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2017). For the tables of contents of all issues of *Il menabò*, see <<https://r.unitn.it/it/lett/circe/il-menabo>> [accessed 4 October 2020].

<sup>6</sup> On the latter definition, see, for example, Giuliana Pieri and Emanuela Patti, ‘Technological Poetry: Interconnections Between Impegno, Media and Gender in Gruppo 70 (1963–1968)’, *Italian Studies*, 72.3 (2017), 47–63.

<sup>7</sup> A bibliography of the multifaceted history of Olivetti is available on the website of Archivio Storico Olivetti: <<https://www.storiaolivetti.it/pagina/bibliografia/>> [accessed 24 September 2020]. See also *Umanesimo e tecnologia: il laboratorio Olivetti*, ed. by Daniele Balicco (= *L’ospite ingrato*, n.s., 6 (2021)), forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> See, in the first instance, Valerio Ochetto, *Adriano Olivetti: la biografia* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2013), and Alberto Saibene, *L’Italia di Adriano Olivetti* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2017).

centres.<sup>9</sup> Ivrea and the Olivetti plants and offices became hubs of a critical industrial culture and of artistic and sociological experimentation in design as well as in industrial democracy.<sup>10</sup> In this lively cultural climate of reflection on the potentialities and risks of industry and industrialisation, the first industrial novels of the ‘economic miracle’ began to be produced. Ottiero Ottieri’s *Tempi stretti* came out in 1957, followed shortly afterwards by *Donnarumma all’assalto* in 1959.<sup>11</sup> Giancarlo Buzzi’s *Il senatore* was published in 1958.<sup>12</sup> Paolo Volponi’s *Memoriale* appeared in 1962, followed by Libero Bigiaretti’s *Il congresso* in 1963.<sup>13</sup> These are only some of the works which served as a basis for – and complemented – the discussion in *Il menabò*.

In many cases, these novels include as part of their narrative structure essayistic reflections on a number of aspects of labour, industry, and industrial societies.<sup>14</sup> At the time, and subsequently, these texts were mostly interpreted with reference to the Marxist and socialist ideas which circulated in critical industrial milieux, or with the critical tools offered by psychoanalysis and psychiatry, which were equally common discourses and epistemological frameworks among Italian intellectuals at the beginning of the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> Many of the categories and concepts that have been widely employed in the interpretation of these texts – including, for example, ‘alienation’, ‘labour’, ‘paternalism’, ‘dehumanisation’, ‘psychosomatic illness’, ‘violence’ – have a transversal connotation belonging to the diagnostic vocabulary of both Marxism and psychoanalysis and psychiatry.<sup>16</sup> What emerged in general from the analyses of industrial novels of the 1950s and 1960s has been therefore a political reading, which saw in them denunciations of the difficult conditions experienced by workers and/or a diagnosis of their diseases or neuroses. On the stylistic side, the value of industrial literature has most frequently been identified in the linguistically

<sup>9</sup> See Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, pp. 164–166; Renzo Zorzi, *Gli artisti di Olivetti: il dovere della bellezza* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2018); Carter, ‘Salaried’, pp. 47–50.

<sup>10</sup> See *Fabbrica, Comunità, Democrazia: testimonianze su Adriano Olivetti e il Movimento Comunità*, ed. by Francesca Giuntella and Angela Zucconi (Rome: Fondazione Adriano Olivetti, 1984); Caterina Toschi, *L’idioma Olivetti 1952–1979* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> Ottiero Ottieri, *Tempi stretti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1957); Ottiero Ottieri, *Donnarumma all’assalto* (Milan: Bompiani, 1959).

<sup>12</sup> Giancarlo Buzzi, *Il senatore* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958).

<sup>13</sup> Paolo Volponi, *Memoriale* (Milan: Garzanti, 1962); Libero Bigiaretti, *Il congresso* (Milan: Bompiani, 1963).

<sup>14</sup> See Antonio Tricomi, ‘Tra romanzo e saggio’, in *Il romanzo*, ed. by Alfano and de Cristofaro, IV, pp. 175–188. One case in which this essayistic tendency has been studied is that of Paolo Volponi: see Gabriele Fichera, *Tolto dall’io, preso dalla storia: studio sul saggismo di Volponi* (Cuneo: Nerosubianco, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> See Renate Holub, ‘Post-War Italian Intellectual Culture: From Marxism to Cultural Studies’, in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. by Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 133–142; Alessandra Diazzi, ‘The Reception of Psychoanalysis in Italian Literature and Culture, 1945–1977: Ottiero Ottieri, Edoardo Sanguineti, Giorgio Manganelli, Andrea Zanzotto’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2016). As an example of a psychoanalytic interpretation of an industrial novel, see Maurizio Masi, ‘Albino, la scrittura, la nevrosi: ipotesi in margine all’eziologia nevrotica in *Memoriale* di Paolo Volponi’, *Quaderni d’Italianistica*, 40.1 (2019), 99–116. For an example of a Marxist interpretation of Volponi’s industrial literature, see Filippo Bettini, *Volponi e la scrittura materialistica* (Rome: Lithos, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> A thorough reflection on the transversal value of the word ‘alienation’ is presented in *The Years of Alienation in Italy: Factory and Asylum Between the Economic Miracle and the Years of Lead*, ed. by Alessandra Diazzi and Alvise Sforza Tarabochia (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

experimental construction of atypical characters and situations, in contrast with the neorealist aesthetics that dominated the post-war period.<sup>17</sup>

After a critical boom in the 1960s and 1970s, investigation of the industrial literature of the ‘economic miracle’ continued for a number of years until a new set of novels which thematised labour was produced in the 2000s and 2010s, under new conditions and a new economy and sociology of labour.<sup>18</sup> This new momentum of literature on labour, in part inspired by the canon of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, led to a renewed interest in that earlier canon. Thus, by now, industrial literature appears to have been explored in depth and to have been archived as a well-defined phase in the development of Italian literature – a phase somehow outdated or late in comparison with that in other countries, and provincial, due to the specificity of the problems tackled.<sup>19</sup>

The most acute critics, however, have sought to destabilise this reading, by shedding light, for example, on the transnational cultural connections at work within this literature. Emanuele Zinato, for instance, has linked the production of industrial literature to the reception of György Lukács’s thought in Italy, while Giuseppe Lupo has highlighted the links with French Catholic socialism and the model

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<sup>17</sup> An example of this trend, again with reference to Volponi, is Paolo Zublena’s ‘Anteo liberato? La lingua della *Macchina mondiale* di Volponi’, in *Nell’opera di Paolo Volponi*, ed. by Eugenio De Signoribus, Enrico Capodaglio, and Feliciano Paoli (= *Istmi*, 15-16 (2004–2005)), pp. 125–156.

<sup>18</sup> Apart from the volumes and articles cited in note 1, other key entries in the bibliography produced from the 1960s to the end of the 1990s on Italian industrial literature as a collective phenomenon are: Elio Vittorini, ‘Industria e letteratura’, *Il menabò*, 4 (1961), 13–20; Marco Forti, ‘Temi industriali nella narrativa italiana’, *Il menabò*, 4 (1961), 213–239; Libero Bigiaretti, ‘Letteratura e industria’, *Civiltà delle macchine*, 6 (1963), 37–39; *Almanacco letterario Bompiani* (Milan: Bompiani, 1968); Enzo Golino, *Letteratura e classi sociali* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1976), pp. 125–198; Michele Leone, *L’industria nella letteratura italiana contemporanea* (Saratoga: ANMA, 1976); *Letteratura e industria*, ed. by Roberto Tessari (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1976); Renzo Paris, *Il mito del proletariato nel romanzo italiano* (Milan: Garzanti, 1977); *Scrittori e industria: dal ‘Menabò’ di Vittorini e Calvino alla ‘letteratura selvaggia’*, ed. by Elisabetta Chicco Vitzizzai (Turin: Paravia, 1982); Francesco Varanini, ‘I frammenti ricomposti: dal romanzo della fabbrica alla fabbrica del romanzo nell’Italia del boom e della crisi’, *Italianistica*, 11.2-3 (1982), 327–335; Rocco Capozzi, ‘Dalla “letteratura e industria” all’industria del postmoderno’, *Annali d’italianistica*, 9 (1991), 144–157; Umberto Casari, *Letteratura e società industriale italiana negli anni Sessanta del Novecento* (Milan: Giuffrè, 2001); Pierpaolo Antonello, *Il ménage a quattro: scienza, filosofia, tecnica nella letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2005). The 1970s witnessed the birth of a new strand of industrial literature, this time mostly produced by working-class writers. This new literature has been significantly labelled as ‘letteratura selvaggia’ and includes texts such as Vincenzo Guerrazzi, *Nord e Sud uniti nella lotta* (Venice: Marsilio, 1974) and Tommaso Di Ciaula, *Tuta blu: ire, ricordi e sogni di un operaio del sud* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1978). On ‘letteratura selvaggia’ see Alfredo Giuliani, ‘Scriversi addosso’, *Il Messaggero*, 31 January 1975, 3; Giuseppina Giacomazzi, ‘Tematiche e strategie testuali della letteratura “selvaggia”’, in *Letteratura e industria*, ed. by Bàrberi Squarotti and Ossola, II, pp. 1009–1024; Claudio Panella, ‘Scritture di rabbia e scritture di desiderio: la letteratura italiana di fabbrica degli anni Settanta’, in *Lavoro! Storia, organizzazione e narrazione del lavoro nel XX secolo*, ed. by Novella di Nunzio and Matteo Troilo (Rome: Aracne, 2016), pp. 53–66. With the apparent progressive dematerialisation of work in Europe, the focus in both narratives and, subsequently, critical literature thereon moved from industry to labour in general and from the factory to the company: see *Letteratura e azienda: rappresentazioni letterarie dell’economia e del lavoro nell’Italia degli anni Duemila*, ed. by Silvia Contarini (= *Narrativa*, 31-32 (2010)); Alessandro Ceteroni, *La letteratura aziendale: gli scrittori che raccontano il precariato, le multinazionali e il nuovo mondo del lavoro* (Novate Milanese: Calibano, 2018); *Il lavoro raccontato: studi su letteratura e cinema italiani dal postmodernismo all’ipermodernismo*, ed. by Carlo Baghetti, Alessandro Ceteroni, Gerardo Iandoli, and Romano Summa (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> On the French and British cases, see Anthony Gilnoer, ‘Classes de textes et littérature industrielle dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle’, *CONTEXTES*, 26 May 2009 <<https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/4325>> [accessed 14 March 2021]; Mehmet Akif Balkaya, *The Industrial Novels: Charlotte Brontë’s ‘Shirley’, Charles Dickens’ ‘Hard Times’, and Elizabeth Gaskell’s ‘North and South’* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

provided by Simone Weil.<sup>20</sup> Pierpaolo Antonello has read industrial literature in connection with the debate triggered by the publication of Charles Snow's *The Two Cultures*.<sup>21</sup>

The aim of this dissertation is to embrace this deprovincialising and transnationalising line of thought in the study of industrial literature and to push it a step further. What becomes apparent when looking at the ideas circulating in those years and the ways in which they permeated this evolving category of literature is that there is another thread which interweaves with – and problematises – Marxism and psychoanalysis, and indeed the industrial: that is, the reflection on decolonisation and anticolonial discourse. From a global perspective, the years from the late 1950s to the early 1960s were also those in which many of the most powerful and impactful decolonisation movements arose. Italy's extraneousness to decolonial wars at this stage did not prevent its intellectuals from embracing the ideas and language of anticolonialism, and in particular the theorisation of Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, often received through the filter of French intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre.

Indeed, it is striking to note that Fanon's anticolonialism and critical reflections, based on a rethinking of the categories of *négritude*, Marxism, existentialism, and phenomenology, share many of the same set of keywords listed above with reference to industrial literature and which appear to be at its core. This fact, which may seem pure coincidence, a case of simultaneous but independent discursive production or a circulation of commonplaces, is instead – we can argue – far from arbitrary. If the channels through which anticolonialism and its discourses reached Italy are investigated in more depth, what emerges is a significant involvement of industrial authors in their mediation. In particular, key voices in this process included those of Giovanni Pirelli, Franco Fortini, and Giovanni Giudici, who actively pursued the dissemination of anticolonial ideas through their different channels.<sup>22</sup> The links between

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<sup>20</sup> See Zinato, *Letteratura*, pp. 62–65; Lupo, *La letteratura*, pp. 13–45 and 215–242.

<sup>21</sup> See Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, pp. 241–272. See also Charles Snow, *The Two Cultures* (New York: Mentor, 1959).

<sup>22</sup> On the reception of anticolonialism in Italy in the twentieth century and on the production of an Italian anticolonialism, see Neelam Srivastava, *Italian Colonialism and Resistances to Empire, 1930–1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). On the reception of Frantz Fanon's thought in Italian culture, see *Fanon in Italy*, ed. by Neelam Srivastava (= *Interventions*, 17.3 (2015)). In particular, for an overview of this phenomenon and the role played by Giovanni Pirelli, see, respectively, Neelam Srivastava, 'Frantz Fanon in Italy: Or, Historicizing Fanon', in *Fanon*, ed. by Srivastava, pp. 309–328, and Rachel E. Love, 'Anti-Fascism, Anticolonialism and Anti-Self: The Life of Giovanni Pirelli and the Work of the Centro Frantz Fanon', in *Fanon*, ed. by Srivastava, pp. 343–359. On the Italian reception of Fanon see also Marco Ferro, 'Quale Fanon? Un'analisi della prima ricezione italiana de *I dannati della terra*' (unpublished Master's thesis, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 2014); Neelam Srivastava, 'The Italian Fanon: Unearthing a Hidden Editorial History', in Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, ed. by Jean Khalfa and Robert J. C. Young, trans. by Steven Corcoran (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 695–716; Luca Mozzachiodi, 'L'uomo dalla roncola: il Fanon degli scrittori', *Ticontre*, 14 (2020) <<http://www.ticontre.org/ojs/index.php/t3/article/view/340>> [accessed 8 February 2021]. For an interesting case of reception of Fanon's thought in the Italian context, see Renate Zahar, *Il pensiero di Frantz Fanon e la teoria dei rapporti tra colonialismo e alienazione*, trans. by Maria Attardo Magrini (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1970). On the role of Giovanni Pirelli in this process of mediation, see *Giovanni Pirelli intellettuale del Novecento*, ed. by Mariamargherita Scotti (Rome: Mimesis, 2016), and Mariamargherita Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli* (Rome: Donzelli, 2019). On the psychiatric reception of Frantz Fanon in Italy see Cristina Giordano, 'Translating Fanon in the Italian Context: Rethinking the Ethics of Treatment in Psychiatry', *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 48.3 (2011), 228–256. On the links between Italian third-worldism and anticolonialism in the second half of the twentieth century, see Tullio Ottolini, 'Dal *soutien* alla cooperazione: il terzomondismo in Italia fra il Centro di

these authors and the thought of Frantz Fanon will be described in more detail throughout the following chapters. What is relevant here is that this active reception of anticolonialism by these three figures (among others) makes the case for an intersectionality between the commitment of anticolonial thinkers and militants, and critical industrial writers, which will here be analysed with respect to Italy.

Having ascertained that strong connections, however subtle and still unmapped, existed between anticolonialism and industrial writing, a logical next step was to look for further evidence of these links in terms of networks, intellectual history, and conceptual and literary figures and tropes in the cultural production in the years 1955–1965.<sup>23</sup> This evidence has been gathered, and in order to assess the presence and significance of such colonial and anticolonial discourses in relation to Italian industrial milieu and literature, two routes have been followed, reflected in the two separate, but interconnected, parts of this dissertation.

Part One examines the coverage of colonial and anticolonial questions between 1955 and 1965 in a sample of Italian periodicals linked in different ways to industry or industrial milieu. In particular, this first part explores a spectrum of journals which ranges from industrial company publications to political and literary reviews with which the authors of this anticolonial–industrial connection were involved, or which there is evidence to show they used to read. On the side of industrial house journals, the corpus comprises *Il gatto selvatico* (journal of ENI, Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi), *Pirelli* (eponymous periodical of the company), and *Civiltà delle macchine* (house organ of FinMeccanica).<sup>24</sup> These three journals represent effectively the different tensions in the addressing of colonial and anticolonial matters at the heart of international capitalist enterprises, which drove the policies of their respective producers as well as their different conceptions of the cultural role of industry.

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Documentazione Frantz Fanon e il Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, 2018). For an overview of Italy's controversial colonial memory, see Angelo Del Boca, 'Il colonialismo italiano tra miti, rimozioni, negazioni e inadempienze', *Italia contemporanea*, 212 (1998), 589–603, and Giampaolo Calchi Novati, 'Italy and Africa: How to Forget Colonialism', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 13.1 (2008), 41–57.

<sup>23</sup> For a rationale of why these dates were chosen, see section 4 below.

<sup>24</sup> The scholarship on industrial house organs in Italy, especially with regard to the literary element, is still at an embryonic stage. A project of mapping of these periodicals has been underway since 2009, sponsored by ISEC (Istituto per lo Studio dell'Età Contemporanea) and headed by Giorgio Bigatti and Carlo Vinti: see <<http://www.houseorgan.net>> [accessed 4 October 2020]. See also Carlo Vinti, *Gli anni dello stile industriale 1948–1965: immagine e politica culturale nella grande impresa italiana* (Venice: Marsilio, 2007); *Comunicare l'impresa: cultura e strategie dell'immagine nell'industria italiana (1945–1970)*, ed. by Carlo Vinti and Giorgio Bigatti (Milan: Guerini e associati, 2010). Studies on single house organs will be mentioned below. The entire collections of *Il gatto selvatico* and *Pirelli* have now been made available for online consultation. See, respectively, <<https://archivistorico.eni.com/aseni/it/magazines/gattoselvatico>> [accessed 8 February 2021], and <<https://www.fondazionepirelli.org/archivio-storico/pubblicazioni-e-riviste/IT-PIRELLI-BIB0001-0021289>> [accessed 8 February 2021]. *Civiltà delle macchine* has not yet been digitalised and I was able to consult it at Biblioteca Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Biblioteca Museo Correr, and Biblioteca Area Umanistica in Venice, thanks to a Fieldwork Grant I was awarded by the MMLL Faculty in Cambridge in 2019.

ENI, the Italian public oil and gas company run by Enrico Mattei, attributed great value to communication.<sup>25</sup> Founded in 1955 and published until 1965, *Il gatto selvatico* was edited for most of its duration by the poet Attilio Bertolucci. The treatment of colonial and anticolonial questions was particularly relevant for this journal, due to the geopolitical role that Italy and ENI played in those years in the oil market and in transactions with decolonised or decolonising countries.

Pirelli was a leading firm in the production of tyres. Its eponymous house journal (1948–1972) hosted contributions by Italian writers and artists. It is particularly relevant here as it was Giovanni Pirelli's family company. It is interesting to trace how the anticolonial struggles that were so relevant for Giovanni found limited but still significant and strategic space in this journal.<sup>26</sup>

*Civiltà delle macchine* (1953–1979), finally, edited by the poet and writer Leonardo Sinisgalli between 1953 and 1957 and then by the journalist Francesco d'Arcais, gave birth to a wide and lively debate on Charles Snow's *The Two Cultures*. It is particularly interesting to look at the shape that anticolonialism took in this enthusiastically industrialist journal.<sup>27</sup>

As for the more political side, *Comunità* (1946–1992), founded by Adriano Olivetti and conceived as the organ of his liberal-socialist Movimento Comunità growing out of the Olivetti enterprise, and the new-left magazines *Quaderni piacentini* (1962–1984) and *Quaderni rossi* (1961–1965), all offer themselves as natural objects of enquiry in this area. Despite their marked ideological and editorial differences, they witnessed the involvement of industrial authors such as Franco Fortini and Giovanni Giudici, among others, and addressed issues of anticolonialism.<sup>28</sup> We will see how anticolonialism and industrial questions are differently but strongly interconnected and cross-contaminated in these unorthodox militant journals.

Finally, a selection of key literary journals which devoted attention to industry has been included in this analysis, in order to see whether and how third-world and anticolonial discourses emerged there

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<sup>25</sup> See Elio Frescani, *Energia, cultura e comunicazione: storia e politica dell'ENI fra stampa e televisione (1955–1976)* (Rome: Mimesis, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> See Franco Vitelli, “Pneumatica”: Sinisgalli e la rivista *Pirelli?*, in *Letteratura e industria*, ed. by Bàrberi Squarotti and Ossola, II, pp. 877–920; Giuseppe Lupo, ‘Sinisgalli e le industrie milanesi’, in *Sinisgalli a Milano: poesia, pittura, architettura e industria dagli anni Trenta agli anni Sessanta*, ed. by Giuseppe Lupo (Novara: Interlinea, 2002), pp. 213–242.

<sup>27</sup> See *L'anima meccanica: le visite in fabbrica in 'Civiltà delle macchine' (1954–1957)*, ed. by Giuseppe Lupo and Gianni Lacorazza (Rome: Avagliano, 2008); Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, pp. 166–172; Alessandra Ottieri, “Scintille belle come stelle”: scrittori e poeti in *Civiltà delle macchine*, in *Cinquant'anni dopo*, pp. 119–146.

<sup>28</sup> On *Comunità*, see Beniamino de' Liguori Carino, *Adriano Olivetti e le edizioni di Comunità (1946–1960)* (Rome: Fondazione Adriano Olivetti, 2008). On *Quaderni piacentini*, see Giacomo Pontremoli, *I Piacentini: storia di una rivista (1962–1980)* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Asino, 2017), and Emanuele Zinato, ‘Ciclostilati in proprio: la critica dei *Quaderni piacentini?*’, in *Sistema periodico: il secolo interminabile delle riviste*, ed. by Francesco Bortolotto, Eleonora Fuochi, Davide Antonio Paone, and Federica Parodi (Bologna: Pendragon, 2018), pp. 173–188. On *Quaderni rossi*, see Marco Cerotto, *Raniero Panzieri e i 'Quaderni rossi': alle radici del neomarxismo italiano* (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2020). While *Quaderni piacentini* and *Quaderni rossi* have been digitalised and are now accessible on the website of the Biblioteca Gino Bianco in Forlì (see <<http://www.bibliotecaginobianco.it/?e=flip&id=37&t=elenco-flipping-Quaderni+Piacentini>> [accessed 8 February 2021] and <<http://www.bibliotecaginobianco.it/?e=flip&id=41&t=elenco-flipping-Quaderni+Rossi>> [accessed 8 February 2021]), *Comunità* has been consulted at Biblioteca Biennale ASAC in Marghera, Biblioteca Civica Costantino Nigra Ivrea, and Biblioteca Regionale Universitaria Catania, thanks to the same Fieldwork Grant mentioned above.

as well and to what extent these discourses intersected with literary visions of industrialisation. Naturally the selection includes the two issues of *Il menabò* on industry and literature, but also looks at two further examples: *Officina* (1955–1959) and *Questo e altro* (1962–1964).<sup>29</sup> *Officina* has been chosen as, even in its pursuit of primarily literary purposes in a pre-industrial or industrialising Italy, a conceptualisation of colonial and anticolonial processes in relation to Italy's incipient industrialisation emerged. *Questo e altro* manifests a much more explicit anticolonialism in which literary and extra-literary dimensions are deeply interrelated, as the title suggests.

Following this survey and analysis of periodicals in Part One, which shows that historical and conceptual intersections existed between anticolonialism and industrial writing, Part Two addresses keywords and tropes that the anticolonial and critical industrial discourses shared. Selecting a cluster of keywords and narrative tropes that were vividly present in both industrial and anticolonial discourses, in some cases stemming from common matrices (such as Marxism and psychoanalysis), Part Two reflects on the meaning and implications of their 'transdiscursive' migration. Furthermore, fictional texts are considered, in order to gauge whether and how the theoretical and intellectual interest in anticolonialism was confirmed by the use of anticolonial keywords and tropes in literary form and how these were worked through. Six industrial novels are analysed, to illustrate how such colonial tropes present themselves in literary form. These novels are 'canonical' industrial texts: Ottiero Ottieri's *Tempi stretti* and *Donnarumma all'assalto*; Paolo Volponi's *Memoriale* and *La macchina mondiale*; Goffredo Parise's *Il padrone*, and Giovanni Pirelli's *A proposito di una macchina*.<sup>30</sup> A series of more or less explicit intersections emerge, in the spirit of a redescription or reimagining of industrialisation in colonial terms.

Why were these two areas intersecting? Why did industrial milieux become interested in anticolonialism? The answers that seem to emerge from the parallel analysis proposed here of periodicals, vocabulary, and fictional texts are twofold. On the one hand, for industrial companies, a certain

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<sup>29</sup> On *Il menabò* see footnote 5 above. On *Officina*, see Gian Carlo Ferretti, '*Officina*: cultura, letteratura e politica negli anni Cinquanta' (Turin: Einaudi, 1975); Francesca Billiani, '*Officina*: Experiments in Engagements in the Arts', in *National Dialogues and Transnational Exchanges Across Italian Periodical Culture, 1940–1960*, ed. by Francesca Billiani, Daniela La Penna, and Mila Milani (= *Modern Italy*, 21.2 (2016)), pp. 199–214; Zinato, *Letteratura*, pp. 19–39; Antonio Bagnoli, 'Una Officina', in *Sistema*, ed. by Bortolotto and others, pp. 85–94. The tables of contents of all issues are available at: <<http://circe.lett.unitn.it/ZwebSvr/Zetesis.ASP?WCI=Browse&WCE=MENU>> [accessed 28 January 2021]. On *Questo e altro*, see Arrigo Lampugnani Nigri, '*Questo e altro*: storia di una rivista e di un editore', ed. by Valeria Poggi (Azzate (VA): Stampa 2009, 2020). The tables of contents of all issues are available at: <<http://circe.lett.unitn.it/ZwebSvr/Zetesis.ASP?WCI=Browse&WCE=MENU>> [accessed 28 January 2021]. Neither *Officina* nor *Il menabò* and *Questo e altro* have yet been digitalised. I consulted them in 2018 at Centro APICE in Milan.

<sup>30</sup> The first editions of Ottieri's *Tempi stretti* and *Donnarumma all'assalto*, and Volponi's *Memoriale* have already been referenced; Paolo Volponi, *La macchina mondiale* (Milan: Garzanti, 1965); Goffredo Parise, *Il padrone: romanzo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1965); Giovanni Pirelli, *A proposito di una macchina* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965). Henceforth, I shall quote from the following editions: Ottiero Ottieri, *Tempi stretti* (Matelica (MC): Hacca, 2012); Ottiero Ottieri, 'Donnarumma all'assalto', in Ottiero Ottieri, *Opere scelte*, ed. by Giuseppe Montesano, Maria Pace Ottieri, and Cristina Nesi (Milan: Mondadori, 2009), pp. 3–226; Paolo Volponi, 'Memoriale', in Paolo Volponi, *Romanzi e prose*, ed. by Emanuele Zinato, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 2002–2003), I, pp. 3–232; Paolo Volponi, 'La macchina mondiale', in Volponi, *Romanzi e prose*, I, pp. 233–414; Goffredo Parise, 'Il padrone', in Goffredo Parise, *Opere*, ed. by Bruno Callegher and Mauro Portello, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1987), I, pp. 833–1073; Pirelli, *A proposito*.

superficial and paternalist anticolonialism worked as a marketing strategy, to consolidate the Italian position during the Cold War as an emerging industrial leader halfway between Communist countries and stronger capitalist economies.

On the other hand, for the more or less radical intellectuals and critical industrial writers whose works will be investigated here, anticolonialism served as a framework to explain, in something of a new, self-reflective allegory, also what was happening in Italy under the ‘economic boom’ and to map it against broader historical–geographical coordinates: anthropological mutation, cultural alienation, racialisation of social differences, the progressive disappearance of peasant cultures, and the birth of new subjects and subjectivities. The subjectivity and agency of these intellectuals in relation to the industry for which they often worked, and to the working class, with whom they felt solidarity, was perceived to be similar to the subjectivity of colonised intellectuals in relation to colonisers and the colonised: an uncomfortable in-between position.

In the next section, the key intellectual figures in this field are going to be introduced, in order to give a sense of their reciprocal positions and relations in the context of this anticolonial and industrial network.

## 2. WHO

The protagonists and minor characters of this intersectional network between anticolonialism and industrial writing are, for the most part, renowned writers, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals, who do not need to be presented here in substantial detail. This section will therefore limit itself to outlining their profiles and stances in relation to colonialism, anticolonialism, and industrial literature.<sup>31</sup>

To facilitate the process, these figures will be grouped into three categories, which of course were much more fluid and overlapping than this labelling reflects: entrepreneurs, mediators, and writers. What will stand out in this brief presentation is the marginality – if not absence – of women in prominent roles. Consequently, a sub-section will be precisely devoted to an assessment of the role of women and their apparent absence from the field.

### 2.1 THE ENTREPRENEURS

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<sup>31</sup> In the background lies the figure of Antonio Gramsci, who in that period represented an almost inescapable touchstone for intellectuals of the left: see Marco Gatto, *Nonostante Gramsci: marxismo e critica letteraria nell'Italia del Novecento* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2016).

The first group is that of the entrepreneurs. Adriano Olivetti and Enrico Mattei are, of course, the most prominent presences in this cluster, because of their political engagement and the new strategic directions that they impressed on the Italian industrial movement.<sup>32</sup>

Adriano Olivetti's industrial project was inextricably linked to his political, cultural, and artistic views, which took shape in the socialist and federalist project of the Movimento Comunità.<sup>33</sup> Consistent with his faith in the redeeming power of art, Olivetti's plants were built, structured, and administered as autonomous communities where particular attention was paid to the cultural and aesthetic dimension.<sup>34</sup> The underlying belief was that alienation could be prevented and fought through political participation in the management of the factories and access to culture. In this context, it is not surprising that a reflection on third-world communities and decolonisation would develop and find space. Umberto Serafini, a close collaborator of Adriano Olivetti and also involved in the Movimento Comunità, spoke in 1956 of 'il deciso anticolonialismo del Movimento Comunità'.<sup>35</sup> This anticolonial spirit found explicit confirmation in the programme of the Movimento, of which an unmissable point was 'la prefigurazione della politica degli Stati Uniti d'Europa come politica di pace, anticolonialista, amica alle giovani o rinnovate democrazie asiatiche ed africane'.<sup>36</sup> Adriano Olivetti also took an original stance in relation to the US hegemony in Europe.<sup>37</sup> Ever since his American tours in the second half of the 1920s, Adriano had expressed a certain perplexity in relation to the economic obsessions of the Americans he encountered. In the 1950s, he decided to buy the American company Underwood, a leader in the typewriter sector, and which at that time was suffering financial constraints.<sup>38</sup> This acquisition marked an inversion in the direction of global flows of capital, however occasional, and of US imperialism.

Olivetti's anticolonial stance was in part undermined and contradicted by his paternalist attitude towards southern Italy, however. The energy he and his establishment expended in the industrialisation of Italy's South and peripheries, however democratic, often assumed the traits of a colonial enterprise, as Ottiero Ottieri explicitly noted in his *Donnarumma all'assalto* (see Part Two, section 3.2 below). This

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<sup>32</sup> See Ochetto, *Adriano*, and Nico Perrone, *Enrico Mattei* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> See Giuseppe Iglieri, *Storia del Movimento Comunità* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2019).

<sup>34</sup> See Adriano Olivetti, *Il cammino della comunità* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2013); Sabrina Fava, 'Adriano Olivetti's Notion of "Community": Transforming the Factory and Urban Physical Space into Educational Space', *Journal of Theories and Research in Education*, 15.1 (2020), 203–216; and <<https://www.storiaolivetti.it/articolo/75-comunita-di-fabbrica-e-autonomia-aziendale/>> [accessed 28 September 2020].

<sup>35</sup> Umberto Serafini, *Adriano Olivetti e il Movimento Comunità* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2015), position 3347 of 11334. Kindle edition [print edition unavailable at the time of writing due to Covid-19 conditions].

<sup>36</sup> Serafini, *Adriano*, position 3302 of 11334. Kindle edition. See also the manifesto of Movimento Comunità: *Statuto e dichiarazione politica*, ed. by Davide Cadeddu (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2016), pp. 68–74.

<sup>37</sup> See Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> See Federico Barbiellini Amidei and Andrea Goldstein, 'Corporate Europe in the US: Olivetti's Acquisition of Underwood Fifty Years On', *Business History*, 54.2 (2012), 262–284.

ambivalent oscillation between an asserted anticolonialism and a *de facto* colonialism was reflected in the pages of *Comunità*.

The case of ENI's founder and president Enrico Mattei is similar in certain aspects, and different in others, to Olivetti. Like the latter, Mattei invested a lot in the communication strategies of ENI and in its cultural and educational sectors – as demonstrated, among other initiatives, by the publication of *Il gatto selvatico* and the production of several industrial films.<sup>39</sup> The most obvious difference, however, lies in the nature of the companies they ran: ENI was a state body; Olivetti was not. Mattei's anticolonial stance, which expressed itself in the overt support offered to decolonising countries, therefore had a stronger political weight, especially in the context of the hegemonic party he belonged to: the Democrazia Cristiana.<sup>40</sup> The international politics of the Italian Christian Democrats was aimed at the containment of Communist parties and support of NATO. On the contrary, Mattei's dynamic energy policy for Italy pushed in a different direction. He pursued an overt opposition to the oil cartel and proposed Italy as an alluring partner to countries rich in oil but poor in the infrastructures to process it. Mattei led ENI from its foundation in 1953 until his death in 1962 and most of these countries were decolonising themselves in the same years. Italy – in Mattei's view – was in the best position to support their decolonisation process, helping them to develop infrastructures in return for access to their oil. This emerges clearly in the draft of one of his talks:

Ho dovuto fare anch'io della decolonizzazione, perché molti settori dell'economia italiana erano colonizzati; anzi, direi che la stessa Italia meridionale era stata colonizzata dal nord d'Italia! Il fatto coloniale non è solo politico: è anche, e soprattutto, economico. Esiste una condizione coloniale quando manca un minimo d'infrastruttura industriale per la trasformazione delle materie prime.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Giulio Latini, *L'energia e lo sguardo: il cinema dell'Eni e i documentari di Gilbert Bovay* (Rome: Donzelli, 2011), and Frescari, *Energia*.

<sup>40</sup> See Bruna Bagnato, *Petrolio e politica: Mattei in Marocco* (Florence: Polistampa, 2004); Saverio Serri, 'Fanfani e il 1958: una nuova politica estera per l'Italia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, IMT Institute for Advanced Studies, Lucca, 2009); Bruna Bagnato, *L'Italia e la guerra d'Algeria (1954–1962)* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2012), pp. 302–336 and 702–733; Eleonora Belloni, 'L'Eni e il Terzo Mondo: l'anticolonialismo di Enrico Mattei nelle pagine de *Il gatto selvatico*', *Progressus*, 1.2 (2014) <<https://www.rivistaprogressus.it/wp-content/uploads/eleonora-belloni-leni-mondo-lanticolonialismo-enrico-mattei-nelle-pagine-de-gatto-selvatico-6.pdf>> [accessed 8 February 2021]; Luca Peretti, 'Before *The Battle of Algiers*: Sartre, Colonialism, Industrial Cinema and an Unmade Film', *Senses of Cinema*, 84 (2017) <<https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2017/sartre-at-the-movies/sartre-colonialism-industrial-cinema-and-an-unmade-film/>> [accessed 4 October 2020]; Srivastava, *Italian*, pp. 210–211.

<sup>41</sup> Enrico Mattei, 'Sulla decolonizzazione degli Stati e dell'economia', in Enrico Mattei, *Tutti i discorsi (1945–1962)* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2012), pp. 730–731. This text was written on 9–10 June 1960 to be read to a Tunisian audience to mark the signing of an agreement between ENI and Tunisia for the construction of an oil refinery there. However, according to a note which accompanies this text, the speech was never delivered. Instead, a different talk was given: Enrico Mattei, 'Accordo tra il governo tunisino e l'ENI', in Mattei, *Tutti i discorsi*, pp. 731–732. Dr Anna Landolfi, curator of the Archivio ENI, has informed me that, in a private conversation with Dr Lucia Nardi (Archivio ENI), journalist Mario Pirani – a close collaborator of Enrico Mattei – claimed to be the author of 'Sulla decolonizzazione degli Stati e dell'economia'. See also Mario Pirani, *Poteva andare peggio: mezzo secolo di ragionevoli illusioni* (Milan: Mondadori, 2010), pp. 274–324.

To argue for the necessity and the righteousness of an Italian intervention ‘in favour’ of the Tunisian state, Mattei emphatically referred to Italy as a land of colonisation itself and put himself on the side of the ‘decolonisers’. He shrewdly and self-reflectively identified the colonial condition precisely in the situation from which he was releasing Tunisia, without of course problematising the risks of top-down industrialisation.

This brief account of Olivetti’s and Mattei’s anticolonial stances offers an insight into what was at stake in the anticolonialism of two major Italian industrial companies of the 1950s and 1960s and in the discursive strategies of their leaders. Adriano Olivetti and Enrico Mattei represent two exceptional cases and it would be impossible to argue that all Italian entrepreneurs in those years were as aware and committed, for whatever reason, to anticolonialism. Olivetti and ENI constitute two cases of profound and evident connection between industrial questions and anticolonialism. This was not the case either for Finmeccanica or Pirelli – the two other companies at the centre of our inquiry into industrial anticolonialism. However, anticolonialism managed to filter into those industrial milieux too, thanks to figures that will be referred to here as the ‘mediators’.

## 2.2 THE MEDIATORS

The discussion on colonial questions and the reception and production of anticolonial ideas in Italian cultural milieux connected to industry were guaranteed not only by the more or less genuine attention of entrepreneurs and politicians, but also by the ‘militant’ underground activity of intellectuals who found in anticolonial texts and ideas a focus of interest. The most prominent among these mediators is certainly Giovanni Pirelli. Born in 1918 into one of the most conspicuous Italian industrial families of the twentieth century, he fought in the Italian fascist army during World War II before embracing antifascism and joining the Resistance in 1945.<sup>42</sup> This experience marked his choice of a militant life, which included embracing socialism and renouncing the management of his family business, Pirelli. Internationalism was a cornerstone of his cultural and political activity.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 16–20.

<sup>43</sup> See Cesare Bernani, ‘Giovanni Pirelli: un autentico rivoluzionario’, *L’impegno*, 2 (2008), 35–63.

In continuity with his Resistance experience, Pirelli embraced anticolonial struggles.<sup>44</sup> In February 1961 he met Frantz Fanon in Tunis.<sup>45</sup> After this encounter, he arranged with Giulio Einaudi for the translation of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* into Italian and, after Fanon's death, he continued to instigate the publication of his writing and contributed to the foundation of the Centro di Documentazione Frantz Fanon (henceforth: CDFF) in Milan in 1963, as a hub for his internationalist militancy and anticolonial support.<sup>46</sup> He understood this as a continuation of the Italian Resistance against fascism and most of all as a class struggle in a broader sense.<sup>47</sup> Pirelli also contributed occasionally to *Pirelli* under the pseudonym of Franco Fellini. He was in touch with the *operaisti* group of *Quaderni rossi* and *Quaderni piacentini* and with the editorial board of *Il menabò* and *Questo e altro*, and was himself the author of an industrial novel, the above-mentioned *A proposito di una macchina*. Consequently, he genuinely embodies the militant link between working-class struggles and anticolonialism, and these with literature.

Other key figures in this picture are the poets Franco Fortini and Giovanni Giudici.<sup>48</sup> They both worked at Olivetti in Ivrea and Milan, and were friends and part of a network of writers, intellectuals, and militants close to both *operaisti* groups and the industrial management. They shared political and cultural interests, as testified by their correspondence.<sup>49</sup> Fortini worked at Olivetti from 1947 to 1963, in different positions. Giudici entered Olivetti in 1956 and worked there until 1979, mostly in the advertising function.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, they both produced poetry and essays, contributing to most of the periodicals

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<sup>44</sup> On this continuity, see Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 131–196; Srivastava, *Italian*, pp. 199–231. The sequence of Pirelli's publications also illustrates this continuity: *Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza italiana: 8 settembre 1943–25 aprile 1945*, ed. by Giovanni Pirelli and Piero Malvezzi (Turin: Einaudi, 1952); *Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza europea*, ed. by Giovanni Pirelli and Piero Malvezzi (Turin: Einaudi, 1954); *Racconti di bambini d'Algeria: testimonianze e disegni di bambini profughi in Tunisia, Libia e Marocco*, trans. by Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1962); *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina*, ed. by Patrick Kessel and Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1963).

<sup>45</sup> See Tullio Ottolini, 'Giovanni Pirelli e la guerra d'indipendenza algerina: tra attivismo intellettuale e *soutien* concreto', in *Giovanni*, ed. by Scotti, pp. 85–110; Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 131–167.

<sup>46</sup> See Frantz Fanon, *I dannati della terra*, trans. by Carlo Cignetti (Turin: Einaudi, 1962); Frantz Fanon, *Sociologia della rivoluzione algerina*, with an introduction by Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1963); Frantz Fanon, *Il negro e l'altro*, trans. by Mariagloria Sears (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1965); Frantz Fanon, *Opere scelte*, ed. by Giovanni Pirelli, trans. by Carlo Cignetti, Eugenia Dolchi Martinet, and Laura Gonzalez, 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1971). The order of publication in Italy reverses the order in which Fanon's works were first published in French: Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952), translated as Fanon, *Il negro*; Frantz Fanon, *L'an V de la révolution algérienne* (Paris: Maspero, 1959), translated as Fanon, *Sociologia*; Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Maspero, 1961), translated as Fanon, *I dannati*. See also Srivastava, 'The Italian Fanon'. The first of Fanon's texts published in Italy is Frantz Fanon, 'Nazione, cultura e lotta di liberazione', *Rinascita*, 4 (1959), 285–289. This is the transcription of Fanon's talk at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists, which took place in Rome in April 1959, on which see Cristina Brambilla, 'Temi del 2° Congresso Mondiale degli scrittori e artisti neri', *Africa*, 3 (1959), 122–124. On the CDFF, see section 3.1 below.

<sup>47</sup> See Guido Piovene, *La coda di paglia* (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1999), pp. 51–55; Neelam Srivastava's illuminating category of 'Resistance aesthetics' in Srivastava, *Italian*, pp. 233–262; Vincenzo Russo, *La Resistenza continua: il colonialismo portoghese, le lotte di liberazione e gli intellettuali italiani* (Milan: Meltemi, 2020), p. 31.

<sup>48</sup> See Luigi Lollini, 'Combattenti della frontiera', in Velio Abati and others, *'Uomini usciti di pianto in ragione': saggi su Franco Fortini* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 1996), pp. 53–59; Mozzachiodi, 'L'uomo'.

<sup>49</sup> See Franco Fortini and Giovanni Giudici, *Carteggio 1959–1993*, ed. by Riccardo Corcione (Florence: Olschki, 2018).

<sup>50</sup> See Carter, 'Salaried', pp. 50–53.

discussed in this dissertation: from *Comunità* to *Pirelli*, from *Quaderni piacentini* to *Il menabò* and *Questo e altro*. It was in the pages of these journals that Fortini and Giudici discussed and fostered anticolonial and third-world theses, among their many and wide-ranging political and cultural ideas.<sup>51</sup> Giudici, in particular, was the author, among other contributions, of the influential article ‘L’uomo dalla roncola’, which appeared in *Quaderni piacentini* in 1963 and marked a milestone in the Italian reception of Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*.<sup>52</sup> Fortini, for his part, included a passage from *The Wretched of the Earth* in his 1965 anthology *Profezie e realtà del nostro secolo*.<sup>53</sup> The relevance of anticolonialism in their discussions and its link to class struggle in general clearly emerges from their letters of the early 1960s as well as from their published work.

Fortini and Giudici were part of a broader intellectual network. On the political side, they were close to the new-left group of *Quaderni piacentini*, born around the militant figures of Piergiorgio Bellocchio and Grazia Cherchi. This militant group also expressed its support for anticolonial struggles through the voices of, among others, Edoarda Masi, Sergio Spazzali, and Paola Spazzali Forti. On the literary side, they were simultaneously in contact – and often in polemic – with the animators of and contributors to the debate on industrial literature, such as Elio Vittorini, Italo Calvino, Vittorio Sereni, and Gianni Scalia, to mention only some key names.

It is interesting to briefly mention here, before discussing them further in Part One, the stances of the two most prominent Italian writers and intellectuals in those years, who were also key interlocutors for the network we are examining: Italo Calvino and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Calvino’s references to the Third World are often nuanced and mostly descriptive, consistent with his lower-profile stance in the political arena, especially after 1956. However, it is interesting to note that references to colonialism and the Third World often occur in the context of his reflection on industry and industrialisation.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast, Pasolini’s militant and for many deeply ‘ambiguous’ third-worldism has already been explored in depth and his anticolonial position will only marginally be the subject of this dissertation, to the extent to which it was influential for industrial authors.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See Franco Fortini, *Verifica dei poteri. scritti di critica e di istituzioni letterarie* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1965), and Giovanni Giudici, *La letteratura verso Hiroshima e altri scritti 1959–1975* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1976).

<sup>52</sup> See Giovanni Giudici, ‘L’uomo dalla roncola’, *Quaderni piacentini*, 12 (1963), 4–12 (repr. in Giudici, *La letteratura verso*, pp. 156–167).

<sup>53</sup> See Frantz Fanon, ‘L’uomo con la roncola’, in *Profezie e realtà del nostro secolo: testi e documenti per la storia di domani*, ed. by Franco Fortini (Bari: Laterza, 1965), pp. 297–307. Fortini also included a translation of Aimé Césaire’s poem ‘À l’Afrique’ in Franco Fortini, *Il movimento surrealista* (Milan: Garzanti, 1959), pp. 186–189.

<sup>54</sup> On the contiguous question of Calvino’s ‘colour blindness’, see Elio Baldi, ‘Italo Calvino’s Colour Blindness and the Question of Race Among Einaudi Intellectuals’, *Modern Languages Open*, 1 (2019) <<https://www.modernlanguagesopen.org/articles/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.273/>> [accessed 9 February 2021].

<sup>55</sup> See Luca Caminati, *Orientalismo eretico: Pier Paolo Pasolini e il cinema del terzo mondo* (Milan: Mondadori, 2007); Giovanna Trento, *Pasolini e l’Africa, l’Africa di Pasolini: panmeridionalismo e rappresentazioni dell’Africa postcoloniale* (Milan: Mimesis, 2010); Giovanna Trento, ‘Pier Paolo Pasolini and Pan-Meridional Italianness’, in *The Scandal of Self-Contradiction: Pasolini’s Multistable Subjectivities, Traditions, Geographies*, ed. by Luca Di Blasi, Manuele Gagnolati, and Christoph F. E. Holzhey (Vienna: Turia+Kant, 2012),

There is, then, a wide spectrum of intellectual involvement in industrial anticolonialism, which ranges from Calvino's detached referencing of the question to Pirelli's militant support for anticolonial struggle within a socialist internationalist perspective, and several positions in between. What is significant here, more than the individual positions of single authors, is the link that is established, historically and conceptually and in parallel to the reactivation of Resistance ideals, between industrialisation and colonialism, our hypothesis being that this also informed, more or less consciously, the industrial novels of the writers which will later be analysed in Part Two, section 3.

### 2.3 THE WRITERS

As has been already discussed in section 1, a fairly compact cluster of industrial novelists gathered around Adriano Olivetti and his company. For the purpose of this dissertation, works by Paolo Volponi and Ottiero Ottieri have been selected as a sample of this Olivetti industrial literature and as instances in which anticolonial tropes are widely employed.<sup>56</sup>

Ottieri, in both his fictional and diary writings, refers to the factories as colonial structures (see Part 1, section 4.3, and Part 2, sections 3.1 and 3.2 below). Although there seem to be no traces of a direct anticolonial commitment on his part in the time period covered in this dissertation, in an interview with Ferdinando Camon from shortly afterwards, Ottieri declares that:

Il momento industriale è stato necessario e inevitabile: non è possibile, neanche oggi per i popoli del Terzo Mondo, credo, teorizzare il 'salto' del momento industriale. Forse io ho letto poco, ma non ho trovato ancora un testo che mi dica bene come si possa saltare a piè pari quel momento.<sup>57</sup>

Having discussed with Camon the downsides of industrialisation, in linking it to the question of third-world countries, Ottieri affirms here his belief in the historical necessity of an industrial transition. In this view, third-world countries are implicitly assimilated to pre-industrial Italy, whose industrial development

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pp. 59–83; Tiziano Toracca, 'L'ambiguità del Terzo Mondo: il rimpianto drammatico di Pasolini', in *Già troppe volte esuli: letteratura di frontiera e di esilio*, ed. by Novella di Nunzio and Francesco Ragni, 3 vols (Perugia: Università degli Studi di Perugia, 2014), III, pp. 193–209. Pasolini proved extremely influential for many industrial authors, as his correspondence with them proves. For an example, see Paolo Volponi, *Scrivo a te come guardandomi allo specchio: lettere a Pasolini (1954–1975)*, ed. by Daniele Fioretti (Florence: Polistampa, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> See Carter, 'Salaried', pp. 53–57. For an early link between Ottieri and colonial-industrial questions, see Umberto Eco, 'A Semiotic Approach to Acculturation and Participation', in *Fears and Hopes for European Urbanization: Ten Prospective Papers and Three Evaluations* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1972), pp. 38–59 (p. 42). I am not aware of any existing study investigating Volponi's reflections on colonialism. I have explored Volponi's novel *Il lanciatore di giavellotto* (1981) from an anticolonial perspective in Erica Bellia, "'La città materna': Urbino nel *Lanciatore di giavellotto* di Paolo Volponi', in *Idee, forme e racconto della città nella narrativa italiana*, ed. by Cristina Placido, Lucinda Spera, and Monica Cristina Storini (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2020), pp. 39–47.

<sup>57</sup> Ottiero Ottieri in Ferdinando Camon, *Il mestiere di scrittore: conversazioni critiche* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2019), p. 137. The interview took place between the end of 1966 and the end of 1968.

is described as ‘inevitable’. The juxtaposition of industrial dynamics and the development of third-world countries, which are not mentioned by the interviewer, demonstrates Ottieri’s awareness of the link between the two aspects and his ambivalent stance in relation to industry. This analogy is itself highly problematic: it implies the assumption that third-world countries will follow the ‘West’ and are just ‘behind’ in their development.

A similar link is established by Paolo Volponi, again in conversation with Camon: ‘Le folle di miliardi di persone che soffrono la fame, che s’affacciano dal Terzo Mondo, chi, se non l’industria, potrà portarle a una condizione di affrancamento e di benessere?’.<sup>58</sup> This enthusiastic faith in the salvific power of industry, which in Volponi’s novels and poetry appears to be at least nuanced if not radically undermined, is balanced by the consciousness that the real danger of industry lies:

nella sua ‘cattolicità’ etnocentrica (malattia di tutti gli organismi che si sentono superiori) che vuole attrarre nella propria orbita e poi colonizzare tutte le culture di tipo diverso, senza preoccuparsi se questo avvenga attraverso l’imperialismo di pace o di guerra o attraverso la strategia leninista.<sup>59</sup>

Cultural alienation emerges in between the lines as a major fault of industry and the choice of the verb ‘colonizzare’ is a striking if incidental reference in this context.

It is interesting to compare the industrialism and continuing narrative industrial production of Volponi and Ottieri, so deeply informed by the ambiguity of their experience at Olivetti, to industrial writings by authors extraneous to Olivetti. The two heterogeneous cases of Goffredo Parise and Giovanni Pirelli, as ‘occasional’ industrial writers, have been chosen here. Pirelli’s anticolonialism has already been discussed. What can be added here regarding his profile as an industrial writer is that sustained reference to anticolonialism can be found within his neglected industrial novel *A proposito di una macchina* (see Part Two, section 3.6 below).

Parise represents in a certain mode a counterpoint to Pirelli’s militant profile. He moved from the ‘peripheral’ Veneto to Milan in the 1950s and then to Rome in 1964, working within the culture sector at the publishers Garzanti and Longanesi. He was peripheral in relation to the cultural milieu that have been described so far. Compared to Pirelli, Parise’s engagement with both working-class and anticolonial struggles is definitely weaker and was developed later. However, he shows some interest in colonial matters. In his 1955 reportage from Paris published in *Corriere dell’informazione*, for example, he devotes some attention to the conditions of North Africans living there.<sup>60</sup> In the first instance, he embraces the point of view of the French: ‘mi son reso conto immediatamente quale gatta da pelare si sian presi i

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<sup>58</sup> Paolo Volponi in Camon, *Il mestiere*, p. 117. The interview took place between the end of 1966 and the end of 1968.

<sup>59</sup> Volponi in Camon, *Il mestiere*, p. 119.

<sup>60</sup> See Goffredo Parise, ‘Allah ci guarda dalla torre Eiffel’, *Corriere dell’informazione*, 7-8 April 1955, 3. See also Ilaria Crotti, *1955: Goffredo Parise reporter a Parigi* (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2002).

francesi con questa specie di importazione coloniale; e in quali legittime preoccupazioni si trovino questi disgraziati datori di lavoro parigini'.<sup>61</sup> Human beings are sarcastically assimilated to commodities as goods to be imported. Parise also shows his orientalism when describing the dreamlike atmosphere that prefaces his encounter with 'la via dell'Oriente'.<sup>62</sup> However, later in the article he depicts with bluntness the characteristic temporary accommodation of the North African migrants and their lives, concluding that 'Parigi cova in seno i futuri ribelli senza accorgersene'.<sup>63</sup> This sounds like a prophecy of the anticolonial struggle which was to shake France in the following years, and this 'prophecy' balances the tone of the opening of the article, giving a sense of Parise's understanding of social reality in the colonial metropolis. This documentary stance, enhanced by Parise's intention to 'penetrare' more than superficially 'visitare' the reality he is faced with,<sup>64</sup> drives his later reportages, especially those in China, Vietnam, and Biafra. In the latter, in particular, published episodically in 1968 and then in *Guerre politiche*,<sup>65</sup> Parise links the question of the future of decolonised countries to his fundamental interpretative framework: Darwinism. Quoting Fanon, who by that time was much more renowned than at the beginning of the decade, Parise claims that the victims of the struggle for life in Africa would have been again 'i dannati della terra'.<sup>66</sup> Finally, a reference to colonialism as linked to industry and industrialisation can be found in his 1976 reportage from New York:

E altre fabbriche nascono nel mondo occidentale e copiano le magliette e i blue jeans [...]. Molte parti del mondo sono colonie dell'America, altre lo stanno diventando e quelle che non lo sono ancora muoiono dal desiderio di diventarlo: non diversi erano quei pellirossa, quei 'buoni selvaggi' pronti a pagare un pugno d'oro all'esploratore bianco per quattro perline colorate.<sup>67</sup>

Without overstating the internal and external intertextuality, it is interesting to read this diagnostic awareness of the colonial problem around the world and its interpretation in a Darwinian framework in consonance with Darwinian and colonial tropes in *Il padrone*.

## 2.4 WOMEN

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<sup>61</sup> Parise, 'Allah', p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> Parise, 'Allah', p. 3. On Parise and the 'Orient', see Elisa Attanasio, 'Goffredo Parise and the Orient: A Continuous Fascination for Alterity', in *Italy and China: Centuries of Dialogue*, ed. by Francesco Guardiani, Gaoheng Zhang, and Salvatore Bancheri (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2017), pp. 295–307.

<sup>63</sup> Parise, 'Allah', p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Parise, 'Allah', p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> See Goffredo Parise, 'Guerre politiche', in Parise, *Opere*, II, pp. 777–996.

<sup>66</sup> See Goffredo Parise, 'L'ecatombe dei poveri', *Corriere della sera*, 13 August 1968, 3, and Parise, 'Guerre', p. 870.

<sup>67</sup> Goffredo Parise, 'New York', in Parise, *Opere*, II, pp. 997–1054 (p. 1004). See also Zinato, *Letteratura*, pp. 109–118.

At first glance, the macroscopic absence of women writers in the canon of industrial literature of the 1950s and 1960s is striking. As noted above, women militants such as Grazia Cherchi, Paola Spazzali Forti, and Edoarda Masi were crucial in the dissemination and production of anticolonial thought in Italy.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, industrial writing was mostly a male genre. Women in those years did indeed work in industrial factories and offices, mostly as manual labourers, secretaries, and typists.<sup>69</sup> Films and books, produced by male writers, as well as the many ‘inchieste’ on female labour which appeared in the 1960s on periodicals, document this presence.<sup>70</sup> So, the question is: why did women not write about industry – or why were they not published?

Firstly, this question is rendered less absolute by a notable exception. A mostly unknown writer named Rosanna Faggiani published a short industrial novel in *Il menabò* 5, entitled ‘Una storia di viti’.<sup>71</sup> This is an allegorical story, resulting from the juxtaposition of separate narrative episodes, set in and around a factory, which mostly involves male characters who organise a sort of ‘quiet’ rebellion against the factory itself. Elio Vittorini’s biographical notice about Faggiani is telling. He is puzzled by the impossibility of obtaining more details about her life other than her marital and motherhood status and the details of her first publication, the poetry collection *Nel deserto*, whose poems all focused on the theme of ‘estraniamento’.<sup>72</sup>

Secondly, women almost never worked in managerial roles and they also had domestic tasks to fulfil, rendering it probable that their potential writing time was limited. Moreover, the acclaimed female writers from that time were not factory workers and had no direct experience of them: for example, Anna Banti, Natalia Ginzburg, Anna Maria Ortese, and Elsa Morante.<sup>73</sup>

However, this lack of writing agency did not translate into the absence of a female subjectivity within industrial literature. Although most industrial novels were narrated from a male point of view and women appeared only in the roles of mothers and objects of desire, there are significant exceptions to

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<sup>68</sup> Joyce Lussu is another very interesting case: see Russo, *La Resistenza*, pp. 60–79.

<sup>69</sup> See Anna Badino, *Tutte a casa? Donne tra migrazione e lavoro nella Torino degli anni Sessanta* (Roma: Viella, 2008); *La signorina Kores e le altre: donne e lavoro a Milano (1950–1970)*, ed. by Rossana di Fazio and Margherita Marcheselli (Milan: Enciclopedia delle Donne, 2016).

<sup>70</sup> See the three special issues of *Pirelli* devoted to ‘Il lavoro della donna in Italia’: *Pirelli*, 2 (1963); *Pirelli*, 3 (1963); *Pirelli*, 4 (1963). On female industrial workers in Italian cinema, see Karen Pinkus, *Clocking Out: The Machinery of Life in 1960s Italian Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

<sup>71</sup> Rosanna Faggiani, ‘Una storia di viti’, *Il menabò*, 5 (1962), 100–160; Rosanna Faggiani, ‘Une histoire de vis’, trans. by Michèle Causse, *Les Temps Modernes*, 217 (1964), 2137–2180.

<sup>72</sup> Elio Vittorini, ‘Notizia su Rosanna Faggiani’, *Il menabò*, 5 (1962), 161. See Rosanna Faggiani, *Nel deserto* (Milan: Schwarz, 1957).

<sup>73</sup> Giuseppe Lupo, however, includes Natalia Ginzburg in his canon of ‘letteratura olivettiana’: see Lupo, *La letteratura*, pp. 174–186. Elsa Morante included in her 1974 novel *La Storia* a cameo of industrial literature in the story of Davide Segre: see Elsa Morante, ‘La Storia’, in Elsa Morante, *Opere*, ed. by Carlo Cecchi and Cesare Garboli, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), II, pp. 255–1036 (pp. 732–750). As a counterpoint to Italian industrial literature, it is interesting to reflect on the significance of women in the production of industrial literature in English: see Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

this trend. Ottieri's *Tempi stretti* and Pirelli's *A proposito di una macchina*, for example, make the case for a protagonism or co-protagonism of women, even though voiced by male authors.

A remarkable fact that further complicates the picture is that one of the most influential sources and models for Italian industrial writers was in fact a woman: the French philosopher Simone Weil, who voluntarily spent months as a worker in a Renault factory in 1934–1935, to explore and understand the condition of the working class. Her diaries of this experience as well as her related letters and reflections were published by Gallimard in 1951 as *La condition ouvrière*, translated into Italian by Franco Fortini in 1952 as *La condizione operaia*.<sup>74</sup> The translation was an initiative of Edizioni di Comunità, indicating that the interest at Olivetti must have been considerable. But the first woman writer to reinterpret this model was Elsa Morante, as late as 1974.<sup>75</sup> Davide Segre, one of the main characters in Morante's *La Storia*, is constructed as a partial reproduction of the sacrificial figure of Weil, precisely with reference to her voluntary experience in a factory. Weil also represents a particularly interesting case in the context of this dissertation because of her strong and somehow precocious anticolonial stance, which clearly emerges from her writings of the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>76</sup> In her book *The Need for Roots*, several passages are devoted to colonialism and she also establishes a colonial analogy with reference to the inferiority complex (a keyword here) experienced by the peasant classes in relation to their urban counterpart:

The inferiority complex in the countryside is such that you see peasant millionaires who find it natural to be treated by retired petits bourgeois with the sort of arrogance shown by colonials towards natives. An inferiority complex has to be very great for money not to be able to wipe it out.<sup>77</sup>

The link between industrialisation and colonisation also emerges in Weil's project for an article of 1938, 'Who is Guilty of Anti-French Plots?', where she claims that 'those colonists and industrialists who treat their workers like beasts of burden [...] are the ones who are sowing hatred of France in the African territories'.<sup>78</sup> Weil therefore stands as a powerful archetype of anticolonial and anti-industrial commitment.

Thus, if the canon of industrial literature is the criterion for an assessment of the presence of women within this industrial–anticolonial constellation, then women disappear. Conversely, if a broader

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<sup>74</sup> See Simone Weil, *La condition ouvrière* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951); Simone Weil, *La condizione operaia*, trans. by Franco Fortini (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1952).

<sup>75</sup> See Angela Borghesi, *Una storia invisibile: Morante, Ortese, Weil* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2015).

<sup>76</sup> See Adriano Marchetti, 'Réflexions de Simone Weil sur le colonialisme', *Francofonia*, 19 (1990), 23–41.

<sup>77</sup> Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*, trans. by Arthur Wills (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 79. The book appeared in Italian, again in Fortini's translation, as Simone Weil, *La prima radice: prelude a una dichiarazione dei doveri verso la creatura umana*, trans. by Franco Fortini (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1954).

<sup>78</sup> Simone Weil, 'Who is Guilty of Anti-French Plots?', in Simone Weil, *Simone Weil on Colonialism: An Ethic of the Other*, ed. and trans. by Janet Patricia Little (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 45–50 (p. 46).

terrain is observed and explored, the presence of women emerges such that, ultimately, they are everywhere in the picture: militants, fictional characters, ideologues, and (mysterious) writers.

### 3. WHERE

The determination of geographical coordinates for a research project which aims to be simultaneously transnational in scope and local – individual – in focus calls for a certain degree of flexibility in perspective.

On a global scale, the period from 1955 to 1965 witnessed a series of major events related to the colonial and anticolonial – and indeed decolonising – dimension of geopolitics and culture, many of which had a direct or indirect impact on the discourse of politics and culture in Italy.<sup>79</sup> In 1955, the Bandung Conference marked the birth of the idea of the ‘Third World’ and the ‘non-aligned’ movement, boosting the decolonisation process.<sup>80</sup> This meant that the bipolar hegemony which had emerged from World War II was complicated by the rise of a third collective actor, embodying a third way between the two opposite tensions of US capitalism and Soviet communism.<sup>81</sup>

The Soviet repression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution established, across European democracies, a slump in the consensus on the left towards the Soviet Union and the formation of a New Left. In Italy, this produced a heterogeneous mix of different political tendencies (anarchism, Marxism-Leninism, socialism) which had in common only their distance from the orthodoxy of the PCI.<sup>82</sup> Many PCI adherents resigned their membership and turned to other parties or other forms of militancy and recognised in the newly decolonising communities and economies new models of development, which based their future on a rejection of European and US political, economic, and cultural imperialism.

Many African countries acquired independence from colonial domination in those years and drafted their first independent constitutions: from Guinea (1958) to Congo (1960), Mali (1960), Madagascar (1960), Senegal (1960), Algeria (1962). The Algerian case was undoubtedly the most prominent in the Italian discussion on decolonisation, not least due to the mediation of French intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre.<sup>83</sup> As Neelam Srivastava has suggested, the Algerian cause was

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<sup>79</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London: Abacus, 1995), pp. 225–402.

<sup>80</sup> See Christopher J. Lee, *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010).

<sup>81</sup> See Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Massimo De Giuseppe, ‘Il “Terzo Mondo” in Italia: trasformazioni di un concetto tra opinione pubblica, azione politica e mobilitazione civile (1955–1980)’, *Ricerche di storia politica*, 1 (2011), 29–52; Marica Tolomelli, *L’Italia dei movimenti: politica e società nella Prima repubblica* (Rome: Carocci, 2015), pp. 17–96; Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> See *La rivoluzione ungherese del 1956 e l’Italia*, ed. by András Fejérdy (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2017).

<sup>83</sup> See Marco Galeazzi, ‘Il Pci e i paesi non allineati: la questione algerina (1957–1965)’, *Studi storici*, 49.3 (2008), 793–848.

embraced by Italian intellectuals in an ideal continuity with the Italian Resistance.<sup>84</sup> Conversely, Somalia's situation was rarely the subject of reflection for Italian intellectuals, despite the fact that in 1960 Italy's UN mandate there ceased, marking the end of Italian colonialism in its turn. Similarly, Libya and Ethiopia were mostly excluded from the Italian discourse on colonialism and anticolonialism in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>85</sup>

In the late 1950s, Mao Zedong's China prepared and undertook its controversial Great Leap Forward and showed itself as a new, rampant economic and political power. India consolidated its independence. US policies showed their colonial character both within the national and the international arena. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and through several crises, the growth of the Civil Rights Movement led to the abolition of Jim Crow Laws and other racist codes; while the enhancement of US military action in Vietnam led to the birth of a radical international anti-war movement which had anti-imperialism at its ideological core. If Italy was bound to the US through its involvement in NATO and as a result of the Marshall Plan and American economic and cultural hegemony, both the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war protests appealed to radical Italian intellectuals as counter-voices making themselves heard from what was becoming the imperialist country *par excellence*. As for Central and South America, the anti-imperialist movements there would become more powerful towards the end of the 1960s, their influence later reaching Europe, although the Cuban situation was already present in public discourse in Italy after Castro's revolution between the 1950s and 1960s.

All these international events and processes related to colonialism and political, economic, and cultural hegemony of course had varying echoes, significance, and impact in different geographic, political, and cultural arenas of the Italy of the 'economic miracle'. For the purposes of simplification, three hubs of industrial anticolonialism have been identified, which often in fact intersected and the divisions between which are not, therefore, intended to be sharp.

### 3.1 MILAN, TURIN, IVREA: THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH

During the 'economic miracle', Milan was indeed Italy's economic and industrial capital city.<sup>86</sup> Between the 1950s and the 1960s, it witnessed extraordinary demographic and urban growth as a result of massive industrialisation and immigration from southern Italy, as well as from other rural areas such as the Veneto and central Italy. The landscape changed: new industrial urban nuclei, new suburbs, new buildings, new

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<sup>84</sup> See Srivastava, *Italian*, pp. 233–253.

<sup>85</sup> See Simone Brioni, *The Somali Within: Language, Race and Belonging in 'Minor' Italian Literature* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2015), and Charles Burdett, 'Transnational Time: Reading Post-War Representations of the Italian Presence in East Africa', *Italian Studies*, 73.3 (2018), 274–288.

<sup>86</sup> See John Foot, *Milan Since the Miracle: City, Culture and Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

means of transport proliferated. As a consequence, new conflicts arose – or old conflicts in new forms – between the (often migrant) working classes along with their unions and parties, and employers.<sup>87</sup>

The most prominent industrial companies in those years, with the notable exception of FIAT (whose case will be discussed below), had headquarters, plants, and offices in Milan. Olivetti, despite being based in Ivrea, had a corporate building in Milan and most of its managers and employees had their offices there, including Franco Fortini, Giovanni Giudici, Paolo Volponi, and Ottiero Ottieri. Pirelli's factories and offices changed Milan's environment and social composition: the Pirelli Tower, better known as the 'Pirellone', was completed in 1958, an iconic example of the urban transformations. ENI, similarly, whilst officially based in Rome, had plants in the Milan area and its prestigious office building in Metanopoli.<sup>88</sup>

Milan was also a hub for radical thinkers. The group of *Quaderni piacentini*, despite being founded in Piacenza, often met in Milan and most of its members ended up there. It was in Milan that Giovanni Pirelli (who lived in Rome for a while and then moved to Varese) contributed to the foundation of the CDFF in 1963 with a group of young militants: Sergio Spazzali, Paola Spazzali Forti, Savino d'Amico, among others.<sup>89</sup> These people made contact with Giovanni Pirelli to create the centre and link it to the Comitato Anticoloniale Italiano, which was based in Rome (see section 3.2 below). The CDFF, which had some links with the Milanese antifascist cultural association Casa della Cultura, organised events to support, materially and ideologically, the struggles of decolonising peoples.<sup>90</sup>

Milan was a centre for literature too. It was there that most industrial writers lived and encountered each other: Fortini, Giudici, Volponi, Ottieri, Parise for a while, the poet Vittorio Sereni, the novelist and translator Luciano Bianciardi, and also Elio Vittorini, the animator of *Il menabò* and Pirelli's friend, among others.<sup>91</sup> The Bompiani, Garzanti, and Feltrinelli publishing houses were also based in Milan and represented a sort of counterpoint to Einaudi in Turin.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> See Roberto Franzosi, *The Puzzle of Strikes: Class and State Strategies in Post-War Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); *Tra fabbrica e società: mondi operai nell'Italia del Novecento*, ed. by Stefano Musso (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1999); Andrea Sangiovanni, *Tute blu: la parabola operaia nell'Italia repubblicana* (Roma: Donzelli, 2006); Ilaria Favretto, 'Rough Music and Factory Protest in Post-1945 Italy', *Past & Present*, 228.1 (2015), 207–247.

<sup>88</sup> See Gabriele Basilico, *Milano: ritratti di fabbriche* (Milan: SugarCo, 1981); Dorothea Deschermeier, *L'impero ENI: l'architettura aziendale e l'urbanistica di Enrico Mattei* (Bologna: Damiani, 2008).

<sup>89</sup> See Ottolini, 'Giovanni Pirelli', pp. 103–110, and Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 197–200.

<sup>90</sup> On the first event organised by the CDFF and on Joyce Lussu's role in it, see Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 199–204.

<sup>91</sup> Poet Vittorio Sereni, who will remain as a key figure on the fringes of this dissertation due to his marginal role in the mediation of anticolonialism and in the production on industrial literature, was among the first translators of African poets in Italian: see Vittorio Sereni, 'Poeti negri e malgasci', *Inventario*, 14 (1951), 138–141. This includes six poems by Léon-Gontran Damas, Étienne Léro, Jean Joseph Rabéarivélo, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Jacques Rabemananjara, from *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*, ed. by Léopold Sédar Senghor (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948). On Sereni's translations, see Graziano Benelli, *La negritudine in Italia: A. Césaire, L.-G. Damas, L. S. Senghor (1950–1994)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1995), pp. 12–16.

<sup>92</sup> On Italian publishing houses, see Gian Carlo Ferretti, *Storia dell'editoria letteraria in Italia 1945–2003* (Turin: Einaudi, 2004).

Milan, finally, was the more or less recognisable setting of many industrial novels. These novels document the transformations which had taken place, or were taking place, in the city and its surroundings. In *Tempi stretti*, for example, Milan and the industrial suburb of Sesto, also a communist stronghold, are presented almost as characters, which develop alongside human beings, figures of their restlessness and conflicts.<sup>93</sup> In Parise's *Il padrone*, the 'grande città' to which the protagonist moves functions as a counterpoint to 'la nostra città', his provincial hometown.<sup>94</sup> Although we cannot be sure that the metropolis mentioned is Milan, it is certain that Milan was a treasure trove of images and ideas for industrial writers, as well as the locus of an intellectual network.

Another pole of industrial Italy was Turin, with its mountain outpost of Ivrea, where Olivetti was based. Turin had a strong antifascist – and in part Jewish – cultural tradition. Many writers variously linked to industry, such as Natalia Ginzburg and Primo Levi, were based there, as well as the original nucleus of Einaudi.<sup>95</sup> This meant that fervent intellectual activity took place in Turin and a significant part of the cultural hegemony of the country was established there.<sup>96</sup>

Turin has been defined also a 'mono-industrial' city, dominated by the colossal presence of the automobile firm FIAT.<sup>97</sup> This deeply conditioned Turin's industrial and urban development. The power of attraction that FIAT exerted on migrants from southern Italy as well as on peasants from rural areas and its vigorously Fordist labour policies determined an escalation in social conflict which ultimately exploded into wide-scale protests. The most renowned of these took place in Turin's Piazza Statuto in July 1962 and was triggered by a conflict between unions.<sup>98</sup> The clashes between the protesters and the police led not only to the arrest of a wide group of factory workers, but also to 88 people being fired by FIAT. This episode of conflict, which reactivated the memory of political struggle in Turin after the Resistance, was inspirational for the theoreticians of 'operaismo': Raniero Panzieri, Mario Tronti, Romano Alquati, Dario Lanzardo, and Antonio Negri, among others, who in 1961 founded the journal *Quaderni rossi* and were in close contact with Milanese radical thinkers and militants such as Giovanni Pirelli and Franco Fortini. In a collective article commenting on the Piazza Statuto events, the focus of *Quaderni rossi*'s reflection is migrant workers, about whom the article says:

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<sup>93</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 160. See also Giorgio Manzini, *Una vita operaia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976).

<sup>94</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 835.

<sup>95</sup> Ginzburg's link to Olivetti has already been mentioned. On Primo Levi's relation to industry, see Antonello, *Il ménage*, pp. 77–123, and Zinato, *Letteratura*, pp. 68–73.

<sup>96</sup> See *I verbali del mercoledì: riunioni editoriali Einaudi, 1953–1963*, ed. by Tommaso Munari (Turin: Einaudi, 2011).

<sup>97</sup> Nadia Caruso, Elena Pedè, and Cristiana Rossignolo, 'The Reinvention of Turin's Image', *disP - The Planning Review*, 55.1 (2019), 6–17 (p. 8).

<sup>98</sup> See Giuseppe Berta, *Conflitto industriale e struttura d'impresa alla FIAT* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1998); Nicola Pizzolato, *Challenging Global Capitalism: Labor Migration, Radical Struggle, and Urban Change in Detroit and Turin* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 59–117.

Da una parte essi incontrano le difficoltà d’inserimento che la politica industriale pone loro abilmente, onde favorire i discorsi che il suo organo di stampa così spesso ripete [...], discorsi di tono razzista e colonialista che assieme alla lamentazione sulla presunta ‘inciviltà’ degli immigrati nei vari campi, esaltano l’accoglienza cortese e immeritata che loro offre la città, concludendo con un invito all’‘adattamento’ a livello del mitico operaio di buon senso, che veniva individuato, fino al momento degli scioperi, nel ‘bravo operaio Fiat’.<sup>99</sup>

The struggles of the migrant industrial working classes are identified as the avantgarde of a movement towards a communist state and the bourgeois revisitation of the myth of the ‘noble savage’ is strongly refused. It is even more interesting to read these lines from our perspective as twenty-first-century readers, as they seem to portray the current attitude of Italy towards migrant workers from the Global South.

In contrast to Turin, whose industry embodied Fordism and, at the same time, the more or less radical opposition to it, Ivrea – another hub of industrial anticolonialism – was the citadel of Olivetti’s communitarian reformism and unionism. Ivrea’s idyllic landscape, which had already been made part of a literary imagery by the poetry and prose of Guido Gozzano and Cesare Pavese, was deeply affected by Olivetti’s industrialisation.<sup>100</sup> Plants and housing were built as well as the factory library and cultural centre. A formerly peripheral rural town became a cultural hub as well as a commuting destination. As a result of this centrality in industrial history, Ivrea also became the setting, disguised to a greater or lesser extent, of some works of industrial literature. Volponi’s *Memoriale*, whilst never mentioning Ivrea explicitly, refers to the Canavese area (in which Ivrea is located) and to Turin. Similarly, Ottieri’s industrial diary *La linea gotica* refers to the Manichean trait of an industrial town elusively called ‘X’ – as in Volponi’s *Memoriale* – full of intellectuals, but from whom the workers are separated.<sup>101</sup>

In conclusion, therefore, it is evident how northern Italy’s urban and industrialised spaces constituted the centres in which reflections on both industrialisation and colonisation took shape and were reconceptualised in fictional form. However, Rome and the Italian ‘Souths’ and peripheries were equally important in the production of this web of discourse, as the following sections will demonstrate.

### 3.2 ROME

If northern Italy was the area from which industrialisation spread to the rest of the country, Rome as a political and administrative centre was equally significant for discourse on both industry and anticolonialism. The city underwent a lighter industrialisation than Milan in the 1950s and 1960s, but its

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<sup>99</sup> ‘Alcune osservazioni sui fatti di piazza Statuto’, *Cronache dei Quaderni rossi*, 1 (1962), 57–61 (p. 60).

<sup>100</sup> See Patrizia Bonifazio and Paolo Scrivano, *Olivetti Builds: Modern Architecture in Ivrea* (Milan: Skira, 2010).

<sup>101</sup> See Ottiero Ottieri, ‘La linea gotica: taccuino 1948–1958’, in Ottieri, *Opere*, pp. 227–453 (p. 404).

urban aspect was nonetheless heavily transformed due to a boom in construction, in response to migration as well as to its staging of the Olympic games in 1960.<sup>102</sup>

Rome was the place where nationwide decision-making happened, but also, in terms of the extra-parliamentary political–intellectual networks with which this dissertation engages, Rome was a significant hub for anticolonial ideas. It was there that the Comitato Anticoloniale Italiano (CAI), founded at the end of the 1950s and active throughout the first half of the 1960s, was based and operated. The CAI was an association which gathered together politicians, intellectuals, and academics from different sectors and areas in support of anticolonial movements.<sup>103</sup> The activities organised by the CAI were aimed mostly at fundraising to support decolonising struggles and to coordinate individual initiatives; for example, doctors who volunteered to work in decolonising countries, or collections of goods to be sent there. A remarkable example of an event organised by the CAI, which gives a sense of what took place within it, is the exhibition ‘Artisti italiani per il popolo algerino’, held in July 1962 at Libreria Einaudi in Rome by some of the most prominent Italian painters of the day, whose proceeds were intended to pay – directly or indirectly – for expenses in support of the Algerian struggle.<sup>104</sup>

As emerges from the letterheads in the CAI archive, writers Giorgio Bassani, Elio Vittorini, Carlo Levi, cultural organisers such as Alberto Carocci, politicians such as Ferruccio Parri and Paolo Vittorelli were part, among others, of the ‘consiglio direttivo’ (executive board) of the committee. Alberto Carocci appeared to act as a mediator between a network of writers, some of whom – including Alberto Moravia, Italo Calvino, Guido Piovene – were close to the CAI without being on its board. Giovanni Pirelli was in turn a mediator with the Milanese group; in particular it was through him and the writer Joyce Lussu that the CDFP in Milan developed, in partial communication with the CAI.<sup>105</sup> To understand the different approaches adopted by the two groups, it is interesting to refer to the stance that Giovanni Pirelli took in relation to the formation, at the end of 1962, of a new association sponsored and fostered by the CAI which was meant to offer support to the new-born Algerian State. In a letter from Pirelli to Alberto Carocci, the former explains the impossibility of adhering to the new association as a consequence of the ban that the Algerian government had imposed on the Communist Party. Pirelli condemns this act from his perspective of a ‘militante del movimento operaio di fronte alla messa fuori legge di una sua organizzazione’.<sup>106</sup> Again, what emerges from this letter, which resonates with other similar refusals by

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<sup>102</sup> On Rome’s post-war growth, see Michael Herzfeld, *Evicted from Eternity: The Restructuring of Modern Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>103</sup> The archive of the CAI is stored at the Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia (INSMLI) ‘Ferruccio Parri’ in Milan. I had the opportunity to spend a week there in July 2019.

<sup>104</sup> Among the painters involved were Renato Guttuso and Carlo Levi. See also Clara Amodeo, ‘Renato Guttuso e Giovanni Pirelli: un’amicizia per immagini’, in *Giovanni*, ed. by Scotti, pp. 133–154.

<sup>105</sup> On this, see Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 199.

<sup>106</sup> Giovanni Pirelli, unpublished letter to Alberto Carocci, Varese, 1 December 1962, fondo 01314, serie 1, fascicolo 3, carte Comitato Anticoloniale Italiano provenienti dall’archivio Fiap nazionale, stored at Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia ‘Ferruccio Parri’, Milan.

Calvino and Piovene, is Pirelli's interpretation of anticolonial struggles as in clear and necessary ideological continuity with working-class struggles, a position visibly echoed in the documents of the CDFF. In other words, to sum up in schematic terms the distinction between Milan and Rome, we can identify in Milan a city of radical anticolonialism and in Rome a more 'institutional' stance.

In terms of literary representations, finally, on the one hand Roman bourgeois neighbourhoods were the setting of novels and stories such as Alberto Moravia's; on the other, Rome's peripheral slums were central in Pier Paolo Pasolini's work.<sup>107</sup> In both cases, industry is kept out of focus and marginal, although there are industrial references, such as to the Ferrobedò factory in *Ragazzi di vita* or the industrial presences in *Una vita violenta*.<sup>108</sup> The opening of Ottieri's *La linea gotica* remarkably thematises the opposition between Rome and Milan and describes the author's positionality on the threshold between the two:

Una linea gotica, mentale, per me taglia a mezzo l'Italia. Ci vivo a cavallo. I dilemmi spirituali, dell'anima, si proiettano nella geografia. Una scelta interiore si camuffa da scelta di una città e non è nemmeno del tutto un camuffamento. Roma è il mio essere, Milano il mio dover essere. Sogno una terza città che le unisca.<sup>109</sup>

This passage is reinforced in the pages that follow by further considerations on Rome's connotation as the city of the past for Ottieri, linked to familiar traditions. In Paolo Volponi's *La macchina mondiale*, Rome is a destination of migration for all those 'contadini che erano andati ad arruolarsi nell'esercito degli schiavi',<sup>110</sup> among whom figure the protagonist Anteo and his wife Massimina.

### 3.3 SOUTH AND PERIPHERIES

In opposition to these urban centres, the peripheral South acts as a historical and narrative counterpoint. The discourse on the north-south divide in Italy, often conceived of and practised as a form of colonialism, was well established by the years at the core of this dissertation, starting from the very earliest years of the post-Risorgimento nation. After World War II, it was not only Gramsci's thinking on the 'questione meridionale' but also the narrative accounts of Carlo Levi and Rocco Scotellaro that made the question central to the public discourse.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See John David Rhodes, *Stupendous, Miserable City: Pasolini's Rome* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Victoria G. Tillson, 'A Nearly Invisible City: Rome in Alberto Moravia's 1950s Fiction', *Annali d'italianistica*, 28 (2010), 237–256.

<sup>108</sup> See Victoria G. Tillson, 'Rome's Modern Margins: The "Borgate" in Pasolini's *Una vita violenta*', *Romance Notes*, 48.3 (2008), 313–325.

<sup>109</sup> Ottieri, 'La linea', p. 229.

<sup>110</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 310.

<sup>111</sup> See *Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in One Country*, ed. by Jane Schneider (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998).

Between the 1950s and the 1960s, two processes took place simultaneously relating to both internal colonialism and industrialisation. Migration from the South to the North and from provincial, rural areas to urban centres accelerated rapidly.<sup>112</sup> This finds validation in industrial novels: for example, *La macchina mondiale* describes the migration of peasants from the Marche region to Rome; *Memoriale*, *Tempi stretti*, and *A proposito di una macchina* all have internal migrants among their characters.

In parallel, top-down industrialisation of the South and other rural areas began, implying the movement of northern managers, employees, and technicians to the South.<sup>113</sup> This is documented by Ottieri's *Donnarumma all'assalto* as well as by *La linea gotica*. Olivetti's case is representative of this tendency. Throughout the 1950s, as director of UNRRA-Casas – the joint Italian and American agency designed to improve housing for the homeless after World War II – Olivetti undertook an ambitious urban project in the area of Matera and in Pozzuoli (Naples). Matera had become renowned through the pages of Carlo Levi's account, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, as the emblem of the poverty of the South.<sup>114</sup> The attempts at the construction of a modern rurality there, which ended up being abandoned after Adriano Olivetti's death and the collapse of the Movimento Comunità, can be said to be part of a genuinely philanthropic modernisation project which nonetheless had a top-down controlled dimension. As part of the same project, which included bringing beauty and art to the South, the Olivetti plant in Pozzuoli was conceived as a modern structure to bring light to the environment of unemployment and poverty that affected southern Italy.<sup>115</sup> Again, this project prefigured a form of territorial and cultural 'conquest', which often implied a racialisation of the southerners, which, in his partly autobiographical *Donnarumma all'assalto*, Ottieri describes precisely in colonial terms (see Part Two, section 3.2 below).

It can be argued that next to this vertical colonisation by the North onto the South, a horizontal one existed, between social classes and cultures, by centres onto peripheries. It was industry which colonised whatever pre-existed it – namely, peasant cultures and ways of life. In this light, it should not be considered accidental that Carlo Levi, in *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, alludes to the direct association between internal colonisation, industrialisation, the class divide, and the race divide:

Quindici anni di fascismo avevano fatto dimenticare a tutti il problema meridionale; [...] non sapevano vederlo che in funzione a qualcosa d'altro, alle generiche finzioni mediatrici del partito o della classe, o magari della razza. Alcuni vedevano in esso un puro problema [...] di necessaria industrializzazione, di

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<sup>112</sup> See, for example, Nicola Pizzolato, "I Terroni in Città": Revisiting Southern Migrants' Militancy in Turin's "Hot Autumn", *Contemporary European History*, 21.4 (2012), 619–634.

<sup>113</sup> See Emanuele Felice and Amedeo Lepore, 'State Intervention and Economic Growth in Southern Italy: The Rise and Fall of the "Cassa per il Mezzogiorno" (1950–1986)', *Business History*, 59.3 (2017), 319–341.

<sup>114</sup> See Michele Tenzon, 'Rural Modernity in Post-War Southern Italy: The La Martella Village in Matera', *The Journal of Architecture*, 23.3 (2018), 498–522; Patrick McGauley, *Matera, 1945–1960: The History of a 'National Disgrace'* (Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2019).

<sup>115</sup> See *Olivetti 1908–1958*, ed. by Giorgio Soavi (Zurich: Ing. C. Olivetti & C., 1958), pp. 42–63; *Luigi Cosenza: la fabbrica Olivetti di Pozzuoli / The Olivetti Factory in Pozzuoli*, ed. by Giancarlo Cosenza (Naples: Clean, 2006).

colonizzazione interna, o si riferivano ai vecchi programmi socialisti ‘rifare l’Italia’. [...] La colonizzazione interna potrà avere dei discreti frutti materiali, ma tutta l’Italia, non solo il mezzogiorno, diventerebbe una colonia.<sup>116</sup>

Rethinking the rhetoric of internal colonialism in these terms, which admit a different axis of domination and hegemony from simply the north–south line, allows for a better understanding of the economic, social, and cultural phenomena that could be observed across Italy between the 1950s and 1960s. An example of this is the constitution in 1951 of the Ente per la Colonizzazione del Delta Padano, which was supposed to create the conditions for the agrarian reformation and redistribution of land in north-eastern Italy, as well as for industrialisation. This is of course only one example of how industrialisation in non-southern peripheral areas took the shape of a ‘colonial’ action. The creation of big industrial centres turned the residual spaces into peripheries, which became marginalised in public discourse.<sup>117</sup>

What emerges from this excursus on the geographic dimension of the socio-economic context of this dissertation is that – at many levels and in different areas – industrial and colonial questions appeared to be linked and similarly conceptualised. How this intersection was particularly evident in the time period selected as the temporal focus of this dissertation will be explored in the following section.

#### 4. WHEN

The chronological boundaries of this dissertation, from 1955 to 1965, are marked by both (geo)political and literary events which transformed the two fields under examination: industrial writing and anticolonialism. Literary and historical considerations contributed in equal measure to the choice of this specific period. 1955 is not only, as already discussed, the year in which the Bandung Conference took place, giving birth to the new collective subject and political actor of the Third World and bolstering the wave of anticolonial independence movements. It is also, according to Paul Ginsborg, ‘a watershed in Italian labour history’, due to the defeat of the CGIL union in the elections of the internal commission at FIAT and the changes in labour and union practices which followed.<sup>118</sup> 1955 also saw the PSI design a new strategy of collaboration with the DC.<sup>119</sup> The Olivetti factory in Pozzuoli, which represented a significant moment in the articulation of an Italian conceptual link between industrial and allegorically

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<sup>116</sup> Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Turin: Einaudi, 2014), p. 220.

<sup>117</sup> See David Forgacs, *Italy’s Margins: Social Exclusion and Nation Formation Since 1861* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>118</sup> Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943–1988* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 192. A ‘commissione interna’ (‘internal commission’) is the democratic, elected body which represents the interests of workers within a company.

<sup>119</sup> See Ginsborg, *A History*, p. 194.

colonial dimensions, was also inaugurated in 1955. Vasco Pratolini's proto-industrial novel *Metello*, from which an intense debate on realism arose, was also published in 1955.<sup>120</sup> The stigmatisation of Pratolini's *Metello* seemed to call and make space for a new literary trend, which had in the construction of conflictual (often self-reflective) industrial characters and in the experimentation of new – industrial – modes of writing its central purpose.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, in 1955, precisely in order to overcome the consolatory tones of Neorealism and to open the field to experiments with new literary forms, the literary journal *Officina* was created, which involved Pier Paolo Pasolini, Francesco Leonetti, and Roberto Roversi – among others – in a search for new poetic modes.<sup>122</sup>

1955, therefore, can be interpreted as a turning point in both literary and historical terms, from the Italy which had emerged from World War II thanks to American support and its Resistance values, to a new, ambivalent, and more reflective Italy, open to experimentation in art and to receiving and producing new hegemonies in politics.

The years which followed 1955 were characterised by events which further destabilised the polarised international arena and Italy's internal context: the Hungarian uprising and the revelations following the death of Stalin, which challenged the Soviet consensus in Italy; the Algerian War; Italy's 'economic miracle' and industrial conflict. In the literary sphere, experiments in industrial literature developed. Moreover, in 1963, but with roots going back at least to *Il Verri* in the late 1950s and the *Novissimi* anthology of 1961, the emergence of the neo-avantgarde movement of Gruppo 63 marked a new strand in Italian literature which would further disrupt realist aesthetics and poetics.<sup>123</sup>

At the other end of this dissertation's temporal spectrum is 1965. On the scale of global historical events linked to anticolonialism, this is the year in which the US enhanced its military and ideological commitment in the Vietnam War. This led to a consequential boost in opposition to the war and protest began to spread across different continents.<sup>124</sup> The new focus on the US as a neocolonial or neo-imperialist power resulted in the development of new forms of anticolonialism, which had as their target US economic imperialism and its internal racial and external neocolonial policies.<sup>125</sup> After 1965, anticolonialism would therefore become more of a mass cultural and political movement, especially among the young, exploding into the protests of 1968 and 1969, once again in close and complex

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<sup>120</sup> See Vasco Pratolini, *Metello* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1955).

<sup>121</sup> See Franco Fortini, 'Il Metellismo', in Franco Fortini, *Dieci inverni: 1947–1957: contributi ad un discorso socialista*, ed. by Sabatino Peluso (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2018), pp. 119–124.

<sup>122</sup> See Ferretti, 'Officina'.

<sup>123</sup> See *I Novissimi: poesie per gli anni '60*, ed. by Alfredo Giuliani (Milan: Rusconi e Paolazzi, 1961), and Renato Barilli, *La neoavanguardia italiana: dalla nascita del 'Verri' alla fine di 'Quindici'* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1995).

<sup>124</sup> See Salar Mohandesi, 'From Anti-Imperialism to Human Rights: The Vietnam War and Radical Internationalism in the 1960s and 1970s' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2017).

<sup>125</sup> See Marica Tolomelli, 'Dall'anticolonialismo all'anti-imperialismo yankee nei movimenti terzomondisti di fine anni Sessanta', *Storicamente*, 12 (2016), 1–33. See also Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956–1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

correlation with issues of industrial labour but with a marked difference in scale and nature. In Italy, 1965 indeed marked the beginning of the University reformation process, which would lead to the birth of new politicised subjects: a mass of university students. In literary terms and with reference to the Italian context, 1965 was also the year in which the last and most atypical industrial novels of this phase were published: Volponi's *La macchina mondiale*, Parise's *Il padrone*, and Pirelli's *A proposito di una macchina*. *La macchina mondiale* was awarded the prestigious Premio Strega in the same year. The year therefore marks the spontaneous exhaustion of the primary literary phenomenon which would nonetheless leave deep traces and evolve into different secondary forms in subsequent years.

Questions of labour and of the legacies of colonialism have continued to work their way through the Italian literary field from the 1950s to the present. But the period from 1955 to 1965 has been chosen here as the era which most clearly and organically shows the creation and early development of conceptual and historical intersections between industrial and anticolonial discourse. This period also contains the parabola of the ascent and decline of the Italian industrial literature of the 'economic miracle'. Finally, as we have seen and will see, it is in those same years that the major texts of anticolonialism were first translated into Italian.

## 5. WHY AND HOW

As will by now be clear, one of the aims of this thesis is to reread Italian industrial literature of the 1950s and 1960s within the transnational framework of a dialectical decolonisation process going on at different levels on the global scale in those same years. Such a reframing allows us to gain a more layered understanding of what was at stake in this literary period, in the tropes, narrative techniques, and language employed by industrial writers. The result is a deprovincialisation of Italian industrial literature and a disruption of its settled place in modern Italian literary history.

Conversely, this dissertation also aims to 'provincialise' the Italian reception and production of anticolonial discourse.<sup>126</sup> Marxist industrial writers and intellectuals, with their problematic, unstable, and intersectional positionality in between the working classes and industrial management, could find in Fanon's portrait of the colonised intellectual a plausible mirror of their own condition, in relation to an industrial power which, in their view, had colonial traits and ended up racialising social differences. Moreover, they often read colonialism as a direct product of capitalism, just like industrialisation, therefore establishing an analogical link between their own situation and colonial countries. Italian

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<sup>126</sup> 'Provincialisation' is understood here in the sense employed by Paolo Capuzzo and Sandro Mezzadra, 'Provincializing the Italian Reading of Gramsci', in *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, ed. by Neelam Srivastava and Baidik Bhattacharya (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 34–54.

industrial companies often embraced anticolonialism, more or less genuinely, as a geopolitical strategy in a position between first-world capitalism and third-world sites and markets.

In the previous sections of this Introduction, the historical and geographical coordinates which frame the ‘object’ of this dissertation have been delineated. In order to define the deeper motives that drive this research – and in consideration of the special attention it gives to subjectivity – I will now point to my own positionality as a researcher in the field of contemporary Italian studies.

As is well known, the 1990s and – even more so – the 2000s have been years in which a migration literature in Italy has started to be produced and published more systematically and consistently.<sup>127</sup> This has resulted in a transnationalisation of Italian literature and – as a consequence – of Italian Studies.<sup>128</sup> Recent years have also witnessed the publication of volumes and articles on the intertwined questions of Italian colonialism and anticolonialism, migrations, racism, and antiracism, as well as on Postcolonial Studies in Italy, which ultimately respond to the urgent imperative of ‘decolonising’ the curriculum as well as the research field.<sup>129</sup> Postcolonial and Subaltern categories have been employed as fruitful interpretative tools by scholars who have reread entire genres of Italian literature looking for traces of memory – or oblivion and blocking – of the Italian and European colonial and anticolonial experience.<sup>130</sup> Postcolonial Studies have often intersected with Gender Studies and Migration Studies, to form a constellation of critical points of view endowed with different, often complementary methodological lenses.<sup>131</sup>

Scholarly interest in industrial literature and, more generally, literature of labour has also been affected by this new transnational perspective. In 2018, to give just one example, the Observatoire Européen des Récits du Travail (OBERT) was founded by a group of researchers based in the CAER

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<sup>127</sup> See, in the first instance, Jennifer Burns, *Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013).

<sup>128</sup> This transnationalisation cannot be mapped here, but it is emblematic that, a few months before the completion of this dissertation, such a trend was marked by the publication of an edited volume entirely devoted to the transnationalisation of Italian Studies: *Transnational Italian Studies*, ed. by Charles Burdett and Loredana Polezzi (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), the culmination of a major research project (<<https://www.transnationalmodernlanguages.ac.uk/>> [accessed 10 February 2021]).

<sup>129</sup> Some further representative cases of this kind of academic publications include: *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory*, ed. by Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005); *Italian Colonialism*, ed. by Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); *Colonial and Postcolonial Italy*, ed. by Fabrizio De Donno and Neelam Srivastava (= *Interventions*, 8.3 (2006)); Sandro Mezzadra, *La condizione postcoloniale: storia e politica nel presente globale* (Verona: Ombre corte, 2008); *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, ed. by Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); *Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe: Critics, Artists, Movements and Their Publics*, ed. by Sandra Ponzanesi and Adriano José Hated (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

<sup>130</sup> See, as exemplary cases all concerning travel literature, Giuliana Benvenuti, *Il viaggiatore come autore: l'India nella letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2008); Barbara Spackman, *Accidental Orientalists: Modern Italian Travellers in Ottoman Lands* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017).

<sup>131</sup> See, among others, Sandra Ponzanesi, *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture: Contemporary Women Writers of the Indian and Afro-Italian Diaspora* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); Ricciarda Ricorda, ‘Scrittrici della migrazione in Italia’, in *Donne al caleidoscopio: la riscrittura dell'identità femminile nei testi dell'immigrazione femminile tra l'Italia, le Americhe e l'Australia*, ed. by Silvana Serafin (Udine: Forum, 2017), pp. 23–31.

(Centre Aixois d'Études Romanes) in Aix-en-Provence.<sup>132</sup> This has subsequently led to the organisation of events and editorial initiatives aimed at establishing a dialogue between the literature of labour produced in different countries and this included industrial literature.<sup>133</sup>

This dissertation has been written from this transnational perspective, in a transnational context, across Italy and the UK – with some fruitful contacts also with France and the US.<sup>134</sup> Certain publications, which embrace this transnational perspective from varying disciplinary points of view, have been inspiring and essential sources and tools for my own work. In particular, I would mention again in this context Neelam Srivastava's books and articles on Italian colonialism and anticolonialism, Mariamargherita Scotti's archival and biographic research on Giovanni Pirelli, Tullio Ottolini's research into Italian third-worldism, Alessandro Portelli's studies on the relations between Italian and African American cultures, Charles Leavitt's work on 'impegno nero', Nicola Pizzolato's research into transnational labour activism between Italy and the US, Luca Peretti's observations on ENI's anticolonialism, and Gaia Giuliani, Valeria Deplano, and Silvana Patriarca's considerations on Italian racism and antiracism.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, this dissertation has drawn upon Emanuele Zinato's and Pierpaolo Antonello's reflections on what was at stake in Italian industrial literature, and on Tiziano Toracca's contributions on Neomodernism as a critical category helpful for accounting for some works of literature produced between the collapse of Neorealism and the affirmation of Postmodernism in Italy.<sup>136</sup> Without these scholarly works, I would not have been equipped to ask myself the questions that have propelled my research: to what extent and why did Italian industrial milieux become interested in and intersect with anticolonialism between the 1950s and the 1960s? To what extent, how, and why did industrial writers and texts employ colonial keywords and tropes – and through which channels?

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<sup>132</sup> See <<https://caer.univ-amu.fr/recherche/obert/>> [accessed 8 November 2020].

<sup>133</sup> See *Narrative contemporanee e lavoro in Europa*, ed. by Carlo Baghetti, Claudio Milanese, and Emanuele Zinato (= *Costellazioni*, 12 (2020)).

<sup>134</sup> I am indebted to the AIPI Summer School on representations of labour in Italian culture (Université Aix-Marseille, July 2017), organised by Carlo Baghetti, Gerardo Iandoli, Alessandro Ceteroni, and Romano Summa, and to Karen Pinkus (Cornell University) for the conversations we had during her stays in Cambridge in 2019 and 2020.

<sup>135</sup> See Srivastava, *Italian*; Scotti, *Vita*; Ottolini, 'Dal *soutien*'; Alessandro Portelli, 'The Problem of the Color Blind: Notes on the Discourse on Race in Italy', in *Crossroutes — The Meaning of Race for the 21st Century*, ed. by Paola Boi and Sabine Broeck (Hamburg and London: LIT, 2003), pp. 29–39; Charles L. Leavitt IV, 'Impegno nero: Italian Intellectuals and the African-American Struggle', *California Italian Studies*, 4.2 (2013) <<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6qn2w1cm>> [accessed 18 February 2021]; Nicola Pizzolato, 'Transnational Radicals: Labour Dissent and Political Activism in Detroit and Turin', *IRSH*, 56 (2011), 1–30; Peretti, 'Before'; *Il colore della nazione*, ed. by Gaia Giuliani (Florence: Le Monnier Università, 2015); Silvana Patriarca, "'Gli italiani non sono razzisti": costruzioni dell'italianità tra gli anni Cinquanta e il 1968', in *Il colore*, ed. by Giuliani, pp. 32–45; *Nation, 'Race', and Racisms in Twentieth-Century Italy*, ed. by Silvana Patriarca and Valeria Deplano (= *Modern Italy*, 23.4 (2018)).

<sup>136</sup> Zinato, *Letteratura*; Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*; Tiziano Toracca, 'Il neomodernismo italiano', in *Il modernismo italiano*, ed. by Massimiliano Tortora (Rome: Carocci, 2018), pp. 211–229.

This dissertation both benefits from this scholarly work and seeks to contribute new perspectives to it, by looking at multidirectional links between Italian industrial writing and anticolonialism.<sup>137</sup> Its subject is therefore itself a relation – historical, conceptual, allegorical – between different authors, discourses, and sets of texts, and the new field of study it configures has a cross-border unstable status, across different media (journals and books), genres (essays, fictional prose, and poetry), and disciplines (intellectual history and literary criticism).

The transmedial, transgeneric, and transdisciplinary character of this research, as well as the intrinsically ‘relational’ dimension of its subject, pose some methodological questions. Firstly: can journals and books be approached with the same methodological tools? Or do journals need to be tackled with the specific instruments of the recently-born ‘Periodical Studies’?<sup>138</sup> Secondly: can heterogeneous genres such as essays, fictional prose, and poetry be read through the same critical lenses? Furthermore, will these lenses work on hybrid texts like many of those in the selected corpus, which result from cross-contamination between essay, novel, and poetry? Thirdly: since the object of study of this dissertation is situated between intellectual history and literary criticism, is it necessary to choose a disciplinary framework between the two?<sup>139</sup>

The experience of Postcolonial Studies embodies and overcomes this disciplinary ‘doubleness’ of questions related to colonialism, anticolonialism, and the subaltern, with a focus, notwithstanding, on the literary dimension of texts.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, in the course of this research, postcolonialism has represented a constant background point of reference for my work, for looking at representations of the Third World and anticolonial movements in Italian journals, and colonial and anticolonial tropes in Italian industrial literature.

Confronted with such a relational, ‘trans-frontier’ heterogeneity of sources and perspective, I asked myself what the materials I would analyse had in common, in order to define a rigorous and ‘economic’ method that was effectively transferrable from one field to another and which could help in the description of the nature and qualities of the relations I would explore.

The first trait shared by the documents at the core of this dissertation is – quite obviously – that they are all written texts, which means combinations of words that have been intentionally formalised and set down on a page.<sup>141</sup> These texts were written by clusters of authors bound by relations of co-belonging to the same journals, militant groups, firms, or intellectual milieux. These networks could be

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<sup>137</sup> See Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

<sup>138</sup> See Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, ‘The Rise of Periodical Studies’, *PMLA*, 121.2 (2006), 517–531.

<sup>139</sup> See Abigail Williams, ‘Literary and Intellectual History’, in *Palgrave Advances in Intellectual History*, ed. by Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 49–65.

<sup>140</sup> See Robert J. C. Young, *Empire, Colony, Postcolony* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2015), pp. 150–151, and Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), p. 141.

<sup>141</sup> See Mitchell Kaye, *Intention and Text: Towards an Intentionality of Literary Form* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008).

traced by looking at archival materials (such as the archive of the CAI at INSMI ‘Ferruccio Parri’ in Milan; Archivio Storico Olivetti in Ivrea; Archivio ENI in Castel Gandolfo), published exchanges of letters between authors,<sup>142</sup> and fundamental contributions in the field of Periodical Studies which reconstruct the relations at the base of single journals.<sup>143</sup> Mapping these networks represented a fundamental stage in understanding the multidirectional migration of words that took place between the anticolonial and critical industrial discourses and their Marxist and psychoanalytic matrices. These words migrated because someone made them move from one discourse to another, from one text to another. But ultimately, tracing the relations between authors was not enough to understand what was at stake in the conceptualisation of industry as a colony and of industrialisation as colonisation.

Since what the texts in the selected corpus ultimately have in common are words, clusters of words, and tropes, it became evident that it was on words – and tropes – that this dissertation should focus. The concordance method has been employed by scholars on single authors or texts to track the recurrence of certain words in texts – which with digital tools and editions has become easier than before.<sup>144</sup> Nevertheless, this method, which can be useful to first define a corpus of recurrent words, risks being purely quantitative and descriptive and is not the most effective way to additionally take into consideration the layered and contextual meaning of words that appear in clusters and in genealogical relation to each other. A more functional option was to look at these recurring words in clusters as ‘keywords’, as Raymond Williams understands this word in his foundational work *Keywords* and as has been employed subsequently by the ‘Keywords Project’ launched by the University of Pittsburgh and Jesus College, Cambridge.<sup>145</sup> Williams’s method has been employed since the 1970s, by its founder and his disciples, to create and interpret evolving corpora of words employed across different discourses. This attention to the transdiscursive dimension of words and to their historical layering made this method particularly appealing in the context of this research and as a transversal tool. As Williams puts it, ‘the very fact that it [the word ‘culture’] was important in two areas that are often thought of as separate posed

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<sup>142</sup> Some key examples are Fortini and Giudici, *Carteggio*, and Volponi, *Scrivo a te*.

<sup>143</sup> A key example is Silvia Cavalli’s work on *Il menabò*. On the epistemology of periodical studies, see Faye Hammill, Paul Hjartarson, and Hannah McGregor, ‘Introduction: Magazines and/as Media: Periodical Studies and the Question of Disciplinarity’, in *Magazines and/as Media: Periodical Studies and the Question of Disciplinarity* (= *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2015)), pp. iii–xiii.

<sup>144</sup> See, for example, Giuseppe Savoca and Antonio Di Silvestro, *Concordanza delle poesie di Leonardo Sinisgalli: concordanza, lista di frequenza, indici* (Florence: Olschki, 2008).

<sup>145</sup> See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. xxvii: ‘I began to see this experience as a problem of vocabulary [...]. What I had then to do was [...] to analyse [...] some of the issues and problems that were there inside the vocabulary, whether in single words or in habitual groupings. I called these words ‘keywords’ in two connected senses: they are significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought’. See also *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, ed. by Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), pp. xvii–xxvi, and <<https://keywords.pitt.edu>> [accessed 18 February 2021].

new questions and suggested new kinds of connection'.<sup>146</sup> Thus, a 'relational' aspect seems also to be at the foundation of this method, which has been adopted in order to shape and structure this dissertation.

Before defining and describing a list of interrelated keywords across anticolonial and critical industrial discourses, and before demonstrating how vividly present they were in industrial novels, it first had to be ascertained that anticolonial discourse was available and in circulation among critical industrial authors between the last years of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. To do so, it was necessary to look at the periodicals circulating in the milieu to which the authors under review belonged and to which they contributed, so as to understand to what extent and how colonial and anticolonial questions were addressed, and if, and how, they were linked to industrial matters. Indeed, periodicals were crucial at that time for the dissemination and discussion of new strands of thought, just as much as translations of single texts. A first set of keywords and tropes emerged from this analysis, which are evident in the titles of subsections of Part One of this dissertation; and what became clear was that, between industrial and colonial dimensions, historical as well as conceptual links existed. This makes it possible to argue that the keywords that the two discourses shared were not coincidentally similar, but were much more significantly intertwined than previously thought, also due to their common matrices of Marxism and psychoanalysis.

Having established this, a set of significant anticolonial–industrial keywords could be identified, working comparatively across discourses (see Part Two, section 2 below). However, a problem emerged when attention was shifted from theoretical and non-fictional works, in which these keywords were extensively employed, to narrative fictional texts (see Part Two, section 3 below). Although the industrial novels in the selected corpus all shared an essayistic component – entailing that pure narration was contaminated with essayistic passages – fictional texts often rendered those keywords as tropes. For example, it was not possible to find the words 'dehumanisation' or 'animalisation' in any novel under review, but many characters are likened to animals in ways that resonate with the colonial and industrial dehumanisation and bestialisation. One way of bypassing this problem would have been to work on what are traditionally defined as themes.<sup>147</sup> This possibility, which would have been fruitful for certain aspects and which has already been employed by scholars for the analysis of industrial texts, presents significant disadvantages. For example, if we take the word 'alienation' as a theme in industrial literature, we tend to interpret it as 'estrangement deriving from labour'. This is certainly valid, but we miss the multidimensionality of the word and its transdiscursive dimension.<sup>148</sup> The same happens with 'paternalism': interesting studies have been produced on this theme in industrial literature, but they do not consider it within the wider cluster of keywords to which it belongs, and therefore risk ignoring some

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<sup>146</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p. xxvi.

<sup>147</sup> See *La critica tematica oggi*, ed. by Romano Luperini (= *Allegoria*, 58 (2008)).

<sup>148</sup> On alienation as a transversal word in Italian critical industrial discourse, see *The Years*, ed. by Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia.

of the connotations the word had in those years, its cultural genealogy, and the broader horizon within which it was understood.<sup>149</sup> Thus, the thematic method had to be set aside and the methodological framework provided by Williams extended, such that it could admit the presence of what we can call ‘key-tropes’. This required – we might say – thinking ‘allegorically’, as the authors at the core of this dissertation did, in between at least two fields, two disciplines, two worlds.<sup>150</sup>

To quote Alessandro Portelli – words written in another related context of interstitial cultural condition, that of African American culture – the spirit of this research, in themes and method, is to explore what happens ‘non dentro gli spazi racchiusi dai confini, ma sulle frontiere perennemente rinegoziate, negate, scavalcate e rinnovate, che essi istituiscono [...] e le ambiguità che sorgono imprevedute dentro spazi che si volevano chiusi ed omogenei’.<sup>151</sup> The allegory of the colour line, which Portelli discusses in his book, is also employed by Franco Fortini – quite tellingly in the winter of 1956–1957 – to describe the uncomfortable positionality of Italian intellectuals of the left in relation to the working classes and the PCI:

All’intellettuale che fosse disposto a passare la ‘linea di colore’ ma non a rimanere nel fatuo cerchio di luce che il partito proiettava sui ‘compagni di strada’ non si aprivano che due possibilità; quella della propria specializzazione come operatore politico o sindacale [...] o l’accettazione di una ‘separazione’ nella categoria degli intellettuali di partito, forniti di doppia verità e identità.<sup>152</sup>

I hope readers will likewise embrace this epistemological and allegorical frontier spirit in engaging with the documents and interpretations proposed in this dissertation.

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<sup>149</sup> See, for example, Carlo Baghetti, ‘La morte del padre come costante narrativa della nuova letteratura del lavoro’, *Status Quaestionis*, 16 (2019), 13–34.

<sup>150</sup> In his essay on Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, ‘L’uomo dalla roncola’ (see Part One, section 3.2.2 below), Giovanni Giudici explicitly claimed that Fanon’s discourse on the colonised should be interpreted ‘come un’allegoria del mondo’ (Giudici, ‘L’uomo’, p. 4). On the heuristic power of allegory in modernity, see Romano Luperini, *L’allegoria del moderno: saggi sull’allegorismo come forma artistica del moderno e come metodo di conoscenza* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1990); Matthew Wilkens, ‘Toward a Benjaminian Theory of Allegory’, *New Literary History*, 37.2 (2006), 285–298; Matthew Walker, ‘Bakhtin and Gogol, or: The Question of Allegory and the Politics of Carnival’, *The Yearbook of Comparative Literature*, 61 (2015), 130–155. See also Leavitt, ‘Impegno’, pp. 12, 14, 17.

<sup>151</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *La linea del colore: saggi sulla cultura afroamericana* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 1994), p. 7.

<sup>152</sup> Franco Fortini, ‘Il senno di poi’, in Fortini, *Dieci*, pp. 27–51 (p. 31).

## PART ONE

### ANTICOLONIALISM, DECOLONISATION, AND THE THIRD WORLD IN ITALIAN PERIODICALS, 1955–1965

#### 1. A CLUSTER OF CASE STUDIES: INDUSTRIAL, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY JOURNALS

The importance of periodicals in the Italian cultural life of the twentieth century is now well-established and cannot be overlooked.<sup>1</sup> This statement is true with reference to many fields of cultural expression: literature, for which journals became true hubs for both theoretical reflection and for the publication and dissemination of narrative and poetic materials; but also other spheres of the cultural life of the country, such as politics and the arts.<sup>2</sup> In particular, in the post-war decades after the end of fascist censorship, journals flourished and intertwined politics and culture, art and social sciences, in the spirit of an ambitious reconstruction of a new humanity – and humanism.<sup>3</sup>

This Part focuses on the coverage of colonial, decolonial, and anticolonial questions in a cluster of journals which range from industrial company publications (*Il gatto selvatico*, *Pirelli*, and *Civiltà delle macchine*) to the political (*Comunità*, *Quaderni piacentini*, and *Quaderni rossi*) and the literary (*Officina*, *Il menabò*, and *Questo e altro*).<sup>4</sup> In particular, it will be shown how anticolonialism featured in the rhetoric and the cultural strategies of these journals and with what implications.

Two traits are shared by these journals, which account for their selection here. The first one is a link, from different angles, to industrial questions. This link is most obvious in the case of industrial company publications and manifests only slightly less immediately for political journals such as Adriano Olivetti's *Comunità*, and *Quaderni piacentini* and *Quaderni rossi*, both deeply committed to the struggles of the working classes. In terms of literary reviews, *Officina*, *Il menabò*, and *Questo e altro* are some of those in which industrial literature took shape and was discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Il secolo dei manifesti: programmi delle riviste del Novecento*, ed. by Giuseppe Lupo (Turin: Aragno, 2006); Elisabetta Mondello, *L'avventura delle riviste: periodici e giornali letterari del Novecento* (Rome: Robin, 2012); Luigi Weber, 'Percorsi tra le riviste del Novecento', in *Sistema*, ed. by Bortolotto and others, pp. 13–30.

<sup>2</sup> See Francesca Billiani and Daniela La Penna, 'National Dialogues and Transnational Exchanges Across Italian Periodical Culture, 1940–1960', in *National Dialogues*, ed. by Billiani, La Penna, and Milani, pp. 121–123, stemming from the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project 'Mapping Literary Space: Literary Journals, Publishing Firms and Intellectuals in Italy, 1940–1960' (2012–2015).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Franco Fortini, 'Che cosa è stato *Il Politecnico*', in Fortini, *Dieci*, pp. 55–74.

<sup>4</sup> I understand the terms 'decolonial' and 'decolonisation' here in their historical sense rather than in connection to theories of Decoloniality.

The second reason for these particular choices of texts is the involvement in all these periodicals of certain of the writers, intellectuals, and mediators forming the industrial–anticolonial network that was mapped in the Introduction. In particular, Franco Fortini and Giovanni Giudici wrote for most of these journals and were pivotal figures in that network.

With different aims and scopes – as well as different degrees of radicality and political engagement – these periodicals seem to form a constellation in which anticolonialism and third-worldism often become linked to industrial questions.

The use of the colonial pattern in industrial literature, which will be addressed in Part Two along with anticolonial–industrial keywords, does not descend directly or mechanically from the mere presence – however remarkable – of colonial and anticolonial reflections in the journals. However, Part One of this dissertation aims to show how in the same years in which industrial literature was produced and flourished, and around which a debate arose, a certain rhetoric of industrial colonisation (of third-world countries, of southern Italy, of generally ‘depressed’ areas) developed in journals of different kinds, which were read and contributed to by industrial writers and intellectuals.

## 2. INDUSTRIAL COMPANY PUBLICATIONS

The sector of Italian industrial company journals – often referred to as industrial ‘house organs’ – represents a relatively new area of study at the crossroads of marketing, intellectual history, graphic design, and literature.<sup>5</sup> Often born as bulletins destined for internal circulation within companies, in some cases these periodicals developed into a more articulate kind of publication that reached a wider readership. In the years of the Italian ‘economic miracle’, which saw – and in part required – a boost in the growth and promotion of the public image of industries, industrial house organs represented a key tool. This generally meant a change in content as well: many industrial house organs moved from covering mainly factory-related matters to addressing questions of broader relevance, related to economics, sociology, international politics, and culture. Such a contamination of ‘industrialist’ and cultural content was a peculiarity of Italian house organs, in comparison, for example, to American ones.<sup>6</sup> Although the boom in the foundation of this kind of journal in Italy coincided with a boom in the appeal that US models held for Italian economists, sociologists, engineers, and designers engaged in factories after World

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<sup>5</sup> See Charles Mann, *Editing for Industry: The Production of House Journals* (London: Heinemann, 1974). A catalogue of Italian industrial company publications – the *Repertorio della stampa aziendale italiana nel Novecento* – is available online thanks to the project directed by Giorgio Bigatti and Carlo Vinti mentioned in the Introduction: <[http://www.houseorgan.net/it/il-progetto\\_8.htm](http://www.houseorgan.net/it/il-progetto_8.htm)> [accessed 2 December 2020].

<sup>6</sup> See Carlo Vinti, ‘I rapporti con la cultura statunitense: mediazioni e conflitti nella comunicazione della grande impresa italiana’, in *Comunicare*, ed. by Bigatti and Vinti, pp. 107–134.

War II,<sup>7</sup> Italian house organs distinguished themselves from their American precedents in one particular way. While the American journals were typically under the direction of engineers or technicians, Italians placed at the head of this kind of journal intellectuals often coming from the world of the humanities.<sup>8</sup> The publication of such culturally engaged journals was initially directed at an ‘elevazione culturale [...] dei dipendenti’ but it also contributed to the prestige of the company and to its publicity.<sup>9</sup>

The ambiguous, hybrid status of house organs, on a threshold between industry, sociology, philosophy, politics, economics, literature, art, propaganda, and information, makes them particularly interesting as case studies for the dissemination of certain discourses in that Italian intellectual milieu situated precisely in a similarly liminal position between industry and culture.

As has been shown, scholarship on this kind of publication in Italy remains scarce and concentrates more on the graphic and marketing aspects than on the content and rhetorical specificity of the medium. To investigate the ways in which house organs contributed to the definition and dissemination of certain ideas in the Italian intellectual milieu proximal to industry, a double criterion is proposed here: on the one hand, the literary aspect, related to the involvement of more or less renowned writers and intellectuals in these projects and in the industrial sector; on the other, from a more historical aspect, the coverage of broadly colonial and anticolonial questions in these publications. By crossing between these two fields, it will be demonstrated that the colonial and anticolonial discourses were present and relevant in these publications in connection to industrial questions, and were circulating among intellectuals for just as long as (and often in parallel with) other discourses including the discussion on industrial literature.

To tackle these aspects, for reasons laid out in the Introduction, three representative journals have been chosen: *Il gatto selvatico*, *Pirelli*, and *Civiltà delle macchine*, produced by three of the most important industrial corporations in Italy: ENI, Pirelli, and Finmeccanica, respectively.

## 2.1 *IL GATTO SELVATICO*: OIL, CONQUEST, AND THE ‘FORMULA MATTEI’

ENI launched an internationally high-profile house organ in 1955: *Il gatto selvatico*.<sup>10</sup> ENI’s president, Enrico Mattei, in a ‘greeting’ that prefaces the first issue of the journal, describes this title as ‘immaginoso e al tempo stesso perfettamente aderente alla nostra attività’.<sup>11</sup> He goes on to explain that the term ‘wildcat’ – of which ‘gatto selvatico’ is a literal translation – was part of the jargon of oil drilling as

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<sup>7</sup> See Giuseppe Berta, *L’Italia delle fabbriche: la parabola dell’industrialismo nel Novecento* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2001), pp. 101–111.

<sup>8</sup> See Giorgio Bigatti, ‘Gli House Organs in Italia tra sperimentazione e ricerca del consenso’, *Doppiozero*, 16 March 2016 <<https://www.doppiozero.com/materiali/made-in/gli-house-organ-in-italia-tra-sperimentazione-e-ricerca-del-consenso>> [accessed 2 December 2020]

<sup>9</sup> Vinti, *Gli anni*, p. 269.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, *Il gatto selvatico*, 10 (1958), produced in Arabic.

<sup>11</sup> Enrico Mattei, ‘Saluto augurale alla rivista’, *Il gatto selvatico*, 1 (1955), 2.

established by American oilman Edwin Drake, and referred to the ‘exploratory well’.<sup>12</sup> This conveyed a sense of adventure, which indeed dominates as a theme in the journal, associated with the discovery and extraction of oil. No reference is made in Mattei’s greeting to the expression ‘wildcat strike’, which at least in English was already an established phrase at that time.<sup>13</sup>

Direction of the journal, which came out on a monthly basis, was assigned from the beginning to the poet Attilio Bertolucci. The style of the journal, in the words of Stefano Giovannuzzi, presupposed ‘un lavoro letterario inteso in senso tradizionale’.<sup>14</sup> This aspect of ‘traditionality’ is particularly evident if we compare *Il gatto selvatico* to more experimental publications, such as those founded and directed by the poet Leonardo Sinigalli, that is, *Pirelli* and *Civiltà delle macchine*.

The main topics covered by *Il gatto selvatico* were almost always connected – even if sometimes obliquely – with the main production of the company, which was, as mentioned above, fuel and energy more generally. Therefore, the periodical insisted mainly on the semantic field of movement, journeys, cars, as well as building up a certain epic of the discovery and extraction of hydrocarbons. The journal’s publication continued for eleven years (1955–1965). In 1963, Bertolucci was replaced as editor by Franco Briatico.<sup>15</sup>

What emerges throughout the years in *Il gatto selvatico* is an aesthetics as well as a rhetoric of oil. The main argument lying at the foundation of this rhetoric was that oil, and the industrialisation based upon it, coincided with economic development and therefore, in the capitalist view, with progress. The first implication of this was that the discovery and extraction of hydrocarbons would lead necessarily to industrialisation. What came next was that countries and areas with oil resources could be industrialised, turned into lively markets, and saved from poverty precisely through this oil-based industrialisation. This was thought to be true for many underdeveloped areas – both in the decolonising or decolonised countries and in first-world countries (socialist countries were not mentioned).

In an article that appeared in the first issue of *Il gatto selvatico* in 1955, the writer and scholar of German Nello Saito comments about the recent industrialisation of Mexico based on the discovery of massive oil fields:

Si capisce che l’industrializzazione procede nel paese con ritmo febbrile. È il ritmo della scoperta del petrolio, [...]. Il Messico, sostenuto dal suo sconfinato amor proprio, avanza con questo ritmo coloniale e di conquista: è divenuto l’entusiasta colonizzatore di se stesso.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See Elio Frescani, ‘Una rivista per tutti: *Il gatto selvatico* di Attilio Bertolucci nell’Eni di Enrico Mattei’, *Memoria e ricerca*, 51.1 (2016), 161–180 (pp. 165–166).

<sup>13</sup> See Alwin W. Goldner, *Wildcat Strike: A Study of an Unofficial Strike* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955).

<sup>14</sup> Stefano Giovannuzzi, *Invito alla lettura di Attilio Bertolucci* (Milan: Mursia, 1997), p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> See Marcello Colitti, *ENI: cronache dall’interno di un’azienda* (Milan: EGEA, 2008), pp. 124–125.

<sup>16</sup> Nello Saito, ‘Antico e nuovo sulle strade del Messico’, *Il gatto selvatico*, 1 (1955), 9.

In this passage, industrialisation is likened to a form of internal colonisation, directed from one sector of the economy to another. After rejecting historical colonialism, according to Saito, the proud new nation of Mexico endowed itself with industry, colonising itself. The analogy is further strengthened by the parallel between the colonial gold rush and this decolonial rush to black gold. This new form of colonisation is characterised by the rhythm of industry and industrialisation: it is feverish, bulimic, enthusiastic, like mechanised industry. Thus, this colonising industrialisation related to oil is not only about space but is also about time. Finally, nationalism is present: in Saito's view, the country is pushed forward by its self-respect; it moves forward driven by its pride. Such a task is then defined as enormous, incommensurable; everything in the article is designed to build up the hyperbolic and optimistic sense of an autonomous conquest.

A keyword in this discourse is, precisely, 'conquest'. Nello Saito returns to this notion in a later article concerning Captain James Cook, published again in *Il gatto selvatico* in February 1958, the subtitle of which reads: 'Nella seconda metà del Settecento audaci navigatori, approdando a terre sconosciute, facevano conquiste scientifiche aprendo insieme la via ai colonizzatori'.<sup>17</sup> Despite the wider audience the journal wanted to reach, it was, in the first instance, designed as a communication medium for an internal audience, made up of workers, cadres, clerks, and managers, belonging to different social strata, for whom this rhetoric of conquest and progress through science, 'tecnica', industry, and oil could work as a powerful ideological glue. This pattern of epic conquest was restated throughout the issues of the journal on several occasions each year. It also implied the instrumental mapping of new territories as well as the construction of streets.<sup>18</sup> Given the link between cartography and colonialism and the non-neutrality of most mapping acts, the following lines sound particularly revealing of what lay beneath Enrico Mattei and ENI's most genuinely philanthropic designs:<sup>19</sup>

Se fra qualche anno gli studenti delle scuole iraniane apprenderanno qualcosa di più sulla catena dei monti Zagros e sui suoi fieri abitanti, lo dovranno in gran parte ai nostri geologi dell'Agip Mineraria, i quali non si limitano a cercare il petrolio, ma tracciano precise carte topografiche, segnano il percorso di future strade e raccolgono una vasta documentazione sui popoli di questa selvaggia regione [...]. Dopo un mese di questa vita primitiva non si stenta a convincersi che non esiste attività più spericolata e romanzesca di quella del 'cercatore di petrolio'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Nello Saito, 'Gli straordinari viaggi del Capitano Cook', *Il gatto selvatico*, 2 (1958), 13–14.

<sup>18</sup> See *La via del petrolio*, dir. by Bernardo Bertolucci (Rai and ENI, 1967); Paola Bonifazio, 'United We Drill: ENI, Films and the Culture of Work', in *From 'Otium'*, ed. by Bouchard and Ferme, pp. 329–350; Luca Peretti, 'Between Auteurism and Sponsored Cinema: Joris Ivens, Bernardo Bertolucci and ENI', *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies*, 7.2 (2019), 199–217.

<sup>19</sup> See Raymond B. Craib, 'Cartography and Decolonization', in *Decolonizing the Map: Cartography from Colony to Nation*, ed. by James R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 11–71.

<sup>20</sup> Raffaele Spadini, 'Con i geologi della Mineraria sulle vette e tra le gole dell'Iran', *Il gatto selvatico*, 6 (1960), 7–9 (pp. 7–8).

ENI attributed to itself not only a leading – and paternalistically colonial – function in the economic development of these countries (in this specific case, Iran) but also a pedagogical as well as demiurgic role, bringing things into a state of existence through the mapping and actual building of new routes in a region non-neutrally defined as ‘savage’ and ‘primitive’. As a counterpoint to these savage areas, the bold pioneer and oil seeker faced the difficulties imposed by a harsh territory and became the bearer of civilisation.

In a 1964 article about Patagonia, poet Carlo Tarabbia comments on the economic changes occurring in that region after industrialisation by also alluding to the colonial past of the area:

Sterminati gli indios, i ‘negrieri’ della Patagonia [...] per far rendere le terre, fecero in modo che, a curare i loro allevamenti, giungessero dai paesi più poveri uomini costretti dalla fame ad accettare una vita da schiavi [...]. Il ‘peone’ anzi è radicalmente cambiato e quando il ciclo si chiude è già divenuto un operaio; un operaio come ve ne sono tanti da noi, un operaio che può crearsi una decorosa esistenza, tirando avanti con dignità e serenità senza mai disperare ed attendendo, come tutti noi, tempi sempre migliori.<sup>21</sup>

Industrialisation here is identified as a way out of poverty and an autonomous instrument of progress. The transition of *peones* from peasants to factory workers is seen as the equivalent of what happened to the population of southern Italy as well as other rural areas in the peninsula, where new plants of the northern industrial companies were established during and after the ‘economic miracle’. Tarabbia puts the emphasis on hope for the future; therefore, again, economic development coincides with progress in his discourse. This reflection proceeded in *Il gatto selvatico* in parallel with the description of the changes occurring in the economic and social structures of southern Italy.

Enrico Mattei, as ENI’s president, highlighted, on several occasions, the crucial power of oil in the economic development of Italy and elsewhere – and in the development of an Italian geopolitical interest in other countries. In such a discourse, ENI played the role of a salvific agent, which could pursue the project of economic growth on a local as well as a global scale. In this light, the dialectic between historical colonialism and ‘industrial’ colonialism can again be evoked. Mattei was very well known in the international arena for designing and pursuing policies which supported the emancipation of third-world countries from their former colonial dominators precisely through the development of an autonomous politics of energy. In this sense, Italy’s geopolitical role was pivotal: unlike France or Great Britain, for instance, Italy had lost its colonies long before and had held them far more briefly, and was therefore in the ‘right’ position to present itself as an uncompromised economic interlocutor which could offer

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<sup>21</sup> Carlo Tarabbia, ‘Patagonia: pecore, peones e petrolio’, *Il gatto selvatico*, 9 (1964), 18–19 (pp. 18–19).

expertise as well as technical means and capital to recently decolonised countries.<sup>22</sup> An article by Franco Piccinni, published in *Il gatto selvatico* in 1958, is illuminating in this sense:

E le popolazioni nere hanno compiuto un salto in avanti nel tempo [...]. Nella terra di tutti i contrasti e di tante sorprese si è creata una armonia meravigliosa tra l'aereo che sorvola il deserto ed il cammello che segue il suo secolare scalpiccio sulla sabbia [...]. La ruota [...] ci rende l'impazienza di queste genti di uscire da una cultura inferiore e di affermare la loro dignità umana.<sup>23</sup>

The 'leap forward' mentioned by Piccinni alludes to a temporal dimension of civilisation which is a frequent feature in colonial literature: temporalising spatial differences conveys the idea of European development being the only possible route.<sup>24</sup> The clichés of the contrasts of Africa and of the presumed harmony between animal and mechanical transport, between nature and civilisation, is still part of a 'neutral' colonial stereotype until we arrive at the mention of a 'cultura inferiore', which establishes a hierarchy between Western modernity and the rest of the world. The whole passage presents a polarisation between black and white and the expression 'lo sforzo dei bianchi', to which Piccinni resorts later in the article, seems to put forward a new version of the white man's burden.<sup>25</sup> The mystification appears even more evident in a comment by Amintore Fanfani on an agreement signed in 1958 by Morocco and ENI, which implied the concession of an area of oil research in Morocco to AGIP and the construction of an oil refinery there:

Ritengo che per eliminare le ragioni obiettive della crisi del mondo arabo sia necessaria una politica organica che abbia un carattere economico tale da contribuire al miglioramento delle condizioni di vita di quelle popolazioni.<sup>26</sup>

Here Fanfani insists on the benefits that Morocco could gain from the Italian presence there in the extracting and refining process and he presents the Italian energy policy in North Africa as a philanthropic, civilising project. This propaganda seems to inform the overall tone of the journal, even though Enrico Mattei was genuinely interested in the cause of anticolonialism.<sup>27</sup> The education and training of a class of African workers was presented as the element which differentiated Italian policy as implemented by ENI in Africa from that of other colonising countries. However, this ideology of 'help'

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<sup>22</sup> On the ambiguity of such a position, see Colitti, *ENI*, pp. 129–131.

<sup>23</sup> Franco Piccinni, 'In Africa la civiltà della ruota', *Il gatto selvatico*, 4 (1958), 15–17 (pp. 15–16). See also Maria Grazia Leopizzi, 'L'Africa parla con la voce dei suoi poeti', *Il gatto selvatico*, 5 (1960), 30–31.

<sup>24</sup> See Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Times: 'Primitives' and History-Writing in a Colonial Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> Piccinni, 'In Africa', p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> 'Tre giudizi sull'accordo', *Il gatto selvatico*, 8 (1958), 6.

<sup>27</sup> See Colitti, *ENI*, p. 82.

and philanthropy legitimised Italy's exploitation of African oil and gas resources and seemed to suppress the memory of Italian colonialism, by presenting Italy as geopolitically innocent in comparison to other countries with a more recent colonial experience. If a certain paternalism was still considered part of the European attitude towards non-Western countries as late as 1964 – that is, after the end of the Algerian war and when many stages of the decolonisation process were complete – ENI seemed well-intentioned in switching to a different paradigm:<sup>28</sup>

Proprio in quei Paesi dove negli ultimi dieci anni è salita impetuosa e irreversibile l'ondata del nazionalismo africano [...] governanti e popoli si sono rivolti, invece, con fiducia e speranza alla collaborazione con l'E.N.I. che introduce un rapporto di effettiva parità, di fraterno aiuto, nello sviluppo economico e nella promozione sociale dei Paesi di nuova indipendenza.<sup>29</sup>

The extract above, taken from an article about the opening of a new refinery in Bizerte (Tunisia), shows a shift from paternalism to a fraternal attitude. On the one hand, this marked ENI's adoption of Mattei's anticolonial voice even after his death in 1962; on the other, it reproduced the pattern of Europe 'helping out' newly independent countries while in fact exploiting their resources.

The journalist Bernardo Valli, when commenting on ENI's presence in new-born Ghana in 1963, reflects on the characteristics of the 'formula Mattei', that particular 'recipe' for effective and fruitful relations between Italy and third-world countries in relation to hydrocarbons elaborated and pursued by Enrico Mattei:

Il presidente Kwane Nkrumah [...] ha precisato con sincerità i motivi che hanno spinto il governo del Ghana a scegliere l'ENI [...] L'Ente italiano non è ammalato di neocolonialismo. Cioè agisce nei paesi del Terzo Mondo senza tentare di influenzare la vita politica delle rispettive nazioni [...]. Oggi le decine di ingegneri e geometri e operai specializzati che si sono [...] formati seguendo gli *stages* organizzati dall'ENI sono senza dubbio la prova migliore della sincerità della famosa 'formula Mattei'. Il neocolonialismo [...] consiste anche, e soprattutto, nel [...] nascondere agli africani la formula di quella moderna lampada d'Aladino che è la tecnica. E il non poter partecipare allo sfruttamento delle ricchezze del loro continente è uno dei 'complessi' più sentiti dalle classi dirigenti dei giovani paesi.<sup>30</sup>

Valli's article, while endorsing the 'formula Mattei', summarises many of the questions at stake in it: the risks of neocolonialism, the importance of training in ENI's policy, the non-neutrality of 'tecnica' and, finally, the set of psychological complexes attributed to colonised populations.

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<sup>28</sup> See Piero Sampieri, 'Il primo congresso arabo del petrolio', *Il gatto selvatico*, 5 (1959), 5–6 (p. 5).

<sup>29</sup> 'Significato di una inaugurazione', *Il gatto selvatico*, 1 (1964), 3–5 (p. 3).

<sup>30</sup> Bernardo Valli, 'L'ENI in Africa', *Il gatto selvatico*, 10 (1963), 5–6 (pp. 5–6).

This interest in the ‘depressed areas’ of the world which could be ‘saved’ and homogenised to first-world industrialism by the discovery and use of oil also projected itself onto southern Italy and gave place to the dynamics that characterise what has been defined as Italian ‘internal colonialism’.<sup>31</sup> As is well known, the South of Italy has always suffered from a geographical as well as an economic marginalisation. As with reference to North Africa, oil emerges from the pages of the journal as a salvific power for southern – or, more to the point, rural – Italy as well, and ENI is presented as the agent of this power which made the growth possible.

In 1958, Corrado Sofia, a Sicilian writer from the small town of Noto (Syracuse), sketches a portrait of his town insisting (perhaps with a note of sarcasm) precisely on the turning point represented by the discovery of oil in that area: ‘Di storia avrebbe da venderne, se la storia si potesse commerciare. Per fortuna adesso è stato trovato il petrolio e il morale di tutti, contadini e signori del circolo, sembra assai rianimato dalla grande scoperta’.<sup>32</sup> Noto is now a well-established tourist destination, which has built its economy on tourism and agriculture rather than industry. It is again Sofia who, writing about Sicily in 1959 in an issue of *Il gatto selvatico* almost entirely devoted to Sicily, comments on its status in colonial terms:

Se vogliamo riordinare le idee e scartare pregiudizi e luoghi comuni che corrono intorno alla nostra isola, tema sempre nebuloso [...] per tutti quelli che finora hanno considerato la Sicilia una mezza colonia, buona soltanto per coltivarvi gli aranci, dobbiamo riandare alla descrizione di quei giorni, di quelle case patrizie, dei signori che le abitavano, del loro parentado.<sup>33</sup>

Sofia is here reflecting on the success of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa’s novel on Sicily, *Il Gattopardo*.<sup>34</sup> Published in 1958, it quickly became a bestseller and an object of controversy on the left. In assessing the reasons for its success, Sofia mentions the necessity to look at this ‘colonial’ history of Sicily to really understand it.

Thus, *Il gatto selvatico*’s coverage of colonial and anticolonial questions and use of colonial tropes, beyond and within the Italian territory, is characterised by the construction and promotion of a rhetoric of oil and its salvific power, further linked to the salvific power of industry. Moreover, the adventurous and pioneering dimension contained in its title is associated with an epic of conquest of new territories, literally and metaphorically. Finally, ENI’s anticolonial propaganda can be read as instrumental to the

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<sup>31</sup> See *Italy’s ‘Southern Question’*, ed. by Schneider.

<sup>32</sup> Corrado Sofia, ‘Ritratto di Noto piccola città di Sicilia’, *Il gatto selvatico*, 10 (1958), 20–21 (p. 20).

<sup>33</sup> Corrado Sofia, ‘Idea della Sicilia’, *Il gatto selvatico*, 6 (1959), 8–10 (p. 10). See also Carlo Verri, ‘L’isola del *Gatto selvatico*: la Sicilia nella rivista dell’ENI (1955–1965)’, *Meridiana*, 98 (2020), 177–194.

<sup>34</sup> Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958).

pursuit of ENI's interests in the global economic and geopolitical arena, in relation to areas perceived as underdeveloped.

## 2.2 *PIRELLI*: PIONEERS, THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN, AND THE ITALIAN SOUTH

*Pirelli: rivista di informazione e di tecnica* was the house organ of the eponymous company from 1948 to 1972. The importance of Pirelli's industrial style and of its influence on other companies has been investigated by Carlo Vinti.<sup>35</sup> *Pirelli* is a most particular case in the context of this research as Giovanni Pirelli, one of the most important figures for the mediation and reception of the anticolonial discourse in Italy, was part of the company for family reasons before leaving it to embrace a career in socialism.<sup>36</sup> The company was founded in 1872 by Giovanni Pirelli's grandfather, Giovanni Battista Pirelli. Giovanni Pirelli worked within the family company until 1948, but even after that date he maintained a collaboration with the journal *Pirelli*, on which he wrote under the pseudonym Franco Fellini.

Between 1948 and 1953, editorship of the journal was held by the poet Leonardo Sinisgalli, who had already worked at Olivetti, before passing to Arrigo Castellani, director of the publicity office at Pirelli at that time.<sup>37</sup> This guaranteed a certain variety in content as well as a constant interest in the literary and graphic design aspects of the journal. This experimental, inter-artistic industrialist aspect, which gave great weight to images and colour and which – as in *Il gatto selvatico* – was often related to movement as a theme, did not prevent the review from covering a wide array of social questions.<sup>38</sup>

Among these broader interests, colonial and anticolonial questions did not receive the same attention they were accorded in *Il gatto selvatico* and yet they were treated in a very peculiar manner, related to the main interests of the journal.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the trope of the pioneer is present in *Pirelli* in reference to non-European countries: 'L'Africa cede: non è ancora uno scherzo dominarla, ma i costruttori, i tecnici, i piloti, questi pionieri della nostra era, ormai l'hanno in pugno'.<sup>39</sup> Cars are at the centre of this article, in which Africa is described, as a whole, in exotic terms. The same metaphor of the pioneer is reproduced elsewhere to comment on the 'touristification' of southern Italy:

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<sup>35</sup> Vinti, *Gli anni*.

<sup>36</sup> See Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 40–53.

<sup>37</sup> See Leonardo Sinisgalli, '1948–1952', *Pirelli*, 6 (1952), 8–9; Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, pp. 167–168. On Arrigo Castellani, see 'Arrigo Castellani', *Pirelli*, 1 (1969), 32–79.

<sup>38</sup> See Vinti, *Gli anni*, p. 284

<sup>39</sup> Pier Emilio Gennarini, 'L'Africa non è ancora uno scherzo ma sta per cedere alle macchine che forzano la mano al progresso', *Pirelli*, 2 (1951), 48–49 (p. 49).

Gli abitanti dei borghi residenziali approntati dall'Ente di bonifica sull'altipiano silano sono ancora dei pionieri, ma fra non molti anni la montagna calabrese che era inospite e selvatica sarà una tra le mete ambite dal turismo.<sup>40</sup>

The assimilation of southern Italy to third-world countries as underdeveloped or depressed areas on the basis that they were not industrialised is something that links *Pirelli* to *Il gatto selvatico*. As a conclusion to his study on industrialisation in southern Italy, which appeared across six issues of *Pirelli*, the historian Guido Macera claims, after mentioning a whole set of underdeveloped areas, that:

Il Mezzogiorno si presenta come il caso più singolare di zona depressa [...]. Anche in questo settore c'è un caso limite ed è rappresentato dalla Sardegna, non solo per la desolante limitatezza dello sviluppo stradale [...], come se la Sardegna non fosse parte dell'unica comunità nazionale. E questo in termini economici non può significare altro che la condanna a una vera condizione coloniale.<sup>41</sup>

Again, the importance of cartography; again, the 'marginalised' territorial dimension implying uneven economic development; and, again, a colonial analogy employed as the most effective way to present a critique of the relationships between the industrial, the developed, the centre, and its peripheries.

The anticolonialism – however instrumental – that informed many pages of *Il gatto selvatico* is not present in *Pirelli*. The decolonisation process is here alluded to only as a troubling spectre. In an article in 1958, writer and literary critic Giansiro Ferrata comments hesitantly on Algeria: 'Ci si astiene volentieri dal ricordare, in una sede come questa, gli episodi della guerra che continua laggiù dal 1954'.<sup>42</sup> The violence of the Algerian conflict is blocked out of the narration due to the specificity of the 'sede' in which the article is published. However, Ferrata does not hold back in his description of the pioneer horizon offered by the new oil discoveries in the country:

Per fortuna i film romanzeschi non traboccano sempre di sangue. Un altro liquido denso e prezioso essi amano evocare per noi, il petrolio, e l'Algeria ne è ormai tutta pervasa. [...] In varie altre visite ritrovai quell'umore da pionieri che mi aveva sorpreso agli inizi dell'esperienza algerina, sorpreso per mia colpa, quasi non avessi immaginato possibile un fervore d'altre grandi passioni durante la guerra. Credo che proprio la vicinanza, in questo caso, all'Europa occidentale dia la migliore spiegazione dell'orgoglio, dell'entusiasmo, dell'accesa vitalità che si notano oggi, fra i tecnici del petrolio sahariano. Gli orizzonti lontani esaltavano, una volta, il pioniere. [...] Oltre agli ingegneri, ai funzionari, ai tecnici, anche gli operai venuti dall'Europa o

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<sup>40</sup> Franco Vegliani, 'Bonifica in Sila: viaggio tra i pionieri', *Pirelli*, 5 (1956), 52–55 (p. 52).

<sup>41</sup> Guido Macera, 'Industrializzazione del Mezzogiorno', *Pirelli*, 1 (1956), 60–67 (p. 63).

<sup>42</sup> Giansiro Ferrata, 'Il tuareg petroliere', *Pirelli*, 4 (1958), 45–47 and 73 (p. 45).

dall’Africa costiera si adattano al clima sahariano. Ma occorre, su un piano di massa, formare maestranze ‘indigene’.<sup>43</sup>

Blood is juxtaposed with oil: the two liquids are in fact interrelated. Ferrata’s seemingly optimistic view – which appears to be informed by the hopeful spirit of Pirelli’s capitalism – seems to exclude conflict while in fact reticently evoking it. The epic rhetoric of oil, so characteristic of *Il gatto selvatico*, with a stress again on the training of ‘natives’, is recognised and employed by Ferrata but his allusion to the Algerian conflict gives a sense of ‘uncanniness’ to these lines.

Giovanni Pirelli, for his part, moved in a similar direction. In his attitude to bottom-up history, the radical experience of the war was central as a moment of total expression of the human being. Keeping this in mind, it is possible to read a reportage from Egypt written by Giovanni Pirelli/Franco Fellini for a *Pirelli* issue of 1959 with reference to the non-conflictual overall stance of the journal. Pirelli, while depicting Egypt quite neutrally, evokes the spectre of colonial violence:

Siedo, quasi affondo nel terreno soffice, tra filari di fave lambiti dall’acque del fiume. Le stelle si spengono, a occidente discende opaca la luna [...]. Alle mie spalle si delinea una muraglia striata di feritoie e in più punti sbrecciata. Ecco: sono questi i bastioni di Omdurman. Qui gli uomini di Abdullahi, schierati in disperata difesa, furono falciati dal fuoco incrociato delle armi di Kitchener e massacrati a migliaia con le donne e i bambini.<sup>44</sup>

The Egyptian landscape enchants Pirelli, who nonetheless does not abandon himself to contemplation but rather recalls the historical memory of the place he is visiting. The realm of History violently enters Nature, the idyll is broken. The mention of Kitchener in this context, however brief, proves telling if we consider that this reportage was published in the context of *Pirelli’s* silence on colonialism and decolonisation. In particular, it is interesting to note the form in which this silence was broken one year later by an article by Alberto Pirelli (Giovanni’s father and president of the company until 1965) on the ‘awakening’ of Africa and Asia:

Ma da parte loro i Paesi che sono stati i grandi colonizzatori del diciannovesimo secolo devono pur accettare il fatto che quel periodo storico è chiuso, che le parole di Kipling, il poeta dell’imperialismo inglese: ‘L’uomo bianco deve portare il fardello del colonialismo’ sembrano oggi quasi un anacronismo, anche se si ha il torto

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<sup>43</sup> Ferrata, ‘Il tuareg’, pp. 45–46 and 73.

<sup>44</sup> Franco Fellini, ‘Taccuino egiziano: dove il Nilo è l’unica strada’, *Pirelli*, 1 (1959), 37–45 (p. 37). See also Franco Fellini, ‘Il messaggio del nano Seneb’, *Pirelli*, 2 (1959), 65–71. The trip to Egypt which constitutes the subject of this reportage was undertaken by Pirelli with the painter Renato Guttuso, among others, in December 1958 and January 1959. Guttuso’s drawings were published in *Pirelli* along with Pirelli’s texts. Some interesting travel notes by Pirelli have been published in *Giovanni*, ed. by Scotti, pp. 199–212.

da parte di molti di non riconoscere che il colonialismo ha rappresentato, sotto molti aspetti, una preparazione necessaria agli attuali sviluppi. Quest'ultimo fatto dovrà essere ammesso dagli stessi popoli che oggi affermano i loro nuovi diritti, anche se ben a ragione reagiscono contro certi perduranti eccessi e contro i gravi torti di cui in alcuni casi sono le vittime.<sup>45</sup>

Even while rejecting the ideology of colonialism, Alberto Pirelli does not fail to underline its benefits, or necessity, for the countries that had undergone colonial regimes. Moreover, later in the piece, he claims that one of the contributions that Western countries could give to underdeveloped or recently decolonised countries 'consiste nel trasmettere a questi Paesi l'esperienza acquisita nel campo della tecnica industriale e anche in quello delle tecniche amministrative – private e di governo – e dell'assistenza sociale'.<sup>46</sup> This was equally justified before the readers by the paternalist ideology according to which the Western world had to help the 'underdeveloped' countries – and areas – through 'tecnica' while exploiting their resources, labour, and markets. This applied to southern Italy as well:

Chi come me è nato in quel vecchio mondo e ci ha vissuto per lunghi anni e ne ha visto il lento risveglio [...] non può provare che grande gioia di quel poco che è già avvenuto e di quello che continuamente avviene laggiù. Il forestiero, diciamo un milanese o un torinese, che capiti per la prima volta in quella terra, rimane trasecolato e non esita a dire che quello è un mondo assurdo e primitivo, e spesso si rifiuta di capirlo [...]. Tutto questo sembrerebbe impossibile, da paesi d'Africa. [...] La civiltà, diciamola europea, penetra dovunque e l'uomo, anche il più duro, incomincia a prendere una chiara visione della vita e del mondo.<sup>47</sup>

Once again, the encounter between industry and traditionally agricultural areas is described in terms of a clash between different civilisations. The image of a 'vecchio mondo', which recalls the Americas before colonisation, looks – in the eyes of a northern newcomer – primitive: again, difference in space is temporalised, in the idea of progress and progression developing in space as well as time. Different civilisations are juxtaposed not only geographically but on the temporal axis as well.

*Pirelli's* coverage of colonial questions was not as systematic as *Il gatto selvatico's* because their interests were, of course, different. However, it is interesting to observe that they shared a certain 'pioneer' rhetoric and the rhetorical primitivisation of rural areas.

### 2.3 CIVILTÀ DELLE MACCHINE: OPTIMISM, 'TECNICA', AND ITS COLONISING POWER

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<sup>45</sup> Alberto Pirelli, 'Considerazioni sul risveglio dell'Asia e dell'Africa', *Pirelli*, 2 (1960), 28–31 (p. 29).

<sup>46</sup> Pirelli, 'Considerazioni', p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Saverio Strati, 'Paesi sullo Jonio', *Pirelli*, 5 (1960), 78–83 (pp. 79–83).

Financed by Finmeccanica, *Civiltà delle macchine* was founded in 1953 by Leonardo Sinisgalli from an initiative by Giuseppe Luraghi, general president of the company from 1951.<sup>48</sup> The project was to give birth to a review that aimed to integrate science and the humanities with an optimistic spirit.<sup>49</sup> Industrial civilisation was exalted and glorified, at least for the duration of Sinisgalli's editorship, which ended in 1958. In that year, *Civiltà delle macchine* became a possession of Iri (Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale) and its editorship passed over to journalist Francesco d'Arcais until 1979, when the journal stopped being published.<sup>50</sup> An epic of the machine was patiently built, issue by issue, with the contribution of writers and poets such as Giuseppe Ungaretti, Carlo Emilio Gadda, and Alberto Moravia, among others. Even the writings of non-professional writers were informed by this tone. As the economist Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni writes, with more or less conscious decasyllabic, anapestic, chiasmic rhythm:

Impensati orizzonti si schiudono, si prospettano nuove aperture. È l'avvio alla prima industrializzazione. L'officina si avvicina ai campi. Ai pagliai già si alternano ciminiere. L'antico dissidio città-campagna va placandosi in feconda comprensione. Nasce l'alba del tempo nuovo.<sup>51</sup>

This epic was only occasionally nuanced, at least in the early years, by less enthusiastic contributions. An example is Franco Fortini's poem 'Officina' (1949), where we read: 'perfida officina | di disordine e cenere | di malattia e piaghe'.<sup>52</sup>

In this enthusiastic framework, not much room remained for conflict, at least until the change in the journal's direction. In an article about India by journalist Lamberti Sorrentino, which dates back to 1959, he reports the opinion of an Indian colleague that:

'Sopravvive in voi un pregiudizio di razza analogo al pregiudizio di classe. Sembra insuperabile, la barriera tra i bianchi e i colorati, esattamente come sembrava impossibile ai nobili di prima della rivoluzione francese convivere con i non nobili, con i servi della gleba. In due o tre generazioni sono diventati uguali e molti nobili oggi dipendono dai discendenti degli ex-servi della gleba'. Lo disse con altre parole, meno crude. Ma la sostanza è questa.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, pp. 167–172, and Pablo Rossi Doria, 'Giuseppe Eugenio Luraghi e Giovanni Pirelli, due amici tra vocazioni e scelte di vita', in *Giovanni*, ed. by Scotti, pp. 119–131.

<sup>49</sup> See Duccio Tongiorgi, 'Letteratura e politica culturale delle aziende negli anni Cinquanta: note su *Civiltà delle macchine*', *Rivista di letteratura italiana*, 1-2 (1992), 193–225 (p. 199), and Vinti, *Gli anni*, p. 277.

<sup>50</sup> On this transition, see Antonello, *Contro il materialismo*, p. 171.

<sup>51</sup> Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni, 'Una risposta sulla riforma fondiaria', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 6 (1954), 41. Mazzocchi Alemanni worked, both under fascism and afterwards, on projects of rural colonisation, that is, reforms aimed at assigning land to peasants and dismantling the institution of the 'latifondo'.

<sup>52</sup> See Franco Fortini, 'Officina', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 2 (1954), 79 (repr. in Franco Fortini, *Tutte le poesie*, ed. by Luca Lenzini (Milan: Mondadori, 2014), p. 95).

<sup>53</sup> Lamberti Sorrentino, 'Sono stato a Sindri', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 3 (1958), 65–70 (p. 70). Among his many experiences as a war reporter, Lamberti Sorrentino (1899–1993) was also a correspondent in Ethiopia under fascism.

The accusation of racism and the parallel between race and class prejudice, both instrumental categories in the perpetuation of power in the speaker's view, is in this case voiced by an Indian, coming from a third-world decolonised country. The Indian journalist nails Europeans to their historical inconsistencies, suggesting between the lines that the French Revolution too was probably not that successful in freeing them from their mental constraints.

D'Arcais's editorship marked a more definite engagement of *Civiltà* with political and broadly cultural questions. If under Sinisgalli's supervision the balance between science and humanities was in favour of the former, the focus being on applied mechanics and its aesthetics, d'Arcais tried to insert even the most specific scientific problems into a wider philosophical framework. Geopolitical questions acquired centrality. In a special issue celebrating ten years of the journal, decolonisation was placed side by side with scientific and epistemic changes over the same years:

Le generazioni che verranno dovranno pur riconoscere e ricordare che la nascita di nuovi popoli nell'Africa nera, come fenomeno, si è avuto proprio in questi dieci anni, che hanno altresì visto il sorgere di una nuova scienza dell'uomo – la cibernetica – e di una nuova tecnica – l'astronautica – l'una e l'altra fino a pochi decenni addietro intuite dalla fantasia dei poeti e dei narratori, ed ora realizzate come conquista tipica dell'uomo vissuto a mezzera del ventesimo secolo.<sup>54</sup>

The issue also features a contribution by Togolese writer Toussaint-Viderot 'Mensah'.<sup>55</sup> This piece presents his ideas on the integration of African and European cultures in recently decolonised countries, thereby fitting well with the optimistic spirit of *Civiltà delle macchine*. Toussaint-Viderot reflects on Senegalese writer and politician Léopold Sédar Senghor's definitions of Africans as 'alienated men' and identifies the condition of their disalienation in their participation in and contribution to world history.<sup>56</sup>

Attention devoted to African and anticolonial thought is confirmed in subsequent issues. 1963 was the year in which industrialisation and decolonisation were most connected in the vision of the journal. In particular, a translation from Senghor is worth noting, published as part of the column 'Testimonianze e giudizi sul valore della civiltà europea' devoted to 'Il fardello dell'uomo bianco', in which he defines the contributions of the Europeans to Africa as mostly related to 'tecnica', industry, and labour:

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<sup>54</sup> 'Questo numero', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 6 (1962), 1–2 (p. 1).

<sup>55</sup> Toussaint-Viderot 'Mensah', 'Les Etats Nouveaux d'Afrique Noire: gli Stati nuovi dell'Africa nera', trans. by Rubina Giorgi, *Civiltà delle macchine*, 6 (1962), 19–23.

<sup>56</sup> See Toussaint-Viderot, 'Les Etats Nouveaux', pp. 22–23.

Ciò che voglio dire è che l'Europa non ci insegna altro che l'utensile e l'ardore al lavoro dell'operaio; non ci garantisce né il suo gusto, né la sua coscienza professionale. E c'è da domandarsi cosa vale lo spirito critico senza senso artistico e senza senso morale. [...] Tuttavia si pone sempre lo stesso problema. Subiremo noi l'Europa, ci lasceremo passivamente 'assimilare'? 'Il fardello dell'uomo bianco' non rischia di essere per noi, più che un fardello, un peso che ci soffoca?<sup>57</sup>

The risk of the European assimilation is clearly perceived, and it is linked to technical 'progress'.

In another issue of *Civiltà* of the same year, the link between industrialisation and colonisation is reversed, but becomes even more apparent and is presented in its cultural dimension. The column, tellingly titled 'La tecnica e le culture', collects some extracts from the 1961 Colloque de Genève, where intellectuals from all over the world gathered to discuss the dialogue between cultures.<sup>58</sup> The intervention by French philosopher Bertrand de Jouvenel is pivotal for this discourse:

Noi siamo tutti colonizzati dalla tecnica, dall'organizzazione del mondo attraverso l'efficienza [...]. Non esiste un problema dei rapporti fra paesi industrializzati e paesi non, o poco, industrializzati: vi è un problema dei rapporti fra tecnica e cultura, in ogni paese; e appare evidente che questo problema dev'essere tanto più grave quanto più la colonizzazione per mezzo della tecnica è più esogena e dev'essere più rapida [...]. Bisognerebbe ricordarsi che il compito economico comporta anche l'aspetto psicologico del connubio della tecnica con la cultura specifica del popolo in causa.<sup>59</sup>

According to de Jouvenel, it is from the singularity of 'tecnica' that the plurality of cultures was threatened, in a form of a cultural colonialism. The homogenising power of 'tecnica' is again described with reference to colonialism by Swiss writer and philosopher Denis de Rougemont, whose contribution to the Colloque de Genève was also included in the column 'La tecnica e le culture' in the same issue of *Civiltà delle macchine*:

Al tempo stesso, in questo mondo di oggi, in cui la tecnica tende a tutto uniformare, vi è il fatto dell'accesso all'indipendenza di molti continenti, di culture che infine si liberano, forse anche grazie alla tecnica, [...] e che non devono, nel momento stesso in cui riprendono la loro autonomia, lasciarsi uniformare, molto di più di quanto non lo siano state durante il periodo colonialista.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Da "Subir ou choisir" in "Le Monde Noir", numéro special 8-9 de *Présence Africaine* Paris', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 1 (1963), 73–74 (p. 74). No information is given about the translator.

<sup>58</sup> See *Le dialogue des cultures: colloque de Genève, 15–17 septembre 1961* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1962).

<sup>59</sup> Bertrand de Jouvenel, 'Al "Colloque de Genève"', in "Le dialogue des cultures". Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 2 (1963), 35.

<sup>60</sup> Denis de Rougemont, 'Al "Colloque de Genève"', in "Le dialogue des cultures". Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 2 (1963), 36.

Cultural colonialism, in de Rougemont's view, proved even more pervasive and dangerous for alternative cultures than its territorial version.

We would not expect to find these words in *Civiltà delle macchine*, the same journal that a few years earlier had unapologetically and acritically endorsed industrialisation and mechanisation. This contradiction gives an idea of how important editors were for these periodicals, and how crucial anticolonial discourse was in that particular historic junction at the beginning of the 1960s. Moreover, it points to the dialectic relatedness established between colonisation and industrialisation and the awareness that intellectuals had – and wanted to share – about the risks of 'tecnica'.

### 3. POLITICAL PERIODICALS

If industrial company publications exhibited an oblique interest in – and involvement with – anticolonialism, this turned into overt support in some of those political journals to which industrial authors contributed. *Comunità*, *Quaderni piacentini*, and *Quaderni rossi* have been selected as representing a spectrum of 'radicality'. The different interests and rhetoric evident in their engagement with anticolonialism are investigated here. *Comunità*, founded by Adriano Olivetti and therefore inevitably bound to industry although born as the organ of the political movement Movimento Comunità, shows a non-radical and multifaceted adherence to anticolonialism. *Quaderni piacentini* took a much more militant stance in support of anticolonial movements and thinkers. The case of *Quaderni rossi* is further problematic since, as we will see, the *operaista* group which gave birth to it was ideologically divided on the assessment of the anticolonial experience. What will emerge from the analysis of these periodicals, however, is how colonialism and anticolonialism were much more strongly present as discourses than has been previously acknowledged and how a link was frequently established between capitalist industrialisation and colonisation – and, conversely, between anticapitalist and anticolonial struggles.

#### 3.1 *COMUNITÀ*: SOCIALISM, 'INVISIBLE MEN', AND MULTILAYERED (ANTI)COLONIALISM

*Comunità* occupies a peculiar place in the spectrum of the Italian periodical press and milieu after World War II, by virtue of its hybrid status, which cross-contaminates the three categories of the industrial, the political, and the cultural. Founded by Adriano Olivetti in 1946 as the official organ of the Movimento Comunità, the journal distinguished itself from the outset in its thematic breadth.<sup>61</sup> The journal survived the death of its founder and of the Movimento itself; under the direction of editor Renzo Zorzi, it

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<sup>61</sup> For the tables of contents of all issues published between 1946 and 1960, see <<https://www.fondazioneadrianolivetti.it/la-rivista-comunita/>> [accessed 5 April 2021].

developed as a study hub for intellectuals, researchers, and journalists interested in local, national, and international political, economic, social, and cultural questions. The lifespan of *Comunità* ended only in 1992.

The peculiarity of the journal, however, is not limited to this aspect. Its founding by Adriano Olivetti meant not only that it had industrial roots, however anticapitalist, but also that it circulated in industrial intellectual milieus as well as among labourers in the Olivetti factories. Although the firm also ran an internal bulletin – first *Tecnica e organizzazione* and then *Notizie Olivetti*, directed for a while by the writer Libero Bigiaretti and devoted mostly to factory matters – it was very much in the spirit of the company to share its cultural acquisitions with the workers.<sup>62</sup> Thus, *Comunità*, as well as books published by Edizioni di Comunità and other materials, were available in the factory libraries. Among the journal's collaborators during the years covered in this study, Fortini and Giudici are relevant names on the literary side as well as other key intellectuals such as Giansiro Ferrata and sociologist Luciano Gallino, but *Comunità* also circulated among the writers employed at Olivetti: Fortini and Giudici themselves, along with Volponi and Ottieri, among others.

The journal proved attentive in examining the decolonisation process. In particular, some areas that will be referred to here include *Comunità's* reactions to the Algerian war, its analysis of the analogies between the concepts of 'race' and 'class', and the role of the US on the imperialist scene. Several of these lines converge in a special issue published in November 1963 and entirely devoted to anticolonialism in its different forms and geographic contexts. Such a specific attention to the Third World and to decolonising countries can be explained in at least two ways. Firstly, these countries seemed to represent an alternative to both capitalist and communist societies in the same spirit as the Movimento Comunità, as a fertile terrain for political, social, and economic experimentation. Secondly, their 'underdeveloped' economies were similar to those of some parts of Italy.

As noted in the Introduction, anticolonialism was explicitly part of the 1953 political programme of the Movimento Comunità, for whom the ideal society was made up of small autonomous communities in federation.<sup>63</sup> *Comunità's* articles in general seem to foster this anticolonialism. As a counterpoint to this, however, 'Olivettian' industrial writer Ottiero Ottieri – among others – suggested that a form of colonisation could be recognised in the top-down directed industrialisation, by Adriano Olivetti himself, of areas of rural Italy.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Adriano Olivetti's 1955 address to the workers at his newly-built plant in Pozzuoli seems to be informed by a covertly colonial rhetoric. To describe his company's effort in

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<sup>62</sup> On *Tecnica e organizzazione*, see <[http://www.houseorgan.net/it/testate/tecnica-ed-organizzazione\\_16\\_66.htm](http://www.houseorgan.net/it/testate/tecnica-ed-organizzazione_16_66.htm)> [accessed 10 December 2020]. On *Notizie Olivetti*, see Renato Giani, 'La carta dell'amicizia', *Civiltà delle macchine*, 1 (1958), 36–41.

<sup>63</sup> See *Statuto*, ed. by Cadeddu, pp. 68–74.

<sup>64</sup> See section 4.3 and Part Two, section 3.2 below.

favour of the Italian South, the word ‘fardello’ is used,<sup>65</sup> which recalls the ‘white man’s burden’ of colonial ideology. Moreover, in Olivetti’s words, the construction of a plant in Pozzuoli was undertaken as an ‘omaggio ai bisogni di queste regioni’,<sup>66</sup> and, in this paternalistic philanthropic rhetoric, ‘nella coscienza dei nostri operai del Canavese è vivo il senso di solidarietà con i fratelli della Campania, della Calabria, della Lucania’.<sup>67</sup> In light of this contradiction between Olivetti’s overt anticolonialism and his para-colonial approach to his workers and the Italian South, it is important to look at *Comunità*’s expressions of anticolonialism with a more alert and less naive eye.

The first aspect of *Comunità*’s socialist anticolonialism is the analysis of the links between class and race. As Neelam Srivastava has demonstrated, anticolonialism was read by the Italian left of the 1950s and 1960s in continuity with the ideals of the Resistance. However, the Resistance and the victory over fascist and nazist regimes had not led to a revolution and the abolition of a class system in Italy and, similarly, Italian left intellectuals were concerned that decolonial wars of independence would not lead to socialism in decolonised countries. In a Marxist perspective, the race divide was traced back to a class divide – and this is likely to be one of the reasons why critical industrial authors proved so receptive of anticolonialism. Race and class were assimilated as lines that divide society. Instead of commenting on Italian colonialism, which by that time was already a phenomenon of the past and largely forgotten as a model or source of memory, Italian intellectuals who wrote about colonialism in *Comunità* investigated the social dimension of colonialism where it was still in place or had been recently dismantled, and compared it to more familiar categories and situations.

By 1954, the socialist journalist and politician Paolo Vittorelli (the pseudonym of Raffaele Battino) had already realised the possibility of a new, less recognisable, and still powerful form of colonialism which took the place of territorial colonialism. In his reflections on neocolonialism, he traces the dialectic link between race and class separations precisely in the terms of a line:

I movimenti nazionalisti reclamano quindi tutti quanti i diritti politici, poiché la linea di colore, il *colour bar*, non fa distinzioni fra borghesia e proletariato di colore, per potersi organizzare e protestare concretamente, grazie a questi diritti politici, e magari dividersi, una volta indipendenti dalla dominazione bianca, secondo linee di classe.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Adriano Olivetti, *Ai lavoratori: discorsi ai lavoratori di Pozzuoli e Ivrea presentati da Luciano Gallino* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2020), p. 20. Apple ebook [print edition unavailable at the time of writing due to Covid-19 conditions].

<sup>66</sup> Olivetti, *Ai lavoratori*, p. 20.

<sup>67</sup> Olivetti, *Ai lavoratori*, p. 22.

<sup>68</sup> Paolo Vittorelli, ‘Vecchio e nuovo colonialismo’, *Comunità*, 24 (1954), 14–19 (p. 17). The phrase ‘colour bar’ had, at that point, its own specific history, related to segregation in the US and South Africa. Vittorelli was also the author, in 1959, of an anticolonial article which touched upon Italian colonialism: Paolo Vittorelli, ‘Contro il colonialismo e per il disarmo’, *Mondo operaio*, 12 (1959), 50–51; on which, see Tolomelli, *L’Italia*, p. 76. He was also active in the CAI.

In Vittorelli's view, which opposes a socialist perspective to a communist one, in the decolonisation process, class claims are neglected in the pursuit of a major objective: national independence. The image of the (colour) bar or (colour) line will prove particularly important and powerful: if the colonial world is strictly separated between races identified by the colonisers and if capitalism divides society into classes, there will always be those who inhabit the thresholds, the margins. These subjectivities form a key element of Part Two of this dissertation.

Neocolonialism appeared to abolish or to forget about colour lines, but it reproduced them in economic terms. Later, commenting on Algeria where a war of liberation was taking place, Vittorelli notes how ethnic divisions slipped into class struggle. Again, a barrier is represented, along with the act of crossing it:

Il conflitto fra i vari gruppi etnici che convivono sul territorio algerino è un conflitto di classe aggravato dalla deliberata identificazione della barriera di classe con barriere religiose, linguistiche e nazionali [...]. Era dunque inevitabile che il contrasto stridente fra le condizioni di vita esistenti ai due lati di questa barriera finisse per determinare la maggioranza dei 'poveri diavoli' a varcarla.<sup>69</sup>

The passage from colour line to class, in its complex analogic but also dialectic dynamic, is further noted by Egidio Fermi, author of a series of articles in *Comunità* on 'La Chiesa in Africa'. In one of these, Fermi quotes Sartre's *Black Orpheus* (1948):

Per i negri d'Africa – per quelli almeno che erano in contatto con i bianchi: i colonizzatori, i padroni –, sebbene con un po' di ritardo, le cose non sono andate diversamente. Anche per loro, alla coscienza di razza (il complesso della 'negrezza') s'è sostituita di colpo – all'annuncio del comunismo – la coscienza di classe. Un processo psicologico descritto molto bene da Sartre: 'Il negro, come l'operaio bianco, è vittima della struttura capitalista della nostra società; al di là del colore della pelle, questa condizione crea in lui un forte senso di solidarietà con certe classi europee come lui oppresse... Ma, se l'oppressione è una sola, i particolari in cui essa si precisa sono diversi'.<sup>70</sup>

This passage – and, more generally, Fermi's reportage – gives an insight into some of the sources employed by Italian intellectuals when commenting on anticolonialism; that is, journals in French such as *Esprit*, *Les Temps Modernes*, and *Présence Africaine*, which offered the point of view both of colonised and

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<sup>69</sup> Paolo Vittorelli, 'Le cause della rivolta in Algeria', *Comunità*, 51 (1957), 16–35 (pp. 17–18).

<sup>70</sup> Egidio Fermi, 'La Chiesa in Africa (I)', *Comunità*, 48 (1957), 18–31 (p. 25). See Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', trans. by John MacCombie, *Massachusetts Review*, 6.1 (1965), 13–52; Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir', in *Anthologie de la nouvelle*, ed. by Senghor, pp. vii–xliv; Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir', *Les Temps Modernes*, 37 (1948), 577–606; Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir (extraits)', *Présence Africaine*, 6 (1949), 9–14. See also Katharina Städtler, 'La décolonisation de l'Afrique vue par *Les Temps Modernes* (1945–1952)', *Rue Descartes*, 36 (2002), 93–105.

metropolitan intelligentsia, and Sartre's thought, in which an anticolonial discourse with its bases on *négritude* was linked to more broadly Marxist claims. Moreover, Fermi points out how the nexus between race and class acquires epistemic implications in the passage from the subjective to the objective dimension (on this aspect, see Part Two, section 2 below). In the second part of the same reportage, Fermi pushes this analogy even further by identifying in *négritude* the 'flag' of the international proletariat.<sup>71</sup>

*Comunità's* overt anticolonialism was reinforced over time, although showing in some cases some uncanny shadows. For example, in his 1956 article 'Presente e avvenire della Somalia', journalist Giorgio Assan, while reflecting on future scenarios of Somalia after the end of the Italian UN mandate there, scheduled for 1960, claims that:

Nel trattare con l'Africa, con la Somalia, è bene che diciamo [...] che la nostra politica è basata sui nostri interessi, [...] senza tentar di vendere palline colorate con le quali neppure il maschietto somalo che all'angolo pulisce le scarpe vuol più giocare. Nessuno di questi interessi è disonorevole, né incompatibile con i loro se questi interessi saranno esclusivamente basati sull'economia, su liberi scambi in liberi mercati; e non già su ritorni palesi o meno di colonialismo, sia pure di colonialismo all'acqua di rose. Al ragazzo che è cresciuto, anche se è cresciuto troppo in fretta, non si può negare la chiave di casa: altrimenti se la prende da sé.<sup>72</sup>

Assan unveils the paternalist hypocrisy which drove Italy and Europe's relation to colonised countries, and he condemns neocolonialism. But precisely in so doing, he reproduces a set of colonial tropes employed in the description of Africa: African countries as children in relation to their European fathers (see in particular the expressions 'palline colorate', 'maschietto somalo', 'ragazzo cresciuto troppo in fretta', which all refer to the semantic field of childhood).

The global and multilayered scale of colonial processes, related to cultural hegemony, is evident again in Vittorelli's words, which remark upon the existence of an American imperialism in the 1950s:

L'ingresso degli Stati Uniti sulla scena mondiale conferisce oggi a quella tendenza un carattere nazionalista, che rischia spesso, proprio per la funzione di 'guida' del mondo libero assunta dagli Stati Uniti, di diventare vero e proprio imperialismo.<sup>73</sup>

Next to a European colonial tendency – and in dialectic relationship to it – Vittorelli recognises in the US policy an imperial vocation based on the consideration of Europe and developing countries as appealing markets whose dependence on the US was created on purpose. In the same spirit as the

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<sup>71</sup> See Egidio Fermi, 'La Chiesa in Africa (II)', *Comunità*, 50 (1957), 47–61 (p. 51). On *négritude*, see Reiland Rabaka, *The Negritude Movement: W. E. B. Du Bois, Léon Damas, Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the Evolution of an Insurgent Idea* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015). On the Italian reception of *négritude*, see Benelli, *La negritudine*.

<sup>72</sup> Giorgio Assan, 'Presente e avvenire della Somalia', *Comunità*, 44 (1956), 18–32 (p. 20).

<sup>73</sup> Paolo Vittorelli, 'I pericoli della "sicurezza"', *Comunità*, 30 (1955), 2–12 (p. 3).

economic support offered to European nations in the post-war period, in Vittorelli's view the US put in place a politics of alleged global democratisation which aimed at making recently decolonised countries markets ready to receive and adopt North American products and values. This was not only Vittorelli's view but was also shared by others in *Comunità*.<sup>74</sup> On US culture, Adriano Olivetti himself had commented in his 1925–1926 letters from the US, saying that he was simultaneously fascinated by the American facility with statistics and concerned about their 'affarismo' and 'mania' for money.<sup>75</sup>

Under the multidirectional constellation of words such as 'colonialism' and 'imperialism', China also came into consideration, although the Chinese territory was in fact not touched by direct colonialism in those years but rather by what Enrica Collotti Pischel would later define as 'colonizzazione indiretta e plurima',<sup>76</sup> perpetrated by different political and economic powers. This consciousness of the colonial dimension of China is particularly significant in the travel reportage of psychoanalyst Cesare Musatti, in which he claims that 'Le nazioni occidentali [...] in questo paese figurano soltanto per gli elementi deteriori del loro modo di vita. Proprio per questo l'era del colonialismo è destinata a finire in Cina e dovunque'.<sup>77</sup>

In some cases, the consideration of colonialism in the pages of *Comunità* became self-reflective, not in the sense that Italian intellectuals looked back on Italy's colonial past, but rather at its present as a territory for foreign economic colonialism or internal colonialism from industrial onto rural areas. The urbanist and sociologist Carlo Doglio alludes in one of his articles for *Comunità* to international neocolonial trends with reference to the discovery of oil in Italy, in particular in the region of Abruzzo.<sup>78</sup> The links between neocolonialism and oil – which in *Il gatto selvatico* were veiled by ENI's ideology of Italy as genuinely devoid of colonial aspirations – are also presented in this article as a threat to the Italian economy. Italy is identified as one of those underdeveloped countries paradoxically threatened by the appealing presence of oil in their territories and unable to exploit it themselves. In particular, in continuity with Adriano Olivetti's communitarian ideals, Doglio's concerns regard the most isolated areas of Italy, which risked being 'colonised'. Reporting on the various political stances in relation to Abruzzo's oil, Doglio attributes to the communists and socialists the call for a nationalisation policy to be pursued by ENI so as to prevent this 'colonisation' by international companies:

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<sup>74</sup> See Carl J. Friedrich, 'Opinione pubblica e politica estera negli Stati Uniti', *Comunità*, 35 (1955), 32–34 (p. 32). No information is provided about the translator.

<sup>75</sup> Adriano Olivetti, *Dall'America: lettere ai familiari (1925–1926)* (Rome: Edizioni di Comunità, 2012), pp. 48 and 96. Ebook edition [print edition unavailable at the time of writing due to Covid-19 conditions].

<sup>76</sup> Enrica Collotti Pischel, 'I problemi strutturali della decolonizzazione in Asia', *Comunità*, 114 (1963), 3–19 (p. 8).

<sup>77</sup> See Cesare Musatti, 'Cina 1955', *Comunità*, 35 (1955), 10–31 (p. 31). Musatti embarked on a trip to China as part of a group which included, among others, Fortini and Carlo Cassola: see also Carlo Cassola, *Viaggio in Cina* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1956); Franco Fortini, *Asia maggiore: viaggio nella Cina* (Turin: Einaudi, 1956).

<sup>78</sup> Carlo Doglio, 'L'Abruzzo e il petrolio', *Comunità*, 38 (1956), 22–31.

Siamo [here Doglio is voicing the requests of the communists and socialists, which in fact he does not share] assolutamente contrari all'intervento in Italia delle Compagnie del Cartello, le 'sette sorelle' che [...] trattano tutti i paesi produttori di petrolio come paesi coloniali. Vogliamo la nazionalizzazione anche per far sì che il petrolio costi in Italia molto meno del prezzo internazionale, sì da poterlo usare come fonte di energia per una reale industrializzazione delle nostre aree sottosviluppate e anzitutto nel Mezzogiorno.<sup>79</sup>

In stigmatising the threat that – in the view of communists and socialists – the oil cartel represented for Italian autonomy and resources, Doglio mentions ENI as the institution asked to guarantee Italy's protection. However, he rather endorses the deployment of Olivetti's 'Piano per l'industrializzazione del Mezzogiorno', based on the democratic participation of communities of workers in decision-making.<sup>80</sup> In the context of a general and more or less genuine interest in underdeveloped areas on a global scale, Italian institutions practised – in Doglio's view – internal colonialism on their territories by reducing the populations who inhabited underdeveloped areas to mere 'objects' of development.<sup>81</sup> However, even within his critique of this top-down directed development model, Doglio seems to take for granted the necessity of the industrialisation of rural areas. Referring to the Fabian economist George D. H. Cole, he ascribes this industrialisation to 'una specie di libero missionariato'.<sup>82</sup> Thus, he does not step back from the paradigm of missionary help.

Doglio also mentions a conversation with Paolo Volponi about Abruzzo, in which the latter – who spent time there as part of an UNRRA-Casas project – commented on mountainous and coastal areas in Abruzzo:

E anche Volponi [...] concludeva che le comunità montane sono 'in difesa', reclinate sulla propria miseria che le isola l'una dall'altra, mentre sulla costa c'è la malinconica sottocultura della periferia, 'il disordine apparentemente moderno e progressivo delle luci al neon e dei dancing'.<sup>83</sup>

From Volponi's quotation, American cultural 'colonialism' emerges in its linguistic dimension too, as acting through words ('dancing') and cultural facts ('luci al neon') even more pervasively than through economics, finance, and politics.

With the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the US, it once again became apparent that the racial foundation of that country had not been dismantled at all. In a *Comunità* issue of 1957, part of an

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<sup>79</sup> Doglio, 'L'Abruzzo', p. 24.

<sup>80</sup> See Ochetto, *Adriano*, pp. 326–328.

<sup>81</sup> See Doglio, 'L'Abruzzo', p. 27.

<sup>82</sup> Doglio, 'L'Abruzzo', pp. 29–30.

<sup>83</sup> Doglio, 'L'Abruzzo', p. 28. On Volponi's role at the UNRRA-Casas, see Maria Laura Ercolani, *Le sfide del Novecento: l'industria prima della letteratura* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2019), pp. 31–57, and Michela Maguolo, 'La comunità e il suo centro: una rivista, un tema, un dibattito', *Engramma*, 166 (2019) <[http://www.gramma.it/eOS/index.php?id\\_articolo=3638](http://www.gramma.it/eOS/index.php?id_articolo=3638)> [accessed 10 December 2020].

article by the novelist Ralph Ellison was published, concerning the presence of black characters in Anglo-American literature. Reading between the lines it is possible to trace a link between industrialisation, literature, and the representation of the black population by North American writers:

Negli Stati Uniti, come in Europa, il trionfo dell'industrialismo aveva disgustato l'artista per la sua flagrante ipocrisia fra ideali proclamati e atti compiuti. Ma mentre in Europa lo scrittore divenne il più profondo critico di questi argomenti, nel nostro Paese se ne disinteressò [...], forse perché un profondo sondaggio dei valori umani, dentro se stesso e dentro la società, lo avrebbe portato a faccia a faccia con l'argomento colpito da un rigido tabù: il negro.<sup>84</sup>

This conjuncture makes the black man invisible in literature, which is something also perceived in relation to peasants and workers at the thresholds of the industrial renaissance, by Italian authors in the 1950s. The working-class character is either idealised or muted in the literary space, just before the new literary season that will make it the centre of a genre, precisely by virtue of this 'invisibility' and yet centrality. In 1956, the sociologist Luciano Gallino, who started working at Olivetti that year, translated, together with Carlo Fruttero, Ellison's 1952 novel *Invisible Man*.<sup>85</sup> A year later, commenting on the agrarian reform project of the Ente per la Colonizzazione del Delta Padano, Gallino employed Ellison's notion of invisibility to refer to Italian day labourers of the North East:

Lo sradicamento socioeconomico dei braccianti non è quindi un'espressione letteraria. Per ogni rispetto sociale ed economico essi sono 'uomini invisibili' (quasi come i negri d'America di cui parla Ellison).<sup>86</sup>

Gallino therefore confirms the reality of a certain sociological phenomenon by dismissing for this the label of 'literary' and resorting still to a category (that of 'invisible men') created not by a sociologist but by a writer, with reference to a racialised context, thus tracing an analogy between the two situations, based on representativity and representability of the subaltern in public discourse. Here we are at the threshold of the 'economic miracle' and Italy could be assimilated to a degree to third-world countries starting out on the process of industrialisation.

The link between industrialism and colonisation was also at the basis of a book reviewed by Luigi Meneghello under the pseudonym Ugo Varnai in *Comunità* some months later: *World Without War*, by communist scientist John Desmond Bernal.<sup>87</sup> In Bernal's perspective:

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<sup>84</sup> Ralph Ellison, 'I negri americani nella letteratura da Twain a Faulkner', *Comunità*, 53 (1957), 48–55 (p. 52). See also M.C., 'Razze come classi', *Comunità*, 60 (1958), 23–25 (p. 23).

<sup>85</sup> Ralph Ellison, *Uomo invisibile*, trans. by Carlo Fruttero and Luciano Gallino (Turin: Einaudi, 1956).

<sup>86</sup> Luciano Gallino, 'La riforma agraria nel Delta Padano (I)', *Comunità*, 54 (1957), 20–33 (p. 29).

<sup>87</sup> John Desmond Bernal, *World Without War* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958); Ugo Varnai, 'Economia e benessere', *Comunità*, 69 (1959), 97–104. See also Robert S. C. Gordon, "'Fare testo in materia": Ugo Varnai, *Comunità* and the Holocaust

Il solo metodo rapido e sicuro per risolvere i problemi economici e sociali del mondo è quello di industrializzare tutti i paesi arretrati. [...] Si tratta di abbandonare però la vecchia distinzione su cui si reggeva il sistema imperialistico, tra paesi produttori di materie prime e paesi produttori di manufatti.<sup>88</sup>

All these reflections seem to prepare and anticipate *Comunità*'s more explicit anticolonial commitment of the 1960s. For the amount and relevance of the decolonising events, 1960 was defined by the journal as 'l'anno dell'Africa'.<sup>89</sup> In the May 1960 issue a long article by Africanist scholar John Marcum appeared, in which the word 'alienation' was used to refer to the cultural process verifiable in the colonies:

Come [...] Joseph Ki-Zerbo ha scritto in *Libérons l'Afrique*, un popolo che non ha 'ricordo cosciente della sua personalità collettiva finisce per alienarsi in una meccanica imitazione degli altri'.<sup>90</sup>

In Marcum's view, cultural alienation in colonial contexts, based on the power exerted by the technocapitalist culture, was characteristic also of a new form that colonialism could take: one that is less recognisable but, in the eyes of the anticolonialists, as dangerous as the traditional form. Gallino and Marcum's reflections both point to the sense of subjective and cultural loss that was innate in both colonialism and industrialism.

The analogy between colonised and industrialised subjects is also present in journalist Sergio De Santis's review of Thomas Hodgkin's *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*:

D'altra parte, però – prosegue coraggiosamente l'autore – sono poi davvero del tutto diverse queste Dakar, queste Lagos, queste Elisabethville, dai centri operai inglesi della metà del secolo scorso, inviccinabili sentine di miseria e corruzione, sovraffollate di miserabili immigrati irlandesi e igienicamente separate dagli aristocratici quartieri alti? Le somiglianze, continua Hodgkin, sono troppe e troppo sintomatiche [...].<sup>91</sup>

1960 was also a crucial year with reference to the internationalisation of the Algerian conflict, since it was in that year that the Manifesto of the 121 was published in France, generating a wave of international

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in 1950s Italian Culture', *The Italianist*, 32 (2012), 193–208; Luciano Zampese, 'Un progetto per tornare a casa: Meneghella e la Olivetti', *LEA – Lingue e letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente*, 7 (2018), 131–155.

<sup>88</sup> Varnai, 'Economia', p. 101.

<sup>89</sup> See Marcello Dell'Omodarme, 'Il fallimento della federazione Rhodesia–Niassa', *Comunità*, 87 (1961), 27–31 (p. 27).

<sup>90</sup> John Marcum, 'La sfida dell'Africa', *Comunità*, 79 (1960), 1–16 (p. 16). See Dobi Parfait Maré, 'Joseph Ki-Zerbo et le panafricanisme', *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 6.1 (2019), 59–75.

<sup>91</sup> Sergio De Santis, 'Nazionalismo nell'Africa coloniale', *Comunità*, 82 (1960), 30–35 (p. 33). See Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Muller, 1956).

reactions, including in Italy.<sup>92</sup> A few months after the manifesto, Giampaolo Calchi Novati published an article in *Comunità* in which he commented on two recently published books on Algeria.<sup>93</sup> As mentioned earlier, up until that moment the most relevant conceptual block in anticolonial thought was the discourse of *négritude*, as elaborated principally by Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor. This insisted on the specific characteristics of black people, whilst keeping itself on a literary level without proposing any strategy for an effective struggle against imperial powers, and also without tracing an explicit and clear link with Marxist struggles in general.<sup>94</sup> With his article, Calchi Novati marks a discontinuity with the previous anticolonial discourse put forward in *Comunità*, analysing Frantz Fanon and Francis Jeanson's works. Calchi Novati expresses overall solidarity with Fanon's ideas. Of particular interest, in view of what has been touched upon so far, is Calchi Novati's 'review' of Fanon's view on the analogy between proletariat – in this case rural rather than industrial – and the colonised:

Esiste certo una lontana analogia fra i colonizzati ed il proletariato dei paesi a sistema capitalistico [...]; il Fanon giudica però che la carica rivoluzionaria di cui il colonizzato è depositario, frutto di decenni di soggezione disumana [...] è più precisa, senza finzioni, perché incontaminata da certe remore proprie della cultura occidentale.<sup>95</sup>

The use of the term 'analogia' is particularly significant as we will see it as employed by another important mediator of Fanon's thought in Italy: poet Giovanni Giudici (see section 3.2.2 below). Through the figure of Calchi Novati, *Comunità* moved further than any of the industrial periodicals in its focus on colonial questions, to the point of producing a special issue, edited by Calchi Novati, on anticolonialism in November 1963.<sup>96</sup> The issue featured contributions by Enrica Collotti Pischel on decolonisation in Asia, Chiara Robertazzi on the conquests of the 'African revolution', and Sergio De Santis on the liberation wars in South America, among many others. It was accompanied by pictures taken by major

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<sup>92</sup> See 'Dichiarazione sul diritto all'insubordinazione nella guerra d'Algeria', *Tempo presente*, 9-10 (1960), 707–709, and 'Diritto alla resistenza: dichiarazione di solidarietà con gli intellettuali francesi', *Tempo presente*, 11 (1960), 785–788; Catherine Brun, '121 Manifesto: Genesis and Posterity', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 54.4 (2014), 78–89; Cesare Pianciola, *La guerra d'Algeria e il 'manifesto dei 121'* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Asino, 2016).

<sup>93</sup> Giampaolo Calchi Novati, 'L'Algeria della Rivoluzione', *Comunità*, 102 (1962), 84–91. See Fanon, *I dannati*; Francis Jeanson, *Problemi e prospettive della rivoluzione algerina*, trans. by Mariella Mammalella (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962).

<sup>94</sup> See Robert Bernasconi, 'The Assumption of Négritude: Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and the Vicious Circle of Racial Politics', *Parallax*, 8.2 (2002), 69–83.

<sup>95</sup> Calchi Novati, 'L'Algeria', p. 86. On North African labourers in French factories, see Daniel Mothé, 'Les ouvriers français et les Nord-Africains', *Socialisme ou barbarie*, 21 (1957), 146–157, and Laure Pitti, 'Figure ouvrière et engagement dans la lutte de libération nationale: les ouvriers algériens de Renault-Billancourt pendant la guerre d'Algérie', *L'Homme et la société*, 117-118 (1995), 115–128.

<sup>96</sup> *Comunità*, 114 (1963).

photographers of the day, including Giulia Ferlito Pirelli.<sup>97</sup> From the very first page, the issue is characterised by its unapologetic tone, in the spirit of Fanon:

L'anti-colonialismo, in quanto riconoscimento di un dato d'ordine storico, è una categoria politica persino ovvia [...]. Il movimento di liberazione nazionale, infatti, costituisce il fattore di trasformazione più importante dei nostri giorni [...] concorrendo a portare avanti insieme la rivolta dei 'dannati della terra' e la liquidazione di tutte le forme di sfruttamento e discriminazione.<sup>98</sup>

Such an explicit reference and commitment to Fanon's ideals can be considered exceptional for a journal like *Comunità* – circulating also among the factory workers –, its central point being straightforwardly anticolonialism and not decolonisation, with all its contradictions. A few lines later, another key term in anticolonial discourse occurs: 'disalienation', which resonates even more significantly in the context of a publication so closely linked to industry (see Part Two, section 2 below).

Africanist scholar Chiara Robertazzi, in her piece on 'Conquiste e debolezze della rivoluzione africana', refers again to Fanon while commenting on the social shape of colonial societies:

[...] è il problema dell'avanzata del cosiddetto terzo mondo e della sua affermazione sulla scena internazionale come elemento attivo e non più passivo, 'soggetto' e non più 'oggetto' della politica mondiale. [...] Come dice bene il Fanon, il mondo coloniale era un mondo manicheo, diviso in compartimenti totalmente separati in cui abitavano uomini di specie diverse.<sup>99</sup>

Robertazzi's point on the 'subjectification' of third-world populations, which resonates with the words of all those intellectuals who genuinely welcomed the entrance into the realm of history of decolonising and decolonised people, is linked to Fanon's ideas on the Manichean character of colonial societies and therefore to their racist foundations. Cameroonian economist and politician George Ngango picks up on a different aspect in Fanon's writings: in a Manichean situation such as the one described by Fanon, the only possibility for the colonised is to imitate colonisers, renouncing their own culture. Once again, colonisation is about cultural alienation:

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<sup>97</sup> Giulia Ferlito Pirelli was mostly known at this stage for her photos of Milan: see Giulia Pirelli and Carlo Orsi, *Milano* (Milan: Alfieri, 1965). She was Leopoldo Pirelli's wife – and therefore Giovanni Pirelli's sister-in-law – and she contributed to *Pirelli* as 'Giulia Ferlito' with reportages which included photographs: see, for example, Giulia Ferlito, 'Gli uomini del cielo', *Pirelli*, 3 (1963), 56–65.

<sup>98</sup> 'L'impegno dell'anticolonialismo', *Comunità*, 114 (1963), 1–2 (pp. 1–2).

<sup>99</sup> Chiara Robertazzi, 'Conquiste e debolezze della rivoluzione africana', *Comunità*, 114 (1963), 20–31 (pp. 20–22).

Con l'esperienza si dimostrò del resto che il modo migliore per domare e disarmare l'uomo nero era di renderlo straniero a se stesso, di alienarlo in rapporto alla propria cultura.<sup>100</sup>

With its focus on the psychological dimension – complementary to the political but specifically affected by colonialism and considered by Fanon's anticolonialism – the publication of Ngango's article inaugurates a new line in the reception and mediation of anticolonial thought in Italy, and in particular of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, directly referenced by Ngango.<sup>101</sup>

The monographic issue of 1963 marks the apex of *Comunità's* involvement with anticolonialism. However, the interest of the journal in anticolonial struggles continued in different forms thereafter. In 1964, for example, Calchi Novati published an article on 'La condizione negra' in which the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in the US are read in continuity with anticolonialism.<sup>102</sup> US society is said to be 'attesa ad una fase storica che non si deve più esitare a chiamare di "decolonizzazione"'.<sup>103</sup> It is in the African Americans that Calchi Novati clearly identifies the force which would emancipate capitalist societies from racism: 'Ai negri spetta forse il compito d'essere la coscienza degli Stati Uniti, dell'occidente, del mondo capitalista'.<sup>104</sup>

To conclude, *Comunità's* political interest in anticolonialism was constant throughout the second half of the 1950s and witnessed a boost in the early 1960s, probably as a consequence of the publication of the Italian translation of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and the dissemination of anticolonialism in public discourse; and then also of the death of Adriano Olivetti and the dismantling of his Movimento Comunità, the immediate political reference point for the journal. Reflecting on colonial questions was a way for *Comunità's* contributors to show that a third – socialist – way between the capitalist US and Soviet Russia could exist. In some cases, *Comunità's* anticolonialism displayed a self-reflective nuance and was employed to consider Italy as a potential target of economic colonisation. The risks of the cultural colonisation on different scales were stigmatised and still not recognised when perpetrated by the Olivetti enterprise.

### 3.2 *QUADERNI PLACENTINI* AND *QUADERNI ROSSI*: INTERNATIONALISM, WORKERISM, AND ANTICOLONIAL ALLEGORY

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<sup>100</sup> George Ngango, 'La presa di coscienza dei popoli africani', *Comunità*, 114 (1963), 72–80 (pp. 73–74). No information is provided about the translator.

<sup>101</sup> See Fanon, *Il negro*.

<sup>102</sup> Giampaolo Calchi Novati, 'La condizione negra', *Comunità*, 121 (1964), 44–48.

<sup>103</sup> Calchi Novati, 'La condizione', p. 45.

<sup>104</sup> Calchi Novati, 'La condizione', p. 48.

This subsection analyses the scope and significance of the treatment of the anticolonial question in the influential new-left journal *Quaderni piacentini*, in the key period from its foundation in 1962 to the year 1965. As a contrast to *Quaderni piacentini* (from now on: *QP*), the renowned workerist journal *Quaderni rossi*, founded by Raniero Panzieri and Mario Tronti in 1961 and published until 1965, is also commented upon in this section, as an example of a journal which devoted little or no attention to anticolonial struggles. *QP* is first framed in the context of other militant journals, and an overview of its anticolonial and third-worldist commitment presented. Then, an analysis of the reasons for *Quaderni rossi*'s dismissal of anticolonial struggles is proposed. Finally, Giovanni Giudici's essay, 'L'uomo dalla roncola', published in *QP* in 1963, is analysed as a significant case study, to show the deep implications that reading Fanon had for Giudici and for the positioning of *QP* generally in relation to the anticolonial struggles and to its local literary concerns.<sup>105</sup>

### 3.2.1 *QUADERNI PIACENTINI'S* MILITANT STANCE AND *QUADERNI ROSSI'S* DISMISSAL OF THE THIRD WORLD

The importance of *QP* in the construction of the Italian 'Nuova Sinistra' at the beginning of the 1960s has been highlighted on different occasions by several scholars.<sup>106</sup> The journal, founded in 1962 by Piergiorgio Bellocchio and Grazia Cherchi and echoing the title of *Quaderni rossi*, was brought into being by, among others, the polymorphic figures of Franco Fortini, Giovanni Giudici, Sergio Spazzali, Paola Spazzali Forti, and Goffredo Fofi. Given the complex ideological positioning of all of its contributors – who shared a Marxist–socialist background which did not correspond to any party membership – *Quaderni piacentini* represented a hub for a lively collective reflection on themes which ranged fluidly from politics to literature and from socio-economic to artistic questions, in the spirit of an inseparability of social and cultural factors. Literary criticism occupied a central place.<sup>107</sup> This approach recalled Gramsci's idea that culture and politics were (and indeed should be) tightly linked at a local, national, and international level; but *QP*'s editors showed an equally acute awareness that official parties, above all the PCI, could not be the interpreters of the spontaneous, bottom-up, youth-centred, and radical research and criticism that they wanted to pursue.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> See Giudici, 'L'uomo'. In Part 1, since the focus is on journals, essays and articles are quoted in their journal versions, rather than from their reprintings.

<sup>106</sup> See Fabio Guidali, 'Culture and Political Commitment in the Non-Orthodox Marxist Left: The Case of *Quaderni piacentini* in Pre-1968 Italy', *History of European Ideas*, 46.6 (2020), 862–875.

<sup>107</sup> Zinato, 'Ciclostilati', reflects specifically on this aspect.

<sup>108</sup> See Nello Ajello, *Intellettuali e PCI, 1944/1958* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1997); Mariamargherita Scotti, *Da sinistra: intellettuali, Partito socialista italiano e organizzazione della cultura (1953–1960)* (Rome: Ediesse, 2011).

The first issue, declaring itself as ‘a cura dei giovani della sinistra’,<sup>109</sup> opens with the famous lines, ‘Gli autori di questo foglio intendono sottolinearne il carattere di “prova”. Non per chiedere indulgenza – ma critiche [...]. Vogliamo che questo sia un foglio di battaglia’.<sup>110</sup> The tone is committedly militant, somehow heroic, but at the same time tentative and aspirational. The ideological line is presented as open to Marxist, socialist, and anarchist positions, with no rigid orthodoxy to be observed. Indeed, contributors came from different political and ideological backgrounds, brought together by their militant leftist spirit. The journal proved impressively long-running, especially compared to similar non-institutional, self-organised, and self-funded publications (for example, *Quaderni rossi*, 1961–1965, and *Classe operaia*, 1964–1967). It ceased production only in 1984, reaching its apex of popularity and influence in the years 1968–1969, corresponding with the outbreak of students’ and workers’ movements. Although it is this phase of the late 1960s that saw the most sustained engagement of *QP*’s contributors with working-class struggles, and which marked in turn the transition to the newly radicalised season of the 1970s, it can be argued that it was in the very first years of *QP* that the key lines of ideological and cultural commitment in the group around the journal were established and these included, in the early 1960s, a deep interest in anticolonial movements.

In a reflection from 1970, Franco Fortini, who collaborated with *QP* from its foundation, retrospectively considers the first phase in the history of the journal as follows:

Il nesso fra estremismo e tragicismo etico, [...] fra lotta anticolonialista e politica antiriformista si stabilisce subito, a partire dalla prima annata, 1962. [...] L’attenzione si portava fuori d’Italia, alla lotta dei popoli africani e in particolare a quella algerina. Fra il 1957, l’anno delle torture e dei parà di Massu, della ‘battaglia di Algeri’ e della testimonianza di Alleg (*La question*) e il 1962 del terrorismo Oas in Algeria e a Parigi e del riconoscimento del nuovo stato algerino passano cinque anni di sollevazioni internazionali. [...] Di questa dilatazione di orizzonte e di eventi il tramite è, insieme al cinema, la pubblicistica francese, in particolare quella anticolonialista e antigollista che si esprimeva nel *réseau Jeanson*, nel Manifesto dei 121 (1960). I due futuri iniziatori di *Quaderni piacentini* e molti dei loro amici si fanno capaci di avvertire la prosecuzione del pathos resistenziale (ed esistenzialista) del primo dopoguerra, ravvivato dal 1956 dalla Polonia e dall’Ungheria. [...] Tutta la prima fase di *Quaderni piacentini* ha la fisionomia dell’impresa ‘radicale’ [...]. La forma propria di questa passione [...] assumeva [...] la tonalità della saggistica di sdegno o ironia.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, Fortini himself identifies very clearly in *QP*’s radical stance a link between international and internal politics, born in the years that preceded the journal’s foundation. In this conjuncture, Fortini underlines

<sup>109</sup> *Quaderni piacentini*, 1 (1962), 1.

<sup>110</sup> ‘Prova per una rivista da farsi’, *Quaderni piacentini*, 1 (1962), 1.

<sup>111</sup> Franco Fortini, ‘I primi anni di *Quaderni piacentini*’, in Franco Fortini, *Un giorno o l’altro*, ed. by Marianna Marrucci and Valentina Tinacci (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2006), pp. 407–410.

the importance of the Algerian events and their elaboration by French intellectuals as a fundamental background for the milieu which gave birth to *QP*. Another interesting aspect noted by Fortini is the specification that the elected and most powerful form for *QP*'s cultural commitment was the essay, in the spirit of – among others – György Lukács's and Theodor W. Adorno's theorisations and uses of this genre.<sup>112</sup> Although the journal did in fact include poetry, Fortini stresses how the option for non-fictional, ironic, and cutting writing marked *Quaderni piacentini*'s opposition to traditional 'letteratura impegnata'. All these aspects point towards a link between *QP* and a certain strand of Italian political-cultural journals, among which *Ragionamenti* (1955–1957) should be mentioned as a key precursor. It is, again, Fortini, in 1959, who attributes to *Ragionamenti* an influential role for future generations of intellectuals owing to its precocious attention paid to thinkers (such as Lukács, Adorno, and Lucien Goldmann) and questions (for example, 'il tema dei popoli di colore e del *Tiers Monde*; delle ideologie dell'automazione') which will come to inform deeply the Italian cultural life of the 1960s, including *QP*.<sup>113</sup>

The attention to global questions and to the international dimension of class struggle in *QP* is particularly significant when considered in contrast to another radical leftist review of that time: Raniero Panzieri and Mario Tronti's *Quaderni rossi*. Although both journals were interested in the challenges and significance of working-class struggles and despite some cross-contaminations between the two (for example, Fortini, Fofi, and others were contributors to both), the majority of *Quaderni rossi*'s editors later dismissed the importance of third-world struggles within their autonomous *operaista* programme.<sup>114</sup> As focused as they were on the specificity of the struggles of the working classes – and especially of factory workers – in capitalist countries, the *operaisti* group did not see any similarity between those struggles and those of the (mostly peasant and mostly rural) colonised peoples.

From its very first article, by Vittorio Foa, *Quaderni rossi* in fact promoted an alliance between factory workers and peasants, which Gramsci had already theorised.<sup>115</sup> However, the most effective practice of struggle was identified in the autonomous experience of industrial conflict in the factories of northern Italy. To gain some insight into the positions of the *Quaderni rossi* group, it is interesting to read some retrospective interviews in which they were asked about their position in relation to the CDFP. As noted earlier, this latter was founded by Giovanni Pirelli and some of the contributors to *QP* in Milan at the beginning of the 1960s, and was aimed at studying and supporting anticolonial struggles. Most of the interviews point towards a distance between the group of *Quaderni rossi* and militants such as Giovanni

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<sup>112</sup> See *Il saggio: forme e funzioni di un genere letterario*, ed. by Giulia Cantarutti, Luisa Avellini, and Silvia Albertazzi (Bologna: il Mulino, 2008).

<sup>113</sup> Franco Fortini, 'Che cosa è stato *Ragionamenti*?', in Fortini, *Un giorno*, pp. 277–280 (p. 279).

<sup>114</sup> See Franco Fortini, 'A quelli di *Quaderni rossi*', in Fortini, *Un giorno*, pp. 319–320; Giuseppe Trotta and Fabio Milana, *L'operaismo degli anni Sessanta: da 'Quaderni rossi' a 'Classe operaia'* (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2008); Mariamargherita Scotti, 'Il paradosso dell'autonomia: traiettorie di intellettuali nel PSI tra anni Cinquanta e Sessanta', in *Aspettando il Sessantotto*, ed. by Francesca Chiarotto (Turin: Accademia University Press, 2017), pp. 222–237.

<sup>115</sup> Vittorio Foa, 'Lotte operaie nello sviluppo capitalistico', *Quaderni rossi*, 1 (1961), 1–17.

Pirelli, who saw instead an immediate and fundamental link between the working classes in capitalist countries and colonised people fighting against their oppressors in the Third World. The harsh words of Rita di Leo, scholar of international relations and contributor to *Quaderni rossi*, unequivocally express this sense of irreducible distance: ‘Noi di Roma avevamo il più profondo disprezzo nei loro confronti, perché erano terzomondisti, e noi operaisti non riuscivamo a capirli’.<sup>116</sup>

However, even in such a strongly oppositional and radical milieu, a mediation between workerism and third-worldism was found in the figure and activity of sociologist Romano Alquati. Renowned for developing the method of *Quaderni rossi*’s ‘inchieste operaie’ (workers’ inquiries) at FIAT as well as at Olivetti,<sup>117</sup> Alquati represented a *trait d’union* between the disciples and companions of Raniero Panzieri and the activists and intellectuals who grouped around Giovanni Pirelli in Milan.<sup>118</sup> When asked later about the CDFE, which he was invited by Pirelli to direct in 1963,<sup>119</sup> Alquati answered that:

Presi parte ai lavori del Centro Fanon prima del 1965; il tutto era orchestrato da Giovanni Pirelli. C’era una certa FGCI terzomondista, un terzomondismo come fuga dalla realtà. Era il mito del Terzo mondo, da Cuba alla Guinea. Ruscimmo a cambiare completamente l’orientamento delle ricerche e spostare il discorso sull’Africa. Gli africani che venivano al ‘Fanon’, talvolta leader politici dei rispettivi paesi [...] venivano a cercare noi. Non erano interessati ai terzomondisti italiani, ma volevano collegarsi con la classe operaia occidentale, anche per avere un orientamento strategico sul loro futuro, di modo da capire, quindi, dove andava il capitale occidentale. Questo per loro voleva dire anticipare i movimenti.<sup>120</sup>

In Alquati’s view, a third-worldist commitment was somehow ‘escapist’ if it did not establish a link between decolonised and decolonising countries and the working classes of capitalist countries. Alquati recalls that he committed to the cause of third-world countries by materially supporting them via the CDFE. However, from a workerist point of view, he points out that the leaders of decolonised countries who came into contact with the CDFE in the early 1960s were most interested in learning from the Western working classes. In Alquati’s view, the working classes in capitalist countries served as a model for third-world populations – and not necessarily the other way round. From the passage quoted, as well as from Alquati’s overall experience at the CDFE, it is possible to derive the idea of a link between third-

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<sup>116</sup> Trotta and Milana, *L’operaismo*, 623. See also Trotta and Milana, *L’operaismo*, p. 693 (Mauro Gobbi: ‘Il sottosviluppo l’avevo visto in Sicilia, e avevo capito che non si poteva fare un discorso tagliando a metà il mondo. Il Centro Fanon per noi aveva un interesse marginale’) and p. 724 (Sergio Bologna: ‘Tutto questo però non comportava che poi, su *Classe operaia*, noi scrivessimo articoli sul Terzo mondo’).

<sup>117</sup> See Romano Alquati, ‘Co-Research and Worker’s Inquiry’, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 118.2 (2019), 470–478. See also Fabrizio Fasulo, ‘Raniero Panzieri and Workers’ Inquiry: The Perspective of Living Labour, the Function of Science and the Relationship Between Class and Capital’, *Ephemera*, 14.3 (2014), 315–333.

<sup>118</sup> Giovanni Pirelli and Raniero Panzieri were very well-acquainted: see Raniero Panzieri, *Lettere, 1940–1964*, ed. by Stefano Merli and Lucia Dotti (Venice: Marsilio, 1987).

<sup>119</sup> See Bermiani, ‘Giovanni’, p. 54.

<sup>120</sup> Trotta and Milana, *L’operaismo*, p. 741.

world populations and the working class in capitalist countries. This link was in fact foundational for the group of *QP*, whose interventions on anticolonial questions are all, however indirectly, related to this analogy.

In the very first issue of *QP*, the ‘trial’ issue, attention is devoted to the Franco-Algerian situation, in a section tellingly entitled ‘Francia 1962’.<sup>121</sup> This includes the translation of a letter by an Algerian student in Paris, a bibliography on the Algerian War in Italian, and an extract from an interview with Jean-Paul Sartre.<sup>122</sup> In the third issue, the discourse on colonialism and anticolonialism is tackled in more depth. In July 1962, an article by Grazia Cherchi marks the publication of the Italian translation of Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*: ‘Abbiamo una gran fretta di segnalare la comparsa nelle nostre librerie de *I dannati della terra*, l’ultimo libro di Frantz Fanon’.<sup>123</sup> Cherchi mainly insists on the violence that, according to Fanon, the colonised had to commit against the systemic violence of the colonisers. She also concentrates on the irreducible distance that had to be taken by African colonised peoples from their European colonisers and interprets anticolonialism as a new radical humanism, in counterpoint to the bourgeois humanism that was so popular at that time, as Fanon himself remarked.<sup>124</sup> From this perspective, it is possible to give at least two different answers to the question with which Cherchi’s article opens: ‘I dannati della terra sono oggi gli europei?’<sup>125</sup> On the one hand, the reader would be led to answer in the negative: ‘*les damnés de la terre*’, mentioned in the left-wing anthem ‘The Internationale’, the exploited class identified as a potentially revolutionary force, were not to be found in Europe anymore. On the other hand, if ‘dannati’ is interpreted as ‘damned’ because of their colonial guilt, then yes, the reader of *QP* could also say that Europeans were in this sense the wretched of the earth. However, Cherchi concludes her piece by stating that:

Per Fanon l’Europa non è in crisi: è moribonda. [...] Se ne parla, è solo per distogliere i popoli nuovi dal bisogno ossessionante di imitarla, di diventare a loro volta Europa. Oggi se si vuole fare qualcosa, occorre lasciar perdere l’Europa. [...] È la condizione indispensabile per il terzo Mondo, se vuole sviluppare un pensiero nuovo, inventare di nuovo l’uomo, restituirgli la sua totalità. Così ci giudicano, a ragione, le élites africane.<sup>126</sup>

This passage resonates and contrasts profoundly with Romano Alquati’s considerations of European working-class struggles as models for third-world countries.

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<sup>121</sup> ‘Francia 1962’, *QP*, 1 (1962), 6–10.

<sup>122</sup> See ‘Lettera di un liceale algerino all’Express’, *QP*, 1 (1962), 6; ‘Bibliografia italiana sulla rivoluzione algerina’, *QP*, 1 (1962), 7; ‘La situazione francese vista da J. P. Sartre’, *QP*, 1 (1962), 7.

<sup>123</sup> Grazia Cherchi, ‘I *Dannati della terra* di Frantz Fanon’, *QP*, 2-3 (1962), 26–28 (p. 26).

<sup>124</sup> See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2004), p. 178.

<sup>125</sup> Cherchi, ‘I *Dannati*’, p. 26.

<sup>126</sup> Cherchi, ‘I *Dannati*’, p. 28.

The same issue of *QP* carries a review for an exhibition on the new-born Algerian nation that took place in Milan in June and July 1962.<sup>127</sup> Far from endorsing celebratory tones, the piece shares raw data on the dramatic Algerian situation and unrhetorically sets out the contents displayed in the exhibition. The reader learns that the exhibition was an initiative of Giovanni Pirelli, set up, among others, also by the ‘boom’ writer Giovanni Arpino. This, in an oblique and indirect way, points at some personal and cultural links between industrial milieux and involvement in the anticolonial cause, in particular with reference to Algeria in those particular years.

*QP* also published poetry. ‘A un operaio del miracolo’, a poem by Giorgio Cesarano that appeared in *QP* in 1963, exemplifies a certain militant poetic form and tone, and the depth and significance of a complex link established between the condition of the working classes in the West and the decolonisation process.<sup>128</sup> The title can be read as resonant with Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters’. The poem apostrophises a factory worker and this apostrophe structures the whole text:

[...]  
Amico nostro (compagno?) sta sù  
goditi i pochi beni, le tue cose ‘strappate’  
(costarono).  
Il televisore  
ti mostra, rapido, un’Algeria  
lontanissima,  
immagini irriconoscibili, eppure  
non è molto che le somigliavamo,  
e chi ci capisce  
niente di che la radio dice  
del Congo, dell’Angola? Darà tra poco  
cronache delle partite.  
[...]<sup>129</sup>

A typical worker of the ‘boom’ is referred to as ‘amico’ and possibly ‘compagno’, but this second definition is still tentative and unsure: the working-class identity and cohesion is already shattered by this stage because of the alienation brought by the ‘economic miracle’, and can be put into question as well as into parentheses. The sarcastic invitation to remain in a good (the right) mood (‘sta sù’) can also be

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<sup>127</sup> See Guido Valabrega, ‘La questione algerina a Milano’, in *Italia e Algeria: aspetti storici di una amicizia mediterranea*, ed. by Romain Rainero (Milan: Marzorati, 1982), pp. 313–328.

<sup>128</sup> Giorgio Cesarano, ‘A un operaio del miracolo’, *QP*, 9-10 (1963), 21–22.

<sup>129</sup> Cesarano, ‘A un operaio’, pp. 21–22.

read, ambivalently and provocatively, as an exhortation to physical and moral rectitude.<sup>130</sup> An allusion to alienation and commodification of life follows: goods are in fact torn away, maybe stolen, and their cost – as commodities and also in labour through exploitation – is recalled again only in parentheses. The television vigorously enters the poetic world, occupying an entire line and breaking the realm of the lyric. What occurs on television, according to Cesarano, is at the same time distant from and close to the spectator. There is Algeria. It breaks the walls of comfortably numb Italian houses and yet still it is ‘lontanissima’: it gives the uncanny sense – in its Freudian meaning – of something simultaneously strange and familiar. The images of Algeria are unrecognisable and still an unspecified plural first-person is able to divine some similarities with Italy before the ‘economic miracle’ or in the post-war period. Two other third-world, recently decolonised countries are mentioned immediately afterwards (Congo and Angola) but a rhetorical question underlines once again the heuristic difficulty for a potential Italian working-class reader in understanding the events of decolonisation. The rapid passage to entertainment and diversion (‘le partite’) marks the fleeting but deep character of the reference to decolonisation.

By stating the distance between the two situations – the Italian and the Algerian – Cesarano juxtaposes them and suggests a link exists between the two, even though the ‘economic miracle’ mentioned in the title marks a turning point in Italian history, from the post-war, underdeveloped, and mostly rural reality (comparable to recently decolonised contexts) to the rampantly industrial new dimension, informed by the consumerist American model. The reader is not even sure to which aspects Cesarano refers when he mentions a time when Italy was similar to Algeria. Is he alluding to being a terrain of war and, more specifically, of Resistance; or, more broadly, to economic and social conditions? What takes place in the poem is a tension between recognition and confusion over identity. However, both those spectres (war and Resistance and underdevelopment) seem to be overcome by the ‘miracle’ and the rest of the poem moves in this direction, with reference to historical events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the first moon landing, which are brought closer to Italian workers through the television and indeed become mass products as well.

This allusion to a passive reception of history and modernity as implicitly opposed to a protagonism of the working class characterises the general line taken by *QP*. The struggles of decolonising peoples seemed to recall and evoke the activism Western working classes had performed in the past – and which they would fully recover some years later. Tellingly, in the same issue of *QP* that features Cesarano’s poem, as part of the column entitled ‘Da leggere’, where reading suggestions were listed as opposed to books ‘Da non leggere’, Fanon’s *Sociologia della rivoluzione algerina* is proposed.<sup>131</sup> In the words of Giacomo Pontremoli:

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<sup>130</sup> See Adriana Cavarero, *Inclinazioni: critica della rettitudine* (Milan: Raffaello Cortina, 2013).

<sup>131</sup> ‘Da leggere’, *QP*, 9-10 (1963), 51.

Da quest'interesse per la Spagna franchista a quello per Fanon e la guerra d'Algeria, fino al futuro studio del movimento afroamericano Black Power, il rapporto borghesi–proletari, bianchi–neri, colonizzati–colonizzatori è nodo cruciale di tutta la prima fase di *QP*. Sono infatti le differenze di classe la ragione di fondo del loro impegno.<sup>132</sup>

Most of the interventions in the journal on colonial and anticolonial questions rendered explicit this link with class. An example of this is Paola Spazzali Forti's article in the July–August issue of 1963.<sup>133</sup> Here, the author reflects on the responsibility of French intellectuals in dealing with the Algerian question. In particular, from a radical perspective, Spazzali Forti castigates French leftist intellectuals for not understanding (or not wanting to understand) how to link their engagement in the cause of the working class with the Algerian struggle:

La carenza, nell'azione degli intellettuali impegnati, fu carenza di penetrazione politica. La loro colpa, quella di non aver saputo trovare il nesso di interesse vitale che univa la lotta di classe dell'operaio francese alla lotta di liberazione dell'algerino. E questo nesso esiste, perché il nemico che essi combattono è lo stesso. [...] Una battaglia vinta dai popoli del terzo mondo è una battaglia vinta anche per il proletariato occidentale.<sup>134</sup>

In the name of working-class internationalism, Spazzali Forti makes *QP*'s interest in international struggles explicit, and also takes a critical stance against the hypocrisy of French intellectuals – and, obliquely, Italian intellectuals of the Left – to whom *QP* was in fact in part ideologically indebted.

This internationalist and third-worldist spirit informed the action of the CDFP, which was presented by its founders in the same issue of *QP* in which Spazzali Forti's critique of the French intellectuals appeared.<sup>135</sup> Its presentation in *QP* effectively lists the activities and interests of the CDFP in detail; but in a draft of this same document stored in the Archivio Privato Giovanni Pirelli, on which Tullio Ottolini and Mariamargherita Scotti, among others, have worked, we find a more politically pointed and precise statement of the link between working class struggles in first-world countries and anticolonial struggles in the Third World:

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<sup>132</sup> Pontremoli, *I Piacentini*, position 317 of 4333. Kindle edition [print edition unavailable at the time of writing due to Covid-19 conditions].

<sup>133</sup> Paola Spazzali Forti, 'La sinistra francese e l'Algeria', *QP*, 11 (1963), 42–44. On Spazzali Forti, see Ottolini, 'Dal *soutien*', p. 58 and pp. 78–162; Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 205–209, and <<https://www.inventati.org/apm/sspazzali/index.php>> [accessed 16 December 2020].

<sup>134</sup> Spazzali Forti, 'La sinistra', pp. 43–44.

<sup>135</sup> 'Cos'è il Centro Frantz Fanon', *QP*, 11 (1963), 45.

Bisognava dimostrare [...] il legame esistente, al di là delle adesioni sentimentali, fra le lotte di classe dei paesi sviluppati e le lotte di liberazione nazionale condotte dalle masse colonizzate.<sup>136</sup>

Overall, what is possible to derive from the article and its earlier draft is a sense of the informative militant interests of the CDFF and the way in which it fed into the lines of *QP*'s ideological commitment.

### 3.2.2 GIOVANNI GIUDICI'S 'L'UOMO DALLA RONCOLA' (1963): ALLEGORY, ANALOGY, AND LANGUAGE

It is within the matrix of these cultural coordinates that we can understand Giovanni Giudici's important article on Fanon, 'L'uomo dalla roncola'.<sup>137</sup> If Pirelli's engagement represents perhaps the most evident case of cross-contamination between an intellectual coming from an industrial milieu and an active commitment to anticolonial struggles, Giovanni Giudici and Franco Fortini stand out as cases of a different but equally significant kind of involvement in anticolonialism from a literary start point. Fortini and Giudici interpreted Fanon's ideas in a less actively militant yet equally radical way as Pirelli. In the relationship between the two, Fortini, as the oldest, and the one with more consolidated poetic and political experience at the time, probably stood as the 'ideologo'.<sup>138</sup> However, whereas references to Fanon and the Third World can be found in many of Fortini's writings in those years,<sup>139</sup> it was actually Giudici who wrote the most comprehensive essay in *QP* to mark the publication of *The Wretched of the Earth* in the Italian translation by Carlo Cignetti.<sup>140</sup> A close reading of this piece allows for an understanding of Giudici's strikingly original perspective on Fanon's ideas and, once again, draws out and underlines the centrality of the link established by Italian intellectuals of the New Left between social struggles in capitalist countries and the actions and ideas of anticolonial thinkers and movements across the world.

The structure of Giudici's essay in itself reveals a great deal and reflects its author's more general beliefs, in particular his universalism. Giudici starts his reflection on Fanon's ideas by clearly stating his position on how they should be read. In particular, he proposes to interpret the situation in colonial

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<sup>136</sup> 'Cos'è il Centro di Documentazione Frantz Fanon', dattiloscritto in Archivio Privato Giovanni Pirelli, serie Cartelle di Lavoro, fascicolo 13, *Teoria e relazioni*, CL13-0078/79. See Ottolini, 'Giovanni Pirelli', pp. 108–110.

<sup>137</sup> See Giudici, 'L'uomo'.

<sup>138</sup> See Fortini, *Dieci*, p. 13.

<sup>139</sup> See section 4.4 below and Fanon, 'L'uomo'. The image of the 'uomo con la roncola' was still present in Fortini's imagery in 1968: see Franco Fortini, 'Lo spettro cinese', in Franco Fortini, *Saggi ed epigrammi*, ed. by Luca Lenzini (Milan: Mondadori, 2003), pp. 364–370 (p. 367).

<sup>140</sup> On Carlo Cignetti, see Neelam Srivastava, 'Translating Resistance: Fanon and Radical Italy, 1960–1970', in *Translating Frantz Fanon Across Continents and Languages*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Sue-Ann Harding (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 17–39 (p. 25).

countries as described by Fanon as an allegory for the entire world ('come un'allegoria del mondo'),<sup>141</sup> in which – as a result of class division – the same power relationships that characterise colonial contexts are in place universally, even where they do not have explicitly racial connotations. Interestingly, he then quotes in French from Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs*, which was at that time still unpublished in Italy.

Giudici's interpretation poses itself as explicitly complementary to some which preceded it. In particular, he refers to Franco Fornari's and Enrica Collotti Pischel's readings of *The Wretched of the Earth*.<sup>142</sup> Giudici finds elements of interest in both of them, particularly in the fact that they point to the universality of Fanon's discourse: Fornari from a psychoanalytical point of view, Collotti Pischel from a Marxist angle. However, Giudici pushes this universality a further step forward by offering an allegorical reading of power relationships in all societies where a class structure exists:

*De re nostra agitur*, come si dice. E allora l'uomo che al discorso 'cultura occidentale' tira fuori la roncola è, indipendente dal color della pelle, discendente antenato e contemporaneo del 'proletario' del *Manifesto*, che non aveva patria, religione, famiglia, le belle cose 'umane' di cui la classe dominante si predicava accorata paladina e tutrice; e non poteva riconoscerle, perciò, non poteva vederle se non appropriandosene.<sup>143</sup>

Giudici traces a continuity between Hegel's master–servant dialectic evoked in its precise terms (see 'riconoscere', and 'signore' and 'servo' used in the following lines), Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*, and Fanon's final book and does so in order to introduce the question of violence. Furthermore, he isolates and iconises the figure of 'l'uomo dalla roncola' from Fanon's text: 'Now it so happens that when the colonized hear a speech on Western culture they draw their machetes or at least check to see they are close to hand'.<sup>144</sup> Giudici suggests how this character is universalisable. Drawing upon a quote from Maurice Maschino's review of *The Wretched of the Earth*,<sup>145</sup> Giudici questions the very terms of the most common understanding of Fanon's position on violence. Contemporary readers stigmatised anticolonial struggles as violent, and this they certainly were, but those same readers were hypocritical – notes Giudici – in not recognising that colonisers were equally violent, even though this violence was camouflaged in the Western, capitalist world:

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<sup>141</sup> Giudici, 'L'uomo', p. 4.

<sup>142</sup> See Franco Fornari, 'Violenza e colpa (I)', *aut aut*, 74 (1963), 20–61, and Franco Fornari, 'Violenza e colpa (II)', *aut aut*, 75 (1963), 28–65; Enrica Collotti Pischel, 'Fanonismo e questione coloniale', *Problemi del socialismo*, 1962. See also Ferro, 'Quale', pp. 46–56.

<sup>143</sup> Giudici, 'L'uomo', p. 6.

<sup>144</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 8. The Italian 'roncola' renders the French 'machette'.

<sup>145</sup> Maurice Maschino, 'Frantz Fanon: l'itinéraire de la générosité', *Partisans*, 3 (1962), 5–15; on which, see Christoph Kalter, *The Discovery of the Third World: Decolonization and the Rise of the New Left in France, c. 1950–1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 228–237.

Ma con altri nomi e altre forme la stessa violenza, ammorbidita, schermata quanto si voglia, esiste nel mondo non coloniale alla radice di ogni società di classe [...]: si provi a leggere, in luogo di violenza, nevrosi [...].<sup>146</sup>

Language is therefore, in Giudici's view, unneutral, and is politically shaped and employed by dominant classes to hide the violence that inform their actions. Furthermore, violence is a language itself, a code which colonised peoples inherited and absorbed from colonisers and reproduced in their behaviour.<sup>147</sup> Giudici reflects here analogically across continents and types of struggle: his thought moves like a pendulum from colonial to Western contexts and back. A diary note from 3-4 June 1963 about this is revelatory of the long and dialogic process which led Giudici to this analogic structure: 'Passo la serata da Fortini, conversando con lui e con la signora Masi. Si cerca di mettere a punto la corrispondenza "fanoniana" tra le situazioni dei paesi ex coloniali e le situazioni dei nostri paesi. La tentazione delle analogie è forte'.<sup>148</sup>

In 'L'uomo dalla roncola', Giudici frames the problem of colonial and anticolonial violence in dialectic terms.<sup>149</sup> He claims that in order to obtain a negation of colonialism there needs to be a simultaneous negation of both the coloniser and the colonised. It is striking that Giudici describes this dialectic as 'tragic', in the sense in which Lucien Goldmann understood this term in his 1955 book *Le dieu caché*.<sup>150</sup> The reference to Goldmann is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, and on a general level of reflection on the status and function of the literary, it reminds the reader of Giudici's awareness of the link that exists between literature and reality, art and history. Secondly, Giudici's reference to Goldmann is also interesting because it offers an acute insight into the field of cultural production in which 'L'uomo dalla roncola' developed. An Italian translation of *Le dieu caché* by Fortini and Luciano Amodio appeared in 1961. Therefore, the book was available to Giudici not only in a more recent and accessible version than the original, but also in one mediated by his colleague and influential friend Fortini. Fortini himself had reviewed Goldmann's book in 1956, before translating it.<sup>151</sup> In 'Deus absconditus', Fortini emphasises in particular the link established by Goldmann between tragic vision, dialectical thought, and the birth of Marxism. According to Goldmann, in the works of Pascal and Racine, the tragic vision showed itself as the worldview of a specific class, the French *noblesse de robe*. This worldview was dialectically overcome by Marxist progressive ideals, which incorporated the sense of refusal that

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<sup>146</sup> Giudici, 'L'uomo', pp. 6–7. In his 1962 review of Paolo Volponi's industrial novel *Memoriale* published in *Comunità*, Giudici dehistoricises and depoliticises Volponi's novel by linking the troubles experienced by the protagonist not to alienation and class violence but to loneliness. See Giovanni Giudici, 'Il Memoriale di Volponi', *Comunità*, 99 (1962), 86–89 (p. 87) (repr. in Giudici, *La letteratura verso*, pp. 307–312 (p. 309)).

<sup>147</sup> See Fortini and Giudici, *Carteggio*, p. 192.

<sup>148</sup> Fortini and Giudici, *Carteggio*, pp. 196–197.

<sup>149</sup> See Enzo Melandri, *La linea e il circolo: studio logico-filosofico sull'analogia* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2011).

<sup>150</sup> Lucien Goldmann, *Le dieu caché: étude sur la vision tragique dans les 'Pensées' de Pascal et dans le théâtre de Racine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955).

<sup>151</sup> Franco Fortini, 'Deus absconditus', in Fortini, *Saggi*, pp. 226–233.

informed that tragic vision and turned it into something progressive via a process of Hegelian *Aufhebung*. Fortini in particular identifies in Racine's *Phèdre*<sup>152</sup> the 'real protagonist' of *Le diu caché*.

Ma, ripeto, il significato del libro, che mi pare riassunto in *Fedra*, è marxista in un senso profondo [...]: la contraddizione, la mostruosità, l'eslege, il male chiedono, ancora una volta, cittadinanza nel mondo dei viventi [...]. I dannati, e le parti dannate dell'uomo vogliono essere accettate; la contraddizione vuol essere a un tempo vissuta, sormontata e riproposta. La classe operaia inglese di Engels poté incarnare, allora, il 'rifiuto' totale. Da allora, troppe cose son mutate. È difficile che gli operai sindacati di mezza Europa socialdemocratizzata si sentano *les damnés de la terre*. I mostri storici sono altrove, in altri continenti.<sup>153</sup>

This passage from Fortini is particularly relevant for Giudici's reception and mediation of Fanon's ideas because it refers to the semantic field of monstrosity – already present in Goldmann – in relation to 'the wretched of the earth'. This nexus is employed also by Giudici, therefore suggesting Fortini's mediation in the passage from Goldmann to Giudici. Fortini defines monsters in social and psychological terms and includes a reference to '*les damnés de la terre*', the line from 'The Internationale' song alluded to by Fanon in his book's title.<sup>154</sup> Social forces that refuse to comply with the global capitalist and imperialist order are – in Fortini's view – 'mostri' because they are beyond the world of supposed humans. They have to overcome humans precisely by means of denying their false and hypocritical humanity and, in Giudici's view, this dialectic is tragic *à la* Goldmann firstly because of its social dimension and, secondly, because of its radicality. This tragic aspect, only evident in colonial contexts where the conflict is so extreme that it is still visible, is what in Giudici's view marks the difference with the working classes in capitalist countries, where social conflict is concealed and mystified, and workers are lured by consumerism.

As a further confirmation of the link that Giudici identifies between the political and the cultural, he describes the radical mindset change needed to overcome colonialism again as a change in language. As long as the colonised/servant employs the same language as the coloniser/master – which is a violent language and one that the dominant classes have constructed in compliance with their own needs – there is not only occasional incommunicability but what Giudici calls a radical 'non luogo a comunicare'.<sup>155</sup> He defines the language of the colonised as a 'non-linguaggio',<sup>156</sup> confirming thereby the cliché of the

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<sup>152</sup> Racine's tragedy starts with the protagonist, Phaedra, wanting to commit suicide because she experiences an illegitimate love for her stepson, Hippolytus. She is therefore a 'monstrous' creature, in Goldmann and Fortini's words, who asks for acceptance in the world.

<sup>153</sup> Fortini, 'Deus', p. 232. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>154</sup> See also Franco Fortini, 'I dannati della terra', in Fortini, *Dieci*, pp. 193–199; Luigi Manconi, *La musica è leggera: racconto su mezzo secolo di canzoni* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2012), pp. 161–162; Robert Bernasconi, 'Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* as the Fulfillment of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*', *Sartre Studies International*, 16.2 (2010), 36–46 (p. 42).

<sup>155</sup> Giudici, 'L'uomo', p. 8.

<sup>156</sup> Giudici, 'L'uomo', p. 8.

illiteracy of the colonised. However, he reverses this illiteracy in a positive and prospective way: it is precisely their extraneousness from the language of the colonisers that preserves the revolutionary potential of the colonised. Neocolonialism, the situation in which colonial dynamics are reproduced even without the formal structure of colonialism, results – according to Fanon and Giudici – from the incapability of the ‘servants’ to renounce the language of the master and from their tendency to imitate it.<sup>157</sup>

The importance of this aspect for Giudici’s poetics in the 1960s, especially with reference to industrial literature, emerges again from his 1965 diary, where he notes on 14<sup>th</sup> June that ‘L’uomo che non parlava la mia lingua mi aspetta al varco’,<sup>158</sup> and on 23<sup>rd</sup> June that ‘Fortini mi mette in guardia, vuol farmi una predica. “No – gli dico – non faro l’autoalbinosaluggia”. Il mio personaggio nuovo è l’uomo che non parlava la mia lingua’.<sup>159</sup> The context of these notes is a reflection on the reception of Giudici’s poetic collection *La vita in versi* published in 1965. He developed, in those years, a desire to change his language and characters which resulted, as Laura Neri puts it, in ‘*O beatrice*, che esce nel 1972, [e] sperimenta la prova di un rapporto di estraneità tra l’io e la lingua’.<sup>160</sup> From this, we derive the idea that Giudici’s writing concerning industrial societies (ironically evoked by the expression ‘autoalbinosaluggia’ which refers to the linguistic ambiguity of Volponi’s first industrial character in *Memoriale*) was deeply affected by his reflections on language and culture in Fanon. Once again, therefore, politics and literature appear to be intimately linked with industrial and anticolonial motives.

In conclusion, what makes Giudici’s piece so powerful here is its broad allegorical scope, its analogical approach, its resonance and consonance with Fortini’s theses, and the extraordinary focus on cultural aspects, which show the implications and relevance of these aspects for Giudici, but also for the intellectual milieu which gathered around *QP*.

### 3.2.3 BEYOND ‘L’UOMO DALLA RONCOLA’

If ‘L’uomo dalla roncola’ represents a milestone in *QP*’s reception of anticolonialism, the pervasiveness and force of Fanon’s thought for Giudici’s writing in *QP* is confirmed by the fact that Fanon is also mentioned in two of Giudici’s pieces from 1963 and 1964. Reviewing Carlo Fruttero and Franco Lucentini’s anthology of American literature, *La verità sul caso Smith*, Giudici reflects on culture’s ability to

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<sup>157</sup> See *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. by Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

<sup>158</sup> Fortini and Giudici, *Carteggio*, p. 212.

<sup>159</sup> Fortini and Giudici, *Carteggio*, p. 212.

<sup>160</sup> Laura Neri, ‘La disarticolazione della lingua in *O beatrice*’, *Oblio*, 28 (2017), 117–128 (p. 117).

constantly overcome itself and incidentally recalls that ‘Uno scrittore come Fanon può servire a ricordarcelo’.<sup>161</sup> In 1964, in ‘Le opposizioni di sua maestà’, Giudici further claims that:

Uno scrittore come Frantz Fanon, per esempio, ci ha costretto a riconsiderare la vecchia pretesa di giudicare i problemi del mondo africano secondo i canoni della nostra tradizione occidentale; e ci ha indotti, per analogia, a riconsiderare il punto di vista della lotta di classe finora e tuttora condizionato dalla cultura della classe dominante. [...] La letteratura, ci impone dunque il compito di gestirlo nello spirito di una autentica trasgressione della norma e pertanto nel modo meno complementare possibile agli istituti vigenti, che coincide in definitiva con la ricerca, anche a questo livello, della verità delle cose e nostra.<sup>162</sup>

By restating the analogical value of Fanon’s thought for Western industrialised countries, Giudici reflects on the necessity of a renewal in literature in terms of protest. This renewal could only happen through a rupture with existing literary codes and institutions – equivalent to the autonomous political proposal of *QP*: to detach from institutions and parties and pursue the research of new forms and practices.

Such an insistence on Giudici is justified by the fact that his reception of Fanon is very much linked to literature. This circumstance allows us to bridge from this section to the next, which moves on to examine literary periodicals in which colonialism and anticolonialism were employed as discursive strategies to comment on Italian industry. However, *QP*’s interest in anticolonial struggles is confirmed by many other contributions to the journals, not only Giudici’s. Paola Spazzali Forti’s articles continued to point out the inadequacy of the European left in relation to anticolonialism.<sup>163</sup> In 1964, a discussion was opened about the effectiveness of anticolonial struggles from a Marxist angle. The first intervention was by Valentino Campi, who claimed – from a Leninist perspective – that wars of liberation in recently decolonised countries had failed their socialist goal, ending up confirming the bourgeois capitalist order.<sup>164</sup> This was caused by their reliance on peasants, who are not, under a Marxist perspective, a revolutionary force. Edoarda Masi remarked in reply that Campi’s analysis misunderstood the Marxist nexus of theory and practice and showed little awareness of the changes that had taken place between 1920, when Lenin’s theses on this aspect were formulated, and the 1960s.<sup>165</sup> However, Masi recognised too that anticolonial revolutions in some countries had missed out on their socialist perspective – like the Resistance in Italy to which anticolonial revolutions were self-

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<sup>161</sup> Giovanni Giudici, ‘L’ambigua verità sul caso Smith’, *QP*, 13 (1963), 30–32 (p. 30); Carlo Fruttero and Franco Lucentini, *La verità sul caso Smith: antologia della nuova narrativa americana* (Milan: Mondadori, 1963).

<sup>162</sup> Giovanni Giudici, ‘Le opposizioni di sua maestà’, *QP*, 16 (1964), 24–29 (p. 29) (repr. in Giudici, *La letteratura verso*, pp. 199–206).

<sup>163</sup> See for example Spazzali Forti, ‘La sinistra’. On this aspect, also see Daniel Mothé, *Journal d’un ouvrier (1956–1958)* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1959).

<sup>164</sup> Valentino Campi, ‘Rivoluzione contadina e rivoluzione proletaria’, *QP*, 19–20 (1964), 5–15.

<sup>165</sup> Edoarda Masi, ‘Tesi teoriche e pratica politica’, *QP*, 21 (1964), 21–24.

reflectively likened. These bitter considerations<sup>166</sup> make *QP*'s line closer to *Quaderni rossi*'s and mark a shift in attention from anticolonial struggles to the Civil Rights Movement, which represented a potentially revolutionary force acting within a capitalist country. However, *QP*'s interest in anticolonialism continued: the text of Fanon's speech at the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris was published in 1965 and the discussions on decolonisation continued in later years.<sup>167</sup>

#### 4. LITERARY PERIODICALS

##### 4.1 THE TARTAR HORSEMEN

After the above mapping of the treatment of colonial and anticolonial questions in two sub-clusters of Italian periodicals in different ways related to industry, the focus will now move to three major literary periodicals in which industrial writers were involved and in which the discussion on literature and industry was grounded and developed: *Officina* (1955–1959), *Il menabò* (1959–1967), and *Questo e altro* (1962–1964). It will be shown how in these journals – whose focus was mostly literary and broadly cultural – colonial and anticolonial matters were not always addressed directly but rather emerged as tropes. These colonial and anticolonial tropes were employed self-reflectively by writers in order to comment on industrialisation in Italy and to represent their liminal and 'double' positionality as intellectuals caught between the new industrial society and its ideologies, on the one hand, and anticapitalist or pre-industrial cultures on the other.

A starting point for this reflection – and a frame which strengthens this reading – can be found in a letter sent by Franco Fortini to Vittorio Sereni in March 1963. While discussing the poetics of the journal *Questo e altro*, in this letter Fortini evokes an image of Tartar horsemen from a poem by T. S. Eliot ('The Wind Sprang Up at Four O'Clock', translated by Giorgio Bassani).<sup>168</sup> In the context of Fortini's argument in the letter, the Tartar horsemen refer to uncanny presences that threaten the status quo:

La realtà ci illude, presentandosi come omogenea, [...] e l'«Altro» sempre più respinto in una zona indefinita, dove i cavallanti tartari agitano le loro lance... [...]. Io, a quei cavallanti tartari – chiamali Eterno Iddio, Morte e Dannazione, Popoli Sottosviluppati & Coloniali, Cino–Cubani o Cubo–Cinesi; metafore per dire qualche

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<sup>166</sup> Confirmed in Paola Spazzali, 'Il colpo di Stato nel Ghana', *QP*, 27 (1966), 42–53.

<sup>167</sup> See Frantz Fanon, 'Razzismo e cultura', *QP*, 21 (1965), 58–67; 'Alcuni dati su un secolo di razzismo in U.S.A.', *QP*, 22 (1965), 46–49; Giorgio Cesarano, 'Il polso del pioniere', *QP*, 22 (1965), 49; Renato Solmi, 'La nuova sinistra americana: lo sviluppo del movimento di liberazione dei negri nel sud e i nuovi movimenti di azione sociale negli Stati Uniti', trans. by Roberto Giammanco, *QP*, 25 (1965), 8–96; 'Dall'autobiografia di Malcolm X', 27 (1966), 30–40.

<sup>168</sup> See T. S. Eliot, 'The Wind Sprang Up at Four O'Clock', in T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909–1950* (London: Faber, 1969), pp. 90–91; *Poeti americani, 1662–1945*, ed. by Gabriele Baldini (Turin: De Silva, 1949), pp. 382–383.

cosa che è (idest: dev'essere) qui, fra noi, alle porte di casa o della città... – ci credo fermamente, *en ceste foy je veuil vivre et mourir*, e se non ci fossero loro, nello spazio bianco fra un verso e l'altro, allora sarei davvero solo un cembalo risonante.<sup>169</sup>

The intertextual density of these lines (from Eliot to François Villon and St Paul) not only demonstrates the poetic complicity between Fortini and Sereni but is particularly interesting as employed to comment on the importance of the non-literary for the literary, of the 'Altro' for the 'Questo'. What emerges from Fortini's words is a permeation of the two realms – the literary and the extraliterary – without which literature would be pure, meaningless sound ('solo un cembalo risonante'). The underdeveloped countries and peoples, those who have been colonised ('Popoli Sottosviluppati & Coloniali') and have undertaken their decolonisation process, are a metaphor for a force – an uncanny force – acting in the West and within its individuals as well. They are a powerful incarnation of the 'Altro' – they are, ultimately, the 'cavallanti tartari'. We can argue that this image from Fortini can be used to frame the matrix between industrial writing and anticolonial discourse, along with Giudici's allegorical reading of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* presented above. For both Fortini and Giudici, at the beginning of the 1960s, decolonising peoples and countries were points of focus and forces that questioned Europe and Eurocentrism, but they were also figures of something happening within Europe. Keeping this in mind, our attention will now be turned to the ways in which colonial tropes were employed by industrial writers in these literary journals, as tools to reflect on Italy's industrialisation and their own positionality in this context.

#### 4.2 OFFICINA: UNDERDEVELOPMENT, PARISIAN AUNTS, AND BLACK MASKS

*Officina* was founded in 1955 as a result of the initiative of a group of former schoolmates from the Liceo Galvani of Bologna: among them, Francesco Leonetti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Roberto Roversi.<sup>170</sup> Twelve issues of the journal came out between 1955 and 1958, and a new series (which counted only two issues) was published in 1959. The focus of the review was mostly literary and in particular aimed at collectively overcoming hermetic and neorealist poetics and looking for new forms of literary coming-to-terms with reality. Although the debate on literature and industry was rarely presented or developed as such in this journal, many of its premises found a place there.<sup>171</sup> The questions of the role of poetry and literature in society and the positionality of anticapitalist intellectuals were particularly urgent for the journal's editors

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<sup>169</sup> Lampugnani Nigri, *Questo e altro*, pp. 38–39.

<sup>170</sup> On the genesis and development of *Officina*, see Ferretti, 'Officina', pp. 3–123; Billiani, 'Officina'; Bagnoli, 'Una Officina'.

<sup>171</sup> See, for example, Gianni Scalia, 'La letteratura di partito', *Officina*, n.s., 2 (1959), 51–56, and Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Marxists?', *Officina*, n.s., 2 (1959), 69–72 (repr. in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), pp. 85–91).

and contributors. Out of all the discussions which took place in the pages of *Officina*, which were often polemical and involved exchanges developed across essays and articles,<sup>172</sup> there are several cases that crossed or touched on colonial questions or were filtered through colonial tropes.

The first text that is taken into consideration is Franco Fortini's 'L'altezza della situazione, o perché si scrivono poesie' (1955).<sup>173</sup> This short note was published to accompany some poetic texts by Fortini in the same issue and contains a reflection on the relations between poetry writing and the culture industry. Fortini comes to the paradoxical conclusion that the only way to 'desacralise' poetry was by writing it. The point of interest here is Fortini's argument about the links between literature and capitalism:

Vedete giustizia: un po' per l'imperfetto sviluppo del nostro capitalismo, un po' per l'importazione – ad uso dei popoli sottosviluppati – dei vecchi modelli di individualismo prodotti tanti anni fa oltreoceano, seguita ad aver corso da noi (non solo nella pubblicità delle scuole per corrispondenza ma anche nelle propedeutiche alla poesia) l'immagine del ragazzo che comincia col vendere i giornali e risparmiare il mezzo dollaro per poi diventare Edison o Ford, cioè Eliot o Thomas Mann.<sup>174</sup>

The mechanisms of artistic production are allegorically and ironically likened to industrial production in order to show in turn the ideological and mystifying character of such a comparison, based on a naive reliance on individualism in artistic as well as industrial production. Italy is identified as an underdeveloped country in relation to the US, and the cultural hegemony exerted by the latter onto the former is pointed out. This is only one strand of the allegorical interest of industrial writers in cultural 'colonialism'.

In the years which followed, *Officina*, in its restless research for new forms and discursive strategies, also presented some early poetic works by individuals who would later become part of the neo-avantgarde movement Gruppo 63, a group which was largely hostile to the *Officina* project: namely Edoardo Sanguineti, Elio Pagliarani, Alberto Arbasino, and Massimo Ferretti, among others. Arbasino's poem 'L'apprendista Tebaide', published in *Officina* in 1957 as part of a 'Piccola antologia neo-sperimentale', is of particular interest here.<sup>175</sup> The poem is a sophisticated, picaresque, and almost ekphrastic description of life in a place which can be easily identified as Paris. Intellectuals and socialites gravitating around Paris are either explicitly mentioned or alluded to, in a phantasmagoric linguistic pastiche which could work as a guessing game for erudite Italian readers, who could recognise most – if

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<sup>172</sup> See, for example, Mariamargherita Scotti, "Una polemica in versi": Fortini, Pasolini e la crisi del '56', *Studi storici*, 45.4 (2004), 991–1021.

<sup>173</sup> Franco Fortini, 'L'altezza della situazione, o perché si scrivono poesie', *Officina*, 3 (1955), 99–104.

<sup>174</sup> Fortini, 'L'altezza', p. 100.

<sup>175</sup> See Alberto Arbasino, 'L'apprendista Tebaide', in 'Piccola antologia neo-sperimentale', *Officina*, 9-10 (1957), 347–358 (pp. 347–350).

not all – of the references. The overall tone of the composition is ludic, therefore, and ‘un-engaged’. What is to be noted here, however, is Arbasino’s quick and almost casual reference to the positionality of French intellectuals towards Algeria in those years. In a self-contained stanza of ‘L’apprendista Tebaide’, Arbasino claims that:

E di qui puoi vedere  
tutti quelli che vanno in Algeria  
a fare la zia.<sup>176</sup>

In the hypervisual dimension of the poem, structured around the continued anaphoric use of the verb ‘vedere’, Paris is also the place from which one might have a privileged perspective on the attitude of progressive intellectuals in relation to the Algerian conflict, which would see an escalation precisely between 1957 and 1958. Intellectuals, who are not mentioned as such but who, in the context of the poem, are the most obvious reference point of ‘tutti quelli’, are likened to aunts in their protective, paternalist, and at the same time nosy attitude towards their nephews or nieces, who can either be identified in the French soldiers there, the Franco-Algerian *pieds noir*, or the Algerians. These three lines are also interesting in so far as they resonate with Arbasino’s words on Algeria in *Parigi o cara*, his 1960 travel book about his encounters with intellectuals in Paris.<sup>177</sup>

In Massimo Ferretti’s poem ‘In trattoria’ – which was also included in *Officina*’s ‘Piccola antologia neosperimentale’ – the bourgeois milieu of the customers of a *trattoria* is described, from which Ferretti feels irremediably estranged:

In questa trattoria di gente stanca  
dove mangiare significa reagire,  
dove la grazia d’una dattilografa  
si percepisce nel tono delicato  
d’un piatto di fagioli chiesto tiepido,  
[...]  
non ho ragione d’essere contento  
se il cameriere lieto della mancia,  
leggendo la commedia del mio viso

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<sup>176</sup> Arbasino, ‘L’apprendista’, p. 347. This poem was later expanded and included in Arbasino’s collection, *Matinée*, with a significant variant: ‘Algeria’ became ‘Tunisia’. See Alberto Arbasino, *Romanzi e racconti*, ed. by Raffaele Manica, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 2010), II, pp. 1265–1299. I am grateful to my colleague Luigi Pinton for pointing out this variant and for the interesting discussions we had about these three lines.

<sup>177</sup> See the chapters ‘Il galà dei parà’ and ‘Una sera da Aron’ in Alberto Arbasino, *Parigi o cara* (Milan: Adelphi, 1995), pp. 114–134.

m'ha detto che ho una maschera da negro?<sup>178</sup>

Ferretti, at that stage an eager reader of Rimbaud and a sharp observer of society from the disenchanted perspective of an individual with a heart condition, looks at the conventional world surrounding him with a smiling or laughing 'maschera da negro'. This 'mask', which resonates with and reverses Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, is the emblem of a subject who – precisely because of his or her detached intellectual position – is able to sneer at the clichés displayed in front of him or her.<sup>179</sup>

The theme of a black identity 'chosen' as a literary and political position returns in Pier Paolo Pasolini's renowned 'African' epigram 'Alla Francia', first published in *Officina* in 1959:

Ho la lieta sorpresa di vedere che assomiglio  
a Sekou Touré il Presidente della Guinea:  
il naso schiacciato e gli occhi vivi.  
Anche lui risalito al grigiore della storia  
da baratri di puro spirito selvaggio:  
negro proprio come era biondo Rimbaud.  
Forse a chi è nato nella selva, da pura madre,  
a essere solo, a nutrire solo gioia,  
tocca rendersi conto della vita reale:  
rinunciare a obbedire al sesso per pensare,  
finire d'essere fanciullo per diventare cittadino,  
tradire gli Dei per lottare con Marx!<sup>180</sup>

Like Ferretti, Pasolini identifies a resemblance between himself and the persona of a black man.<sup>181</sup> In this case, the term of comparison is not generic, unlike Ferretti's 'maschera da negro', but specifically refers to the first President of the Republic of Guinea, Ahmed Sékou Touré, elected in 1958 and a pioneering figure in the decolonisation of Africa. The analogy between the two figures is not limited to physical resemblance. In Pasolini's view, he shares with Touré an orphic posture, a savage connection to nature, and the call from history in the form of a political commitment that they both felt they had to answer. Once again, therefore, a black, decolonising subjectivity is employed analogically to comment on the intellectual positionality of a writer in a capitalist context. Pasolini would further identify himself in

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<sup>178</sup> Massimo Ferretti, 'In trattoria', *Officina*, 9-10 (1957), 357.

<sup>179</sup> See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto, 2008).

<sup>180</sup> Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Alla Francia', *Officina*, n.s., 2 (1959), 38 (repr. in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Tutte le poesie*, ed. by Walter Siti, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 2003), I, p. 1007).

<sup>181</sup> See Trento, 'Pier Paolo Pasolini and Pan-Meridional', p. 61.

decolonial subjectivities: two interconnected examples are his ‘Nota sul *Menabò* 4’ and his poem ‘L’uomo di Bandung’ (see section 4.3 below).

In the same issue of *Officina*, Francesco Leonetti published ‘La liquidazione’, a poem about the status of the intellectual and writer in which he likens his class to a colony, dominated by scientific culture.<sup>182</sup> Again, the reference does not inform the whole poem but is punctual and almost incidental, as in Arbasino’s ‘L’apprendista Tebaide’. In the context of a poetic reflection on the hegemony that scientific culture and rationalism exerted over the humanities, Leonetti claims in ‘La liquidazione’ that:

Avviene certo che si comprova  
nei fatti la concezione più nuova:  
senza automi né esplosioni  
una colonia diviene,  
con indigeni santi,  
senza moderna coscienza,  
la nostra regione  
anche in nome di Croce e di Gramsci...  
E predispone le rampe dei lanci.<sup>183</sup>

In Leonetti’s view, the hegemonic power of positivistic ideologies colonised humanistic culture, turning its representatives into colonised subjects. These ‘natives’ – writers, intellectuals, humanists – were indeed ‘santi’: they were uncorrupted by modernity and claimed among their ideal fathers Benedetto Croce and Gramsci, who both – from different political perspectives – rejected the ideology and ethics of Positivism.<sup>184</sup>

This uncomfortable positionality in relation to the transformations that Italy was undergoing during its ‘economic miracle’ was even more explicitly described by Pasolini in his essay titled ‘*Marxisants*’. Here he sketches the coordinates and direction in which militant literature aiming to address the problem of alienation should be moving – coordinates that, ultimately, point to the set of problems with which the two issues of *Il menabò* on industry and literature would deal two years later:

Al letterato di questo periodo transitorio, si presenta, in concreto, [...] una immensa quantità di materiale: la scala fenomenologica è vastissima, in questo mondo complesso e antitetico, [...] in una società che, in un momento di particolare calma, efficienza e quasi ottimismo, è, al contrario, alle soglie della sua più grande crisi.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Francesco Leonetti, ‘La liquidazione’, *Officina*, n.s., 2 (1959), 103–107.

<sup>183</sup> Leonetti, ‘La liquidazione’, p. 106.

<sup>184</sup> See also Francesco Leonetti, ‘Un supplemento di società’, *Il menabò*, 5 (1962), 46–68 (p. 47).

<sup>185</sup> Pasolini, ‘*Marxisants*’, pp. 71–72.

### 4.3 *IL MENABÒ*: THRESHOLDS, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND CUNNING DOVES

Founded by Elio Vittorini and Italo Calvino in 1959, *Il menabò* was published by Einaudi and, with Vittorini and Calvino as editors, it came out with irregular frequency until 1967, when the publication was definitively interrupted after Vittorini's death.<sup>186</sup> Our attention will be focused here on the two issues (4 and 5) that appeared in 1961 and 1962 respectively, and were devoted to relations between industry and literature. They have since become the central focal point of all histories of the industry and literature debate in Italy and they are also those in which the analogical and allegorical links between industrial and colonial questions appear most vividly.

The role of Vittorini and Calvino as cultural organisers and catalysts of a network of writers and intellectuals – especially as a result of their pivotal positions at Einaudi – made *Il menabò* a hub for discussions of many state-of-the-art literary questions in those years. From his well-established position within the culture sector, Vittorini felt the urge to launch a debate on what the industrialisation of Italy meant for Italian writers, in terms of motifs, structures, genres, language, and ultimately poetics. The change that Italy was undergoing was systemic and evident at all levels of society, and militant literature could not avoid confrontation with such a transformed reality. With increasing literacy and levels of education across the country, culture became more accessible to a wider public as well as cheaper, due to mass production in the culture industries. This was perceived as a risk by 'aristocratic' intellectuals such as Elémire Zolla, who published his *Eclissi dell'intellettuale* in 1959, shortly before the debate on industry and literature was launched by *Il menabò*.<sup>187</sup> A chapter in *Eclissi dell'intellettuale*, tellingly titled 'Industria e letteratura', frames the debate and provides its basic coordinates. In Zolla's view, in the face of the rise of industry, the intellectual found him/herself at a crossroads: 'Al primo bivio si aprono due strade, si sceglierà l'una o l'altra a seconda del giudizio che si dà del mondo industriale. Lo si può respingere o accettare'.<sup>188</sup> Zolla further identifies the risks due to the alluring aspect of the culture industry, which seduces its victims:

Per la sua persecuzione fanatica della libertà e dell'umano non ha più bisogno di chiedere soccorso ai sofismi plausibili, ovvero a un'arma infida fra le sue mani, poiché ormai dispone di un apparato industriale, un'Alcina che quietamente seduce le sue vittime sussurrando: 'Io ammazzerò il vostro tempo'.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See Zinato, *Letteratura*, pp. 41–53; Francesco Bortolotto, "'Caro Vitt': Francesco Leonetti racconta il *Menabò*", in *Sistema*, ed. by Bortolotto and others, pp. 105–119.

<sup>187</sup> Elémire Zolla, *Eclissi dell'intellettuale* (Milan: Bompiani, 1959).

<sup>188</sup> Zolla, *Eclissi*, p. 62.

<sup>189</sup> Zolla, *Eclissi*, p. 198.

In this context, the counterpart of the isolated and metaphorically exiled artist is a relatively new, all-embracing anthropological creature: ‘l’uomo massa’.<sup>190</sup> Instead of describing the mass as a passive entity, which receives the products of the culture industry without exercising any power over it, Zolla recovers an image indirectly connected to colonial discourse when he claims that, as a son of the bourgeoisie:

L’uomo massa è l’uomo sbarcato dai secoli oscuri in un’isola che egli domina appieno. Lo si è scambiato per un Calibano indurito nell’idiozia [...] ancor più del suo progenitore borghese. Ma l’uomo massa non è un Calibano, [...] è un Prospero che impiega i suoi poteri per abbrutirsi.<sup>191</sup>

We would expect the masses to be described as a collective social actor of exploited Calibans. But Zolla moves a step further. He depicts a society which is only apparently horizontal. In this context, the ‘uomo massa’ is not shipwrecked by chance on a metaphorical cultural island, but this cultural landscape is built for him. His alleged freedom is actually a residual one. He is made a Prospero to flatter him and to prevent him from developing the will to revolt. The real Caliban is the artist, marginalised – if not crushed – by the pervasive power of the culture industry. Zolla’s condemnation of so-called popular culture derived from the Adornian consideration that its nature was, in fact, by no means popular. It was a culture that someone else conceived, produced, and then superimposed onto the masses. This radical rejection of mass culture excluded any possible contamination of the intellectual.

This radical position was rethought and debated in *Il menabò* 4 and 5. The intellectuals who participated in the debate launched by the journal were all in some way involved in industry and even those who did not earn a living from it shared the impulse to interact with it in order to understand it better. A key example is Vittorio Sereni, whose poem ‘Una visita in fabbrica’ opens *Il menabò* 4, evoking his experience as a visitor at a Pirelli factory in the 1950s.<sup>192</sup> This is far from the immersive model of contamination by the reality of the factory proposed by Simone Weil and yet, even from this superficial contact, Sereni is infected by the distance between the intellectual and the working classes and their irreducible ‘bilingualism’:

Ma è voce degli altri, operaia, nella fase calante  
[...].

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<sup>190</sup> This term can be traced at least as far back as José Ortega y Gasset’s *La rebelión de las masas*, published in Spain in 1930 and only translated into Italian in 1962 as José Ortega y Gasset, *La ribellione delle masse*, trans. by Salvatore Battaglia (Bologna: il Mulino, 1962).

<sup>191</sup> Zolla, *Eclissi*, p. 102. See also Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, trans. by Pamela Powesland (London: Methuen, 1956), published in France in 1950.

<sup>192</sup> See Vittorio Sereni, ‘Una visita in fabbrica’, *Il menabò*, 4 (1961), 7–11 (repr. in Vittorio Sereni, *Poesie*, ed. by Dante Isella (Milan: Mondadori, 1995), pp. 123–128); Dante Isella, ‘Apparato critico’, in Sereni, *Poesie*, pp. 267–888 (pp. 531–546); Oscar Schiavone, ‘Lettura di “Una visita in fabbrica” di Vittorio Sereni’, *Italianistica*, 35.3 (2006), 99–119.

O voce ora abolita, già divisa, o anima bilingue  
tra vibrante avvenire e tempo dissipato  
o spenta musica già torreggiante e triste.<sup>193</sup>

The factory siren, upon which the poem opens, evokes the alternative voice of workers, inexorably ‘other’ to the poet and double, split, bilingual. The lyric ‘I’ moves closer to the workers, to their hell, but at the same time he knows he can always escape. Workers’ lives remain unknown to the bourgeois intellectual: ‘che sai di loro | che ne sappiamo tu e io, ignari dell’arte loro...’.<sup>194</sup> However, the lyric ‘I’ acknowledges the vanity of that movement towards the workers: ‘l’ansia di dirsi uguali... | un debole argomento’.<sup>195</sup> These words resonate powerfully with Fanon’s words on the position of the colonised intellectuals in relation to their people:

The colonized intellectual who returns to his people through works of art behaves in fact like a foreigner. Sometimes he will not hesitate to use the local dialects to demonstrate his desire to be as close to the people as possible, but the ideas he expresses, the preoccupations that haunt him are in no way related to the daily lot of the men and women of his country.<sup>196</sup>

Similarly, the dialectical ‘otherness’ of the critical industrial intellectual in relation to the working classes is one of the most widely commented-upon aspects of the whole question of industry and literature, and the trope of bilingualism will be touched upon further in section 4.4 below.

Immediately after Sereni’s poem, Vittorini introduced into *Il menabò* 4 the core set of questions at stake in the issue. These can be summarised as the opportunity for literature to engage, in content and form, with the pervasive phenomenon of industrialisation. Vittorini hoped for a renewal of the novel and of poetry to reflect the new industrial reality. He aimed to overcome the elegiac trend that was so widespread in those years. The problem is posed in *Il menabò* in terms of possession: industry remained to intellectuals a ‘mondo imposseduto’,<sup>197</sup> difficult to grasp.<sup>198</sup>

In this respect, a consonance can be detected between Vittorini’s words and Ottiero Ottieri’s contribution to *Il menabò* 4, ‘Taccuino industriale’, later expanded and published in book form as *La linea gotica*.<sup>199</sup> Ottieri, like Sereni, points out here precisely the difficulty for the writer in establishing relations

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<sup>193</sup> Sereni, ‘Una visita’, pp. 7–8.

<sup>194</sup> Sereni, ‘Una visita’, p. 8.

<sup>195</sup> Sereni, ‘Una visita’, p. 9.

<sup>196</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 160.

<sup>197</sup> Vittorini, ‘Industria’, p. 13.

<sup>198</sup> See also Elio Vittorini, *Le due tensioni: appunti per una ideologia della letteratura*, ed. by Dante Isella (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1967).

<sup>199</sup> Ottiero Ottieri, ‘Taccuino industriale’, *Il menabò*, 4 (1961), 21–94, revised and expanded as Ottiero Ottieri, *La linea gotica: taccuino 1948–1958* (Milan: Bompiani, 1962). See also Claudia Bonsi, ‘Dal “Taccuino industriale” a *La linea gotica* di Ottiero

with the working classes and in describing their conditions inside the factories. It is, in his view, a question of both access and language. He decided to experience factory work for himself and in 1953 was eventually employed in the Human Resources department of Olivetti, tasked with selecting prospective workers. This provided him with the opportunity to cross the threshold of the factory gate, to enter the industrial apparatus and experience its mechanisms from the inside.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, Ottieri realised that the gap between his class and that of the workers was also a linguistic one:

La mancanza di radici comuni con la gente della fabbrica e di un linguaggio comune crea inoltre una difficoltà di scrivere su X. In fondo, non ne è mai nato né un saggio né un romanzo. Credo, soprattutto, per mancanza di assimilazione e di 'memoria'.<sup>201</sup>

Intellectuals – in Ottieri's view – lived in Ivrea as exiles ('la loro vita privata rimane da esuli'),<sup>202</sup> although they tried to pursue what in Gramsci's words would have been an 'andata al popolo'.<sup>203</sup> Their uncomfortable position of displacement and double belonging is captured by Ottieri in a powerful image of liminality:

Il dottor M., grosso dirigente che tratta con la CI [Commissione Interna], è marxista; sta in piedi su un crinale sottilissimo da cui vede le opposte sponde, in una sorta di follia. Un minimo spostamento da una parte o dall'altra: e diventa un rivoluzionario, diventa un uomo della Direzione. [...] Con una intelligenza vertiginosa, è in una posizione vertiginosa, e non conosco nessuno che rappresenti, con più acuto intelletto e coraggio di lui, un dato più estremo della nostra situazione marxistico-borghese.<sup>204</sup>

On the threshold between workers and managers, this unnamed character embodies the condition of many Marxist intellectuals, including Ottieri himself, struggling to become 'organic' to any institution or subject. Crucially, the separation between workers and intellectuals is later described in colonial terms:

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Ottieri: un viaggio testuale', *Autografo*, 49 (2013), 37–57, and Fabrizio Di Maio, *Ottiero Ottieri: un caso letterario* (Rome: Carocci, 2014), pp. 19–36.

<sup>200</sup> In his 'Taccuino', Ottieri mentions Vasco Pratolini as an exemplary case of an intellectual who refused to get to know the factory from the inside: 'Pratolini, scrittore socialista, non sapeva nulla di una grande fabbrica settentrionale, e non ha voluto visitare la nostra! Credo, per difendersi' (Ottieri, 'Taccuino', p. 33).

<sup>201</sup> Ottieri, 'Taccuino', p. 35. 'X' stands for 'Ivrea', where Olivetti was based.

<sup>202</sup> Ottieri, 'Taccuino', p. 35.

<sup>203</sup> See Neelam Srivastava, 'The Travels of the Organic Intellectual: The Black Colonized Intellectual in George Padmore and Frantz Fanon', in *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, ed. by Srivastava and Bhattacharya, pp. 55–79.

<sup>204</sup> Ottieri, 'Taccuino', p. 51. For a theory of intellectual exile, see Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage, 1994).

Così la sera, la notte, X è deserta, con piccoli circoli di intellettuali, o di ingegneri, o di ragionieri, chiusi in difesa, in una atmosfera coloniale. E la classe operaia, fuori del lavoro, si disperde, senza occasioni di nessun vero incontro con gli intellettuali.<sup>205</sup>

And in *La linea gotica*, Ottieri would include this further reference:

La mia curiosità è la mia ambiguità, la mia ambiguità è la mia curiosità. Dopo cena mi aggrego alla spedizione culturale che ha deciso un ultimo tentativo di colonizzazione di un paesetto vicino a X: paesetto depresso, tana di poveri, emigranti veneti e meridionali, che resiste alla civiltà, zona selvaggia, oasi perduta e ribelle.<sup>206</sup>

This industrial version of the cultural ivory tower remains impenetrable and there is no real possibility of cross-contamination between classes. This is indeed very similar to what happened in colonial worlds according to Fanon: ‘The colonized world is a compartmentalized world [...], a world divided in two’.<sup>207</sup> In the para-colonial context of Ivrea as it emerges from Ottieri’s words, the risk of paternalism is always around the corner, also because intellectuals voice factory workers in their works.<sup>208</sup>

An even more iconic representation of this uncomfortable intellectual positionality – and one which is deeply connected to our discourse on anticolonial and third-world subjectivities – is found in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s ‘Nota sul *Menabò* 4’ (1961).<sup>209</sup> This brief note is strikingly significant as it flags up many of the points raised here. Everything is already condensed in its opening paragraph:

Che cosa possa io dire del *Menabò* 4, non è ben chiaro. Mi par d’essere un delegato della Nigeria, o di Zanzibar, mandato qui come osservatore. La mia capitale è Bandung. E io, povero uomo di colore, sarei qui, sconvolto dal rispetto, davanti ai problemi sottoposti alla mia osservazione. Bandung è ancora tutta immersa nel Vecchio ordine ‘naturale’, tutta consistente in oggetti e gesti ‘naturali’.<sup>210</sup>

Pasolini seems puzzled by a question from which he feels extraneous. To illustrate this extraneity, he allegorically locates himself in the position of an observer coming from a radically ‘other’ context, the

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<sup>205</sup> Ottieri, ‘Taccuino’, p. 57.

<sup>206</sup> Ottieri, ‘La linea’, p. 398.

<sup>207</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 3.

<sup>208</sup> On this specific aspect, see Ottieri, ‘Taccuino’, pp. 38, 41, and 80.

<sup>209</sup> Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘Nota sul *Menabò* 4’, in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla letteratura e sull’arte*, ed. by Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), II, pp. 2318–2320. Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude note that this short text remained unpublished but give no details on its genesis (see Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude, ‘Note e notizie sui testi’, in Pasolini, *Saggi sulla letteratura*, II, pp. 3001–3035 (p. 3006)). One possible explanation is found in a letter of January 1962 to Franco Fortini, in which Pasolini alludes to ‘quella serata sul *Menabò* industriale’ (Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Lettere 1955–1975*, ed. by Nico Naldini (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), pp. 499–500). The presence of the deictic ‘qui’ in Pasolini’s ‘Nota’ – which gives the sense of a speech delivered on a specific occasion – makes us think of the ‘Nota’ as related to the ‘serata’ alluded in the letter to Fortini. There is no detail about this ‘serata’ in *Il menabò*, ed. by Cavalli.

<sup>210</sup> Pasolini, ‘Nota’, p. 2318.

Third World. His ideological belonging to an allegorical Bandung powerfully resonates with his poem 'L'uomo di Bandung', first published in 1964, in which he again states his distance from bourgeois capitalist societies and his proximity to colonised individuals and cultures and their internal contradictions.<sup>211</sup> In the dialectic between Nature and History, Bandung is understood as the realm of pure nature, uncorrupted by History and its crimes but at the same time entering History at that decolonising moment. Pasolini, in this 'Nota', presents himself as not only a vessel of a third-world subjectivity but also a black one. This blackness is further reaffirmed throughout the text and can be linked to his subjective stance in 'Alla Francia'. Moreover, Pasolini's controversial Marxism and poetic adhesion to the preindustrial lumpenproletariat locates him at the margins of the factory, while the major concern of industrial writers in those years was gaining access to the true industrial mechanisms in order to describe them:

Gli scrittori dell'industria non mi sembrano davvero in una posizione invidiabile. Gli hanno dato un biglietto di ingresso, nella fabbrica, e [...] non riescono a varcare quella terribile soglia. Vittorini si dichiara certo che non l'attraverseranno mai: appunto perché si ostinano a volerla attraversare. [...] Voglio dire, insomma, che chi è alle soglie di un mondo rivoluzionato dalla fabbrica, ha un unico modo di vivere realmente: ed è quello appunto, di viverci alle soglie.<sup>212</sup>

The importance of the image of the threshold in this conceptualisation of industrial writing cannot be stressed enough. It reminds us of the significance of threshold scenes in industrial poetry and prose and, if read in consonance with similar affirmations by other writers, comes to delineate a sort of 'threshold intellectuality' of industrial writers, which we have already seen in place in Ottieri's 'Taccuino' and which finds further confirmation in the writings discussed below.<sup>213</sup> This positionality also recalls Fanon's description of the colonised intellectual, who acts on the threshold between the coloniser and colonised sectors of the colonial world: 'Every colonized intellectual who crosses back over the line is a radical condemnation of the method and the regime, and the uproar it causes justifies his abdication and encourages him to persevere'.<sup>214</sup> This consonance is particularly striking as it points out the way in which the link between anticolonialism and critical industrial writers does not concern only the content of the two discourses but also the positionality and subjectivity of the authors involved (see Part Two, section 2 below).

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<sup>211</sup> See Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'L'uomo di Bandung', in Pasolini, *Tutte le poesie*, I, pp. 1305–1313.

<sup>212</sup> Pasolini, 'Nota', pp. 2318–2319. A powerful – significantly liminal – image of a factory is found in the opening of Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), and other images of factories appear in the background of *Ragazzi di vita* and *Una vita violenta*.

<sup>213</sup> See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Texas University Press, 1981), pp. 84–85 and 248–258.

<sup>214</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 158.

A very similar positionality is further staked out, strikingly and consciously, in the pages of *Il menabò* 5, again related explicitly to a colonial dimension. Here – as a sort of prosecution of the strand initiated in *Il menabò* 4 – questions of decolonisation and the Third World are directly linked to industrialisation in Italy and the role of literature in relation to this process.

In his essay ‘Astuti come colombe’, Fortini vigorously responds to Gianni Scalia’s intervention in *Il menabò* 4 on alienation.<sup>215</sup> Fortini argues that the real theme for literature in those years is not industry but capitalism – and capitalist industry. As in the quote from his letter to Sereni, Fortini insists here on the necessary process of metaphorisation of reality by the writer – in this case of industry:

Lo scrittore di cui dico, proprio perché sa che cosa l’industria sia, sa che parlarne è come parlare del proprio io più profondo; e che dunque solo una lunga catena di metafore può rischiare quel discorso.<sup>216</sup>

Fortini’s answer to the question of what kind of literature could work more effectively for an assessment and criticism of capitalist industrial society is in the spirit of invisibility and paradoxical silence at this stage, accompanied by action. The image of the cunning doves in his title refers precisely to this proposed attitude. The poetics of Hermeticism are, in his view, rehabilitated in a proposal for a sort of ‘guerrilla’ literature. In this reflection, the experience of the Third World and decolonising countries is crucial:

Aggiungo di credere oggi che un modo di eludere la volgarità del Progressismo Generalizzato e Riformista è quello, da me tentato in più d’una composizione, di accennare al recupero, in una società comunista, dei valori della società preindustriale; che, tra l’altro, sono così essenziali ai popoli del Terzo Mondo.<sup>217</sup>

And this connection with the Third World is even more necessary if:

È nell’interesse del neocapitalismo o del capitalismo monopolistico di Stato evitare qualsiasi obiettivo collegamento rivoluzionario fra le rivendicazioni ‘arretrate’ del Terzo Mondo e quelle ‘avanzate’ dei proletariati continentali.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> See Franco Fortini, ‘Astuti come colombe’, *Il menabò*, 5 (1962), 29–45 (repr. in Fortini, *Saggi*, pp. 44–68); Gianni Scalia, ‘Dalla natura all’industria’, *Il menabò*, 4 (1961), 95–114.

<sup>216</sup> Fortini, ‘Astuti’, p. 43.

<sup>217</sup> Fortini, ‘Astuti’, p. 36. In a later version of ‘Astuti come colombe’ included in *Verifica dei poteri*, Fortini adds to this line the following words: ‘che nessuna rivoluzione può essere vera per loro se quei valori, come Fanon ci dice, non verifica’ (Fortini, *Saggi*, p. 55).

<sup>218</sup> Fortini, ‘Astuti’, p. 39.

Fortini's proposal in relation to industry is therefore in favour of the creation of conceptual and political links with third-world countries and populations, as these are seen as allegories of the present and future of the European industrial working classes (see section 4.4 below).

The Third World is also present in Francesco Leonetti's 'Un supplemento di società' and in Italo Calvino's 'La sfida al labirinto', both published in *Il menabò* 5.<sup>219</sup> In the first, the author vividly registers the centrality of the Third World in discourses on industry and literature:

Il mio avviso è che, nell'impresa che discutendo vogliamo continuare, è stata implicita, e circola negli scritti che ho citati, un'attenzione al terzo mondo: ossia, l'uso più ampio del livello di confronto mondiale che è del nostro tempo [...]. E vi è implicita tale attenzione, vi è internamente attiva, tanto più perché in tali scritti non si dichiara questo oggetto, come sarebbe più facile, né si parla esplicitamente di Afroasia, dove si tenta il salto a un'altra società senza passare per tutta la nostra storia 'civile'.<sup>220</sup>

Leonetti's essay is informed by an anthropological and rationalist Marxist perspective and frames the whole discourse on industry and literature within these fluid disciplinary coordinates. Sartre is widely present, precisely in his 'subjective' moment (see Part Two, section 2 below). Leonetti also refers here to the work of Bronislaw Malinowski and Claude Lévi-Strauss, in order to show how in those years ethnography could work, and was in fact employed, as a scientific approach to understand diversity and against Eurocentrism.

Calvino, in 'La sfida al labirinto', picks up on the image of the leap as a pattern of economic and social progress ('ormai dappertutto si va a salti'),<sup>221</sup> and identifies in the Third World the real 'other' and antithesis in relation to industrialisation and automation:

Lo sviluppo della tecnica e della produzione spingono come forze biologico-sismiche; il risveglio delle società coloniali ed ex coloniali spinge dall'altra parte; la classe operaia dell'Ovest non è più sicura d'essere l'antitesi fondamentale del capitalismo perché ora le forze decisive sembra possano essere altre (e non più solo i 'rapporti di forza' Est-Ovest ma il 'terzo mondo' come antitesi e problema fondamentale degli altri due); il capitalismo sente finalmente d'essere vecchio e cerca, sotto il suffisso 'neo', di convincersi che altro non è che un paterno organismo di servizi produttivo-distributivi.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> See Leonetti, 'Un supplemento', and Italo Calvino, 'La sfida al labirinto', *Il menabò*, 5 (1962), 85–99 (repr. in Italo Calvino, *Saggi 1945–1985*, ed. by Mario Barenghi, 2 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 1, pp. 105–123).

<sup>220</sup> Leonetti, 'Un supplemento', p. 47.

<sup>221</sup> Calvino, 'La sfida', p. 85.

<sup>222</sup> Calvino, 'La sfida', p. 85. See also Italo Calvino, 'L'antitesi operaia', *Il menabò*, 7 (1964), 129–145 (repr. in Calvino, *Saggi*, 1, pp. 127–142). This 1964 issue was part of a projected international journal entitled *Gulliver*: see Silvia Cavalli, 'An International "Non-Review": Cultural Conflict and the Failure of *Gulliver*', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 3.1 (2018), 67–79.

The centrality of the Third World is once again pointed out here, although Calvino does not indulge in the artistic fascination coming from this world of antitheses, and proposes instead a rationalist approach to industrialism, which ultimately allows for a mapping and understanding of – and therefore salvation from – the labyrinth of the new industrial reality.

Finally, Umberto Eco's 'Del modo di formare come impegno sulla realtà', also in *Il menabò* 5, can be read in strong opposition to Calvino's essay.<sup>223</sup> Among other points of friction, Calvino's partial endorsement of the poetics of the French *école du regard* was not shared by Eco and, conversely, the Modernist writers sponsored by Eco were dismissed by Calvino.<sup>224</sup> Consistent with his background, Eco considers the industry and literature question from a more broadly philosophical point of view. His entire essay can also be read as a reply to Zolla's pamphlet. Eco looks at the concept of alienation – the keyword in his essay and a keyword, of course, in the debate on industry and literature too – in the two variants of the word expressed by the German *Entfremdung* ('alienation') and *Verfremdung* ('estrangement').<sup>225</sup> The reflection on the Hegelian—Marxian contiguous notions of objectification and alienation raises the theme of the relationship between the subject and the 'other'. The dialectic here is between a pacific integration with the instruments and products of work as well as with the rest of society and the sense of loss and diminution implied by industrial labour. Mimicking the objections of a hypothetical moralist, Eco comments:

La realtà industriale maschera l'oppressione che esercita su di noi e ci invita a smemorare camuffando le nostre rese alla macchina che ci agisce, facendoci avvertire come gradevole un rapporto che invece ci diminuisce e ci rende schiavi.<sup>226</sup>

Alienation is irreducible: 'Parafrasando Hegel: l'uomo non può rimanere chiuso in se stesso, nel tempio della propria interiorità'.<sup>227</sup> In Eco's view, two extreme positions can be held in the face of this predicament: on the one hand, the Hegelian beautiful soul, personified by Zolla, who pursues a radical extraneity to the object or the 'other' (be it the product, the machine, industry as a whole); on the other, those who lose themselves in the object: Eco mentions Dewey as a theoretical reference point. The final aim is to understand the object, a gnoseological goal. Zolla proposed reaching it by maintaining distance from the object. For Eco, on the contrary, 'la verità è invece che per capire l'oggetto occorre prima

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<sup>223</sup> See Umberto Eco, 'Del modo di formare come impegno sulla realtà', *Il menabò*, 5 (1962), 198–237.

<sup>224</sup> On this opposition, see Andrea Brondino, 'Industry, Alienation, Cosmic Labyrinths: Calvino and Eco in *Il menabò* 5', paper delivered at *Italy at Work: SIS Postgraduate Colloquium 2020*, 27 November 2020, online due to Covid-19 conditions.

<sup>225</sup> See Ernst Bloch, "'Entfremdung, Verfremdung": Alienation, Estrangement', trans. by Anne Halley and Darko Suvin, *The Drama Review: TDR*, 15.1 (1970), 120–125.

<sup>226</sup> Eco, 'Del modo', p. 204.

<sup>227</sup> Eco, 'Del modo', p. 205.

compromettersi'.<sup>228</sup> In *Il menabò*, Eco resorts to some interesting anthropological—colonial metaphors to account for the attitude of the writer who relates to industry. He compares the situation of the writers dealing with industry to that of 'Western' specialists researching 'primitive' communities, which represent 'the other'. These specialists – significantly anthropologists or ethnographers – can follow two routes. They can either keep to their own categories or adopt the cultural model of the object described:

Quindi la sua azione descrittiva si accompagna continuamente alla fondazione di una sorta di metalinguaggio, usando il quale rischia continuamente di cadere in due errori opposti: da un lato giudicare la situazione in termini occidentali, dall'altro alienarsi completamente alla mentalità indigena e togliere ogni validità al proprio lavoro di chiarificazione. Da un lato abbiamo dunque la posizione aristocratica del viaggiatore di vecchio stampo che passa tra 'popoli' selvaggi senza capirli e tentando di conseguenza di 'civilizzarli' nel peggiore dei modi, e cioè di 'colonizzarli'; dall'altro abbiamo la scempi relativistica di una certa antropologia [...]. L'equilibrio sta naturalmente dalla parte dell'antropologo sensibile che [...] avverte continuamente la dialetticità della situazione.<sup>229</sup>

The passage is worth quoting in full in order to reflect on three intertwined aspects. Firstly, Eco does not clarify who is who in the analogy, and what is the observed object: the working class or the machine. Nonetheless, he is clear on the position the intellectual should take. Secondly, the reference to the dialectical character of the situation alludes to the intrinsic doubleness that the intellectual needs to acknowledge in his/her relation towards industry. Finally – and unsurprisingly for Eco at that moment – this issue is reconnected to the question of language. As in colonial contexts, the difference in cultural models is inscribed or manifested in a linguistic shift. Such an aspect links Eco's theories implicitly to the programme of the Neo-Avantgarde, which applied to literature the means of production used by industry to produce an effect of Brechtian estrangement. This eventually led Eco to join the Gruppo 63 when it was formed and to open up to what he called 'mass culture'. Eco's book *Apocalittici e integrati* moves further in this direction.<sup>230</sup>

The whole set of questions tackled in Eco's 'Del modo di formare' sums up the problems addressed by *Il menabò* 4 and 5 and does so resorting to a colonial analogy, which is particularly meaningful in the context of a reflection on links between industrial and anticolonial discourse. What emerges from this analysis of *Il menabò* is the way in which colonial, anticolonial, and third-world images and tropes were powerfully employed to conceptualise the relation between Italian industrial intellectuals and the new reality, and to comment on the Italian 'economic miracle'. Furthermore, historical references to the

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<sup>228</sup> Eco, 'Del modo', p. 207. See also Umberto Eco, *Apocalittici e integrati: comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1964).

<sup>229</sup> Eco, 'Del modo', p. 224. See also Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1996), p. 83.

<sup>230</sup> See Umberto Eco, 'Apocalittici e integrati: la cultura italiana e le comunicazioni di massa', in Eco, *Apocalittici*, pp. v–xv.

Third World as an uncanny ‘other’ were regularly used to undermine Eurocentrism and the sense that capitalist industry was a historical necessity. Finally, it is striking to see how, for all these intellectuals who were experimenting with new forms of commitment in the early 1960s, reflecting on the Third World and on the subjectivities produced in the Third World represented an alternative model and source of imagery, which undermines the idea, crystallised in the field of study on this period, of the debate on industrial literature as a provincial and outdated question.

#### 4.4 *QUESTO E ALTRO*: BILINGUALISM AND THE FAULTS OF THE RESISTANCE

Born out of an idea of the poet Giovanni Raboni and published by Arrigo Lampugnani Nigri, *Questo e altro* involved, in both its genesis and its development, Franco Fortini, Giovanni Pirelli, and Giovanni Giudici, as well as other critical industrial intellectuals and poets, such as Lamberto Pignotti and Giancarlo Buzzi.<sup>231</sup>

The journal was published with irregular frequency between 1962 and 1964, so was not as enduring as *Il menabò*. However, in these two years, it tackled many of the same questions addressed so far: the relations between literature and reality, highlighted in its very title; the challenges of industrial literature; the positionality of Marxist intellectuals.

This section concentrates on references to colonial and anticolonial questions in the journal, to show how *Questo e altro* explicitly endorsed the ideas of anticolonial thinkers such as Fanon and linked these to philosophical and literary questions, including those recurrent within the literature and industry debate.

In the very first issue, questions of literature and industry are discussed by Giudici, Sereni, and Geno Pampaloni among others. In the same issue, Fortini devotes a subsection of his column, ‘Cronache della vita breve’, to Fanon and his appeal to the youth of third-world countries.<sup>232</sup> Fortini reports here – and shares – the ideas of young Algerian, Angolan, and Congolese figures whom he had encountered at a meeting on decolonisation. The specific meeting he refers to is not clear, but we can speculate about its nature, perhaps connected with the activities of the Casa della Cultura in Milan or the milieu of the CDFP, which was about to be officially formed. About this youth, Fortini says:

In una pubblica riunione e poi il giorno seguente in una casa privata ascolto alcuni giovani politici dell’Angola, del Congo, dell’Algeria. [...] Non il colonialismo è ora sotto accusa e nemmeno il neocolonialismo ma la sinistra europea ritenuta incapace o apertamente traditrice di se stessa [...]. Ad un giovane comunista che

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<sup>231</sup> See ‘Perché *Questo e altro*’, *Questo e altro*, 1 (1962), 55–57; Elisa Gambaro, ‘Un progetto letterario per gli anni del miracolo: la sintesi difficile di *Questo e altro*’, *Letteratura e letterature*, 10 (2016), 53–70; Lampugnani Nigri, *Questo*, pp. 7–68.

<sup>232</sup> Franco Fortini, ‘Cronache della vita breve: unire per dividere’, *Questo e altro*, 1 (1962), 80–81.

nomina fascismo e Resistenza sento rispondere cortesemente che il fascismo è durato vent'anni e la violenza coloniale dura da secoli ed è stata praticata anche dagli antifascisti.<sup>233</sup>

The accusation against the European left which Fortini attributes to his interlocutors demonstrates the contradictions of the links established between anticolonialism and the antifascist Resistance in the 1950s and 1960s. These contradictions were clearly visible in the French case but were also a key factor for Italians of this generation.<sup>234</sup> This position is very interesting as it shines a light into the shadows of the Italian anticolonialism of the traditional and New Left, and poses the problem of the speech of the subaltern to which Fortini listens and about which he reports, and which could be destabilising. The whole piece is about the necessity of rejecting Europe and what it embodies: that is, industrial capitalism. Fortini resorts to the image of the 'salto qualitativo' – widely employed in the pages of *Il menabò* – to claim that what the Third World demonstrated was that European-style 'progresso' was not necessary; it was not inevitable. And he calls, too, for a rediscovery of this antithetical spirit in the European:

Ma l'altro – dall'Europa' non è una terra o una etnia. Non ci si deve fare né indiani né congolesi né cileni né cinesi. L'altro – dall'Europa' è sotto i nostri piedi, è l'altro', è la 'rivoluzione copernicana' che si genera proprio *da e contro* la prodigiosa unificazione neocapitalistica.<sup>235</sup>

This passage can be also read as an indirect – and possibly polemical – response to Pasolini's stance discussed above with reference to *Officina* and *Il menabò*.

Fortini further reflects on colonial questions in his column, 'Cronache della vita breve: *La pensée sauvage*', in the following issue.<sup>236</sup> While criticising Claude Lévi-Strauss's *La pensée sauvage* for its anti-historicism, Fortini claims that:

Suppongo si tratti di una caratteristica specifica del neocapitalismo, quella che succede alla espansione imperialistica e che potremmo ormai chiamare la fase della colonizzazione nazionale, quella nella quale alla forza-lavoro si sottrae un plusvalore di storicità [...].<sup>237</sup>

A similar stance, again against a political use of ethnology and anthropology with reference to colonial dynamics, is endorsed in Fortini's 1963 essay, 'Le mani di Radek':<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Fortini, 'Cronache della vita breve: unire', p. 80.

<sup>234</sup> See the character of Colonel Mathieu in *La battaglia di Algeri*, dir. by Gillo Pontecorvo (Casbah Film, 1966), who embodies these contradictions, which were also present in the mind of the Italian mediators of anticolonialism, such as Pontecorvo himself, Giovanni Pirelli, and others who fought in the Resistance. See Srivastava, *Italian*, pp. 233–262.

<sup>235</sup> Fortini, 'Cronache della vita breve: unire', p. 81. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>236</sup> Franco Fortini, 'Cronache della vita breve: *La pensée sauvage*', *Questo e altro*, 2 (1962), 94–95.

<sup>237</sup> Fortini, 'Cronache della vita breve: *La pensée*', p. 94.

<sup>238</sup> Fortini, 'Le mani di Radek', *Questo e altro*, 4 (1963), 102–109 (repr. in Fortini, *Saggi*, pp. 115–129).

L'ottica etnologica propone un mercato mondiale dei valori di ogni società [...]; di fatto in quest'area di libero scambio si verrebbero a trattare dei sistemi di valori inconciliabili con quello fondamentale del capitalismo [...] che è fondato sulla produzione e il consumo, e dunque sulla distinzione fra società industrialmente più o meno avanzate, più o meno arretrate. La contraddizione non può essere risolta con la buona volontà o con gli scambi culturali [...]. Evidentemente tutto ha cospirato a farci dimenticare che cosa significa: 'gli ultimi sono i primi'. *Abbiamo dimenticato che gli 'ultimi' sono coloro che vivono la doppia identità del riconosciuto e del non-riconosciuto, dell'umano e dell'inumano, dell'oppressore e della libertà;* e che quella doppia cittadinanza rende in verità senza patria. I 'proletari' sono i combattenti della frontiera, non coloro che ristanno nei confini sociologici della classe. Coscienza di classe è anche coscienza *dell'altra classe*, è bilinguismo.<sup>239</sup>

The passage touches on a series of figures and tropes that have been encountered before: ethnology again, bilingualism again – as in Sereni and Giudici –; and, again, doubleness, a frontier once more. Ultimately, what Fortini invites is an awareness that:

L'operaio cinese, il negro minatore del Sudafrica e l'insorto contadino venezuelano *non sono il nostro passato. Sono il nostro presente.* Anzi, nella misura in cui sono le più chiare figure del transito e del mutamento, essi sono il nostro futuro, occupano un luogo al quale ancora dobbiamo venire.<sup>240</sup>

Seemingly adopting Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history,<sup>241</sup> Fortini opposes, to the synchronic approach of anthropology and ethnology *à la* Lévi-Strauss, the historical sense of the simultaneous action of different cultures and forces: colonial and anticolonial. These are not seen as equivalent and have, in Fortini's view, different values for as long as the former exploits the latter.

Giudici as well, in his review 'Leggendo Solzenitsyn' published in *Questo e altro* in 1964, analogically reflects on bilingualism in colonial contexts:

Con un rapporto analogo per molti aspetti a quello che Frantz Fanon stabilisce fra colonizzato e colono e che si configura nell'impossibilità per il primo di accettare (è come se parlasse una lingua totalmente diversa) la mediazione del secondo all'acquisizione dei valori 'europei', il Marx del Manifesto violentemente dissacrava gli stessi valori etici e religiosi, non come valori in sé, ma come valori degradati dalla classe dominante a strumenti d'oppressione e quindi inassumibili dalla classe oppressa in quanto tale se non come conferma della sua condizione di asservimento.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Fortini, 'Le mani', p. 106. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>240</sup> Fortini, 'Le mani', p. 107. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>241</sup> See Fortini, 'Le mani', p. 107.

<sup>242</sup> Giovanni Giudici, 'Leggendo Solzenitsyn', *Questo e altro*, 5 (1964), 54–56 (p. 55) (repr. in Giudici, *La letteratura verso*, pp. 327–334). On Giudici's thoughts on allegorical bilingualism, see section 3.2.2 above.

This passage addresses precisely the ‘doubleness’ dimension affecting the colonised and, in particular, colonised intellectuals in Fanon’s thought. While Fortini interprets that double subjectivity as an uncomfortable but fertile positionality, Giudici focuses here more on the ambiguity that such a positionality implies and seems to argue for a radical refusal of the ‘language’ of the coloniser and, in Marxist terms, of the dominant classes.

These interventions are the most significant traces of a discourse which circulated within the pages of the journal and its underlying editorial choices, and which makes *Questo e altro* a key element in the landscape surveyed here. The journal marked a shift from implicit to explicit anticolonial references in literary journals, appearing in coincidence with the publication of Fanon’s works in Italy, the decolonisation of Algeria, and the beginning of a process of popularisation of anticolonialism which would explode in the years around 1968, but which was already underway at this stage in intellectual milieux linked to industry.

## 5. PROVISIONAL CONCLUSION

The analysis of the nine journals discussed in this chapter has shown the implications of the capillary presence of colonial and anticolonial questions and tropes in industrial milieux and amongst anticapitalist groups of intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s. Because of their nature as multiauthored and periodical media, journals tend to build discourses that are not always consistent and not always linear, but rather ‘constellated’, through the montage of single contributions and issues across time. A reflection on this non-linearity has been proposed in this Part. At the same time, through a work of montage, this Part has aimed to shed light on the multi-directionality of the industrial and anticolonial links, across different journals, authors, and texts. What emerges from the survey is that these colonial and anticolonial questions and tropes were much more vividly present in industrial milieux in those years than has been previously acknowledged.

In particular, industrial house organs such as *Il gatto selvatico*, *Pirelli*, and *Civiltà delle macchine* demonstrate different degrees of interest in – and commitment to – anticolonialism, also according to their commercial policies and geopolitical roles. *Il gatto selvatico*’s strong explicit anticolonialism was in line with (and served the purpose of) Enrico Mattei’s energy politics in the Mediterranean and beyond; *Pirelli*’s mild anticolonial stance can be read as an interesting counterpoint to Giovanni Pirelli’s active anticolonial commitment; *Civiltà delle macchine* seemed to commit more strongly to anticolonialism in the early 1960s and after its editorship passed to Francesco d’Arcais. Moreover, *Civiltà delle macchine* engaged in reflection on the relation between the ‘two cultures’, which on certain occasions was

conceptualised in colonial terms. All these journals, even the most blatantly anticolonial one of them, employed colonial tropes to define their role and mission.

Militant and political journals were much more overt in their adhesion to – or refusal of – anticolonial struggles and their methods. This does not mean that their anticolonialism was uncontroversial. *Comunità* manifested constant interest in decolonisation, but its anticolonialism somehow clashed with Olivetti's industrial politics as described in Ottieri and Volponi's novels (see Part Two, sections 3.2 and 3.3 below). *Quaderni rossi's* dismissal of anticolonial struggles is telling in relation to the Marxist interpretation of those conflicts. *Quaderni piacentini's* active engagement with anticolonialism exposed philosophical and literary theoretical implications along with practical outcomes. These 'militant' journals, therefore, seem to have been receptive of anticolonialism both as a theory and as a practice, shaping their own anticolonialism according to their respective stances.

Finally, literary reviews which defined the debate on industrial literature persistently referred to or employed colonial tropes in order to comment on the process of industrialisation in Italy. *Officina* shows how colonial and anticolonial language was significantly – however marginally – present in the writings of engaged and 'un-engaged' authors even before their wider dissemination in the early 1960s. *Il menabò* intertwines third-world matters and ethnography in the literary conceptualisation of a newly industrialised Italy. *Questo e altro* overtly commits to anticolonialism and Fanon's ideas, always problematising them and their link with Marxism. In the writings that have been analysed here, the questions of intellectual positionality and the role of industrial authors are equally conceptualised in ways that resonate strongly with Fanon's image of the colonised intellectual, while the Gramscian ideal of intellectual organicity is problematised and questioned.

In conclusion, anticolonialism, decolonisation, and the emergence of the Third World are discussed at different levels in industrial intellectual milieux: present in capillary form, employed in different discursive strategies, dismissed in some cases, but rarely ignored.

Part Two will demonstrate the way in which industrial and anticolonial vocabularies shared a cluster of keywords and 'key-tropes', in some cases stemming from common matrices, which migrated quite fluidly across discourses, genres, authors, and texts. In addition, Part Two will show how industrial novelists – many of whom were already strongly present in the networks and arenas of Part One – faced a set of problems which had many traits and keywords in common with those occurring in colonial societies and in debates on colonial questions. It will be argued that this fact is one possible reason why these authors proved so receptive to anticolonial discourse and why their literary works came to be significantly informed and shaped – in language, structures, and tropes – by colonial and anticolonial discourses.

## PART TWO

### BETWEEN INDUSTRIAL AND ANTICOLONIAL: KEYWORDS AND NARRATIVE TROPES

#### 1. A FIELD OF MULTIDIRECTIONAL INFLUENCES

To understand how the narrative of critical industrial writers came to resonate and intersect with the anticolonial discourse, it must first of all be recalled that the fictional texts produced in the industry and literature debate were highly ideologised and imbued with theoretical reflections. They tended to assume the form of what has been called the ‘novel–essay’ precisely due to this ideological as well as theoretical engagement.<sup>1</sup> These texts were conceived as experiments in how to write about the experience of the factory, how to understand it and conceptualise it. Powerful tropes were therefore built to describe the experience of the capitalist factory during the ‘economic miracle’. Factories were often depicted in Italian industrial literature as infernal realities, and the memory of the concentration camps deployed to allegorise these descriptions.<sup>2</sup> It can be argued that the colony was another of these tropes.<sup>3</sup> Power relationships in the factory were effectively described through an explicit or implicit reference to the kind of economic, social, and cultural relations which could be found in colonial contexts. Such colonial tropes were built upon either explicit comparison between industrialisation and colonisation or key concepts which appear to be shared by anticolonial theoretical writing and industrial fictional texts. These concepts and their relations were the subject of intense debate in these particular years, often in the very same circles that included industrial writers, and they reappeared extensively in industrial literature. Many industrial novels manifest key aspects in common with the description of colonial contexts in the words of anticolonial thinkers.<sup>4</sup> These similarities are not accidental but rather appear to be the result of a process of cross-

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<sup>1</sup> See Stefano Ercolino, *The Novel–Essay, 1884–1947* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> See Giuseppe Lupo, ‘Orfeo tra le macchine’, in *Fabbrica di carta*, ed. by Bigatti and Lupo, pp. 3–20. The protagonist of Volponi’s *Memoriale*, Albino Saluggia, spent months in a concentration camp and some of his memories of that experience are reactivated while he works in the factory. On Ottieri’s complex link between factory, asylum, and concentration camp, see Fabrizio Di Maio, ‘L’opera di Ottiero Ottieri’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Tor Vergata University of Rome and EHESS Paris, 2010), pp. 136–137. On the dialectic between infernal and edenic tropes in colonial and postcolonial literature, see Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 16, and Sharae Deckard, *Paradise Discourse, Imperialism, and Globalization: Exploiting Eden* (London: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The colony was emerging in this period as intersecting precisely with the concentration camps as a source of memory and narrative: see Rothberg, *Multidirectional*, pp. 175–198. However, the memory of Italian colonialism was only reactivated later.

<sup>4</sup> Alongside Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, some key texts in the background here are: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. by Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); Jean-Paul Sartre,

contamination in the late 1950s and early 1960s between Marxian, psychoanalytical, and anthropological categories within an anticolonial and anticapitalist perspective already traced in Part One, now rendered into literary form.

It can be argued that critical industrial authors in Italy received anticolonial texts so readily precisely because these addressed the same set of questions they were engaged in tackling in relation to the industrialisation of Italy; that is, (cultural) alienation, dehumanisation, paternalism, violence, linguistic hegemony, psychosomatic disease, subjectivity. By interweaving many different approaches to these questions, anticolonial discourse appeared to provide a persuasive and widely applicable paradigm to describe and support an understanding of the situation with which critical industrial authors were faced. Arguably even before they encountered anticolonial texts, critical industrial authors had linked together many of the questions at stake in anticolonialism, including a definition of what it is to be human; illness and neurosis; the effect of total institutions on the human being; labour and exploitation; violence and language. Direct intertextual references or explicit lines of influence between anticolonial and industrial texts cannot always be either definitively excluded nor irrefutably confirmed. With a comparative and transdisciplinary approach between discourses and texts, a cluster of conceptual nuclei will be identified here which recur in both fields of writing and which make critical industrial writings resonate powerfully with anticolonial discourse.

Thus, the analysis in this Part will proceed in two stages. In section 2 below, some of the conceptual nuclei, some keywords, in anticolonial thought that are especially resonant – as words or tropes – in industrial literature will be isolated, particularly: alienation, race, language, labour, paternalism, dehumanisation, animalisation, inferiority complex, psychosomatic illness, violence, and subjectivity. Alessandra Diazzi and Alvis Sforza Tarabochia have prepared the ground to some extent in their mapping of the use of the word ‘alienation’ across the psychoanalytical–psychiatric and Marxist industrial discourse in Italy during the ‘economic miracle’, shedding light onto the conceptual and historical line which ties these two areas together.<sup>5</sup> What will be proposed here is an analysis which turns this line into a triangle, through the inclusion of the anticolonial discourse in the field. In this view, ‘alienation’ is only one word in a wider cluster of keywords employed both in industrial writing and in the anticolonial discourse, possibly and partially due to their common Marxist and psychoanalytical–psychiatric matrices. Fanon’s lens will be particularly useful in this analysis: firstly, as his thought linked economic questions

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‘Colonialism is a System’, in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, trans. by Azzedine Haddour, Steve Brewer, and Terry McWilliams (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). Further research is needed to investigate the translation and dissemination of *négritude* literature in Italy from the late 1940s: see Benelli, *La négritude*, and Leavitt, ‘Impegno’. On the Italian translations of Césaire, see Antonella Emina, ‘Changer quel monde? Aperçu des traductions en italien des œuvres de Césaire ou la prise en compte des extrêmes’, paper presented at *Aimé Césaire: œuvre et héritage*, Colloque Internationale Centre Césairien d’Études et de Recherches (CCER), Fort-de-France, 24–28 June 2013.

<sup>5</sup> See Alessandra Diazzi and Alvis Sforza Tarabochia, ‘Introduction: Social and Mental Alienation in Italy Between the Economic Miracle and the Years of Lead’, in *The Years*, ed. by Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia, pp. 1–40.

to psychoanalysis and psychiatry, culture, and politics; and secondly, because it represented a turning point in the development and dissemination of anticolonial discourse at its peak of maturity in the metropolitan centres of Europe, Italy included. Fanon was by far the best known and most consistently translated anticolonial thinker in Italy at the beginning of the 1960s.

In section 3, six case studies will be presented of specific novels from the ‘canon’ of industrial literature to show how such texts absorbed and expressed these key concepts analogically and allegorically, and through which tropes. The six case studies will be by four key authors, published by different but influential publishers, and across the period treated in this dissertation, the central time-period of the first wave of industrial literature: Ottiero Ottieri’s *Tempi stretti* and *Donnarumma all’assalto*, published respectively by Einaudi in 1957 and Bompiani in 1959; Paolo Volponi’s *Memoriale* and *La macchina mondiale*, published by Garzanti in 1962 and 1965; Goffredo Parise’s *Il padrone*, published in 1965 by Feltrinelli; and Giovanni Pirelli’s *A proposito di una macchina*, published by Einaudi, also in 1965. An ‘anticolonial’ reading of these novels will be proposed.

## 2. A CLUSTER OF KEYWORDS AND TROPES

The first keyword to be considered is ‘alienation’, since this functions as an ‘umbrella’ term, allowing us to pick out a further cluster of related words. Given the semantic stratification and intrinsic complexity of this word, a preliminary investigation into its meaning is essential.

As seen in Part One – and as is well established in the critical field – the notion of alienation was central in the debate on industry and literature.<sup>6</sup> To have an idea of how popular the term was, it is sufficient to recall here a line from one of the masterpieces of the *commedia all’italiana* film genre, Dino Risi’s *Il sorpasso* (1962). Bruno, the protagonist of the film, is talking with his fellow traveller Roberto about a song by Domenico Modugno when he mentions ‘quell’altra cosa, quella che va di moda oggi... la... l’alienazione, come nei film di Antonioni’.<sup>7</sup> Alienation is therefore represented as a fashionable, familiar, recognisable word, accessible not only to the educated Roberto but also to the brash, anti-intellectual Bruno. However, when it comes to the meaning of this word, things become more confused. In Bruno’s speech, the word follows other expressions which refer to feelings or more generically to the realm of psychological phenomena, namely ‘solitudine’ and ‘incomunicabilità’. This psychological dimension – however undefined – is certainly one of the components of alienation’s meaning – and one

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Giovanni Giudici, ‘Sul fronte dell’alienazione’, *Comunità*, 84 (1960), 101–103, (repr. in Giudici, *La letteratura verso*, pp. 139–148); Eco, ‘Del modo’; *The Years*, ed. by Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia, pp. 13–19.

<sup>7</sup> *Il sorpasso*, dir. by Dino Risi (INCEI Film, 1962).

explored in Antonioni's films, as Bruno says – but not the only one. Raymond Williams, in his *Keywords*, defines 'alienation' as:

one of the most difficult words in the language. [...] It carries specific but disputed meanings in a range of disciplines from social and economic theory to philosophy and psychology. [...] There has been some impatience with its difficulties, and a tendency to reject it as merely fashionable. [...] In its evidence of extensive feeling of a division between *man* and *society*, it is a crucial element in a very general structure of meanings.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of the abstract concept, it is possible to admit the very generic definition provided by the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, which describes alienation as 'a distinct kind of psychological or social ill; namely, one involving a problematic separation between a self and other that properly belong together'.<sup>9</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, the two main connotative areas for the term were the Hegelian–Marxian and the psychiatric and psychoanalytical.

In the Marxian elaboration, labour is of course central, and alienation means both objectification and estrangement from oneself, from the product of one's work and fellow men – and women. Under capitalist exploitation, workers are dehumanised. They are separated from their work by being denied the function of decision-making; from their products, by lacking control over them; and from the rest of humanity, by competition.<sup>10</sup>

In psychiatric vocabulary, the word 'alienazione' was still used in Italian in the 1960s – and had equivalents in most romance languages and English – 'as an umbrella notion'<sup>11</sup> to refer to mental disorders in general, which were further classified as 'frenopatia, frenosi, psicosi [...]'.<sup>12</sup>

Anticolonial discourse employed the word 'alienation' with reference to both of these areas of meaning. Fanon, as a psychiatrist and political theorist, was well aware of both the Marxist and psychiatric connotations of the word when he received it.<sup>13</sup> When he used it, the word 'alienation' was already established in anticolonial vocabulary with a very particular focus on the cultural moment. At that stage, black alienation was certainly one kind of alienation in the world. The word appears in Sartre's *Black*

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<sup>8</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, pp. 3–6. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>9</sup> David Leopold, 'Alienation', in *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/alienation/>> [accessed 19 December 2020].

<sup>10</sup> See Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia, 'Introduction', in *The Years*, ed. by Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> See the Italian Law 36/1904, which established asylums, and which reads: 'debbono essere custodite e curate nei manicomi le persone affette [...] da alienazione mentale'. See also Franco Basaglia, 'Corpo, sguardo e silenzio: l'enigma della soggettività', *Rivista sperimentale di freniatria*, 1 (2007), 11–22 (first publ. in *L'évolution psychiatrique*, 1 (1965)), and Alvisè Sforza Tarabochia, *Psychiatry, Subjectivity, Community: Franco Basaglia and Biopolitics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> See Zahar, *Il pensiero*, pp. 23–80.

*Orpheus* (1948),<sup>14</sup> and it is possible to trace a constant and intense presence of the word and concept in the pan-African (and anticolonial) journal *Présence Africaine* as far back as 1948.<sup>15</sup> Via these channels, the anticolonial use of the word reached Fanon, who employed it systematically in order to comprehensively account for the problems that colonised peoples and individuals experienced in colonial contexts.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, from the very introduction Fanon frames the problems he is going to deal with in terms of ‘alienation’. He immediately states that alienation – and consequently the emancipation from it, which he calls ‘disalienation’<sup>16</sup> is a multidimensional matter:

The analysis that I am undertaking is psychological. In spite of this it is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities.<sup>17</sup>

Here Fanon shows clear awareness of the triple character of alienation: psychological, social, and economic. A few lines further on, he restates this idea by linking it to an epistemological question: ‘It will be seen that the black man’s alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny’.<sup>18</sup> The focus on the social dimension is both a result of Fanon’s Marxian background and an implicit critique of the epistemic and therapeutic approach of psychoanalysis, which he considers inappropriate to investigate and heal the problems of the colonised. Psychoanalysis and psychology, especially in Alfred Adler’s theorisation,<sup>19</sup> are seen by Fanon as useful but insufficient tools to deal with the psychosocial impact of colonisation. Fanon’s view is imbued with materialism and thus disalienation cannot but pass through a ‘reformatting’ of social and power relationships: ‘There will be an authentic disalienation only to the degree to which things, in the most materialistic meaning of the word, will have been restored to their proper places’.<sup>20</sup> Proper decolonisation – a word which is not employed by Fanon at this stage – happens only when black men and women realise that they are, as such, a product of white men and women and ultimately of colonisation through racialism. From this fact, Fanon’s powerful position on a two-sided alienation descends: ‘I am speaking here, on the one hand, of alienated (duped) black, and, on the other, of no less alienated (duping and duped) whites’.<sup>21</sup> In his view, alienation affects colonisers as well as the colonised, as for Marx alienation affected capitalists no less than the proletariat.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Sartre, ‘Black’, pp. 28–29.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Jacques Howlett, ‘Notes sur Chester B. Himes et l’aliénation noir’, *Présence Africaine*, 4.3 (1948), 697–704.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Disalienazione’ was fairly uncommon as a word in Italian at that time: see Giovanni Pirelli, ‘Introduzione’, in *La rivoluzione algerina nei suoi documenti*, ed. by André Mandouze, trans. by Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1961) (repr. in *Giovanni*, ed. by Scotti, pp. 219–226).

<sup>17</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> See Fanon, *Black*, pp. 109–168.

<sup>20</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> On this aspect, see the chapter ‘The Capitalist’s Alienation’ in Ollman, *Alienation*, pp. 153–156.

While portraying a Manichean situation, Fanon actually introduces into his discourse a third term in the spectrum between 'white' and 'black'. Between the coloniser and the colonised, in the French context, stands the Antillean, who occupies in the racialised context discussed a liminal zone of nearly-French and nearly-white black people:

My theme being the disalienation of the black man, I want to make him feel that whenever there is a lack of understanding between him and his fellows in the presence of the white man there is a lack of judgment. A Senegalese learns Creole in order to pass as an Antilles native: I call this alienation. The Antilles Negroes who know him never weary of making jokes about him: I call this a lack of judgment.<sup>23</sup>

The institution of a whole band of blackness and whiteness, and thus of an aristocracy of the 'nearly-white', makes the raising of intraracial conflicts possible: instead of revolting against the oppressor, the colonised subject, in Fanon's view, aspires to gradually turn 'whiter'.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon also presents a set of questions related to colonial alienation (language, sexual relationships, recognition) to uncover the many psychological as well as social consequences of an economic and geopolitical phenomenon like colonialism. This plurality of intertwined aspects makes alienation a slippery concept for Fanon as well, and not surprisingly he never defines it in the book until the end, where he summarises what he has been writing about as follows:

It is obvious [...] that the quest for disalienation by a doctor of medicine born in Guadeloupe can be understood only by recognizing motivations basically different from those of the Negro labourer building the port facilities in Abidjan. In the first case, the alienation is of an almost intellectual character. Insofar as he conceives European culture as a means of stripping himself of his race, he becomes alienated. In the second case, it is a question of a victim of a system based on the exploitation of a given race by another [...]. Scientific objectivity was barred to me, for the alienated, the neurotic, was my brother, my sister, my father. [...] There are times when the black man is locked into his body.<sup>24</sup>

By distinguishing between 'real' alienation, which affects racialised black workers, and the particular kind of intellectual alienation from which he himself, as an Antillean educated man, suffers, Fanon restates the centrality of race (itself another keyword here; see section 3 below) and labour as factors of alienation, and the ambivalence of the colonised intellectual, grown up and educated into the culture of the coloniser and engaged with those resources in the process of emancipating colonised peoples. This peculiar kind of intellectual alienation, attributed to the middle-class, is further commented on in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where Fanon insists again on the implications of alienation in colonial contexts:

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<sup>23</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Fanon, *Black*, pp. 174–175.

When we consider the resources deployed to achieve the cultural alienation so typical of the colonial period, we realize that nothing was left to chance and that the final aim of colonization was to convince the indigenous population it would save them from darkness. [...] The first duty of the colonized poet is to clearly define the people, the subject of his creation. We cannot go resolutely forward unless we first realize our alienation. We have taken everything from the other side. Yet the other side has given us nothing except to sway us in its direction through a thousand twists, except lure us, seduce us, and imprison us by ten thousand devices, by a hundred thousand tricks.<sup>25</sup>

For Fanon, the task of colonised intellectuals is first of all to identify the subject of their work, then to gain awareness of the seduction they have been subjected to and the renunciation that has been required of them. Language is a central moment in this dynamic.<sup>26</sup> By exporting and imposing its own language and imagery, the colonial metropolis alienates the colonised and makes them illiterate.

Alienation can therefore be defined as the result of a set of strategies of domination, dehumanisation, exploitation, but also assimilation through seduction and cultural hegemony.<sup>27</sup> These strategies are employed by the coloniser firstly to 'build' the colonised as such racially and, secondly, to estrange them from themselves, from their relations, their social and natural environment, their culture and language.

Labour has a key role in both colonial and industrial alienation. In colonial contexts, labour is most often forced labour and slavery. As Fanon puts it:

Through a kind of mystification constituting the highest form of alienation, he [the coloniser] sought to convince the slave that the land he was working belonged to him and the mines where he was losing his health were his property.<sup>28</sup>

Labour represents one of the most significant relations that the colonised establish with the colonisers – which is, once again, one of separation, negation, exploitation, slavery. In industrial literature, labour (even in its slave version) is widely present as a keyword as well as a form of the relationship between characters, although with different connotations: at times desired, at others hated; at times seemingly enriching, at others concretely harmful to the very bodies of the workers.

Throughout all this wandering around the unmappable territories of colonial and industrial alienation, other keywords, conceptual nuclei, and tropes have emerged, which form an ideal constellation

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<sup>25</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, pp. 149 and 163.

<sup>26</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 160.

<sup>27</sup> On hegemony and the conceptual links between Fanon and Gramsci, see Srivastava, 'The Travels', pp. 62–63.

<sup>28</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 135.

defining colonial alienation more as a field than as an autonomous category. Not unlike alienation, paternalism and superiority and inferiority complexes are multifaceted and stratified notions at a crossroads between social sciences, politics, culture, and medical care whose history cannot be tracked here. At the time when Fanon started using these terms publicly, they were already very much present in the vocabulary of anticolonialism.

As for the word ‘paternalism’, quite neutrally definable as ‘the attempt by one actor to substitute his judgement for another’s on the grounds that it is in the latter’s best interests or welfare’,<sup>29</sup> a powerful example of how it was employed by anticolonialists can be found in an article by the Togolese student Albert Franklin, published in *Présence Africaine* in 1953. The term ‘*paternalisme*’ is present here since the title and the whole piece is an investigation of the links between colonialism and paternalism. Seeing the latter as invariably present in the former, Franklin provides from his situated perspective a far more militant and committed definition than the standard neutral one:

Le paternalisme, c’est l’attitude d’un individu (ou groupe d’individus) qui pour voiler son œuvre néfaste se camoufle en ami; c’est l’attitude de l’ennemi qui épouse les apparences du défenseur, qui affecte un extérieur paternel.<sup>30</sup>

He is of course referring here to colonists, who maintain their domination under the hypocritical veil of care and benevolence. What Franklin has in mind is Octave Mannoni’s theorisation of the ‘Prospero complex’.<sup>31</sup> According to Mannoni, who studied the relations between colonisers and colonised in Madagascar, the colonisers’ racist attitude towards the colonised was psychologically driven by an inferiority complex of the former who needed recognition (Prospero) and a dependency complex of the latter, who lacked stability after the rupture of their tribal habits and bonds. Franklin polemically addresses and challenges Mannoni’s theses. In Franklin’s view, Mannoni’s book, by attributing the coloniser’s paternalist attitude only to an inferiority complex, actually denied the economic, social, and political dimensions of colonialism. Because of his psychoanalytical training and epistemic framework, Mannoni’s understanding of colonial paternalism grasped, in the eyes of Franklin and others, no more than the individual level. Furthermore, as Franklin points out, according to Mannoni’s explanation, colonisers suffered as much as the colonised. Franklin rejects this thesis precisely by choosing African

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<sup>29</sup> Michael N. Barnett, ‘International Paternalism: Framing the Debate’, in *Paternalism Beyond Borders*, ed. by Michael N. Barnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 1–44 (p. 14).

<sup>30</sup> Albert Franklin, ‘Le paternalisme contre l’étudiant africain’, *Présence Africaine*, 14.1 (1953), 71–82 (p. 71).

<sup>31</sup> See Mannoni, *Prospero*.

students as his case study to uncover the truth of paternalism. The text is imbued with a militant spirit and shares with Fanon a total refusal of Mannoni's theses.<sup>32</sup>

Fanon comments on Mannoni in *Black Skin, White Masks*.<sup>33</sup> In the chapter on language, he expresses a strong rejection of paternalism as an attitude: 'I do not allow myself to resort to paternalistic "understanding"'.<sup>34</sup> Here Fanon is not only voicing his dislike for paternalism: he is refusing to compromise with it and to use it as an ideology. We will see how the reflection on paternalism is also widely present in industrial literature, either directly in essayistic digressions, or indirectly through paternal tropes.

Paternalism, through an idea of adult and parental (patriarchal) care, generates non-neutral relations of power and implies a sense of superiority. In particular, as Barnett puts it, 'implicit in an act of paternalism is a judgment about the competence and capacity of the subordinate actor'.<sup>35</sup> Paternalism presupposes therefore an inferiority projected onto the person who is looked after: this person is treated as a child or as a disempowered being. By this attribution of inferiority, the act of care appears in its real value: a mystification, a hypocritical deceit, in some cases interestedly justified by an alleged 'ethics of consequences' where control is presented as care and power does not require consent.<sup>36</sup> A sense of inferiority is artfully created to exercise power over a group of people. Fanon's words on this aspect are crystal clear:

The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior*. This conclusion brings us back to Sartre: "The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew".<sup>37</sup>

The allusion to antisemitism and to the existential and non-essential character of the feelings of superiority and inferiority in colonial contexts makes evident the way in which economic and psychological facts are tightly connected in the realm of history for Fanon. The racialisation of the human being perceived as inferior is part of this colonial dimension and this aspect, too, emerges powerfully in industrial literature, as will be shown in section 3.

An essential part of the construction of this inferiority in colonial contexts happens, in Fanon's view, through the dehumanisation of the colonised. The colonised are made 'animals', in the colonial

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<sup>32</sup> See Mireille Delbraccio, 'La "Psychologie de la colonisation" d'Octave Mannoni: dépendance, reconnaissance, altérité', *L'information psychiatrique*, 91.3 (2015), 263–270; François Vatin, 'Octave Mannoni (1899–1989) et sa psychologie de la colonisation: contextualisation et décontextualisation', *Revue du MAUSS*, 37.1 (2011), 137–178.

<sup>33</sup> See Fanon, *Black*, pp. 61–81.

<sup>34</sup> Fanon, *Black*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>35</sup> Barnett, 'International', p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> Barnett, 'International', p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 69. Emphasis in the original.

imagery: they are racially discriminated against because of their bodily characteristics. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon highlights the linguistic and conceptual moments of this ‘animalisation’:

Sometimes this Manichaeism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject. In plain talk, he is reduced to the state of an animal. And consequently, when the colonist speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms. [...] In his endeavors at description and finding the right word, the colonist refers constantly to the bestiary.<sup>38</sup>

This constructed inferiority easily develops into a complex. Fanon takes the notion of the inferiority complex mainly from Adler but there is a possibility that Henri de Man’s theory of the inferiority complex of the working class was also in his mind, possibly via Sartre.<sup>39</sup> This complex is, as shown:

the outcome of a double process:

- primarily, economic;
- subsequently, the internalization – or, better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority.<sup>40</sup>

From an economic and political phenomenon (colonialism), psychological and psychosomatic consequences emerge. The colonised, deprived of their land, language, culture, and ultimately of their own bodies, fall ill. In an article entitled ‘The North African Syndrome’ (1952), published after his experience as a psychiatrist in Lyon, Fanon tackles the question of the psychosomatic issues of the colonised, which he addresses again in *The Wretched of the Earth*. In that article, we see how his method merges together a medical–scientific approach and a sociological one, in what he refers to as ‘sociodiagnostic’.<sup>41</sup> His object of study is North Africans in France and his thesis is that, given all the conditions of eradication and alienation, they are likely to end up ill:

The North African combines all the conditions that make a sick man. Without a family, without love, without human relations, without communion with the group, the first encounter with himself will occur in a neurotic mode, in a pathological mode.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> See Sartre, ‘Colonialism is a System’, pp. 30–31: ‘Third, that the problem is, finally, psychological: you remember de Man and his “inferiority complex” of the working class. He had discovered at the same time the key to the “native character”: maltreated, malnourished, illiterate, the Algerian has an inferiority complex with regard to his masters’. Sartre is referring to Henri de Man, *The Psychology of Socialism*, trans. by Eden & Cedar Paul (London: Allen & Unwin, 1928).

<sup>40</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Frantz Fanon, ‘The North African Syndrome’, in *Toward the African Revolution (Political Essays)*, trans. by Haakon Chevalier (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1967), pp. 3–16 (p. 13). See also Frantz Fanon, ‘Colonial War and Mental Disorders’, in Fanon, *The Wretched*, pp. 181–233.

In these cases, the link between psychological trauma, neurosis, and the body is tragically real and experienced physiologically by the colonised – but similarly, Italian industrial novels of those years present characters who are allegorically affected by psychosomatic illness.

Unlike Mannoni, by realising the political, socio-economic, and cultural nature of colonial violence, Fanon proposes a collective response to it that is at the same time social and political. This cannot but be in the spirit of violence. In Fanon's view, *négritude* is no longer a strategy, as it ends up being a pure, often merely literary, antithesis. What is necessary to colonised peoples is, in his view, a violent revolution against the systemic violence of colonialism:

To blow the colonial world to smithereens is henceforth a clear image within the grasp and imagination of every colonized subject. To dislocate the colonial world does not mean that once the borders have been eliminated there will be a right of way between the two sectors. To destroy the colonial world means nothing less than demolishing the colonist's sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory.<sup>43</sup>

This image of an explosion is particularly striking and – we can argue – resonates powerfully with some forms of political violence represented in industrial novels, in part drawing upon the archetypal image of an explosion on which Italo Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno* ends.

The keywords listed so far – alienation, race, language, labour, paternalism, inferiority complex, dehumanisation, animalisation, psychosomatic illness, and violence – seem to refer to a cluster of questions tackled by both anticolonial thinkers and industrial writers, and contribute to the definition of a colonised and subaltern subject and subjectivity that, in turn, can be likened to the subjectivities constructed in many industrial novels.

'Subject' is, then, a keyword we can add to the list of vocabulary migrating between discourses. The word itself carries about a certain structural ambiguity, as Alvis Sforza Tarabochia, among others, has pointed out. In his words, 'the very noun "subject" suggests an ambiguity: subject means both who/what performs the action expressed by the verb and he/she who is subject to power'.<sup>44</sup> This equivocality of the word is evident already in the Marxian theory of the subject.<sup>45</sup> For Marxism, the subject is the exploited social force which acquires consciousness of itself and of its exploitation, and fights against it.

In this dialectical process, the production of subjectivity is a fundamental stage, and it is materialistically interpreted not as the romantic expression of the individual self but rather as the moment in which the proletariat becomes aware of its existence as a class and of its alienation and exploitation by

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<sup>43</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Sforza Tarabochia, *Psychiatry*, p. 173.

<sup>45</sup> See John Lutz, 'A Marxian Theory of the Subject: Commodity Fetishism, Autonomy, and Psychological Deprivation', *Rethinking Marxism*, 21.3 (2009), 420–434.

the capitalist bourgeoisie, which takes advantage of the surplus value produced by workers. This notion of subject and subjectivity once again intertwines with a psychoanalytic one, via notions of alienation and fetishism. As Lutz argues:

The development of subjectivity and consciousness as a process deeply connected to a condition of powerlessness and alienation in response to which human beings struggle for autonomy provides a common frame of reference for all three authors [Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Jacques Lacan].<sup>46</sup>

Marx's reflection on subjectivity is indeed at the basis of both anticolonial and critical industrial discourse.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, it can be useful to consider how it was further elaborated by anticolonial thinkers before looking at how subjects and subjectivity manifest in critical industrial literature.

In the words of psychiatrist Giovanni Jervis, what is most interesting in Fanon, more than his psychiatric achievements, is his contribution to the 'teoria marxista del *soggetto* rivoluzionario'.<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is interesting to look at the passages in Fanon where this theory of the subject (and subjectivity) seems to emerge more clearly in its cross-field dimension between colonised and capitalist countries. Before and alongside Fanon, however, it was Sartre who discussed these concepts most clearly and in depth. Two of Sartre's writings, respectively published in 1948 and 1961, will be analysed here before moving to Fanon's texts.

The first of these writings is 'Orphée noir', published in 1948 as a preface to Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache*.<sup>49</sup> Here, Sartre establishes a direct analogy between the subjectivity of black people and that of white proletarians: 'Like the white worker, the negro is a victim of the capitalist structure of our society'.<sup>50</sup> However, although they appear to be victims of the same exploitation, black individuals and white proletarians are, in Sartre's view, radically different for one reason at least. The fundamental experience of the black individual is physical and psychological exile, which white workers do not experience as often. From this fact, the recurring theme of the return to the native country pervades the literature produced by black people. Sartre identifies in literary production, and poetry in particular, a crucial stage in the process of acquiring consciousness. Black poets are called, like Orpheus, to descend to their most profound and troubled depths of consciousness to rescue their black soul that has been submerged by the culture of the colonisers: 'And I shall call this poetry "Orphic" because the

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<sup>46</sup> Lutz, 'A Marxian', p. 420.

<sup>47</sup> See Agostino Pirrella, 'Comunicazione letteraria e organizzazione industriale', *Il menabò*, 4 (1961), 115–120 (p. 117): 'E in realtà: c'è un mondo di uomini da aiutare a diventare "soggetto", mentre sono, o rischiano di restare, "oggetto", se non merce'.

<sup>48</sup> Giovanni Jervis, 'Fanon e la soggettività', in Giovanni Jervis, *Il buon rieducatore: scritti sugli usi della psichiatria e della psicanalisi* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1977), pp. 84–90 (p. 84). Emphasis in the original. See also Srivastava, 'Frantz Fanon in Italy', pp. 309–328.

<sup>49</sup> See Sartre, 'Orphée noir', and Sartre, 'Black'.

<sup>50</sup> Sartre, 'Black', p. 18.

negro's tireless descent into himself makes me think of Orpheus going to claim Eurydice from Pluto'.<sup>51</sup> Although for Sartre this form of exile is not typical of capitalist contexts, it can be argued that in the Italian case most workers in the 1950s and 1960s experienced a similar alienation and displacement, a form of *déracinement*,<sup>52</sup> if not actual exile, by physically moving from the countryside to big cities, from the South to the North of the country, from peripheries to centres.

Moreover, in Sartre's view racialisation is all about the relation between subjective and objective conditions, and the overcoming of it could not but pass through subjectivity:

In the European worker, class consciousness is based on the nature of profit and unearned increment [...]; in brief, it is based on the objective characteristics of the *position* of the proletariat. But since the selfish scorn that white men display for black men [...] is aimed at the deepest recesses of the heart, black men must oppose it with a more exact view of black subjectivity; consequently race consciousness is based first of all on the black soul, or, rather, [...] on a certain quality common to the thoughts and conduct of negroes which is called Négritude.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, although the exploitation of the white worker is, in Sartre's view, different in many respects from the violence by which the colonised subject is oppressed, the subjective reaction of the latter – the literary and philosophical experience of *négritude* – represents an interesting experience for the European too.

Another text by Sartre which is deeply relevant here is a paper he gave at a conference in Rome that was held at the Istituto Gramsci in December 1961.<sup>54</sup> The title, 'Marxismo e soggettività', clearly anticipates its content. What Sartre aims to assess is:

whether the principles and truths that constitute Marxism allow subjectivity to exist and have a function, or whether they reduce it to a set of facts that can be ignored in the dialectical study of human development.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Sartre, 'Black', p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> See Weil, *The Need*.

<sup>53</sup> Sartre, 'Black', p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Marxismo e soggettività', *aut aut*, 136-137 (1973), 133–158; Jean-Paul Sartre, 'La Conference de Rome, 1961: Marxisme et subjectivité', *Les Temps Modernes*, 560 (1993), 11–39; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Qu'est-ce-que la subjectivité?*, ed. by Michel Kail and Raoul Kirchmayr (Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2013); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Marxismo e soggettività: la Conferenza di Roma del 1961*, ed. and trans. by Raoul Kirchmayr (Milan: Marinotti, 2015); Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Subjectivity?*, trans. by David Broder and Trista Selous (London: Verso, 2016). See also Enzo Paci, 'L'ultimo Sartre e il problema della soggettività', *aut aut*, 67 (1962), 1–30; Luciana Castellina, 'Sartre in Italia', *Il Manifesto*, 5 December 2015 <<https://ilmanifesto.it/sartre-in-italia/>> [accessed 21 December 2020]; Simon Gusman, *Sartre on Subjectivity and Selfhood: The Self as a Thing Among Things* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

<sup>55</sup> Sartre, *What*, p. 3.

After giving a definition of subjectivity as a form of interiority connected with the lack of knowledge and the having-to-be of the working classes, Sartre moves on to a discussion through examples of some of the characteristics that make subjectivity so important in a dialectic process from a Marxist standpoint. He concludes by claiming – in opposition to the alleged ‘pan-objectivism’<sup>56</sup> of Marxist theories – that ‘in the course of struggle, the subjective moment, as a way of being inside the objective moment, is absolutely indispensable to the dialectical development of social life and the historical process’.<sup>57</sup>

What is of greatest interest here, more than the ‘doctrinal’ discussion of Marxist orthodoxy, is Sartre’s point on art and subjectivity. This is better expressed in the debate that followed Sartre’s paper at the conference and which involved Italian intellectuals such as Mario Alicata, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, Galvano della Volpe, Renato Guttuso, Cesare Luporini, Guido Piovene, Lucio Lombardo Radice, Giuseppe Semerari, and Francesco Valentini. In particular, the occasion prompted Guido Piovene to reflect on how the subjectivity of the artist could be expressed even in allegedly ‘objective’ works of art.<sup>58</sup> Sartre in turn replied by referring to the key example of Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, in which the author projected himself so intensely onto his protagonist as to affirm in the end that ‘Madame Bovary c’est moi’.<sup>59</sup> Sartre defines subjectivity precisely as a criterion to distinguish between a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ book, and gives an example that is particularly interesting for our reflection on industrial literature:

A writer sets himself up in a factory for a few weeks, comes back and then recounts what happened in the factory. He does not put himself into it or project himself onto it, because he knows that he is not truly a worker – he is a socialist writer, but not a worker – and nor is he putting other people into it, since he does not know them well enough; so what we get is a bad book.<sup>60</sup>

For Sartre, then, objectivity is not sufficient to make a work of art. What is necessary for a book to be ‘true’, and therefore good, for Sartre, is that it contain at least a part of the subjectivity of the author. This is something of which industrial writers were indeed aware, and about which they interrogated themselves.<sup>61</sup>

The problem of the value of a work of art also implies a moral question, and when asked about this, Sartre answers with an example related to colonial societies: the most liberal of colonial

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<sup>56</sup> Sartre, *What*, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Sartre, *What*, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> See Sartre, *What*, pp. 68–85. See also Piovene, *La coda*, pp. 490–492.

<sup>59</sup> Towards the end of 1961, Sartre resumed his critical work on *Madame Bovary*, which was then published in 1971–1972 as Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’idiot de la famille: Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971–1972). See Gilles Philippe, ‘L’idiot de la famille: repères chronologiques’, in *L’idiot de la famille de Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. by Julie Anselmini and Julie Aucagne (= *Recherches & travaux*, 71 (2007)), pp. 177–180.

<sup>60</sup> Sartre, *What*, p. 77.

<sup>61</sup> An example of this consciousness emerges in an interview by Ferdinando Camon with Paolo Volponi about his *Memoriale*, in Camon, *Il mestiere*, p. 116.

administrators cannot be liberal in a radically non-liberal society such as a colonial regime.<sup>62</sup> With this example, he alludes to the fact that producing ‘moral’ art in immoral contexts is not necessarily possible. It is evident here how ethical and aesthetic aspects of subjectivity clearly cut across both the issues addressed by industrial literature and those implied in the reflection on colonialism.

Fanon draws upon Sartre’s theorisation and further develops it in an anticolonial direction. In *Black Skin, White Masks* he uses both fictional writing and his first-hand experience with psychiatric patients to develop a theory of the colonial subject, later refined and enriched by his Algerian experience which led to the writing of *The Wretched of the Earth*.

From the outset of *Black Skin, White Masks*, the reader is presented with three fundamental colonised subjects and distinct types of subjectivities: the ‘black’ and/or colonised who aim at ‘whitening’ themselves; the ‘black’ and/or colonised who hate the ‘white’ and fight against them; the Antillean, the ‘nearly-white’ subjects, who are familiar with the French culture and are alienated from their ‘black’ origins. The thesis at the heart of the work is that the colonised is made ‘black’ by the ‘white’. As we have seen, in order to disalienate themselves, black people need, in Fanon’s view, to gain clear consciousness of the social and economic realities of which they are a product, as well as of their subjectivity. As a matter of method: ‘On the objective level as on the subjective level, a solution has to be supplied’.<sup>63</sup> In this subjective process of acquiring consciousness and producing action, language is of course central. Fanon reflects on how the way of expressing oneself is shaped by power relationships: in the case of the Antillean on whom he focuses his attention, their physical and ideological migration to France result in a change in the way they speak but also in their absorption of French culture. In Fanon’s words, ‘the Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is’.<sup>64</sup>

Fanon further claims that black history ‘takes place in darkness, and the sun that is carried within me must shine into the smallest crannies’,<sup>65</sup> therefore positioning himself within the object/subject of his research – which is far from inevitable in a supposedly analytical text such as this – and connoting further black subjectivity as living in obscurity but being the bearer of light.<sup>66</sup> Fanon goes on to discuss love relationships between black and white people: for both black women and men, the highest desire seems to be to find white partners in order to ‘whiten’ themselves. The same could be said of people of mixed white and black ancestry. It is curious that Fanon’s case studies for this section on relationships are not his patients or real human beings, but rather the characters of certain novels written mainly by black

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<sup>62</sup> See Sartre, *What*, pp. 109–110.

<sup>63</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 25.

<sup>65</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> On this dialectic of obscurity and light, see Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952). See also Lawrence Jackson, ‘Ellison, Fanon and Guerrilla War’, *Cabiers Charles V*, 40 (2006), 227–246.

authors.<sup>67</sup> After this, he moves to his own experience as a black individual – again, something which was not considered orthodox in a scientific text.

In this construction of subjectivity, the body occupies a central place. In Fanon's view, black subjects have first to become conscious of their bodies: it is their bodies which make the colonised 'black'. In the dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity, Fanon interprets the body as simultaneously a subject and an object of consciousness. He refers to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to claim that:

At certain moments the black man is locked in his body. And yet 'for a being who has acquired the consciousness of self and body, who has achieved the dialectic of subject and object, the body is no longer a cause of the structure of consciousness; it has become an object of consciousness'.<sup>68</sup>

In this light, the exploitation and racialisation of the colonised are not abstract processes but rather constitute concrete abuse visited upon the bodies of the colonised; and from the awareness of bodies and of the violence perpetrated on them, a 'black' or colonised subjectivity develops.

The conflict that lies at the foundation of colonial societies (and which, in the form of class struggle, manifests itself also in capitalist nations) therefore affects bodies as well, in Fanon's view; literally, in the form of a 'muscular tension'.<sup>69</sup> In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he explains how – in opposition to what they learn from their masters, that is, to know their place at all times – the colonised interiorise the colonial conflict and transform it into a physical tension which is a form of their resistance. In their daily lives – Fanon argues – the colonised are stuck in the place that the violent system they live in has assigned to them. The tension that the colonised accumulate during the day explodes in their dreams, in which they tend to perform very muscular actions, or in violence, either self-destructive and fratricidal or against the colonisers.<sup>70</sup> Another way of channelling this bodily energy and distracting it from the more or less violent proposal of destroying the coloniser is through religion, or through dance.<sup>71</sup> The colonised subjects as described by Fanon between *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* are therefore individuals – and/or literary characters – who embody that structural ambiguity of the word 'subject' that has been mentioned and discussed above. On the one hand, they are subject to a form of violence: their whole existence as black/colonised individuals is defined by someone else who exerts some power over them. On the other, their subjectivity makes them the new subject of history: anticolonial struggles are

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<sup>67</sup> See, for example, Mayotte Capécia, *Je suis martiniquaise* (Paris: Corr ea, 1948), and Ren  Maran, *Un homme pareil aux autres* (Paris:  ditions Arc-en-ciel, 1947).

<sup>68</sup> Fanon, *Black*, p. 175; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Ph nomenologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 277.

<sup>69</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, pp. 17–18.

<sup>70</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 17.

<sup>71</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched*, pp. 19–21.

interpreted by Fanon as palingenetic processes in which a new humanity is created, also through the use of violence aimed at eliminating the systemic violence of the colonial system.

Beside these subjects, in Fanon, as in Sartre, another subjectivity already exists: that of the thinkers, writers, or artists who represent other subjects.<sup>72</sup> Fanon delves into this aspect in detail in his essay 'On National Culture'. Here he remarks on the necessity for colonised intellectuals to unite with the nationalist struggles against colonisation and goes on to add some observations on the characteristics of colonised intellectuals. According to Fanon, these figures act on an uncomfortable threshold. Their primary concern should be identifying the subject of their art, the people, and then committing entirely to their struggle. Fanon identifies three stages in which this process develops. First, the intellectuals absorb the language and culture of the coloniser. Then, they consciously decide to step back and reach their people, the colonised; they immerse themselves.<sup>73</sup> Finally, they engage materially in the struggle by the side of their people. Fanon describes the process of moving between the culture of the coloniser and that of the colonised as traversing a line (see Part One, section 4.3 above).<sup>74</sup>

This whole semantic field and set of images of lines, ridges, and thresholds also characterises the Italian industrial literature of the 'economic miracle', in particular with reference to the positioning of the intellectual and to figures of subjectivity. It can be argued that the choice to employ these images points to the difficult positionality that critical industrial intellectuals experienced, between the bourgeois culture into which they were educated, and their elective subject of representation. This sense of a threshold, an in-betweenness, a 'doubleness' is something that informs both their fictional and their non-fictional writing about industry. It can thus be hypothesised that, besides offering us the subjectivities of their characters, industrial writers also represented their own liminal subjectivity in their works. In this light, the liminal and the unstable, tense status that permeates industrial literature can be interpreted as a multilevel allegory: for the instability of working-class characters; for the ambiguous position of bourgeois Marxist writers; and, ultimately, for Italy in the years of a transition from rural and artisanal to industrial, from human to mechanised and automated. In the words of Alberto Asor Rosa, 'Fra alienazione e integrazione, cultura e letteratura si muovono come sul ciglio di un baratro'.<sup>75</sup>

### 3. AN ANTICOLONIAL READING OF ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL LITERATURE

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<sup>72</sup> For the layered meaning of the word 'representation' in this case, see Said, *Representations*, pp. 11–23.

<sup>73</sup> Neelam Srivastava notes that remarking upon this aspect is something Fanon and Gramsci have in common: see Srivastava, 'The Travels', p. 73.

<sup>74</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 158.

<sup>75</sup> Alberto Asor Rosa, *Intelletuali e classe operaia: saggi sulle forme di uno storico conflitto e di una possibile alleanza* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1973), p. 138.

After this exploration of a cluster of colonial and anticolonial keywords and their use in the 1950s and 1960s, set against the frame of the networks and discourses explored in Part One, the following case studies will show how these aspects were also intensely present in Italian fictional industrial writing in the same years or immediately afterwards. The underlying hypothesis is that capitalist industrialisation, in the work and view of industrial writers, shared many of the characteristics of colonisation and colonialism as described by anticolonial thinkers. As we have seen, the link between the two realms – industrial and colonial – had already been traced at this stage by political thinkers and philosophers. What will be uncovered here, through an analogical anticolonial reading of Italian industrial novels, is how literature was a key sphere in which these theoretical intersections manifested vividly, in the form of tropes, spaces, narrative and psychological representations.

### 3.1 OTTIERO OTTIERI'S *TEMPI STRETTI* (1957): CLASS, 'RAZZA', AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Ottiero Ottieri's *Tempi stretti*, published by Einaudi in 1957, has been defined as the prototype of the industrial novel of the 'economic miracle'.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, it can be seen as representing a turning point between the neorealist literary approaches to the conditions of the working class – of which Vasco Pratolini's *Metello* (1955) had been considered both the epitome and the exhaustion point – and the new experimental industrial literature that developed over the 1960s after the debate in *Il menabò*.

If read in comparison to *Metello*, which, tellingly, is set at the end of the nineteenth century, *Tempi stretti* shows a much deeper awareness of the contradictions, conflicts, and stratifications of the new industrialising society. Oversimplifying, we might say that while the first presents well-rounded characters who find in their political militancy their completion as individuals and literary creations, Ottieri projects onto the system of characters of *Tempi stretti* a much more problematic subjectivity, which can be argued to reflect his own, contradictory, positionality towards industry. As has already been shown in Part One with reference to his non-fictional writing, Ottieri's industrial literature is deeply self-reflective. 'Taccuino industriale' represents the non-fiction tranche of Ottieri's elaboration of his own industrial experience, covering the years 1948–1958. As we have seen, it reveals a certain explicit acknowledgement of the colonial dimension of Italian industrialisation which will then become even more overt in *Donnarumma all'assalto* (see section 3.2 below).

What will be shown here is how the presence of colonial-shaped tropes and keywords can be identified even in this early narrative attempt, indeed in the earliest recognised work of industrial literature of the 'economic miracle', in particular in the form of an analogy between class and race, but also in

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<sup>76</sup> Mattia Fontana, 'La fabbrica d'irrealità', in Ottieri, *Tempi*, pp. 361–386 (p. 365).

certain references to industrial paternalism, a sense of exile and cultural alienation, and in the construction of the subjectivities of the characters in relation to labour and to each other.

*Tempi stretti* is set between Milan and its industrial periphery, Sesto San Giovanni, where the action takes place inside and outside the factories in which the characters are employed in different roles.<sup>77</sup> It tells the stories of Giovanni, a ‘tecnico’ (specialised worker) at the typographic company of ingegner Alessandri; Paolo, who works for the same company; Emma and Aldo, workers at Zanini. The story is voiced in the third person by an omniscient narrator who seems to know much about all the characters. However, the focalisation is mostly on Emma and Giovanni. Giovanni has an affair with Emma, who has migrated to Milan from Umbria and comes from a peasant family; but he is also attracted to Teresa, the fascinating and wealthy wife of an industrial manager. Emma falls in love with Giovanni and when she understands that her love is not entirely reciprocated, she leaves Paolo’s house, where she and Giovanni are lodgers, and starts a new life in her colleague Anna’s house.

The focalisation on Emma and Giovanni appears to be designed to highlight the lack of communication – and in some cases radical incommunicability – between the two. Giovanni is the character who embodies most evidently some traits of Ottieri’s own experience and personality. He migrates from Tuscany to Milan; he is employed in a company owned by a charismatic entrepreneur, not as a factory worker but in the in-between status of ‘tecnico’. On the one hand, he lives with workers (Paolo and Emma) and is therefore sensitive and sympathetic towards them and their struggles, and he also joins in with the meeting of Zanini’s ‘commissione interna’. On the other, Giovanni is literally seduced by the world of what can be called – within the analogic framework which structures our analysis – the ‘colonisers’: he is attracted by Teresa and the ambitious entrepreneurial bourgeois world she represents but to which he does not belong entirely either.

What is at stake in *Tempi stretti* – and, again, it is interesting to reflect on this aspect in comparison to Pratolini’s *Metello* – is not the description or construction of a realistic and still idealised working-class character, but rather the problematic position of those who are in between the claims and life of the working class and the world and culture of the bourgeoisie.

To introduce this reading, it is useful to recall an early review of *Tempi stretti* by Marisa Bulgheroni of 1957. In order to describe both the general atmosphere and setting of the book and its system of characters, Bulgheroni affirms that:

L’alienazione urbana è un prodotto dell’industria, degli strati sociali che essa crea distinti come razze: e non a caso Ottieri ha scelto come sfondo costante del suo romanzo interni e paesaggio, Milano tra le nostre città

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<sup>77</sup> On Sesto, see Foot, *Milan*, pp. 135–156, and Di Maio, *Ottiero*, p. 26.

industriali certo la più sorda, quella che reca nella sua fisionomia i segni più profondi dell'incomunicabilità tra gruppi. Non a caso a tali razze diverse appartengono i personaggi.<sup>78</sup>

Alienation is explicitly mentioned as a theme of the book and is related by Bulgheroni to class division, which is, in turn, racialised in her words. Throughout the rest of her review, Bulgheroni describes each character as belonging to a specific 'race' (read: 'class'), according to their socio-economic and cultural status.<sup>79</sup> This reading is legitimated by some passages in *Tempi stretti* itself, which appear to drive Bulgheroni's interpretation. The word 'razza' is employed four times in the book, always with reference to characters' status of belonging. In three cases, the full phrase that Ottieri chooses to use is 'di un'altra razza',<sup>80</sup> employed in Italian to refer to something radically different from what has just been described. Thus, it is used to outline a gap, a breach existing between individuals or groups. In the first case, the context is that of a strike at Zanini. Aldo (engaged to Caterina, Paolo's daughter) is a factory worker there and is deeply involved in the strike as an organiser. He and his male colleague Tara are fired because of their industrial action. However, while Tara is presented as a 'bestia rivoluzionaria',<sup>81</sup> his political violence being stigmatised as more proper to an animal than a human being, Aldo embodies the passionate and still democratic and rational militant. Thus, even in the eyes of the secretary of the 'commissione interna', Aldo's punishment seems unfair: 'Perché questi [Aldo] doveva pagare per Tara che era di un'altra razza da lui?'.<sup>82</sup> The difference in the political and militant approach between Aldo and Tara is described in terms of race in a free indirect question. Similarly, in the same compartmentalised context of the factory, in the words of the narrator – probably expressing Emma's thoughts – the uniform of the 'guardie' turns them into humans of another race: 'Udiva un operaio vociare sotto la portineria, mentre le guardie dello stabilimento si annoiavano come sempre dietro il cancello: e in divisa erano uomini di un'altra razza'.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, race is employed as a category for human hierarchisation in a direct speech by Sozzani, an industrial manager invited to Teresa's house, who complains in front of Giovanni about the poor quality of working-class education:

Così vengono in officina e si sentono schiavi prima di entrarci. Adesso usa tutta una letteratura che racconta storie sull'officina, roba di gente che non ci ha mai messo piede e che si compiace a descriverla come un inferno. Son libri gialli. Ma ecco, proprio per questo, se gli operai non fossero dei semianalfabeti, dei bambini,

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<sup>78</sup> Marisa Bulgheroni, 'Tempi stretti: un romanzo nella fabbrica', *Gazzetta del libro*, 8 (1957), available online in part: <[http://www.ottierottieri.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/recensioni1954\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ottierottieri.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/recensioni1954_2009.pdf)> [accessed 21 December 2020].

<sup>79</sup> On the racialisation of southern migrants in the North of Italy, see John Foot, 'Razzismo e Italia: migrazioni interne, migrazioni dall'estero, storia e memoria', *Contemporanea*, 13.1 (2010), 143–150.

<sup>80</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, pp. 272, 291, and 304.

<sup>81</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 280. See also Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 288: 'Tara era già imbestialito'.

<sup>82</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 291.

<sup>83</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 272.

se le scuole tecniche italiane funzionassero a dovere, avremmo maestranze d'un'altra razza, istruite, civili! Il problema si sposta fuori della fabbrica.<sup>84</sup>

This passage links race to slavery and civilisation and reproduces the trope of working-class illiteracy and 'infancy', which were attributes of colonised people in colonial discourse. The racialisation of class differences, therefore, utilised by colonial regimes to legitimate their exploitation of colonised peoples, is inserted here within a wider framework of colonial motifs and keywords.

The point on illiteracy can be linked to other passages in the novel related to the language of the working classes. Instead of making them speak in dialect, Ottieri assigns a linguistic ambiguity to his characters. Of a speech that Aldo delivers at a crucial meeting of the 'commissione interna', the narrator says that the speaker 'Cominciò nel suo italiano pulito, nasale, appena inciampando sulle frasi più difficili da girare',<sup>85</sup> and that 'Si teneva appena in equilibrio fra il dialetto e l'italiano'.<sup>86</sup>

The attribution of allegorical infantility to the working class can be linked to a strong sense of the paternalism of industry that imbues the whole novel, embodied in particular in the figure of ingegner Alessandri, founder and manager of the eponymous company. From the very first pages, Ottieri ensures his readers are aware of this aspect. Ingegnere Alessandri, while celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his company, emphatically claims that 'la nostra azienda è una grande famiglia. Io non sono che la guida di essa, quindi, se permettete, sono un po' il vostro padre. Cura naturale di un padre sarà sempre di non lasciar soli i suoi figli'.<sup>87</sup> This industrial paternalism resonates indeed with that of colonialism – as ultimately mystifying exploitation.

Returning to Sozzani's speech quoted above, his words are particularly significant as they also convey a layered metaliterary message. He refers to the literature concerning the experience of the factory as a fashionable trend in the 1950s. Given the prototypical value of *Tempi stretti* mentioned above, it is therefore possible that Ottieri precociously registers here the development of a discussion on industrial literature even before its actual birth as a genre. Furthermore, Sozzani polemically voices one of Ottieri's major concerns: that industrial literature was often produced by writers who had never entered a factory in their lives. This preoccupation – as Giuseppe Lupo points out – can show how the unreachable model of Simone Weil was present and acted in the mind of industrial writers gravitating around Olivetti as a powerful and daunting lesson. As noted above, Simone Weil spent some months as an incognito worker in two factories in France in the 1930s in order to better understand the conditions of the working classes

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<sup>84</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 304.

<sup>85</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 170.

<sup>86</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 170.

<sup>87</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, pp. 26–27.

and establish connections with factory workers.<sup>88</sup> Her experience was indeed inspirational to Ottieri: implicit and explicit allusions to Weil can be found in both *Donnarumma all'assalto* and *La linea gotica*.<sup>89</sup>

The final occurrence of 'razza' as a factor of identity can be detected in a passage about Emma. She is seeing the factory doctor and her love affair with Giovanni has proven inconsistent: 'Era molto graziosa benché sempre pallida, gli occhi ombrati, i capelli e la testa pesanti sul petto leggero: conservava i segni della sua fisionomia, della sua razza'.<sup>90</sup>

This 'racial' and 'colonial' dimension is furtherly evident in the interplay between Giovanni, Emma, and Teresa. Both Giovanni and Emma are migrant workers, they both experience alienation and exile, they both live in someone else's house. In Giovanni's nostalgic remembrance of Tuscan food ('ogni volta Giovanni ricordava il mangiare della Toscana, da cui era partito molti anni fa'),<sup>91</sup> we can read an echo of Dante's prophecy of exile: 'tu proverai sì come sa di sale lo pane altrui' (*Paradiso*, 17, lines 58–59). However, nothing in his personality is tragic,<sup>92</sup> nothing is heroic, he has not even participated in the Resistance and his political commitment becomes only slightly more radical towards the end of the novel, when he renounces a promotion at work to join the 'commissione interna'. Giovanni's parable in the novel is similar in a way to Ottieri's movement. Giovanni leaves Tuscany, as Ottieri leaves Rome, to move to Milan, driven by socialist ideals and the will to have a closer involvement in industry. Giovanni gets closer to his people by sharing accommodation with Paolo, Caterina, Emma, and in part with Aldo as well – as Caterina's fiancé. Emma in this sense embodies Giovanni's most immediate link – but expressed through sentiment – to the working class. She has peasant origins, she has experienced exile herself, she has moved from Umbria (an unindustrialised region of central Italy) to Milan, and for her, Giovanni represents an initiation into life. However, Giovanni's affinity with bourgeois milieux represented in the novel by Teresa shows his in-betweenness and the ambivalence of his sentimental relationship with Emma. Teresa seduces him. Like colonised subjects in Fanon's view,<sup>93</sup> Giovanni dreams of possessing the wife of the coloniser (Teresa's husband is an engineer and industrial manager), and there is a scene where this dream of possession manifests itself in dance. Similarly to what happens in colonial contexts, according to Fanon, social conflict is untangled and neutralised in dance:

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<sup>88</sup> See Weil, *La condition*. On Ottieri and Weil see Lupo, *La letteratura*, pp. 215–242.

<sup>89</sup> See Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 153; Ottieri, 'La linea', pp. 305–306.

<sup>90</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, pp. 190–191.

<sup>91</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 42.

<sup>92</sup> See Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 59. On Giovanni's failed experience in the Resistance, see Ottieri, *Tempi*, pp. 50 and 80.

<sup>93</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 5: "The gaze that the colonized subject casts at the colonist's sector is a look of lust, a look of envy. Dreams of possession. Every type of possession: of sitting at the colonist's table and sleeping in his bed, preferably with his wife. The colonized man is an envious man. The colonist is aware of this as he catches the furtive glance, and constantly on his guard, realizes bitterly that: "They want to take our place". And it's true there is not one colonized subject who at least once a day does not dream of taking the place of the colonist'.

La trascinò, come una cosa sua, saltando sulla pedana per ballare; sentiva ormai familiare la stoffa dell'abito di Teresa. Ballavano ora stretti, ora lontani sostenendosi l'uno davanti all'altra, per guardarsi nella luce fredda, dalla quale dopo il ballo sarebbero dovuti sfilare via. Dopo un passo rapido, si riavvicinarono diritti, venendosi incontro e si toccarono la bocca.<sup>94</sup>

However, when the possibility of a more intimate encounter between the two becomes more real – the dancehall turns out to be a hotel too – Teresa withdraws and the two return chastely to their respective homes. Here a clear indication of their different status is restated by the compartmentalised character of the city:

La città li spartiva, ma sostenendolo; proprio di quartiere in quartiere la città avviava ognuno al suo posto. Quindi da solo se ne tornò a casa sua, alla casa di Paolo: lungo il marciapiede sfiorò il solito muro di una fabbrichetta, i cui motori ronzavano forte, anche tardi, il sabato pomeriggio. Ricordò uno dei pochi poderi della sua famiglia in campagna. Il piccolo stabilimento sul marciapiede era come un podere nel mezzo della città, curiosa città, che ne era piena: invece che al grano, ai maiali e alle ulive, badavano alle macchine.<sup>95</sup>

Giovanni's subjectivity is therefore a convoluted one, split between bourgeois aspirations, socialist ideals and therefore closeness to the working class, his peasant background, and his belonging to the variegated reality of Milan.

Throughout the novel, Giovanni's political subjectivity and conscience develop. At first, he is said to know workers 'assai male, nel senso ora necessario, cioè sindacale; mancava il modo per conoscersi a viso aperto: non solo nel carattere, ma [...] nella vera coscienza'.<sup>96</sup> This lack of consciousness and therefore of subjectivity on the part of the working class, which has its counterpoint in the politicised characters of Aldo and the 'commissione interna', is represented in its development throughout the novel.<sup>97</sup> When Zanini's workers stand in solidarity with their colleagues at Smai – another factory – the 'commissione interna' tries to generate in them 'la coscienza dell'allarme continuo e della fraternità'.<sup>98</sup> The strike at Zanini represents probably the highest moment in which this consciousness is acquired by workers:

La confusione esplose negli spogliatoi; la loro coscienza, prima silenziosa e quasi inerte aveva adesso bisogno di sentirsi viva. Ognuno parlava e non si ascoltavano; le donne si cambiarono alla meglio sul pavimento che

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<sup>94</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 210.

<sup>95</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 212.

<sup>96</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 155.

<sup>97</sup> See Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 332: 'La commissione interna serve a difenderci come uomini ed a trasformarci da merci in uomini?.'

<sup>98</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 186.

scottava sotto i piedi, fra i grembiuli, le sottovesti, i vestiti e le scarpe. Avevano urgenza di varcare i cancelli per darsi coraggio.<sup>99</sup>

The place this conscience significantly emerges is in the female changing rooms in the factory, and the very act of crossing the threshold of the factory gate empowers the workers and makes them alive as well as visible to the rest of the city, once again pointing to the significance of threshold spaces in industrial literature.<sup>100</sup> Everything happens at the factory gate, where conflict manifests itself, whilst during the working day the repetitive movements at the machines absorb all the workers' energy and are just another form of fixity. The body, of course, is central in this dynamic. At the machine, it is a property of the factory and must be functionalised to optimise production. Like the body of the colonised in Fanon's view, the bodies of factory workers are 'determined' by someone else. They risk being damaged every day – as in fact occurs to a colleague of Emma, who is injured while rushing her work in order to achieve a higher *cottimo* ('piece rate').<sup>101</sup> During the strike, however, the individual bodies of the workers acquire new life and determine themselves – like the body of the colonised through violence, in Fanon's view. United in a social and political organ, they represent a threat – however feeble and incidental, literally parenthetical – to the social body of the city, destabilising it: '(Ma il grosso della città non se ne accorgeva [of the strike], la città borghese e commerciale si difendeva bene: anche questa operazione poteva compiersi senza che il resto del corpo sussultasse)'.<sup>102</sup>

Conversely, the whole functioning of the factory in capitalist terms is only guaranteed by the lack of awareness of the working class, precisely in bodily terms. In Sartre's words:

the positions we must adopt to hold the tool and use the materials are not a matter of knowledge, still less the muscles, bones and nerve links that make it possible to hold this or that position. In other words, there is an objectivity maintained by something that is beyond knowledge, and which, moreover, it might be practically detrimental to know.<sup>103</sup>

This essential lack of knowledge is, in Sartre's view, the basis on which the exploitation of mechanical labour is perpetrated, and Ottieri's narrator – in this case significantly focalised on Giovanni – is well-aware of this aspect when he affirms that:

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<sup>99</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 277. See also Ilaria Favretto, 'Toilets and Resistance in Italian Factories in the 1950s', *Labor History*, 60 (2019), 646–665.

<sup>100</sup> See Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 49.

<sup>101</sup> It is an 'infortunio' which triggers the narrative mechanism of Giovanni Pirelli's *A proposito di una macchina*. On this aspect, see also *La classe operaia va in paradiso*, dir. by Elio Petri (Euro International Film, 1971).

<sup>102</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 252.

<sup>103</sup> Sartre, *What*, pp. 7–8.

Nessuno dei due si concedeva più il lusso di conversare sulle proprie sorti o su quelle dell'azienda: del resto il lavoro vero è una forma di silenzio e di incoscienza. Abolisce appunto il margine, in cui di solito si inseriscono le rivendicazioni, o addirittura le lotte, dei prestatori d'opera [...]. Non vi era lo spazio fisico per ribellarsi. Stavano tutti schiacciati addosso al padrone, contro il muro degli orari mirabolanti, da pionieri, e del lavoro puro.<sup>104</sup>

And that:

La tecnica è la tecnica e non ha coscienza. Reclamando sistemi diversi, a Marini sarebbe parso di colpire a tradimento l'ingegnere, come un padre cui si chieda conto del perché ci ha dato la vita. E forse avrebbe perduto il posto [...]. Un ragazzo prediletto, allevato nell'azienda, non fa il nemico pubblico dell'ingegnere, come Giuda o come Bruto.<sup>105</sup>

In these passages, questions of time – apparently the central dimension of the book given its very title – and space overlap and cross-contaminate. The margins, the liminal space in which action would be possible, are suppressed by the 'unconsciousness' of pure work.<sup>106</sup> The intellectual profile of Giovanni defines itself as uncomfortably in between master and servant, in the Hegelian dialectic, as ungrateful and treacherous as Giuda and Bruto.<sup>107</sup>

When and if there is no awareness of exploitation, fratricidal struggles arise. An example in *Tempi stretti* is the fight between the workers Terzi and Ferrari. Ferrari's body has been damaged by labour. He is said to have been hit and wounded on the head by a falling hook while at work one day. Terzi makes fun of Ferrari, who reacts violently, and the two get into a fight.<sup>108</sup> This episode resonates with Fanon's description of the behaviour of colonised subjects who in the first instance tend to perpetrate suicidal or fratricidal violence instead of directing their violence towards the colonisers.<sup>109</sup>

In conclusion, it is interesting to note how even at the embryonic stage of industrial literature of which *Tempi stretti* is an example, certain tropes and reflections of the industrial-colonial constellation are already present and interconnected, even if in muted forms. All these aspects will be further developed by Ottieri in *Donnarumma all'assalto*, which is further analysed and discussed below.

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<sup>104</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 215.

<sup>105</sup> Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 141.

<sup>106</sup> See also Ottiero Ottieri, *Memorie dell'incoscienza* (Turin: Einaudi, 1954).

<sup>107</sup> On the positionality of the 'ungrateful guest', see Franco Fortini, *L'ospite ingrato: primo e secondo* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1985).

<sup>108</sup> See Ottieri, *Tempi*, p. 129.

<sup>109</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched*, pp. 17–21. On suicide, see Ottieri, *Tempi*, pp. 68–73.

### 3.2 OTTIERO OTTIERI'S *DONNARUMMA ALL'ASSALTO* (1959): INDUSTRIAL COLONIALISM BETWEEN PROSPERO AND CALIBAN

Ottieri takes his narrative material for *Donnarumma all'assalto* from his first-hand experience as an HR employee (a 'psicotecnico') at the Olivetti plant in Pozzuoli (Naples). The novel, written in the first-person and as a diary, recalls the experience of the unnamed narrator as precisely such a psychotechnician, sent to southern Italy, where a northern company has just established a plant, to recruit new factory workers and employees. The factory in the novel reproduces quite transparently many of the features of the real Olivetti factory in Pozzuoli, built in 1955: glass structure, avant-garde architecture and design, worker-centred policies.<sup>110</sup> This apparently utopian setting is surrounded by the astonishing coastal landscape of Campania and thus is very different from the grim environment of many factories located in the North. The exotic and colourful beauty of the surroundings is described in the novel as in sharp contrast with the greyness that generally connotes the industrial milieu. A strong opposition exists between the factory and the surrounding environment, in spite of the company's efforts to reconcile and integrate the two through design and architecture. The first-person narrator explicitly likens industrialisation in southern Italy to a form of colonisation by virtue even of its territorial dimension:

L'altro volto, l'ingannevole volto della fabbrica è di indurre noi impiegati e dirigenti al colonialismo, e i candidati assunti all'orgoglio della aristocrazia operaia, la quale più ancora che nel nord taglia i legami con la plebe [...]. Dobbiamo uscire dalla fabbrica e sentirci, come siamo, una goccia nel mare: il lavoro ci tiene il giorno intero nello stabilimento, ma fuori, per le campagne, lungo la costa, muoiono aziendalismo e colonialismo, e le nostre acque si mescolano, si disperdono. Al di là dello stabilimento gonfia una vita collettiva, cui la fabbrica non porta che un miraggio di civiltà.<sup>111</sup>

Employees and managers, as well as the 'fortunate' workers who manage to get jobs, develop a colonial attitude towards the 'primitive' world which surrounds them. In the words of the narrator, this world has an autonomous life, independent from the factory and from colonialism. Industry is associated with civilisation, but taking its civilising mission for granted leads to forgetting that the industrial is not the only possible reality. The process of creating the plant is described like the mystic discovery of a new land:

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<sup>110</sup> See *Luigi Cosenza*, ed. by Cosenza. See also <<http://www.data.unibg.it/dati/corsi/25098/75397-scheda%20stabilimento%20pozzuoli.pdf>> [accessed 22 December 2020].

<sup>111</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', pp. 37–38. Olivetti's approach to southern Italy is described in colonial terms also in Pinkus, *Clocking*, p. 15.

Vi nasce un mondo unitario, caduto dall'alto nelle sue forme, ma per affondare nella terra e nello spirito di questo paese. Questo paese è come una miniera umana; cova fra le più profonde ricchezze d'uomini nel mondo. Noi siamo venuti a scoprire un nuovo, difficile oro, sepolto dalla natura e dalla storia.<sup>112</sup>

Ennobled by a humanitarian patina, industrialism manages to conquer new virgin lands, co-opt new subjects into the industrial system, and exploit them and their resources, as in a colonial dynamic.<sup>113</sup> History is far from innocent. In this case – the particular establishment of a northern factory in the South – industrial colonialism overlaps with what scholars have named and discussed as Italy's 'internal colonialism'.<sup>114</sup> Managers and white-collar workers unsurprisingly come from the North; what they get from the South is physical labour. Their advent is likened to a military contact with another race: 'passa lo stato maggiore dei lombardi, alti e chiari, razza diversa dai locali'.<sup>115</sup> These 'colonisers' are also portrayed at a certain point dismissing their colonial attributes in an effort to understand the new reality they are facing:

Gli organizzatori settentrionali si tolgono dal capo il cretino casco coloniale, con cui sono scesi alla stazione di città, e cominciano a capire. C'è ovunque uno stesso silenzio di persone che corrono dietro al tempo, e questa corsa costringe certamente alla schiavitù, ma mai come nel nostro stabilimento compare l'altra faccia di questa schiavitù necessaria: la dura dignità, la costruzione giornaliera di una via di libertà.<sup>116</sup>

The narrator links colonialism to a 'necessary' slavery while simultaneously sketching the possibility of freedom related to his factory. His ambivalence towards industry and especially towards the 'enlightened' spirit which appears to drive his employers emerges several times and labour in the factory is one of the main aspects of this ambivalence. Throughout the novel, it is presented as a double-faced concept: according to Marxist theory, it brings alienation and at the same time, the narrator says, in southern Italy it is a salvation from alienation.<sup>117</sup> In the narrator's view, alienation in the pre-industrial South is related to unemployment. Instead of experiencing the troubling transition from craftsmanship to industry, southern Italy has known only poverty and the colonial institution of the *latifondo*, from which a 'good' factory like the one in the novel represents a way out:

La disoccupazione cronica, invece, muta davvero la prospettiva della condizione alienata: l'alienazione vera, storica, qui a Santa Maria è la disoccupazione, la quale precede ogni problema industriale [...]. E molto più

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<sup>112</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> See also Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 151: 'Forniamo una rigogliosa terra vergine ai sociologi?'

<sup>114</sup> See *Italy's 'Southern Question'*, ed. by Schneider.

<sup>115</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 22.

<sup>116</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 156.

<sup>117</sup> On ambiguity in the conceptualisation of labour, see Zinato, *Letteratura*, pp. 55–78.

che altrove, qui sorgono l'orgoglio di fabbrica, l'aziendalismo ecc., tutte le forme dello snobismo operaio, accanto alla disciplina di fabbrica, la noia, e l'alienazione. Attraverso la fabbrica si vede il 'complesso d'inferiorità sociale della classe operaia' come dice uno studioso 'dando origine ad una rappresentazione giuridica generatrice di costumi, diventare un fattore di entusiasmo e non più di depressione'.<sup>118</sup>

In the narrator's view, the worker finds life and not death in the objects he produces and is therefore not alienated but enriched by labour. The factory presents itself as a salvific entity. However, it may be argued that, throughout the novel and against this assumption of the narrator, the workers undergo a different form of estrangement when they come into contact with industry: they are affected by a form of cultural alienation. In the words of the narrator, factory workers suffer from an inferiority complex, and alienation and the inferiority complex are again connected here. The inferiority complex, however, evolves into corporate pride: the workers are those who have been selected to be part of the body of industry and from this moment they are therefore part of an aristocracy. They start believing in industry, they feel part of it, they are seduced and flattered without realising that industry is in fact an exploitative system. This ambiguity is evident in the fact that the narrator refers to workers as 'liberi schiavi'.<sup>119</sup> The 'studioso' mentioned by Ottieri is most likely Henri de Man, the anti-Marxist socialist theoretician – later collaborationist – who, in the 1920s, developed a theory precisely about the inferiority complex of the working class. Ottieri explicitly refers to de Man as one of his readings of the years 1952–1954 in *La linea gotica*.<sup>120</sup> De Man is also mentioned by Sartre in 'Colonialism is a System', in reflecting on the psychological aspects of colonial alienation (see section 2 above).

Illiteracy is one of the criteria upon which this alleged inferiority is measured in *Donnarumma*. One of the aspirant workers examined by the narrator and his colleague, signorina S., is illiterate and is named after his illiteracy: he is 'l'analfabeta' and, at least initially, he hardly speaks. The entire scene is constructed to render the bestial character of this man:

È entrato l'analfabeta. Con le mani grosse da anziano manovale, afferrati i pezzi sparsi del Moede con brutalità, stava subito per romperci il cordino di trasmissione. 'Stia attento' gli grida la signorina S. e a me dice forte: 'Se me lo rompe, dove pesco un altro cordino per il Moede?'. L'analfabeta si ferma un momento, stacca le mani pesanti dal nostro giochetto e alza il viso butterato, gli occhi tondi. Si riapplica a testa bassa tirando il cordino molto delicatamente, seguendo i consigli della S. e infila due ingranaggi nei perni giusti.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', pp. 154–155.

<sup>119</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 25.

<sup>120</sup> See Ottieri, 'La linea', p. 312: 'Diverso è il modo di reagire operaio a quello che De Man chiama il complesso d'inferiorità dell'operaio industriale', and p. 351: 'Ecco un esempio di "proletariato randagio", simile a quello descritto da De Man'. See also Henri de Man, *Il superamento del marxismo*, ed. by Alessandro Schiavi (Bari: Laterza, 1929).

<sup>121</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 14.

'L'analfabeta' begins his work in a mode of brutality but when he is reproached with a shout, he does not react verbally but accepts, with docility, the requirement to repeat his action more delicately. When he speaks, he makes linguistic mistakes: he changes the word 'analfabeta' into 'alfabeta',<sup>122</sup> and by this expedient Ottieri renders the ungrammatical voice of the workers. Another example of this is the dialogue where a worker calls the narrator a 'pizzicologo', instead of 'psicologo'.<sup>123</sup> By recording the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the working class of southern Italy, Ottieri is simultaneously giving voice to it and signalling the gap that exists between that class and that of his narrator.<sup>124</sup> Workers are portrayed in their effort to acquire the language of their 'colonisers', to conform to their categories, and to comply with their definitions. Read in this perspective, their mistakes or phonetic peculiarities are metaphors for the friction between the two cultures and of a certain – however residual – resistance to assimilation on the side of the working class.

The outsider aspirant worker Antonio Donnarumma, the eponymous protagonist of the novel, is the emblem of this resistance. A counterpoint to the narrator, Donnarumma becomes his nightmare. If the narrator embodies rationality, abstraction, bureaucracy, and humanitarianism, Donnarumma is the image of the irrational, of concreteness and violence. He threatens the order and light of the factory with his 'obscure' presence.<sup>125</sup> In the words of critic Giuseppe Montesano, he is a Caliban to the narrator's Prospero.<sup>126</sup> Donnarumma is the element that puts the entire order of the factory into crisis. His disquieting presence on the threshold of the factory, begging for a job and disturbing the order of the plant, reminds the troubled beautiful soul of the narrator of his colonising role. Donnarumma resists and challenges the paternalistic approach of the narrator:

Vuol dire che il paese capisce, inconsapevolmente, la connessione tra la bellezza dello stabilimento e il valore del no spiegato con migliaia di vuote parole, quel rifiuto ad ogni persona che, nei giorni neri, appare una pazzia inutile, un lusso paternalistico. 'Ma Donnarumma?'. 'Donnarumma è pazzo, dottore'.<sup>127</sup>

The very task of the selector is imbued with paternalism as much as the factory's alleged mission. As a 'civilising' body, they feel the responsibility of judging – which is mystified as 'saving' – an entire people.<sup>128</sup> This judgment of men upon men is precisely what Donnarumma resists. The narrator asks him to fill in a form and send it in if he wants his job application to be processed. But Donnarumma opposes this

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<sup>122</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 16.

<sup>123</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 48.

<sup>124</sup> He is also 'winking' at the cultured reader, who laughs at these idiosyncrasies.

<sup>125</sup> Donnarumma is characterised by obscurity even in his corporeal traits: see Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 112.

<sup>126</sup> See Giuseppe Montesano, 'Donnarumma liberato', in Ottiero Ottieri, *Donnarumma all'assalto* (Milan: Garzanti, 2004), pp. i–x.

<sup>127</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 167.

<sup>128</sup> See Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 18.

bureaucratic practice to the point of refusing a subsidy he is paternalistically offered, and for his resistance to techno-procedural hetero-determination he is labelled 'crazy'.

The signorine Alemanno together form another emblematic example of the paternalistic shape of the intervention of the narrator and signorina S. in the lives of the working class. The duty of care assumed by the selectors extends to their going to the house of the two sisters to literally bring the youngest to work so that the eldest will be able to get married:

Senza che me ne accorgessi, avevo appoggiato il codice ugualitario della fabbrica, la pesante idea della emancipazione femminile contro il piccolo corpo, le lentiggini di quella Alemanno minore. [...] Sporgendomi verso di lei con una velocità razionale e veloce, prima ero paterno, poi sibilante.<sup>129</sup>

The selector, ideologically sympathetic towards the working class and yet acting within and for the structure of the exploiters, is well aware of the contradiction implicit in his position and feels a sense of responsibility and guilt:

Per fortuna l'intuizione, l'esperienza, chi lo sa, guidano ogni giorno di più il selezionatore; il rischio della scelta di un suo simile come oggetto, come merce, pare stringersi entro margini onesti. Il selezionatore calma il suo rimorso per il giudizio dell'uomo sull'uomo con questa fiducia di poter sbagliare nella contrattazione psicologica sempre meno; e con la coscienza che la selezione sia necessaria. Seleziona, perché assume.<sup>130</sup>

This separation between human beings, between subjects and objects, between those who decide and those for whom things are decided, those who are allowed inside the factory and those who are kept outside, becomes, as in Fanon's reconstruction, Manichaean. Furthermore, as in Fanon, the frontier between the two worlds, inside and outside the factory, is strongly marked and patrolled by police-like forces: 'Hanno creato un'aria da caserma' and 'Ai cancelli ora abbiamo un carabiniere e un poliziotto'.<sup>131</sup> A grey area is made up of watchmen and doormen. These liminal figures control entrances and exits; endowed with military power, they would have belonged to the working class but are turned against it by their role, which is literally to reject those who are not assimilated by the factory. The gates of the factory become the space where conflicts emerge and are fought. Tellingly, *Donnarumma all'assalto* was translated into English in 1962 as *The Men at the Gate*.<sup>132</sup>

Finally, towards the end, *Donnarumma* is haunted by the spectre of violence, specifically in the form of an explosion which resonates with Fanon's description of violence in colonial contexts. A blast

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<sup>129</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 191.

<sup>130</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', p. 35. See also p. 106.

<sup>131</sup> Ottieri, 'Donnarumma', pp. 57 and 212. See also Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 38: 'The colonized world is a world divided in two. The dividing line, the border, is represented by the barracks and the police stations'.

<sup>132</sup> Ottiero Ottieri, *The Men at the Gate*, trans. by Ivy Marion Rawson (London: Gollancz, 1962).

aimed at the factory management does not kill anyone but is the event which triggers and legitimises a tightened grip in the authoritarian control of the factory.<sup>133</sup> At that stage, the police are asked to patrol the gates. Apart from this, the explosion paradoxically seems to have a subduing effect overall: aspirant workers feel intimidated and the whole body of the factory restarts its work as usual. Donnarumma is suspected as being responsible for the explosion and this does not surprise the reader. The word ‘violenza’ occurs four times in the novel; three times, in relation to Donnarumma. This reinforces his image as a Caliban in opposition to the rationality of the factory. As the case remains unsolved, his haunting presence is sustained until the end of the book, when the narrator–protagonist leaves the South, giving the reader the illusory and uncanny sensation that bourgeois order might be re-established.

Ottieri’s *Donnarumma all’assalto*, therefore, stands as the case in which colonial tropes are most consistently employed, with explicit reference to the colonial dimension of the industrialisation of southern Italy. The two subsections which follow address Paolo Volponi’s novels of the 1960s, in which a different set of colonial–industrial tropes is used to comment on Italy’s ‘economic miracle’.

### 3.3 PAOLO VOLPONI’S *MEMORIALE* (1962): LANGUAGE, VIOLENCE, AND PSYCHOSOMATIC ILLNESS

In Paolo Volponi’s *Memoriale*, there is no overt colonial allegory nor explicit mentions of ‘alienation’, ‘paternalism’, and ‘inferiority complex’ as such. This is because, in this instance, the first-person narrator is a neurotic factory worker, whose vocabulary does not include such abstract terms. Albino Saluggia, the neurotic narrator of the novel, considers his own experience as a factory worker with a special focus on the physical illness (tuberculosis) that marks his life in the factory.<sup>134</sup> It can be argued that the whole book can be fruitfully read by looking at colonial and anticolonial tropes, in light of: 1) its specific focus on language and violence; 2) the macro-theme of psychosomatic illness which is linked to paternalism in medical care as well as in the factory.

With regard to the first aspect, an early review of *Memoriale* by Pier Paolo Pasolini frames the question appropriately.<sup>135</sup> Pasolini identifies two linguistic strata in the novel, which he likens to two painted glass sheets that Volponi lays one on top of the other. On the one hand, there is the poetic language of the author: to that point, Volponi has only published poetic collections and therefore his tone is still informed by lyric as well as elegiac tones. On the other, the language of a tuberculous paranoid, doubly alienated by his personal history and illness and by his experience in the factory. In

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<sup>133</sup> On the source of this episode, see Cristina Nesi, ‘Notizie sui testi’, in Ottieri, *Opere*, pp. 1669–1756 (p. 1674).

<sup>134</sup> Volponi took inspiration from a real episode that occurred while he was working as director of Social Services at Olivetti in Ivrea: see Emanuele Zinato, ‘Commenti e apparati’, in Volponi, *Romanzi*, I, pp. 1070–1172 (p. 1075).

<sup>135</sup> See Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘Il mostro e la fabbrica’, in Pasolini, *Saggi sulla letteratura*, II, pp. 2366–2372 (first publ. in *Paese sera*, 13 April 1962).

Pasolini's view, the value of the novel comes precisely from the overlapping of the two layers in Albino's narration:

La grande intuizione di Volponi è stata quella di usare questa poeticità naturale del grafomane appartenente alla classe inferiore che usa una lingua non sua, appresa in libri letti in ospedale o in prigione: e di aver sovrapposto [...] a questa poeticità la sua poeticità personale [...] di poeta colto.<sup>136</sup>

In another passage of his review, Pasolini defines the culture that Albino 'steals' to shape his writing as the 'cultura superiore' used by the 'classe dominante', thereby establishing a hierarchy between cultures and framing the novel and Albino's experience within Marxist categories. This helps to consider the political meaning of certain passages in the book which are related to language. The first one appears in an anonymous letter that Albino writes to his mother. Before the letter is conceived, the two have an argument. Albino tells his mother that it would have been better for him to work as a peasant instead of becoming a factory worker. This would have meant freedom and connection with the land.<sup>137</sup> Albino's mother insists instead on the factory's welfare and, in his anonymous letter, Albino blames her precisely for her compromised language: 'Colpa anche vostra che non rinnovate il vostro linguaggio'.<sup>138</sup> A few pages further on, Albino declares that after some days the letter no longer convinces him, except for the passage on language:

Mi piacque la parte sul linguaggio e capii che era veramente l'ora di parlare in un altro modo, non solo per lei ma anche per tanti altri. Non spedii la lettera e la rimisi in tasca, per altri momenti o meglio come memoria sulla necessità di far capire agli altri di cambiare linguaggio.<sup>139</sup>

Language is identified here as a non-neutral institution. In particular, it is seen as organic to the industry-centred mind and therefore a change in language would indeed correspond to a change in other spheres.

In his memoir, Albino includes lyrical images that refer to natural elements. Poetry is therefore seen as an alternative to the technical and bureaucratic language of the factory and, in this sense, Albino's poetic imagination is a sign of lucidity, coming from the estranged perspective of a paranoid and an 'escluso'.<sup>140</sup> Pasolini notes how Albino is literally 'alloglotta' and displaced for at least five reasons: born

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<sup>136</sup> Pasolini, 'Il mostro', pp. 2368–2369.

<sup>137</sup> On the opposition between factory worker and peasant, dependence and freedom, illness and health, see Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 165. See also David Albert Best, 'Volponi–Ottieri–Olivetti and the Ills of *homo industrialis*: Returning to a "civiltà della natura" as a Questionable Antidote to the Urban-Industrial Malaise', in *The Years*, ed. by Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia, pp. 79–97 (pp. 90–94).

<sup>138</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 167. See Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 149: 'At the level of the unconscious, therefore, colonialism was not seeking to be perceived by the indigenous population as a sweet, kind-hearted mother'.

<sup>139</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 169.

<sup>140</sup> See Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 75.

in France (and – we might add – in Avignon, location of a historical exile), he fights in the war and is taken prisoner, he is paranoid, he is sexually uncertain, and he is tuberculous and therefore isolated from society.<sup>141</sup> Volponi projects onto Albino – and sometimes superimposes – his own voice, but he does so to propose a dissonant worker voice, even though the entire story is set in a factory very similar to Olivetti's and therefore 'persin troppo "buona"'.<sup>142</sup> Through his estranged and alienated poetic voice, Albino is able to detach himself from the institutions within which he is enclosed. Just before his second stay in a sanatorium, he starts to compose verses. These are often driven by pure sound, which transcends meaning:

Ecco, andavo dietro alle parole: il loro suono contava più di ogni altra cosa, più del loro senso, ed io finivo per ordinarle o per trovarle o per inventarle secondo il suono, senza più l'ordine del significato e del pensiero. Ma così trovavo un altro ordine pieno di emozioni e che parlava meglio il mio linguaggio.<sup>143</sup>

In such a dismissal of meaning in favour of sound, we can see a trace of Albino's delirium but also an allegory for his – more or less conscious – rejection of the language of capitalist industrial reason. His poems have a lyrical side but also a more militant one: in one of them, through a chain of rhymes, Albino reflects on the workers' condition as 'disprezzati dai padroni' and describes the factory as 'nemica'.<sup>144</sup> Poetry represents, therefore, a first step in the opposition against the total institution of the factory.<sup>145</sup> After his second experience in the sanatorium, Albino is finally readmitted to work, this time as a factory sentry. He is literally located on the threshold of the plant, at the gates, between industry and the countryside. It is at this stage that he moves from poetry to action, first imagined and then real. While monitoring the plant he daydreams of perpetrating political violence against the 'capi' ('cadres') and managers: 'Io impugnavo la mitragliatrice. Eccone due alle porte. Facevo fuoco. Le mie labbra misuravano la mitraglia'.<sup>146</sup> This phantasy of violence further involves an 'esplosione'.<sup>147</sup> Shortly after this, Albino decides to participate in a strike, for which action he is eventually fired.<sup>148</sup> Albino, therefore, whose name significantly conveys a sense of extreme whiteness, reproduces what for Fanon is the contradictory path of black, colonised poets. On the one hand, in Fanon's words, 'Generally speaking the bards of

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<sup>141</sup> See Pasolini, 'Il mostro', p. 2370. Pasolini's own lexical choice ('il mostro') is of great interest (see Part One, section 3.2.2).

<sup>142</sup> See Giudici, 'Il Memoriale', p. 89.

<sup>143</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 213.

<sup>144</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 215.

<sup>145</sup> On Volponi's ambivalent judgment on industry, see Camon, *Il mestiere*, pp. 109–126.

<sup>146</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 225.

<sup>147</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 226.

<sup>148</sup> See Piovene, *La coda*, p. 536: '[Albino] Ha partecipato a uno sciopero, accettato lo scandalo della lotta di classe, che tutto quel gigantesco apparato vuole derealizzare. È finalmente tra i caduti, gli espulsi, tra quelli che restano uomini'.

negritude would contrast old Europe versus young Africa, dull reason versus poetry, and stifling logic versus exuberant Nature'.<sup>149</sup> On the other,

After the assimilation period of rhyming verse, the beat of the poetic drum bursts onto the scene. Poetry of revolt, but which is also analytical and descriptive. The poet must, however, understand that nothing can replace the rational and irreversible commitment on the side of the people in arms.<sup>150</sup>

This is exactly Albino's parable: from words to action – and arms.

Throughout the novel, Albino's contradictory efforts of integration in and disambiguation from the factory seem to him to be countered by those he identifies as enemies. With an attitude sinisterly reminiscent of the dynamics of a controlling biopolitics, the factory determines every aspect of Albino's life. Albino is far from integrated, also as a consequence of his participation in World War II and his experience in concentration camps. He is eradicated. He is neither a peasant nor a farmer, therefore he does not even have that kind of direct contact with his land. He identifies himself as a factory worker but immediately after his employment in the factory he becomes ill and develops a problematic relation to the factory environment. He has problems with his colleagues and suffers from a neurosis, which takes a paranoid form, because he feels the factory doctors are deceiving him. He is not suspicious of all doctors or healers: he agrees to receive regular injections from a stranger he encounters by chance on his way home. His paranoia specifically concerns the medical personnel employed in the factory or linked to it; in particular, Dr Bompiero and Dr Tortora. What he sees in their alleged benevolence is a will to control and determine his life. Bompiero's words sound paternalistic: 'Da quanto tempo si sente male? In questa fabbrica, a casa sua, certamente avrebbero fatto tutto'.<sup>151</sup> Albino refuses to undergo Bompiero's medical examination and flees, precisely because he feels he needs self-determination: 'per poter decidere soltanto dentro di me cosa fare'.<sup>152</sup> By certifying Albino's status as sick, then as 'matto' (like Donnarumma in Ottieri's novel), the factory seals his fate.<sup>153</sup> Albino goes back and forth from the factory to the sanatorium and the factory also manages his time off, offering him holidays in the mountains which he feels he has to accept. He fights his loneliness by anchoring himself to the familiar images sketched by the stains on the bricks of the barn in which he sleeps, electing them his totems. These are a boot and – quite tellingly – an 'indiano'. What strikes him, in particular, is 'il ritrovamento sul muro e dentro di me della figura

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<sup>149</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 151.

<sup>150</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 162. These extracts come from Fanon's intervention at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists, held in Rome in 1959, the year in which Volponi started composing *Memoriale*.

<sup>151</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 68.

<sup>152</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 69.

<sup>153</sup> On Albino's 'madness', see Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 134.

dell'indiano'.<sup>154</sup> At a certain point, Albino is also bestialised and he resorts to religion as a way to survive his perceived oppressors:

Quando arrivai a metà del corridoio, Grosset sbucò con una guardia e alzò l'indice verso di me. Non feci in tempo a dire niente: la guardia mi raggiunse e disse che avrebbe dovuto accompagnarmi in infermeria. Ero tradito e consegnato alle guardie. Sentivo appena Grosset che diceva di non potermi riprendere in reparto e di avere il dovere di costringermi a curarmi. Infatti fui ben curato [...]. Quella volta all'infermeria tutti mi guardavano: le infermiere uscivano dalle loro stanze per vedermi e i piantoni mi giravano intorno, come i contadini intorno a una bestia che tira calci.<sup>155</sup>

And it is worth noting how this process of estrangement and dehumanisation affects the body:

Appena messo il pigiama, il mio corpo non era più il mio; era già quello di un malato, magro e storto, coperto malamente dalle cuciture e dalle grosse tele e sembrava avere ormai altre strutture sotto le pieghe del pigiama. Anche l'odore del mio corpo non era più il mio.<sup>156</sup>

Reflecting on his overall experience inside and outside the factory, Albino realises the power industry has over man. Industry annihilates human beings and transforms their beliefs. The transformation in an individual's mindset is so oppressive as to lead them to reconsider the very nature of man. Albino describes this process in racial terms: 'Ci si può spingere a pensare a un uomo non più fatto a somiglianza di Dio, nella sua terra; ma più somigliante e legato alle macchine, addirittura a una razza diversa'.<sup>157</sup> Albino himself is ambivalent: he simultaneously searches for and rejects a bond to the factory;<sup>158</sup> he is a kind of barometer of the process of 'colonisation' that is taking place. Hallucinatorily, he sees it; but is also troublingly enveloped in it. In the words of Tiziano Toracca, he is 'the subject who *must* but *cannot* be assimilated'.<sup>159</sup>

Volponi's engagement with industry, industrialisation and its consequences affected his entire literary output, as well as his own life. His 1965 industrial novel *La macchina mondiale* further testifies to this fact, as will be discussed below.

### 3.4 PAOLO VOLPONI'S *LA MACCHINA MONDIALE* (1965): MACHINES, ANIMALITY, AND SAVAGERY

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<sup>154</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 29.

<sup>155</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', pp. 78–79.

<sup>156</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 81.

<sup>157</sup> Volponi, 'Memoriale', p. 133.

<sup>158</sup> See Tiziano Toracca, 'Paolo Volponi's *Memoriale*: Industry Between Alienation and Utopia', in *The Years*, ed. by Diazzi and Sforza Tarabochia, pp. 115–132.

<sup>159</sup> Toracca, 'Paolo Volponi's', p. 116.

*La macchina mondiale* occupies an odd and unique position in the canon of industrial literature. Indeed, neither the plot nor the setting can be said to be properly industrial, which makes its presence in the canon debatable.<sup>160</sup> However, there are at least two important factors that allow us to read it as a work of industrial literature and to interrogate it in the context of the argument presented here.

First, Paolo Volponi, as we have seen, can be considered an industrial writer *tout court*, even when the factory is not at the centre of his novels. In 1965, when *La macchina mondiale* came out, Volponi's first properly industrial novel *Memoriale* had already been published and by that time he was very well established in the Olivetti milieu. Moreover, he would go on publishing industrial novels over the following decades: the most 'recognisable' example is 1989's *Le mosche del capitale*, but he himself called *Corporale*, published in 1974, his 'most industrial' novel, despite its not having an industrial setting.<sup>161</sup> *Il pianeta irritabile* (1978), set in a dystopian future and written in the form of an allegorical fable, is a reflection on sets of power relationships in industrialised societies and on the consequences of uncontrolled industrialisation. These facts give a sense of the presence, significance, and strength of industrial imagery and themes in Volponi's work and permit us to argue for an inclusion of such destabilising novels that are not completely industrial within the canon of industrial literature.

Furthermore, *La macchina mondiale* is itself industrial in a specific way. Set between the rural environment of the Marche region in central Italy, where Volponi was born and grew up, and the lively commercial district of Rome, the novel does not include scenes from the factory floor nor the representations of working-class life seen in earlier industrial novels. There is none of their gloomy suburban landscapes, no serial production, no strikes, none of their 'commissioni interne'. Instead, it is in the protagonist and his story that we find the sense of the industrial 'mutation' as something that has already happened by this point, an allegory of the 'economic miracle' as something permeating the very structure of life and subjectivity even in the countryside.

The peasant–philosopher Anteo Crocioni, around whose speculations and actions the plot revolves, is an industrial character even though he never crosses the threshold of a factory. He has assimilated, in part instinctively and in part through study, a radically mechanical and industrial mindset, such that he is completely aware of the exploitation involved in the industrial system and rebels against it, to the point of ultimately adopting a savage lifestyle. However, he is also fascinated by machines themselves and by their liberating potential. Moreover, Anteo's theories as presented in the book are attributed in a paratextual note to an unidentified 'P.M.V.', who has been recognised by critics in the figure of Pietro Maria Vallasciani, a visionary peasant–philosopher from the Marche, who Volponi met

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<sup>160</sup> On the industrial background of *La macchina mondiale*, see Zinato, 'Commenti', p. 1112.

<sup>161</sup> See Emanuele Zinato, 'Paolo Volponi: letteratura e industria', *Doppiozero*, 18 February 2016 <<https://www.doppiozero.com/materiali/made-in/paolo-volponi-letteratura-e-industria>> [accessed 23 December 2020].

while working at Olivetti. Once again, we see how the novel is indirectly set against an industrial background.

The story, narrated in the first person by the deranged voice of Anteo, is that of a rebellion, however visionary and unrealistic, against society as it is and against exploitation.<sup>162</sup> Anteo can be defined as a case of hyper-consciousness and hyper-subjectivity. He interprets the world according to a philosophically and scientifically imprecise system, shaped by himself, in which human beings are conceived as machines created by other men or less sophisticated machines, in an entirely materialistic dynamic of production and reproduction. In this totally mechanical world, where no god exists, Anteo would like to insert morality, essential in his view to direct human development to the good. In the elaboration of his theories, he is partially supported by his Christian friend Liborio, whom we encounter at the beginning of the novel as an epiphany and then towards the end when he has become a priest and is therefore able to indicate to Anteo the fallacies of his system according to a Christian conscience. All other characters oppose and frustrate Anteo's ideas in different ways. His family dismisses him and moves to Rome. His wife Massimina – who he ends up beating, as we learn from the minutes of the court in which Anteo is put on trial – leaves him because in her eyes he is crazy, violent as well as unable to work and guarantee her maintenance. Once the marriage has broken down, Massimina migrates to Rome to work as a housekeeper in the house of an eminent lawyer. Anteo moves to Rome too for a while both to look for her and to expound his ideas to acknowledged academics and scientists. However, his theses are rejected by these scholars, scorned as too poetic. He finds Massimina but is not able to see her. When they finally meet back in the Marche, they have sexual intercourse – it amounts to an act of rape, although Anteo denies this – in the process of which they conceive a baby that Massimina will later kill as soon as he is born. The book ends on Anteo's project of committing suicide by staging an explosion, after reading in a newspaper about Massimina's actions.

*La macchina mondiale* has most frequently been interpreted through the categories of utopia and allegory. What Anteo theorises is a utopian society that represents the outcome of Volponi's own utopian view of industry and mechanisation, partly shaped by Adriano Olivetti's ideas.<sup>163</sup> Anteo's mental condition and his controversial ideas have been read as an allegory of the problematic position of the poet in contemporary and industrialised societies and of the conflict between the humanities and science, nature and history.<sup>164</sup> Linguistic analyses of *La macchina* have highlighted Anteo's psychotic trait,

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<sup>162</sup> The character of Anteo has been linked to Cervantes's Don Quixote by Volponi himself and by his critics, starting from Pasolini: see Salvatore Ritrovato, *All'ombra della memoria: studi su Paolo Volponi* (Pesaro: Metauro, 2016), pp. 99–116.

<sup>163</sup> See Eleonora Lima, 'Paolo Volponi's *La macchina mondiale* as a Cybernetic Utopia: The Limits of a Solely Allegorical Interpretation', *Forum Italicum*, 51.3 (2017), 618–640.

<sup>164</sup> See Emanuele Zinato, *Volponi* (Palermo: Palumbo, 2001), pp. 29–31.

characterising him as an unreliable narrator. Pasolini, among others, captured the alienation of Anteo also as a linguistic fact.<sup>165</sup>

How does all this connect with the anticolonial allegorical and analogical analysis pursued so far in this dissertation? Key elements of continuity can be identified in this eccentric novel as well and, as will be shown here, several of the tropes which are so frequent in ‘true’ industrial literature as well as in anticolonial thought are present in *La macchina mondiale*, in a nuanced and more implicit – but still significant – way.

Anteo’s hallucinatory hyper-subjectivity and hyper-consciousness, as well as his rebellion against exploitation, can be fruitfully reread as an allegory of the unsettled and rebel subjectivity of the colonised. Anteo is so aware of his being hetero-determined and directed by other human beings that he eliminates any creative deity from his philosophical system and conceptualises human beings as literally created by other human beings: ‘gli uomini non sono creature del cielo ma macchine fabbricate da altri uomini, anzi da altri esseri che adesso abitano altrove o che sono addirittura estinti’.<sup>166</sup> Anteo’s idea of the power relationships that rule the world – however visionary, pseudoscientific, and even paranoid – works for him as an explanation of capitalist industrialised societies, where humans are actually determined and ‘made’ by other humans, according to a criterion of amoral, laissez-faire accumulation. The word ‘fabbricare’ occurs relatively frequently in the novel, giving the sense both of the materiality and the seriality of the process of creation and reproduction. Anteo fights against this lack of self-determination of the exploited throughout the whole novel. Style and language are significant in this sense too. Anteo, like Albino in *Memoriale*, rebels against the established meaning of words and aims to create a new language, which responds to different rules:

Insieme studiavo le parole e le ordinavo secondo il suono: colto, coltivo, coltura, coltivare, continuare, confortare; auto, automa, autore, automatico; genio, geniale, genitale, generare e capivo come le parole insieme si articolassero secondo le loro sillabe e secondo il suono in un modo che era già una costruzione, una costruzione che diveniva autonoma, che non aveva cioè bisogno di essere sostenuta dal mio pensiero e che invece per la sua forza ed anche per il suo disegno e per le sue strutture componeva un pensiero proprio.<sup>167</sup>

This passage is also charged with metaliterary implications, especially when read in consonance with another episode in the novel in which Anteo reflects on human collective consciousness and claims that:

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<sup>165</sup> See Pier Paolo Pasolini, ‘Un piccolo “Vangelo” anarchico’, in Pasolini, *Saggi sulla letteratura*, II, pp. 2448–2453 (first publ. in *L’Europa letteraria*, 35 (1965)); Zublena, ‘Anteo’.

<sup>166</sup> Volponi, ‘La macchina’, p. 247.

<sup>167</sup> Volponi, ‘La macchina’, p. 250.

Posso dire che gli autori hanno fabbricato una macchina uguale all'altra, dando a tutte le stesse regole e anche la coscienza di queste regole; senza però voler dare a tutte le macchine una regola comune che avesse sede nella coscienza stessa della comunità, della possibile comunione e poi della conversione di tutte le regole verso uno scopo che potrebbe anche diventare, ed allora sarebbe il più allettante, quello di una ribellione agli autori, di una liberazione dalla meccanica con l'invenzione di una supermeccanica e quindi di un supercorpo.<sup>168</sup>

These words can therefore be read on two levels: firstly, as a call for freedom coming from a man and, secondly, as a claim of the importance of the freedom of fictional creatures in the face of their authors, coming from a character. This specific aspect is very present in Volponi's reflections of those years, as is evident in his essay 'Le difficoltà del romanzo', discussed later below.<sup>169</sup> Volponi's efforts in creating characters that are as independent as possible from their author give an idea of the strong connection in his writing between style and a libertarian – in some cases openly anarchic – view of society, affecting language as well.

Returning to the level of the character in the novel, the turning point in human evolution for Anteo would be to create new and more functional machines and to direct the existing ones in a broadly communist (and communitarian) sense, which takes shape in the utopia of an 'Accademia dell'amicizia'. The development of his subjectivity is a substantial stage in Anteo's growth, allowing him to become aware of the necessity of transformation in society. A very significant episode in this sense, which ties together many anticolonial and industrial keywords such as exile (and migration) and paternalism, is that of the 'venditrice di lupini' (the lupin bean trader) in Rome. Driven by his desire to share his scientific theories with established scholars as well as to search for Massimina, Anteo steals some pieces from Contessa Carsidoni's house in the Marche, sells them, and leaves for Rome. Once there, he realises the money he has is not enough. He has to work to earn more so gets in contact with a rich woman, also from the Marche, who manages a trade in lupin beans, and becomes a seller himself. On a Sunday, the woman's son-in-law – a doctor – approaches the lupin bean sellers to convince them to vote for the Christian Democrats, essentially bribing them with the promise of medical assistance. He gives a speech and the sellers seem to hang on his words:

Io guardavo i trenta lupinari con disprezzo, ma poco a poco cominciai a capire la loro umiliazione e mentre guardavo le loro bicciche ed i loro occhi lagrimosi mi sentivo di nuovo fratello della loro razza ed allora domandai al dottor Colombari che cosa intendeva per famiglia, lavoro e religione [...]. Il dottor Colombari disse che le parole erano quelle che erano, [...] e che tutti sapevano benissimo che cosa volevano dire [...].

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<sup>168</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 239. The use of the word 'comunità' by an author closely linked to Adriano Olivetti is particularly significant.

<sup>169</sup> See Paolo Volponi, 'Le difficoltà del romanzo', in Volponi, *Romanzi*, 1, pp. 1023–1038.

Allora io dissi, con l'intenzione di spiegare a loro, che famiglia non voleva dire niente, perché ogni famiglia è diversa dall'altra e spesso la famiglia è una maledizione, più spesso che non un peso od una preoccupazione, e che molto spesso proprio la famiglia è un'angheria e che nelle città la famiglia non esiste più perché è dilaniata dalla servitù, dispersa dalle distrazioni tanto che, come loro sapevano, almeno metà delle loro figlie non li salutavano quando li incontravano sui marciapiedi con la bigonza e con il misurino.<sup>170</sup>

Anteo's position here draws on racial subdivision to point to the exploitation of which he and his colleagues are the victims. Exile and recognition are further keywords here: the 'venditrice di lupini', through her adhesion to the capitalist economy, has eradicated herself from her original country and culture. Her children, fully integrated in the metropolitan environment of Rome, despise her and do not even recognise her, as she is still somehow linked to the Marche, the province and periphery, via her employees who come from there. This phenomenon is perceived by Anteo as a double alienation (even though the word as such never appears in the novel, written again as a memoir). In turn, workers from the Marche, peasants, newcomers in the urban reality of Rome, are not even greeted anymore by their children as a sign of the radical separation between them. The reply of the woman is built around other motives of colonial/industrial discourse; that is, paternalism, dependency complex, and ingratitude:

Ho visto altri ribelli come te finire sdentati a mangiare la carità. Ah! tu credi di poter pensare e fare per conto tuo, brutto burino ignorante e rifiuti il bene che la gente vuole darti, ma vedrai che non troverai terra per le tue pallotte e che cadrai fulminato da qualche parte. Voi uomini sapete che per campare bisogna lavorare e che qui noi vi facciamo lavorare a Roma, che è una città dove tutti vorrebbero venire e che addirittura invece di camminare potete andare in tram; quindi date retta a chi sa qual è il vostro bene e assecondate la vostra fortuna!<sup>171</sup>

Thus, the woman represents a sort of grey area between the peasant workers and the metropolitan bourgeoisie. She earns money: she embodies a form of capitalism that has not yet absorbed the urban mindset and ideology entirely. She is at the same time dominatrix of the mass of sellers who work for her, who depend on her, and who she controls; and dominated, by the Roman bourgeoisie embodied in the first instance by her children who exploit her resources without literally recognising her:

I suoi figlioli, uno ragioniere al Ministero della Marina e l'altra sposata con uno di quei medici figli di marchigiani, non la riconoscevano quasi più e non andavano nemmeno a trovarla; mandavano le loro donne di servizio a prendere le uova fresche e l'insalata per i bambini.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', pp. 330–331.

<sup>171</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 331.

<sup>172</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 328.

The sellers, in relation to whom Anteo has mixed feeling of both sympathy and disdain, are at the mercy of their dominators, in particular the woman and her son-in-law. When Anteo protests against Colombari's attempt to bribe them and affirms that he is a communist, his colleagues attack him physically as well. Anteo likens them, in their lack of consciousness, to animals:

Alla fine io mi tirai da parte e dissi: – I discorsi non servono per voi e non servirebbe nemmeno bastonarvi uno per uno; se volete un poco riscattarvi e siccome siete bestie qualsiasi vi dico di votare per il Partito Comunista. Allora si fermarono ed alzarono la testa, questa volta con un gesto più lento, come se avessero trovato un odore strano o sentito un suono che toccasse e convincesse qualche cosa dei loro corpi, o minacciasse di un danno i loro vestiti. La donna disse: – Sì, solo gli animali votano per il Partito Comunista e io lo sapevo che alla fine avresti battuto il naso su questa cacca. – È giusto, – dissi io, – gli animali votano per il Partito Comunista e questo voi lo sapete e vi rincresce; avete sempre trattato questi uomini come animali e temete, dentro di voi, che alla fine finiscano per comportarsi come tali. E come animali verranno e mangeranno perfino le vostre mastelle, perché voi li avete abituati a mangiare anche peggio. Fate pure i dottori ed usate la carità, accantonate le ricchezze e ogni tanto datene via un po' per mantenere gli schiavi, ma non riuscirete mai a combattere la vostra stessa idea che gli uomini intorno a voi siano degli animali [...].<sup>173</sup>

Animalisation is here dialectically reversed by Anteo, who first scorns his colleagues as beasts and then, when he in turn is bestialised in the woman's discourse, shows consciousness of his animal nature as something generated by his dominators. Moreover, consistent with Volponi's own view about animality, Anteo prophetically exalts the values of being an animal.<sup>174</sup> This aspect of animality and animalisation is at the same time powerfully reminiscent of, and dialectically in divergence with, the anticolonial reflection on these keywords. Throughout the rest of the book, in parallel to developing his scientific and philosophical intuitions, Anteo comes progressively closer to a condition of savagery.

The scene of the fight with the lupin bean sellers is followed by what we might call a *flânerie* by the protagonist through the streets of Rome. After some passages in which he anaphorically recalls his epiphanic experience of seeing and looking at things with an estranged vision, Anteo relates that when he eventually gets to his room he is in a sort of ecstasy:

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<sup>173</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 333.

<sup>174</sup> See Paolo Volponi, 'Natura e animale', in Volponi, *Romanzi*, II, pp. 686–698. See also Andrea Inglese, 'L'umano e l'animale in *Il pianeta irritabile* di Paolo Volponi', in *Images et formes de la littérature narrative italienne des années 1970 à nos jours*, ed. by Alain Sarrabayrouse and Christophe Mileschi (= *Cahiers d'études italiennes*, 7 (2008)), pp. 347–357. This aspect resonates with Gramsci's and Subaltern theories of animality, in relation to both the industrial and colonial dimension: see Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. by Valentino Gerratana, 4 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), III, pp. 2160–2165; Neel Ahuja, 'Postcolonial Critique in a Multi-Species World', *PMLA*, 124 (2009), 556–563.

cominciavo a girare fino a strusciare contro un muro e poi contro l'altro e poi a fare il giro sempre più stretto, perduto ogni senso, verso un punto che non era il mio, ma che doveva essere il punto misterioso della mia matrice, che ancora mi accompagnava, della bocca dell'automa-autore dalla quale sono uscito e che ha soffiato sulla mia macchina.<sup>175</sup>

Thus, it is as if Anteo does not succeed in holding onto and handling social conflict to the point of a true organisation and channelling of it, and instead loses himself in an ecstatic experience of estrangement and almost mystical comprehension of his existential root.

From this point of his 'parabola',<sup>176</sup> Anteo moves toward a savage state. It is in the description of this movement that it is possible to find the most significant resonances in the novel, however oblique, with the anticolonial discourse. Anteo says that, '[i]n realtà io andavo verso uno stato selvaggio, anche se per fortuna ci andavo solo e senza chiedere di essere accompagnato e giustificato da una intera compagnia e da tutta una società'.<sup>177</sup> This savage condition is positive, in Anteo's view, and it coincides with a non-industrial dimension of existence. It is interesting to note that Claude Lévi-Strauss's *La pensée sauvage* (1962) was translated into Italian in 1964, one year before *La macchina mondiale* was published.<sup>178</sup> In the 'compagnia' and 'società' alluded to by Anteo we can see an indirect but suggestive reference to the organised dimension of colonialism, in radical contrast with Anteo's individual tension towards 'the savage' and to its anthropological dimension. 'Selvaggio' is indeed a keyword in the colonial discourse. As Fanon puts it:

For colonialism, this vast continent [Africa] was a den of savages, infested with superstitions and fanaticism, destined to be despised, cursed by God, a land of cannibals.<sup>179</sup>

In this light, Anteo's radical adhesion to savagery can allegorically point to the 'anticolonial' dimension of his parable.

Finally, 'società', as opposed to 'realtà', is a crucial word in Volponi's discourse of those years. In 1966, he gave a paper at a conference organised by the Associazione culturale italiana.<sup>180</sup> Volponi's talk was entitled 'Le difficoltà del romanzo', and the text has now been published as an essay.<sup>181</sup> On this occasion, when asked to discuss the difficulties of the novel as a genre threatened by the emergence and

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<sup>175</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 335.

<sup>176</sup> Pasolini, 'Un piccolo', p. 2451.

<sup>177</sup> Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 366.

<sup>178</sup> See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Il pensiero selvaggio*, trans. by Paolo Caruso (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1964).

<sup>179</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 150.

<sup>180</sup> The Associazione culturale italiana was founded in 1947 by Ilda Antonetto in Turin, and hosted conferences on several aspects of Italian culture.

<sup>181</sup> See Volponi, 'Le difficoltà'.

affirmation of contaminated genres and neo-avantgarde poetics, Volponi answered by reversing the perspective and interpreting the title of the conference as the difficulties that novels pose and should pose to their readers. In this context, for Volponi, ‘società’ represents the realm of what is already given, whereas ‘realtà’ is in fact something magmatic and continuously moving. In Volponi’s view, the novel should deal with ‘realtà’ and should not, therefore, simply represent and describe something that already exists, but rather realise that reality is in a constant process of change and thus create works of art informed by this sense of movement and mutability. He identifies in Dostoevsky a model for his restless characters, and invites readers to join him in a process of common discovery and construction of meaning. Anteo is exemplary of this trait of Volponi’s writing. He is in constant movement (for example, ‘In quel periodo oscillavo molto io stesso; tremavo e mi sentivo sottile ed agitato come l’ala, anzi il corpo intero di una vespa’,<sup>182</sup> ‘Ma io non posso ammettere l’ozio’),<sup>183</sup> and disdains everything that is stable and conservative, such as society. Anteo’s individual physical and intellectual restlessness can be read as an allegory of his opposition to the *status quo*. His suicide by means of the explosion involving the small statue he stole from Contessa Carsidoni’s house acquires allegorical meaning in relation to movement if we link it to this passage, where the recurrence of the word ‘fermo’ in different declinations is crucial:

Vedete oggi come gli uomini, soprattutto i potenti, non cerchino altro che di fermarsi o di disegnare macchine perché loro possano rimanere fermi [...]. Temo che anche la mia statuina sia stata costruita a questo scopo: dare a chi la possedeva il momento fermo e fisso dello sguardo di una primavera metà donna e metà astro. Oggi la statuina accanto a me è diventata uno stimolo ed io vedo e sono d’accordo con essa che i suoi occhi guardano un punto che non esiste [...].<sup>184</sup>

The resonance with the following passage from Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, and with his words on the muscular tension of the colonised, is striking:

A world compartmentalized, Manichaeic and petrified, a world of statues: the statue of the general who led the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge. A world cocksure of itself, crushing with its stoniness the backbones of those scarred by the whip. That is the colonial world. The colonial subject is a man penned in; apartheid is but one method of compartmentalizing the colonial world. The first thing the colonial subject learns is to remain in his place and not overstep its limits. Hence the dreams of the colonial subject are muscular dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality. I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, and climbing.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Volponi, ‘La macchina’, p. 237.

<sup>183</sup> Volponi, ‘La macchina’, p. 239.

<sup>184</sup> Volponi, ‘La macchina’, p. 284.

<sup>185</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 15.

Analogously to the muscular tension of the colonised that explodes in dreams, ecstatic manifestations, dance, and violence, Anteo's tension passes through most of these stages before the preparation of the final explosion. It is to be noted, even merely as a coincidence, that it is through a 'roncola' – the same peasant tool employed by the colonised as a weapon in their revolts against the colonisers in Fanon's translation and picked up by Giudici<sup>186</sup> – that Anteo is injured towards the end of the novel. Through the pain caused by the wound, he becomes aware of himself. That wound is a part of the construction of his own subjectivity and his almost pantheistic attachment to nature.<sup>187</sup> His movement is in fact towards savagery, as proposed above, and this means embracing that same animality used as an ideological stigma for the colonised and the exploited in capitalist, industrialised contexts: 'dovevo mettermi subito dalla parte di quegli animali, tordi e lepri, che avevo fino a quel momento cacciato'.<sup>188</sup> Allying with animals can therefore be interpreted as an anticolonial and anticapitalist stance here.

All these considerations should give a sense of what is at stake in the novel: not only the singular parable of a strange and 'crazy' individual who is not able to come to terms with society, but an allegory of atypical subaltern subjectivities which resist exploitation and forms of colonisation. In *La macchina mondiale*, it is not only the factory that serves as an allegory for a colonial structure, but the whole world in which exploitation takes place: 'la macchina mondiale'. The tropes that have been encountered and described so far to highlight a certain contiguity between anticolonial and critical industrial discourse are thus present and in fertile interconnection in this novel too, even if in a slightly different, more oblique way, and allow for an interpretation of the novel that links anticolonial and broadly industrial problems, patterns, and forms of language in the name of rebellion.

### 3.5 GOFFREDO PARISE'S *IL PADRONE* (1965): DARWINISM, ANIMALISATION, AND PATERNALISM

Like *La macchina mondiale*, but for different reasons, the status of Goffredo Parise's *Il padrone* as an industrial novel is far from unproblematic.<sup>189</sup> Unlike Ottieri and Volponi, Parise was not part of the Olivetti milieu, but worked instead for a different kind of industry: the culture industry. He was a journalist and had worked, since 1954, for Garzanti, the famous publishing house based in Milan said to act as a source for the setting of *Il padrone*.<sup>190</sup> Parise's description of the corporate environment in *Il padrone* is peculiar, for many reasons. As in Ottieri's *Donnarumma all'assalto*, the first-person narrator is an unnamed employee defined only by his status as 'dipendente'. The offices are depicted as a network of

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<sup>186</sup> See Giudici, 'L'uomo'.

<sup>187</sup> See Volponi, 'La macchina', pp. 364–366.

<sup>188</sup> See Volponi, 'La macchina', p. 367.

<sup>189</sup> In an interview with Massimo Grillandi, which appeared in *Il Gazzettino* on 20 July 1965, Parise declared that '*Il padrone* non c'entra niente con la letteratura di fabbrica. Nel mio romanzo c'è una ditta? Ebbene questa ditta potrebbe essere la vita stessa'.

<sup>190</sup> See Niccolò Scaffai, 'Goffredo Parise', in *Il romanzo*, ed. by Alfano and de Cristofaro, IV, pp. 217–232 (p. 228).

power relationships whose centre is represented by the master, the strange and neurotic dottor Max, and his family. In this dematerialised factory the product itself disappears: the reader is not even told what the company actually manufactures. This is not the only peculiarity of Parise's 'factory' novel. *Il padrone* marks Parise's return to narrative prose after six years. This means that he innovates in form and language in many ways, for example through the contamination of the novel with popular culture that is evident in the parodic incorporation of names of famous cartoon characters in the text.<sup>191</sup> In spite of this programmatic differentiation from the contemporary genre of the factory novel, alienation remains a key theme in *Il padrone*, and although it is not named as such it emerges in many circumstances and forms.

Two main aspects bring *Il padrone* into an interesting dialogue with the categories of anticolonial thought. The first is the bodily character of alienation in the novel, which results in a form of dehumanisation. The second is paternalism. A Darwinist framework informs the entire novel, which makes the anticolonial–industrial resonances even more intriguing.

As regards the first aspect, dehumanisation appears in *Il padrone* as a bodily matter at the very threshold of industry. The narrator describes the body of the doorman of the building in animalistic terms, likening the man to a big monkey:

A questo punto si è curvato e ha allungato la mano in direzione della scala: nel fare questo movimento, accompagnato dal suono profondo della voce, ha rivelato chiaramente la sua vera natura che, come m'era parso di intravedere nei suoi occhi offuscati dall'ombra delle sopracciglia, era una natura scimmiesca. Infatti egli ha tentato di sorridere: ma nel fare questo tentativo, cioè nell'atteggiare il volto a qualcosa di umano [...] la sua indole triste e cupa è apparsa chiaramente [...] come in certi vecchi, enormi oranghi dello zoo. Di questi oranghi si dice che siano tristi per il loro stato di prigionia, per la nostalgia delle origini e della libera esistenza nelle foreste. Ma non è vero. L'orango diventa triste per la lunga consuetudine all'uomo, per la domestichezza con quei tratti fisici che tanto somigliano ai suoi, per il desiderio oscuro di diventare anch'esso uomo.<sup>192</sup>

The animalisation of the doorman implies a human standard in the narrator: this is represented by the man who works within the building, the integrated metropolitan bourgeois employee.<sup>193</sup> The 'economic miracle' – the industrial 'colonisation' of Italy – has already occurred, and, from the perspective of an employee, the outdoor world has become a zoo, a place of captivity, a cage from where wild animals sadly contemplate the life of real men, longing to become like them.<sup>194</sup> Immediately before publishing *Il*

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<sup>191</sup> Clear examples are the characters of Minnie, Pippo, and Pluto.

<sup>192</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', pp. 837–838.

<sup>193</sup> See Parise, 'Il padrone', pp. 956–957.

<sup>194</sup> A source of inspiration for Parise's conceptualisation of the corporate world was also his 1961 trip to the US: see Ludovica del Castillo, 'Chi si ribella "ieri ci lasciava la pelle, oggi ci rimette l'anima": la prigioniera allucinata del *Padrone* di Goffredo Parise',

*padrone*, Parise had read Charles Darwin's *The Origins of Species* with great interest, and the whole novel can be read as a bitter contemplation of the struggle for life between individuals and species.<sup>195</sup> In this framework, the doorman is defined as non-human – and possibly, in Parise's evolutionist perspective, pre-human – and metonymically identified by a recognisable trait of his body, his bald head, as 'il portiere-scimmia-cranio'.<sup>196</sup> Only later on in the novel is the character's name revealed: Lotar. He is an appendix of dottor Max, a sort of robot, pure labour, who performs the most mechanical tasks. We have no access to his psychological processes. As a threshold figure, Lotar is not really within the human realm, nor is he totally outside it. What is certain, is that he is hyperdetermined by dottor Max. Similarly, the narrator also perceives and describes dottor Max with zoomorphic attributes. He is likened – *à la* Kafka – to an insect.<sup>197</sup> Therefore, both the exploited and the exploiter have, in the eyes of the narrator, animal traits.

The second figure that the narrator encounters upon his arrival at the office, a receptionist, is again liminal. The narrator's judgment on the humanity of this character concerns his body and is in the spirit of a diminution:

Chissà perché mi è saltato in mente che quell'uomo fosse senza lingua o senza testicoli, come gli eunuchi degli harem, e ho cacciato subito questo pensiero inopportuno e quasi empio nella mia prima giornata di lavoro.<sup>198</sup>

In this bizarre fantasy which involves sexual aspects as well, the narrator deprives the receptionist of language or fertility; and a few lines later, his feet are described as 'inadatti a camminare'.<sup>199</sup> Again, what takes place is the judgment of man upon man pushed to the ultimate definition of what is human. The narrator, in this dynamic, occupies a peculiar place: he embodies the point of view of the integrated man, except for some 'flashes' during which he realises that he has been co-opted into the company. The character of dottor Max, the master, the 'padrone', represents for the narrator the ideal of perfection to which he aspires. The narrator is affected by a desire for identification that is far from linear. On the one hand, 'Ecco allora sopravvenire in me il desiderio di identificarmi con lui [dottor Max], coi suoi problemi e coi suoi progetti senza i quali, proprio come la ditta, la mia vita si arresta'.<sup>200</sup> On the other:

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*L'ospite ingrato*, 3 October 2019 <<https://www.ospiteingrato.unisi.it/chi-si-ribella-ieri-ci-lasciava-la-pelle-oggi-ci-rimette-lanimale-prigione-allucinata-del-padrone-di-goffredo-pariseludovica-del-castillo/>> [accessed 26 December 2020].

<sup>195</sup> See Andrea Gialloretto, *La parola trasparente: il 'sillabario' narrativo di Goffredo Parise* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2006), p. 123.

<sup>196</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 951. See also Giovanni Dore, 'La scimmia ammaestrata: natura, cultura e razionalizzazione del lavoro in Gramsci', *La Ricerca Folklorica*, 9 (1984), 21–28, and Pinkus, *Clocking*, p. 27.

<sup>197</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 856.

<sup>198</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 839.

<sup>199</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 839.

<sup>200</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 983.

non riesco ad amare la ditta e il dottor Max pure identificandomi con loro. È vero che desidero identificarmi con lui, ma questo è un desiderio assurdo e irrealizzabile: infatti non sarò mai lui, non avrò mai la sua ricchezza e la sua potenza.<sup>201</sup>

The narrator builds his entire life – and consequently his narration – around the company and especially around the persona of the master. His hyper-integration is not even disrupted by physical diseases:

Del resto non sono il solo e quasi tutti i dipendenti della ditta si identificano con lui e non fanno che parlare di lui o delle loro malattie. Anzi essi sono molto più liberi di me perché le malattie si oppongono in qualche modo al dottor Max e, nella loro inguaribilità e voracità di farmaci sempre nuovi e sempre inefficaci, sono componenti elementari e primarie di una individualità esasperata che non trova altra via di scampo. Invece io non ho nulla, non ho nessuna malattia [...]. Anzi sto benissimo e non possiedo nessun antidoto contro il dottor Max, me lo devo tenere sempre accanto come se fosse un altro me stesso che guarda e giudica.<sup>202</sup>

Unlike Albino in *Memoriale*, whose illness and neurosis paradoxically save him from total annihilation in the factory, the narrator here is so healthy that when dottor Max imposes some injections on him for a non-existent lack of vitamins he starts to become suspicious and annoyed. This is the beginning of the descent element of the narrator–protagonist’s professional parable. He is punished for his suspicion, and especially for his initial doubts about the proposition of marrying the young woman to whom dottoressa Uraza (dottor Max’s mother) has introduced him, and who he will end up marrying. The attitude of the narrator as a ‘dipendente’, an agent who is in fact ‘acted’ and determined by the master, becomes radically ambivalent. This ambivalence is somehow analogous to the ambiguous position of the colonised in the colonial context in Fanon’s view. On the one hand there is envy and efforts at imitating the master, the coloniser. On the other, there is the fantasy of killing him – and, according to Fanon, liberation from colonial violence could only be obtained through violent reaction. The choice is between these two opposing tensions:

Ma per me egli è il dottor Max, cioè il punto più alto della mia parabola vitale, a cui confluiscono giornalmente (anche di notte) tutti i miei pensieri. Tuttavia, così, un poco infantilmente ho pensato spesso di ucciderlo. [...] La mia immaginazione si faceva più rabbiosa e più violenta. Perdeva cioè le caratteristiche infantili che aveva avuto fino a quel momento e acquistava invece quelle allucinanti e bestiali della realtà. [...] Il coltello, che avevo allontanato dalla mente, diventava l’arma più naturale e anche più soddisfacente.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Parise, ‘Il padrone’, p. 984.

<sup>202</sup> Parise, ‘Il padrone’, p. 1006.

<sup>203</sup> Parise, ‘Il padrone’, pp. 1009–1011.

In *Il padrone*, assimilation and integration prevail. A bourgeois marriage and access to commodities ratify the protagonist's surrender to his seductive dominator. However, in psychoanalytical terms, such an ambivalence toward the master can be explained as an Oedipal instinct to kill the father/dominator. In fact, in *Il padrone*, paternalism is a major motif. The title itself has an element of the paternal but paternalism is also explicitly mentioned in the text. The entire plot develops around an act of paternalism: the young narrator–protagonist moves from the province to the big city where his father has some acquaintances who secure him a job. Dottor Max is the narrator's surrogate father in the company but even dottor Diabete, who introduces the pair to each other, is depicted in a paternalistic attitude:

‘Ma tu, quanti anni hai?’. ‘Venti’ ho risposto. Mi ha dato un buffetto sulla guancia e ha ripreso a parlare. Stava in piedi e io lo guardavo da sotto in su. ‘Ho letto la lettera dell’agente provinciale, ma non ce n’era bisogno. Anche se non lo sa, o non si ricorda di me, io ho conosciuto tuo padre in tempi migliori... diciamo diversi. E tu sei qui grazie a questa conoscenza’.<sup>204</sup>

The protagonist is defined by inferiority and directed by paternal demiurges from the very beginning of his professional trajectory.<sup>205</sup> Benevolence and hypocrisy inform the actions of dottor Max:

Durante l'intervallo, il dottor Max mi ha preso sottobraccio e con tono confidenziale, parlandomi quasi all'orecchio, ha affrontato l'argomento. ‘Mi scusi per oggi, sono stato un po’ brusco. Ma io odio il paternalismo nelle ditte, specie in una ditta moderna come la nostra. Un dipendente non è uno schiavo, santo cielo, ma un uomo libero. Quanto tempo ci vorrà prima che lo capiscano? Un dipendente è lui che sceglie, liberamente, con un atto di libera scelta, se far parte della ditta o no. È lui che liberamente diventa proprietà della ditta e dunque del padrone, non il padrone che lo acquista in proprietà. Ci vuol tanto a capirlo che la sua, quella del dipendente, è una scelta morale e non una imposizione?’.<sup>206</sup>

Dottor Max verbally rejects paternalism through precisely the paternalistic gesture of taking the protagonist by the arm, and this gesture recurs several times in the novel. Furthermore, he condemns slavery but fosters the voluntary subsumption of workers to the firm. He talks of freedom only to refer to a most residual kind of liberty: the liberty of becoming the property of someone else, as a ‘dipendente’. With his ideological camouflage, dottor Max paints the laws of social determinism with a moral patina. He calls for a sort of existentialism, but he seems no more than a caricatural parody of the ‘enlightened’ master bound by moral concerns. The narrator follows his destiny: impelled by economic motives and a

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<sup>204</sup> Parise, ‘Il padrone’, p. 842.

<sup>205</sup> On the religious dimension of these paternal figures, see del Castillo, ‘Chi si ribella’.

<sup>206</sup> Parise, ‘Il padrone’, p. 949.

sense of apathy, in order to survive he marries a woman he does not love and succumbs to the Darwinian necessity that drives the entire novel. In the words of dottor Max, he is therefore:

un esemplare di specie completamente diversa: diversa dalla specie a cui apparteneva, una specie unica, rara, nata per così dire per inseminazione del padrone stesso. Da questo progenitore sarebbero nati altri alberi della nuova specie e solo quelli, essendo in qualche modo figli suoi, avrebbero abitato il giardino del padrone.<sup>207</sup>

Again, the trope of species is employed to comment on social differences between humans. This is indeed a consequence of Parise's endorsement of Darwin's theories, but also resonates with Fanon's words about colonial societies: 'This compartmentalized world, this world divided in two, is inhabited by different species'.<sup>208</sup> An alleged 'evolution' through metamorphosis has happened. Colonisation is complete.<sup>209</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction, Parise referred to Fanon in a reportage of 1968, when the latter was renowned as a radical thinker. We cannot be sure that he had already read Fanon when he wrote *Il padrone*. However, Parise's use of the colonial and anticolonial tropes of animalisation, paternalism, and species in *Il padrone* is of particular interest in the light of the strong Darwinist stance and tone which drive it.

### 3.6 GIOVANNI PIRELLI'S *A PROPOSITO DI UNA MACCHINA* (1965): FEMALE AGENCY, DOG-LIKE HUMANS, AND MANICHAISM

Giovanni Pirelli's problematic position in relation to his family's industrial company and his active involvement from a socialist stance in the anticolonial struggles of the 1950s and 1960s make his industrial novel *A proposito di una macchina*, published by Einaudi in 1965, a lesser-known but nevertheless key text in the context of this dissertation.<sup>210</sup>

This text has been largely overlooked by scholars both of industrial literature and indeed of Giovanni Pirelli's work. The reasons for this more or less conscious exclusion from the canon are manifold, the result being, however, that the link between the industrial and anticolonial stance of Pirelli has never been clearly identified by critics, the novel seemingly remaining as just an outdated example of industrial literature when compared to many other, more successful, and more extensively analysed,

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<sup>207</sup> Parise, 'Il padrone', p. 1065.

<sup>208</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 5.

<sup>209</sup> On the use of Darwinism in colonial ideology, see Alana Lentin, *Racism and Anti-Racism in Europe* (London: Pluto, 2004), pp. 47–48. On Darwinism, capitalism, and Italian literature, see Giovanna Miceli Jeffries, 'Darwinismo, machiavellismo e "creative destruction" nella rappresentazione del lavoro e degli affari in Svevo', in *From 'Otium'*, ed. by Bouchard and Ferme, pp. 215–234.

<sup>210</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*.

works.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, the trend in Italy at around this time was moving towards a more direct expression of the working class and its struggles, resulting in works such as Nanni Balestrini's 1971 *Vogliamo tutto* – partially based on the oral testimony of a factory worker – and in the so-called 'letteratura selvaggia' of the 1970s.<sup>212</sup>

However, far from being written simply on the wave of the industrial fashion, *A proposito di una macchina* is noteworthy because of the length of Pirelli's engagement with it. The original nucleus of the novel was in place as far back as 1960. Furthermore, while considering himself an inadequate contributor to the genre, Pirelli recognised the necessity of industrial literature, when he wrote to Vittorini and Calvino that 'Oggi, però, e soprattutto in Italia, sono convinto che saremo poveri interpreti della "tensione" del nostro tempo nella misura in cui la fabbrica seguirà a rimanere relegata ai margini della letteratura'.<sup>213</sup> The word 'tensione' is marked by Pirelli with inverted commas since he is explicitly referring to a passage from Calvino's essay 'Il mare dell'oggettività', published in *Il menabò* the previous year, in which the author reflected significantly on issues of objectivity and subjectivity in literature.<sup>214</sup>

Imbued with Marxist ideals, Pirelli saw the world as affected by irreducible conflict. His personal experience in World War II, firstly in the Italian army and then in the Resistance, determined and shaped his commitment to anticolonial struggles. The same war imagery is applied to class struggle in the essay-letter he wrote to Vittorini and Calvino, destined for issue 4 of *Il menabò*, and devoted to the relationship between industry and literature:

Un conto è avere la coscienza di un dramma, qual è la Guerra, che tutto e tutti coinvolge in modo irruento e spettacolare, e un conto è avere la coscienza di una tensione storicamente non meno grave né meno drammatica, qual è la lotta di classe nelle sue trincee avanzate, ma che si svolge in profondità, per episodi all'apparenza scollegati, tanto meno vistosi quanto più sono determinanti; che si svolge, comunque, dietro cancelli impenetrabili, salvo, si capisce, esserci dentro.<sup>215</sup>

Criticising Ottieri's *Tempi stretti* for failing to describe the reality of life in a factory, Pirelli here justifies both his fellow writer and himself by saying that they are not able to understand the factory because they only move around its thresholds. This allusion to the liminal status of the industrial writer, associated with the imagery of conflict and of the trenches, is particularly interesting in the light of what has been said above.

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<sup>211</sup> *A proposito di una macchina* was only reprinted once in 1973 as part of a collection of Pirelli's narrative works: Giovanni Pirelli, *L'altro elemento: quattro romanzi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974).

<sup>212</sup> See Nanni Balestrini, *Vogliamo tutto* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1971).

<sup>213</sup> Giovanni Pirelli, 'Il testo non pubblicato sul *Menabò*', in *Giovanni*, ed. by Scotti, pp. 213–218 (p. 214).

<sup>214</sup> See Italo Calvino, 'Il mare dell'oggettività', *Il menabò*, 2 (1960), 9–14 (p. 9) (repr. in Calvino, *Saggi*, I, pp. 52–60).

<sup>215</sup> Pirelli, 'Il testo', p. 217. The allegory of the trenches is further deployed with reference to class struggle in Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 32 and p. 84. See also Gramsci, *Quaderni*, III, pp. 1566–1567.

Furthermore, Pirelli shows himself to be very conscious of the importance of the link, proposed by Sartre, between subjectivity and truth (see section 2 above), when he asks himself and his readers:

Che carica di verità, e quindi di poesia, può avere d'altro canto un racconto di fabbrica, qualunque sia il tema e il modo della narrazione, se non contiene il dramma, le ragioni profonde del dramma d'una classe matura a divenire soggetto, protagonista della storia, e sempre più risospinta alla condizione di oggetto, di strumento, di gruppi dirigenti?<sup>216</sup>

Here Pirelli is therefore declaring that the subject of his industrial narration will be the working class as a collective subject, although of course his point of view will still reflect the liminal position he occupies in relation to the factory.

*A proposito di una macchina*, set in and around a metalwork factory in Lombardy ('le Lombarde'), revolves around a machine (hence the title), the Vanguard, which is likened by workers to a beast because of its destructive power. The focus, again, is not on the factory's products but rather on the process of production. The text opens on the arrival of 22-year-old Marianna Colli in the factory, hired by the company to work at the Vanguard as the replacement – we understand – for a former worker who was seriously injured by the machine. All the action is therefore triggered by a body that has been damaged, wounded, and that becomes the element that makes workers aware of their exploitation. The first character we encounter, the 'capo' Ribacchi, is actually drawing mutilated bodies, as a sinister prediction of a trope that informs the whole novel. Throughout the novel, we follow the development of Marianna's symbiotic relationship with the Vanguard, which alienates her from her fellow workers and her family, ultimately leading her to commit suicide by literally – and, tellingly, silently and almost invisibly – throwing herself inside the machine. In parallel, we witness the development of the political consciousness of the 'commissione interna'. This works as a choral and internally polyphonic character in the novel, emerging from the debating voices of its members: the strong-willed personality of Gavazzi, Silvia, and her husband Marcantonio, to mention only the most incisive voices.

The point of view from which the story is narrated is particularly interesting in relation to questions of objectivity and subjectivity, and is coherent with Pirelli's ideals on subaltern and decolonial voicing and with his broader cultural practices. In the years in which *A proposito di una macchina* was being composed, Pirelli had already collected and published not only *Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza italiana* but also *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina* and *Racconti di bambini d'Algeria*. This fact, along with Pirelli's interest in Panzieri's practice and in the method of the 'inchiesta operaia', gives an idea of the importance he assigned to direct testimony and voice.<sup>217</sup> Probably also in continuity with this stance, Pirelli opts for

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<sup>216</sup> Pirelli, 'Il testo', p. 217.

<sup>217</sup> On Pirelli's familiarity with Raniero Panzieri and the method of 'inchiesta', see Scotti, *Vita*, pp. 104–119.

third-person narration in *A proposito*, instead of recounting his own experience in the factory in the first person. This allows him to give voice to the subaltern, the workers, who are in fact the protagonists of the book. The risks of such an operation are double and specular: on the one hand, the danger of producing a purely objective narration, in contrast with his proposal for a re-evaluation of the subject in industrial literature; on the other hand, superimposing his own voice onto those of his characters.

Free indirect speech is used as a technique to overcome this impasse. A trace of Pirelli's uncomfortable stance can be detected in a passage in the final pages of the book, which seems to have a strong metaliterary value. During a meeting of the 'commissione interna', in which the members are trying to reconstruct the reasons behind and the dynamics of Marianna Colli's suicide in the Vanguard, each participant is asked to recount what they saw. Zanotti, who chairs the meeting, asks specific questions and invites participants to raise their hands to speak ('per favore, chiedete la parola') and to be brief, in order to keep the discussion orderly and manageable.<sup>218</sup> To justify his call for order, Zanotti claims that 'Dobbiamo scrivere un rapporto, non un romanzo'.<sup>219</sup> When a report has to be compiled, objectivity and brevity are in his view essential, the risk being ending up writing a novel – which is, in fact, precisely what Pirelli is doing. Zanotti therefore can be interpreted as the counterpoint to Pirelli's search for subjectivity: the lure coming from the tempting 'sea of objectivity'. Conversely, the risks of extreme objectivity are identified during the meeting by two other characters: Galera and – not surprisingly – Silvia, who embodies, together with Gavazzi, a female revolutionary and working-class subjectivity in the novel. This centrality and agency of empowered female characters indeed distinguishes *A proposito di una macchina* from other industrial novels of the period, representing an interesting case study in the context of a genre and a field of debate that in Italy has been seen – sometimes incorrectly, as we saw in the Introduction – as predominantly 'male'.

Galera comments on the difficult task ascribed to Guzzi, who has to write the minutes of the polyphonic meeting: 'Povero Guzzi. Se mette le storie che lui chiama personali, non la finisce più col suo verbale. Se non le mette, resta con un verbale che sembrerà un orario ferroviario'.<sup>220</sup> The importance of personal stories is identified to the extent that they give substance and, literally, subject to the discussion, which would otherwise be reduced to objective raw data. In reply to Guzzi's emphatic complaint that '*Non è possibile, in queste condizioni non è possibile redigere un verbale. Parlate uno dentro nell'altro e continuate a saltare da un argomento all'altro*',<sup>221</sup> Silvia interrupts him to claim that:

C'è una cosa che non ho capito. Siamo qui riuniti per redigere un verbale, come dei questurini dopo un delitto, oppure per chiarirci le idee su quello che è successo, perché è successo...? Se è per redigere un verbale, è

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<sup>218</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 272.

<sup>219</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 272.

<sup>220</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 274.

<sup>221</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 277. Emphasis added.

inutile che perdiamo tempo in dodici, o quanti siamo. Se è per questo, impariamo dalla direzione. Ha mandato in giro due pivelli che hanno raccolto i dati occorrenti.<sup>222</sup>

Silvia's point, expressed in the form of a rhetorical question, is made more emphatic by the use of a simile. By comparison with a police investigation, she seems to suggest that their gathering aims instead at a deeper understanding of the facts and of the profound motivations behind them. She implies that their polyphonic discussion has a deeper meaning than just collecting data in relation to an event that does not concern them. Ultimately, she intimates that their narrative, dialogic subjectivity, however disorderly it might be, stands in opposition to the guilty objectivity of the managers – and their police. In relation to Marianna Colli's suicide, it is not to them to understand exactly how it happened in objective terms – that being a task for 'questurini'. In order to draw a lesson from this experience and to build their struggle against alienation, they have to understand the subjective motivations that determined Marianna's actions.

Again, if we read this passage assigning to it a full metaliterary significance, we gain the idea of a conflict existing between pure objectivity, which best fits police and managers, and subjectivity, which, in Zanotti's words, produces a 'romanzo'. The writing of *A proposito di una macchina* seems to result precisely from this tension: on the one hand, Pirelli is interested in giving a description and a representation of class struggle in a factory; on the other, he listens to the subjectivities of his characters and reproduces them, frequently resorting to free indirect speech. This technique allows Pirelli to move the point of view of the narration fluidly from character to character, from voice to voice, without the bulky and authoritarian presence of an omniscient narrator. Furthermore, it gives him the possibility of creating a polyphonic subjectivity over and above single characters, made up of a plurality of single voices: the 'commissione interna'. Gavazzi and Silvia, in particular, are the powerful expressions of a female militant consciousness. They are both aware of their exploitation and they express two different models of femininity: Gavazzi being the single militant, entirely devoted to her commitment within the 'commissione interna' in a spirit of self-sacrifice; Silvia embodying the militant mother, who has a family life alongside her political engagement, which she shares with her husband, Marcantonio.

It is in one of Silvia's dialogues with Marcantonio that we find an interesting self-conscious reflection on the link between working-class struggles in capitalist countries and global anti-imperialist battles. The exchange is worth quoting at length:

La Silvia: – Immagina una locomotiva...  
– Mi fai passare alle Ferrovie dello Stato?

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<sup>222</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 277.

– ...una locomotiva che sarebbe: il partito con le sue tesi, le parole d'ordine, gli obbiettivi. Mentre: i compromessi inevitabili, gli adattamenti e anche le miserie umane, le faccende personali, quelle sarebbero i vagoni, il peso morto che la locomotiva dovrebbe tirarsi dietro nel suo viaggio verso il socialismo. Invece, a ben guardarci, chi tira, chi impone le soste, la velocità di marcia... Vuoi che ti faccia un esempio? Non vuoi? – Siccome Marcantonio non dice né sì né no: – Hanno un bel dire: legare la lotta per la libertà nelle fabbriche con la lotta per la pace, contro l'imperialismo. Libertà nelle fabbriche, come l'intendo io, sarebbe andare dal Menga e dirgli chiaro e tondo che il Vescica è un verme e un incapace. Se ci prendiamo questa libertà, dimmi tu: com'è che la si lega con la lotta contro l'imperialismo? Non la si lega, invece, con un bel licenziamento in tronco? [...]

– Se ci penso, capisco anch'io, ignorante come sono, capisco che sarebbero parole giuste. Che un legame ci sarebbe in fondo...<sup>223</sup>

The dialogue between the two happens in a setting that is significant in itself: they are in bed at night, Silvia struggling to fall asleep, while Marcantonio, who was asleep before Silvia's speech, yawns. The interchange does not really resolve itself and they end up having sexual intercourse, which tellingly dissolves the conflict, allowing them to release their tension and forget about their discussion: it is there that they decide to put their energy. In this setting, Silvia's words express the difficulty for some workers of feeling direct solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles: she hesitates to feel part of the same subjectivity as decolonising countries. However, by simply interrogating herself and her husband on the question, she poses it, and they suggest that a link exists, however hard it is to trace. Significantly, the novel is set in 1957–1958, the years of the battle of Algiers. It is in those years that European left-wing militants who saw the link between working-class subjectivity and the colonised struggled to make this understandable and clear to their political base.

A few pages after this dialogue between Silvia and Marcantonio, there is a direct reference to Algeria. Pirelli's listening attitude towards the subaltern entails giving space in the novel to radical graffiti that appear on the walls of Milan. This includes a reference to redundancies at a local factory, an outdated 'LIBERTÀ ALLA COREA',<sup>224</sup> and 'un attualissimo: L'ALGERIA AGLI ALGERINI'.<sup>225</sup> The use of the adjective 'attualissimo' not only gives the reader an indication of the chronological coordinates in which the book is set, but also makes us wonder which point of view it is expressing. Is it only a temporal reference or is there also a sense of the significance of the simultaneity and actuality of workers' redundancies in a factory in Milan and Algerian anticolonialist claims? Furthermore, the graffiti is mentioned because Marianna and her suitor Salvatore walk past it, he, of peasant origins, manually wheeling his Lambretta, symbol of mass consumption in Italy. Everything in the scene gives a sense of

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<sup>223</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, pp. 141–142.

<sup>224</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 162.

<sup>225</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 162.

history happening elsewhere, at a different speed and on different frequencies to Salvatore and Marianna's. Suddenly, Salvatore's Lambretta slips on the asphalt and falls as a man driving a Ferrari overtakes them. Salvatore is not even capable of defending himself properly from the arrogant speed of the Ferrari and this can be read as an allegory of an Italy that is moving at different paces at this point and is populated by different subjectivities: on the one hand, there are those who struggle (evoked by the Algerian graffiti as well); on the other, there is capitalist power, which affirms itself regardless of its casualties.

References to the Algerian Resistance are re-evoked shortly afterwards in the book. Brambillino, son of Brambillone and, like his father, a member of the 'commissione interna', evokes the violent vitality of the Algerian struggle as a counterpoint to the mild inadequacy of the 'commissione interna':

Zanotti, dopo che il Brambillone gli ha sunteggiato il colloquio dal Vescica: – Lo vedi: ogni novità ci coglie di sorpresa. Non siamo più capaci di un'analisi, non dico della lotta in generale, nemmeno di quella interna, delle tattiche della direzione... Che fesserie vado dicendo? Se non capiamo quello che succede in casa nostra, è appunto perché... Intendo dire che, finché non ritroviamo il senso globale della nostra lotta...

Il Brambillino: – E intanto che lo cercate, questo vostro senso globale, io che cosa faccio? Me ne vado coi ribelli in Algeria? Là, vivaddio, si spara.<sup>226</sup>

The centrality of the Algerian experience for Pirelli emerges here in all its clarity. In particular, it is evident how the Algerian cause was embraced with particular vitalism by Italian leftist youth as a new form of Resistance, in some sense more authentic and 'real' than the democratic institutions, such as the 'commissione interna', which resulted from the Italian liberation.

A final, indirect, link between a colonial and industrial subjectivity, again related to Algeria, can be found towards the end of the novel. Berti has just died. He was a socialist 'capo' worker who paid the price for his rebellion in the factory by being destined to the 'rüera' (Lombard for 'rubbish bin'), the department to which unwanted workers are sent before being sacked. Gavazzi is lavishing all her care into the organisation of a non-religious funeral. She collects money from her colleagues to pay for it and involves the socialist section to which Berti belonged in the organisation. The secretary of the section, when asked in turn for money, tells Gavazzi that the section does in fact have money that it could offer for the funeral, but that the money is untouchable, because it was collected in support of the Algerian cause. To this, Gavazzi simply and authoritatively replies that 'Invece li toccherete [the contributions for Algeria]. Gli algerini li si aiuta dando dignitosa sepoltura, a Milano, a un proletario',<sup>227</sup> implying the profound and problematic transnational link between these struggles. A socialist factory worker in Milan,

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<sup>226</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 185.

<sup>227</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 203.

unfairly sacked, is the same 'subject' as an Algerian fighting for his freedom: he deserves the same support under a socialist perspective. Pirelli's internationalism, therefore, emerges clearly from the analysis of these passages in which anticolonial struggles are directly linked, by working-class characters, to working-class struggles. However, *A proposito di una macchina* shows other, less direct but equally interesting, links with anticolonial keywords, including animalisation and subjectivity.

The importance of the 'commissione interna' in the economy of the book should not overshadow the other characters that Pirelli presents us. As counter-voices to the lively polyphony of this choral actor in the novel, Marianna and Salvatore – as well as Bonzi – are equally interesting. Marianna and Salvatore might represent – in a colonial allegory that we as readers can project onto this text – the 'colonised', who try their best to conform to the colonisers' culture instead of actively engaging in the struggle for decolonisation. Marianna humanises the Vanguard, the machine at which she works, likening it to a husband:

La sera sono stracca che non m'accorgo neanche di mettere la testa sul cuscino. Di giorno ho te. Hai preso il posto di quel marito che mi stava ad ascoltare. Come marito, anche tu, maledizione... [...]. A me così va bene.<sup>228</sup>

Conversely, the Vanguard is likened to a beast by politicised workers, because of its violent and uncontrollable power. In this multidirectional play of humanisation and bestialisation/animalisation, it is interesting to note that, while many characters have their animal correspondent (a significant example is in the very first words of the novel: 'L'assistente Ribacchi è un verme'),<sup>229</sup> it is precisely their claim for humanity that characterises the subjective expression of the 'commissione interna':

La Gavazzi [...] dice con tono accorato: – Noi non siamo come il signor Ribacchi ci vede. Non siamo bestie. Non siamo né asini né conigli. E nemmeno sciacalli. Siamo operai, perdio! Capiamo che cos'è lavoro. Sappiamo che una macchina è una macchina, non un gingillo. Che la produzione è una cosa seria, molto seria. Anzi, è la vita. Per noi altri è la vita.<sup>230</sup>

Their humanity is significantly linked to verbs which indicate their ability to understand phenomena and learn, and to labour, both as a form of exploitation and of production of subjectivity. This assertion of humanity and subjectivity is further stated in the context of Gavazzi's speech after the death of Berti. On this occasion, she repeatedly likens her colleagues and herself to 'cani', because of their dependency on masters. However, she finally proclaims that 'Noi sappiamo che un giorno diventeremo uomini e donne

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<sup>228</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 62.

<sup>229</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 9.

<sup>230</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 92.

per intero e loro [the ‘capi’ and managers] non lo sanno’.<sup>231</sup> Again, the ‘commissione interna’ as a collective subject shows an awareness and a desperate quest for humanity that Marianna Colli does not have and does not want to pursue. In the tragic epilogue of the book, before committing suicide, she dreams of herself as embodied in the Vanguard (‘Nell’incubo non compariva in prima persona. La sua prima persona era il Vanguard’),<sup>232</sup> and elsewhere, when she is with Salvatore, she wishes she was able not to think, and therefore to renounce her humanity.<sup>233</sup>

The welder Salvatore, in turn, who Marianna calls ‘terrone’ to stigmatise his peasant southern origins, tries to seduce her, and only when she seems on the point of giving herself to him does he abandon her, determining her final breakdown and her eventual decision to commit suicide by being embraced by the Vanguard. Marianna is mostly hostile toward Salvatore. She accepts the court he pays her, while in fact refusing him:

– E tieni chiuso il becco. Non voglio storie. Certamente non con un terrone. – [...] Ma che razza d’uomo è costui? È un uomo? Le dita gli si muovono lentissime. È un tardo, ecco cos’è. Un sottosviluppato.<sup>234</sup>

In Marianna’s words and thoughts, Salvatore is racialised, his humanity itself questioned; he is described as underdeveloped.<sup>235</sup> Salvatore’s hand – the agent of labour – is made a synecdoche for his whole historical backwardness.<sup>236</sup> Nothing in him is as it should be for Marianna: ‘Odia la sua parlata, i suoi goffi silenzi, le sue movenze da contadino. La pazienza, l’ostinazione del contadino. Odia, detesta quella sua lambretta’.<sup>237</sup> Salvatore ends up having a child with Amelia, one of Marianna’s colleagues, and we witness the encounter between the pair’s families, from which Salvatore’s familiar background as a ‘terrone’ emerges.

In the Manichaean and vertical microcosm of the factory, significantly likened to a circus at one point in the novel,<sup>238</sup> between the two poles of the workers and the managers (here represented by ingegner d’Olivio) stands the grey area of the ‘capi’. Ribacchi is the most repulsive representative of this category, but not the most interesting for this analysis. In the same way that in colonial regimes a part of the population becomes integrated into the colonisers’ milieu, ending up constituting a sort of bourgeois aristocracy, so too in the factory specialised workers are employed as ‘capi’, who benefit from an

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<sup>231</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 234.

<sup>232</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 267.

<sup>233</sup> See Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 238.

<sup>234</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 188.

<sup>235</sup> See also Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 195.

<sup>236</sup> On hands in industrial literature, see Peter J. Capuano, *Changing Hands: Industry, Revolution, and the Reconfiguration of the Victorian Body* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), pp. 1–4, and Pinkus, *Clocking*, pp. 81–104.

<sup>237</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 189.

<sup>238</sup> See Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 67.

uncomfortable in-between status as neither managers nor workers. This position isolates them. In Fanon's words, 'whereas the national bourgeoisie competes with the Europeans, the artisans and small traders pick fights with Africans of other nationalities'.<sup>239</sup> Similarly, in *A proposito di una macchina* workers who are not politicised fight among themselves (such as Marianna, who racialises Salvatore), while 'capi' compete with managers.

Bonzi, another 'capo', is an example of this. He understands what is wrong with the Vanguard and why it is so dangerous and reports his findings to ingegner d'Olivo, who has actually designed the machine. In Bonzi's interactions with d'Olivo, we find the most interesting insight into his problematic status. Bonzi is explaining to d'Olivo what it is that does not work in the Vanguard and why it is harmful. This means he is somehow questioning the authority of someone located above him in the hierarchy. D'Olivo is so irritated by the conversation and by Bonzi's ambiguity that he eventually asks him: '...che cosa sceglie lei, quando una scelta si rende necessaria: la popolarità fra le tribù indigene, o il... – quest'ultime parole le dice con il naso già a un palmo dal foglio da disegno – ... progresso della civiltà?'.<sup>240</sup> Bonzi genuinely does not understand the question – or pretends not to. With a colonial–anthropological allegory, d'Olivo is forcing Bonzi to make a choice and take a stance either for the management, allegorically identified as the progress of civilisation, or for workers – native tribes. Bonzi's ambivalence is not sustainable and the Manichaean world of the colony/factory is again disclosed: progress stands in opposition to 'natives'. When the question is finally asked in clearer terms ('Lei da che parte sta? della direzione o delle maestranze?'),<sup>241</sup> Bonzi finds a way to elude that Manichaeism by answering that he stands in favour of efficiency, which insinuates both workers and the direction. He seems to advocate a neutral role for 'tecnica', which has the sole aim of improving the general quality of life. He does not appear to realise the political implications of such a discourse.

Bonzi also shows awareness of the paternalist attitude and view of the company: 'Osserva, constata. Se i padri hanno adottato questo metodo, una ragione ci dev'essere. Forse'.<sup>242</sup> In a different scene, when Ribacchi, his superior, claims that he is talking to Bonzi like an older brother, the latter reacts by unveiling Ribacchi's mystification:

Da fratello maggiore? Perché mai? Lei è il mio superiore diretto. Lei sta facendo uso del suo diritto d'interrogarmi. Se invece della maniera poliziesca usa le tecniche delle relazioni umane, anche questo è nei suoi diritti, nelle scelte di metodo che le sono consentite; o suggerite. Ma non mi venga a parlare di fratelli maggiori. Lo considero un vero e proprio abuso.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched*, p. 103.

<sup>240</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 125.

<sup>241</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 125.

<sup>242</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 66.

<sup>243</sup> Pirelli, *A proposito*, p. 157.

The technique of human relations, imported from the US, is exposed by Bonzi as but a different way of confirming established hierarchies, making them look smoother and more sustainable but without altering them in substance.

Above the level of the individual subjectivities of the characters stands the hyper-subjectivity of the author. Pirelli's experience of the factory was one of both belonging and refusal. He came from an industrial family but renounced his role within the family company: he did not want to become complicit in it. *A proposito di una macchina* can be read as Pirelli's attempt at transforming his own, 'double', subjectivity of a bourgeois sympathetic towards the claims of the working classes into a series of subjectivities, which correspond to the different parts, conscious or unconscious, of his own. To use a psychoanalytical word borrowed by Sartre for his discourse on subjectivity, Pirelli 'projected' his own conflictual attitude towards industry onto his characters.

What transpires from this analysis of *A proposito di una macchina* is how colonial and industrial imagery are intertwined, in particular given Pirelli's direct involvement in both anticolonial movements and *operaisti* milieux. The (more or less) radical subjectivity of the 'commissione interna' acts as a counterpoint in the novel to the colonial structure of the factory. Tropes of humanity and animality and paternalism are deployed to describe the internal dynamics and subjectivities of a system whose criterion for objective description would be efficiency. Pirelli's experimentation with the genre of the industrial novel, therefore, allows him to express his concerns about class struggle and colonialism in a new narrative form, which indeed bears traces of the different genres and discourses with which he had engaged by the time the novel was written.

#### 4. PROVISIONAL CONCLUSION

In this analysis of industrial, colonial, and anticolonial keywords and narrative tropes, across different genres, national contexts, cultural contexts, authors, and texts, a series of interesting links has emerged between two discourses that have never been brought into dialogue by literary critics. An 'anticolonial' reading of Italian industrial literature allows us to see and map textual phenomena, such as the recurrence of certain words or tropes, which would otherwise be invisible or occluded. Such a reading does not necessarily postulate any direct intertextuality, but rather highlights resonances and elements of proximity between two fields of discourse produced and disseminated over the same years and with matrices (starting with Marxism and psychoanalysis) and mediators in common. Ottieri came to conceptualise industrialisation and the factory experience as a colonial process, a reality affected by paternalism, complexes, and, ultimately, alienation deriving from the judgement of man upon man. Volponi set the

actions of his restless working-class characters against a background of systemic violence and depicted the varied reactions of his protagonists. Parise, from a Darwinist perspective, interpreted social unrest as a conflict between different species, with tropes that resonate with the anticolonial view of relations between human beings. Finally, Pirelli projected his anticolonial anxieties onto his only industrial novel, including references to decolonisation and making the links between colonialism and industrialisation even more explicit. From different perspectives and with different shades of engagement and consciousness, these writers shed light on the violence and conflicts that lay under the surface of the ‘economic miracle’, often employing clusters of keywords and tropes shared with the anticolonial discourse.

Ottieri, Volponi, Parise, and Pirelli produced major examples of industrial literature, but they are not – of course – the only possible case studies for which such an anticolonial reading can be proposed. It would be particularly interesting, for example, to look at Luciano Bianciardi’s industrial narratives from an anticolonial perspective, especially given the poignancy of his analogy between Amilcar Cabral and Giuseppe Garibaldi in *Viaggio in Barberia*.<sup>244</sup> Similarly, Libero Bigiaretti’s involvement within the CAI (Comitato Anticoloniale Italiano) would suggest that his industrial literature, too, would merit a reading through an anticolonial lens.

To conclude, it can be argued that reconsidering the permeating presence of an anticolonial discourse in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s and the implications of its use within other discursive contexts and strategies is not only historically necessary but also critically stimulating, in order to better understand this period of intellectual and literary – as well as cultural and geopolitical – history.

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<sup>244</sup> See Luciano Bianciardi, ‘Viaggio in Barberia’, in Luciano Bianciardi, *L’antimeridiano: tutte le opere*, ed. by Luciana Bianciardi, Massimo Coppola, and Alberto Piccinini, 2 vols (Milan: ISBN, 2005), II, pp. 1309–1434 (p. 1365).

## CONCLUSION

In quegli anni gli inverni furono o mi parvero molto lunghi. [...] Le rovine che avevamo intorno come l'allegoria di un riscatto possibile sparivano per dar luogo ad una città opulenta e meschina. Spariva l'Italia popolare e orgogliosa delle sue piaghe che un tempo aveva scoperto e amato se stessa fra resistenza e dopoguerra; o, se dal sud ne venivano le voci e le grida, con le notizie degli eccidi, sembrava intollerabile e inguaribile come il nostro passato; e un'altra Italia veniva avanti, avviluppata nel cinismo di settimanali, bruciata dalla speculazione, coperta di manifesti, piena di colore e di stanchezza coloniale; fatta con la nostra stessa vita e, come un figlio, irricognoscibile.

Franco Fortini, 'Il senno di poi'<sup>1</sup>

Fortini's words can once again help us bring into focus and identify the interrelatedness and complexity of the questions tackled in this dissertation. In his 1957 essay 'Il senno di poi', Fortini reflects bitterly on the changes that Italy has undergone throughout the 1950s. A strong and explicit allegorical dimension permeates the quoted passage, which reminds us of the allegorical reading of history and the present that dominated contemporary responses to anticolonialism. One phrase in particular is striking in its poignancy: Fortini speaks of Italy's 'stanchezza coloniale'. A question immediately arises: to which colonialism is Fortini allegorically referring? We would tend to exclude any direct reference to the memory of historical Italian colonialism, although this is allusively there as a layer within a deeply ambiguous passage. In Fortini's hermetic view, is Italy tired of being colonised, or exhausted by its own colonial attitude?

The irreducible ambiguity of this phrase can itself work as an allegory for the Italian reception of anticolonialism in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As many scholars have pointed out, Italy had not yet come to terms with its own colonial past at that time. In this dissertation it has been argued that the reading of colonialism, anticolonialism, and decolonisation provided by a cluster of Italian journals and Italian industrial writers in the 1950s and 1960s was one centred on Italy's then industrial present. The ambiguous intersections between Italy's industrial colonial attitude towards its South and towards the Global South (also allusively evoked in Fortini's text), and its status as a subject of American cultural colonialism (or imperialism) find direct or indirect space in industrial fictional and non-fictional literature.

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<sup>1</sup> Fortini, 'Il senno', p. 28.

This paradoxical Italy, which at the same time embraced and resisted its ‘economic miracle’, was tired even before it started out – and tired with a peculiarly ‘colonial’ tiredness, in Fortini’s words.

Within this deeply contradictory and ambiguous context, this dissertation has shown evidence of three cultural processes underway in late-1950s and early-1960s Italy, which intersect colonial, anticolonial, and industrial aspects.

Firstly: a reflection on colonial and anticolonial questions was much more significantly present in industrial milieux than has been previously acknowledged. Periodicals devoted pages if not entire issues to the interrelated questions of anticolonialism and decolonisation, and these frames were often employed self-reflectively as lenses through which to understand Italy’s – and Europe’s – then industrial present. This interest in anticolonialism was produced largely through the activity of crucial mediators: Giovanni Pirelli, Giovanni Giudici, Franco Fortini, Enrica Collotti Pischel, Paolo Vittorelli, Edoarda Masi, Giampaolo Calchi Novati, among others.

The second aspect on which this dissertation sheds light is the set of keywords and ‘key-tropes’ shared by both anticolonial and industrial discourses. This cluster of keywords and tropes includes ‘alienation’, ‘race’, ‘paternalism’, ‘inferiority complex’, ‘psychosomatic illness’, ‘violence’, ‘dehumanisation’, ‘animalisation’, and ‘subjectivity’, among others. Far from being accidental, this coincidence of vocabulary drew on common matrices (especially Marxism, psychoanalysis and psychiatry, and anthropology) underpinning both discourses, and on the specific interest that industrial authors developed in anticolonialism.

Finally, this dissertation has established how industrial novels of the late 1950s and early 1960s creatively and extensively deployed this cluster of industrial and anticolonial keywords and tropes. These novels were written by authors who were not necessarily engaged in anticolonial activities in the 1950s and early 1960s but who reflected on industry as related to colonialism in the late 1960s. Although it is not always possible to infer direct intertextuality between these industrial texts and anticolonial writings, this intersectional vocabulary and – therefore – a shared set of problems can explain why industrial authors became interested in anticolonial matters; our thesis being that a self-reflective dimension was vividly present in the Italian reception and production of anticolonialism by industrial writers. In addition, as Neelam Srivastava has powerfully demonstrated, the anticolonial struggles represented for many a mirror and an extension of the Italian Resistance that this generation of writers had experienced, either first-hand or as a receiver or producer of a myth. It can be added that anticolonial struggles also problematised the memory of the Italian Resistance.

Conceptualising the Italian ‘economic miracle’ in more or less explicit colonial and anticolonial terms represented a way to justify, or more commonly denounce, the embedded processes of industrial ‘conquest’ of underdeveloped and rural areas, exploitation of their resources, and racialisation, cultural homologation, or ghettoisation of their inhabitants. Furthermore, in such a conflictual historical

conjuncture, anticolonialism and third-worldism offered industrial writers convenient frameworks for the conceptualisation of their own problematic positionality; that is, a threshold positionality, between the world and culture of the ‘colonisers’ – to which they belonged, as white, bourgeois, (mostly) male intellectuals – and those of the ‘colonised’ – their working-class elective belonging and political horizon.

The research in this dissertation could and should be further developed in several directions. Firstly, the archives of the CAI call for further investigation, which I am in part currently undertaking on the materials I managed to assemble during my fieldwork in Milan. Secondly, the cluster of periodicals in which to trace the presence (or absence) of anticolonial questions and patterns could be expanded so as to include a wider range and number in all sectors: industrial publications, political journals, and literary – or broadly cultural – reviews. Similarly, the corpus of industrial novels could be broadened, as suggested in Part Two. Thirdly, the analysis of the literary dimension of the Italian reception of anticolonialism deserves further study: in particular, a systematic scrutiny of the Italian editions and translations of African and African American writers published between World War II and 1989 would cast light upon literary representations of colonisation, racism, and decolonisation, that Italy received, mediated, and sponsored. A fourth strand of research could examine comparatively the links between industry, labour, colonialism, and anticolonialism in other literatures: the French case, with the examples of Simone Weil, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Daniel Mothé, among others, would be a particularly productive illustration of this link. Finally – but this is not an exhaustive list –, Italian ‘migrant’ literature, as an inherently transnational genre or mode of writing, with its own distinct positionality, could be interrogated in order to see the place questions of labour occupy there and the implications they convey.

As will by now be apparent, both Italian industrial literature and Italian anticolonialism are vital fields of research which still call for further exploration, with new lenses, by scholars willing to cross – or at least question – national, disciplinary, chronological, and generic boundaries. I hope this dissertation has managed to construct one bridge between these two fields and, as such, to make a contribution to both.

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