

When Worlds Collide: Clashes of Communication between Italian and Anglophone Cultures in Movies Set in Venice

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Abstract : Our paper deals with feature films set in Venice which focus on the influence of Italian life style on anglophone characters. Usually, these films emphasize the different cultures and mentalities of Italian and British (or American) people. More often than not, these encounters result in a profound change of the anglophone characters' attitude towards romance and sensuality. A case in point is David Lean's *Summer Madness* (UK 1955). This film recounts the love affair between the American tourist Jane Hudson (Katherine Hepburn) and the Venetian antique shop owner Renato de Rossi (Rossano Brazzi). Jane is a spinster in her mid-forties who longs for love and romance. The chance arrives when she meets Renato who feels attracted to her. Jane's immediate reaction, however, is to reject Renato's advances. What follows is a struggle between the strict morality of a puritan upbringing and the irresistible charm of Mediterranean temptations. Similar conflicts can be found in many other movies. Apart from *Summer Madness* we will discuss Aldo Lado's *Chi l'ha vista morire?* (It 1972), Nicolas Roeg's *Don't Look Now* (UK/It 1973) and Paul Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers* (It/UK/USA 1990). Our paper raises the question whether or not these and other films present false stereotypes and clichés. The paper is part of our large-scale research project which explores the history of erotic cinema in Italy and England.

Keywords : culture clash, erotic cinema, film, Venice

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