

Metamorphic Felliniesque in Wes Anderson's cinema

Giuseppe Natale

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), USA

Abstract:

The Felliniesque is not only to be understood as superficial imitation of Fellini's style but also as a true re-creative act. Wes Anderson's cinema clearly exemplifies the latter. In *The Aquatic Adventures with Steve Zissou* (2004), Anderson adopts the seed-image of *8½* (1963) or, in Deleuze's definition, the image in its production that feeds on its own obstacles, resulting—in Anderson's work—in a transmogrification of the "confused director" original metaphor. Another Felliniesque connection in the same work is detectable at the metanarrative level when Anderson, while filming in the Cinecittà studios, reveals the underlying mechanics of cinematography through his Nautilus submarine model, similarly to what Fellini did with his tilting platform in the final shots of *And the Ship Sails On* (1983). A close analysis reveals that Anderson's whole film production is in fact interspersed with Fellini references: *Moorise Kingdom* (2012) is built on a series of tableaux like *Amarcord* (1973); the sudden appearance of the hawk Mordecai in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001) reworks the scene of the peacock in the snow also from *Amarcord*; the horizontal tracking shot in the finale of *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) is a narrative-visual device used in the closing of *I vitelloni* (1953); the short *Castello Cavalcanti* (2013) is openly interwoven with "Fellinemes", such as the statue of "Christ the Worker" that duplicates the one in *La dolce vita* (1960). The aim of my essay is to demonstrate that Anderson, as detailed in his recent interview, *Fantastic Mr. Fellini* (2020), does not limit himself to imitating the Italian director but instead uses his topoi and stylistic features in an abstract way, as a scheme of creative thought, which can be defined, according to Deleuze, as a form of "procadence", a synthesis of progress and decadence, the intersection of the existing and creating.