

**The Italian Medeas of Corrado Alvaro and Pier Paolo Pasolini.
Transformation of a Myth in Twentieth-century Italy**

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ABSTRACT

In my article I intend to explore two re-interpretations of Euripides' Medea which appeared in Italy 20 years apart between the end of the Second World War and the first years of the so-called 'economic miracle'. The first interpretation is that of essayist and writer Corrado Alvaro who published his *La Lunga notte di Medea* in 1949. Alvaro's Medea is a symbol of persecution, alienation and discrimination of ethnic minorities. According to Alvaro, whoever is perceived or seen as 'different' is destined to an erratic life, forced to come to terms with violence, exclusion and radical choices. The second Italian Medea (*Le Visioni della Medea*, 1970) is that conceived by Pier Paolo Pasolini, poet, writer and film director who experienced at his own tragic expense (he was murdered in, still nowadays, unclear circumstances in Rome in 1975) the condition of seeing himself different and alien within his own society (he was homosexual). Pasolini's Medea embodies the archetypal clash of cultures, the opportunism of modern bourgeoisie and the (naïve) integrity of proletarians. Both Alvaro and Pasolini explore the theme of infanticide as either a form of desperate 'euthanasia' (Alvaro) or cleansing sacrifice (Pasolini).