

of the role played by women's organisations, sheds light on the shift to interventionism, and on the dynamics of the patriotic mobilisation. Schiavon's research underlines the importance of the interventionist women not only in the general framework of the Italian wartime assistance activities, but also in their ability to shape the welfare procedures themselves. In this way, interventionists contributed considerably to the patriotic mobilisation on the Italian home front but failed in their main goal.

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Matteo Ermacora

University of Venice Cà Foscari

matteo.ermacora@unive.it

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**Political Fellini: Journey to the End of Italy**, by Andrea Minuz, translated by Marcus Perryman, New York-Oxford, Berghahn, 2015, 196pp., £56.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-78238-819-7.

*Political Fellini: Journey to the End of Italy* is the English translation of the book Andrea Minuz published in 2012 with the inverted title *Viaggio al termine dell'Italia. Fellini politico* (Rubettino). The Berghahn edition differs only in the addition of a 'Preface' titled *After the Great Beauty*, with an explicit reference to Paolo Sorrentino's film, which, coincidentally, was released after the publication of the Italian volume, and which now acts as an apt cinematic addendum to Minuz's main argument. Following the footsteps of Fellini, Sorrentino's film in fact 'reaches into the depths of the Italian unconscious', and displays 'a strong political dimension despite the fact that — unlike *Il divo* — it does not address Italian politics' (ix). By pivoting on Giulio Bollati's, Silvana Patriarca's and Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg's works on the character and vices of Italians, Minuz's argument hinges on the idea that Fellini channeled, metamorphosed, and aestheticised his political outlook through his representations of the many idiosyncratic aspects of the Italian mentality (or socio-anthropological ideology), particularly embodied by male characters. These men are seen as childish, egocentric, lacking any form of discipline and sense of responsibility, and neurotically or archetypically attached to variously transfigured mother figures. Rather than

being simply autobiographic exercises, Fellini's films are seen as a 'mythical biography of a nation', while the idea of 'Italianness' is constantly implicated through forms of self-deprecating reflexivity. From a methodological standpoint, Minuz's reconsideration of Fellini's cinema in political terms is put forward against the backdrop of its critical reception in Italy through the years, which seemed to converge on a conventional reading of Fellini's oeuvre (this is done by examining a large variety of sources: from newspaper and journal reviews to interviews, director's notes, and personal letters, including an interesting appendix on the exchange between Fellini and Giulio Andreotti). The underlying assumption and Minuz's rhetorical starting point is that the Italian critical context tends to adopt hasty critical simplifications, which are subsequently repeated and then crystallised either as explicatory *passe-partouts* or brisk ideological pigeonholing. This seems to echo what Fredric Jameson argued in *The Political Unconscious*, in which he argues that much criticism merely 'rewrites' selected texts into a form that (unselfconsciously) reflects a critic's own aesthetics and concepts of language. The result is an exercise in allegory, in which the text is simply recoded in an already accepted and recognized narrative. Such a perspective sounds less surprising in the context of Anglo-American criticism, which has wider boundaries in respect to what 'political cinema' might mean (beyond the usual remit of an ideologically charged critical strategy to inform or to agitate the spectator), and how a text might put forward effective political argument in spite of its apparent apolitical perspective. Nonetheless, Minuz's book is a welcome contribution in the context of Italian film criticism as an example of burgeoning exercises that try to complexify the critical vocabulary and perspectives used in film studies in Italy, and to broaden the scope of political analysis of films. In Fellini's films specifically, the political is not the product of an ideological adherence, but of a deeply felt belonging to, and personal and emotional implication with, a society, a polis, a specific socio-cultural make-up. Through the prism of Minuz's analysis, Fellini emerges as an intellectual 'civile', who lived through a period of radical changes in Italian society, and who was able to intercept and represent, but also anticipate, its complex metamorphosis. Cinema was used as a probe to auscultate his personal and collective unconscious in order to diagnose and respond to many of the Italian socio-cultural and political impasses. He employed a form of imaginative and psychoanalytically charged self-reflection to speak about *all* Italians, who, as a result, were disturbed to find themselves represented in such a way (Goffredo Fofi's critical reversal, discussed by Minuz, is quite eloquent in this respect).

The book grapples first of all with films that invited most immediately a political reading at the time of their releases, like *Amarcord*, with the discussion of the emotional and nostalgic elements of Italian personal experience of Fascism (chapter 2); *La dolce vita*, and its examining of the ethical vacuum left by the economic boom (chapter 3); *Prova d'orchestra* defined as an example of 'filmed political philosophy in images' (150); *Ginger and Fred* and Fellini's parodic look at the new language of Berlusconi's television, that eventually turned into an actual legal battle between Fellini and the Italian tycoon (chapter 7). More interesting and original are Minuz's analyses of films like *Roma* in which the capital ('the sum of all our errors') is portrayed as a palimpsest, a synecdoche of the collective unconscious, in which the conflict between antiquity and progress epitomises 'the traumatic background of Italian modernity, a modernity that fails to expunge anti-modernity because [...] it is unable to leave the past behind or resolve its problems, but simply superimposes itself over antiquity and mixes with it, producing only incongruities and inefficiencies' (94). Chapter 5 is then devoted to the reception by the Italian feminist movement of 1970s films like *Giulietta degli spiriti*, *Il Casanova*, and *La città delle donne*. Minuz here rightly undermines the common understanding of Fellini (and Fellini's explicit position on this) as a precursor or supporter of feminism, which was in fact 'entirely absent in the so-called social and

engaged cinema of the period' (120). A closer analysis shows the ambiguities in his films, in which women are still objectified or mythologised and framed by ancestral fears, but also Fellini's political and philosophical superficiality in addressing gender issues from an emancipatory perspective. In the vast scholarship on Fellini, Minuz's work is a welcome reconsideration of some key aspects of the product of the Italian director which have not been systematically examined, while providing a fresh, retrospective look at coeval critical discussion, which is the most interesting contribution of this volume to the field of Italian film studies.

Pierpaolo Antonello  
*University of Cambridge,*  
*paa25@cam.ac.uk*

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**Giuseppe Mazzini and the Origins of Fascism**, by Simon Levis Sullam, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, x + 206 pp., £55.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-137-51458-5

Simon Levis Sullam's monograph aptly traces a strident, productive lineage between the figure of Giuseppe Mazzini and the political ideology of the Fascist regime. The book aims to answer some key questions about the role Mazzini played across two centuries, as well as to show how he acted as a mediator across divergent political forces and groups, while also being able to maintain an ideological and political stance exceeding that of the father of the nation. Sullam answers these questions by 'reconstructing certain central aspects of Mazzini's thought and by examining certain examples of the high regard in which he was held' (p. 2). The larger issue at stake is, however, the relationship between the Risorgimento and the regime, and their forms of continuity and rupture. In this respect, the chapters following on from the clear introduction thematically scrutinise precisely such possible continuities within a discontinuous historical periodisation (Risorgimento, Fascism, anti-fascism). As the author states, his analysis moves across the forms in which the imposing figure of Mazzini has been ideologically appropriated. He continues: 'What I mean by ideology is, on the one hand [...], a series of cultural and conceptual elements that define a given political project or tendency; on the other hand, it is a vision that [...] contains a distorting element, since it is used [...] to serve a specific political vision or programme'. This is a fitting definition for evaluating political appropriations, for it accounts for both the practical and the abstract sides of ideologies.

The book is divided into five main chapters. The first analyses Mazzini's political reflections on the specific relationship between nation and religion, as foundational to the social and political idea of Risorgimento and of European unity that the Italian intellectual cherished. Such a connection is, of course, the same connection that Emilio Gentile (and George Mosse) identified as being active in the definition of a modern dictatorship. Chapter 2, 'From Poetry to Prose', outlines the transition from the late nineteenth century to the nationalist policies of the 1910s. Francesco Crispi relied heavily on the idea of Italy's duties and 'national mission', which promoted the image of Italy as unified and ready to be the Third Rome. At the same time, he proclaimed that religious faith was connected to a need on the part of the civil population to submit to higher powers, and in this way he subverted the idea of civic freedom that Mazzini unequivocally championed. Such ideas were then redeployed by Carducci and Pascoli's 'Grande Proletaria'