

Federica Colleoni e Francesca Parmeggiani, a cura di. *Forme, volti e linguaggi della violenza nella cultura italiana*. Lonato del Garda, Brescia: Edibom Edizioni Letterarie, 2012. Pp. 260.

Questo volume curato da Federica Colleoni e Francesca Parmeggiani raccoglie sedici saggi, tutti sulla rappresentazione della violenza nel cinema e nella letteratura italiana, eccetto il saggio di Sebastiano Ferrari, incentrato sulla canzone autoriale e sui modi in cui Lucio Dalla, Giorgio Gaber e Fabrizio De André hanno denunciato la violenza politica degli anni Settanta. Le curatrici hanno messo insieme efficacemente saggi che presentano, da una vasta gamma di prospettive, diversi aspetti del macro-argomento della violenza: tensione politica, violenza di genere, trauma, distruzione ambientale e criminalità solo per nominarne alcuni. Il volume propone un itinerario che, sebbene in maniera discontinua e con un'attenzione soprattutto al XX secolo, porta il lettore dal XVI secolo ai giorni nostri.

Il primo saggio di Stefano Ciammaroni spiega che nei film neorealisti la violenza fascista viene mostrata in maniera plateale ed esteticamente curata così da ispirare negli spettatori un sentimento antifascista unitario e giustificare la violenza partigiana come necessaria per la salvezza del paese. Il saggio si concentra sul documentario *Giorni di gloria* (1945) realizzato da Visconti, De Santis, Pagliero e Serandei che, partendo da materiale di repertorio e scene ricostruite realisticamente, “presenta una lettura agiografica delle capacità del movimento partigiano di sopportare il martirio e reagire simultaneamente al nemico con equivalente ferocia” (18).

I saggi di Chiara Borroni, Francesco Rosetti e Fabio Benincasa si occupano di cinema degli anni Sessanta e Settanta. Borroni si concentra sul cinema d'autore e sulla rappresentazione dello spazio domestico durante il boom economico. Partendo da considerazioni teoriche di Merleau-Ponty e Bachelard, Borroni osserva come la casa passi dalla metaforica rappresentazione del conflitto pubblico-privato a uno spazio di disagio esistenziale. Nel film *Il seme dell'uomo* (1969) di Marco Ferreri, ad esempio, la casa diventa un museo di oggetti che appartengono ad una società cancellata dalle violente trasformazioni del boom economico. Di Ferreri si occupa anche Rosetti mostrando che la violenza viene rappresentata dal regista milanese come prodotto

di pulsioni individuali irrefrenabili e di desideri estremi e osservando che Ferreri “ama tematizzare la violenza non tanto come dato interno all’immagine, ma come elemento... del fare cinema” (64). Benincasa, infine, analizza la violenza nel cinema horror di Lucio Fulci notando come egli metta in scena atti di violenza che rimandano ad una dimensione onirica, a prescindere dall’utilità narrativa. È una violenza gratuita che avvicina il regista al “teatro della crudeltà” di Antonin Artaud.

I restanti tre saggi dedicati al cinema spostano l’attenzione su film più recenti. Francesca Parmeggiani parla di *Primo amore* (2003) di Matteo Garrone soffermandosi sullo sguardo maschile di Vittorio che, veicolato dalla macchina da presa e dall’uso del montaggio, diventa uno strumento distruttivo del personaggio femminile di Sonia. Il saggio di Luana Ciavola, utilizzando le recenti categorie individuate da Slavoj Žižek di violenza soggettiva (e visibile) e oggettiva (e invisibile), analizza la violenza come affermazione vitale, mezzo per passare dall’invisibilità alla visibilità sociale. I personaggi emarginati di Irena ne *La sconosciuta* (2006) e Teodoro in *Good Morning Aman* (2009), un’immigrata ucraina e un proletario, esemplificano il passaggio di condizione da vittima invisibile della violenza sociale a carnefice visibile e autocosciente. Federica Colleoni si occupa della rielaborazione dei traumi degli anni Settanta attraverso il cinema. *Pasolini. Un delitto italiano* (1995) di Marco Tullio Giordana e *Romanzo criminale* (2005) di Michele Placido colmano la distanza di tempo dai fatti descritti attraverso l’uso di materiali d’archivio e filmati d’epoca, portando gli spettatori a rievocare i traumi vissuti anche a livello sensoriale. Come accennato, anche il saggio di Ferrari dedicato alla musica si sofferma sulle tensioni degli anni Settanta. Nel suo originale contributo Ferrari analizza i testi di Dalla, Gaber e De André, e si concentra anche su ritmi, suoni dissonanti, tonalità e analisi del binomio voce-musica mantenendo un alto livello di chiarezza argomentativa malgrado l’uso di termini tecnici.

Ancora sugli anni Settanta è lo studio di Gabriele Vitiello che esamina due romanzi recenti, *Libera i miei nemici* (2005) di Rocco Carbone e *La scoperta dell’alba* (2006) di Walter Veltroni, in cui c’è un’edulcorazione di conflitti politici e motivazioni ideologiche alla base di tensioni e avvenimenti violenti. Vitiello collega tale semplificazione

ai tentativi di pacificazione relativi al periodo della Resistenza.

Il saggio di Christopher Nixon sulla *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) di Torquato Tasso si concentra sul simbolo della foresta, che cambia da luogo “soprannaturale del romanzo cavalleresco a banale risorsa naturale” (139) per la produzione di macchine da guerra. Tale cambiamento rispecchia la realtà storica al centro dell’attività poetica di Tasso e la progressiva scomparsa dell’immaginario cavalleresco agli albori della modernità.

Sulla poliedrica e vastissima produzione letteraria di genere di Giorgio Scerbanenco è incentrato l’intervento di Roberto Riso. La violenza nelle opere di Scerbanenco colpisce tutti senza distinzioni sociali e viene concepita come istinto primordiale. La rappresentazione della società degli anni del miracolo economico è cupa e Milano, città prediletta dall’autore, appare a metà strada tra benessere e degrado.

Nel suo saggio sui migranti nella letteratura contemporanea, Loredana Di Martino analizza i lavori di Gianrico Carofiglio, Giancarlo De Cataldo e Massimo Mongai, che presentano figure di migranti lontane dall’immagine stereotipata dell’Altro come minaccia, proponendo una visione alternativa dell’essere italiano che si pone contro un sistema giudiziario iniquo.

Di uno scrittore contemporaneo, Luigi Romolo Carrino, si occupa anche Christian Gabriele Moretti, vicino allo studio di Ciavola per le conclusioni raggiunte. Nella sua analisi di *Pozzoromolo* (2009), Moretti usa il personaggio di Gioia per parlare di “violenza implicita” (204), cioè una violenza subita ma nascosta e in qualche modo giustificata agli occhi della vittima. La continua sottomissione risulta in un’“implosione emozionale” (204), una crisi violenta in cui Gioia riafferma se stessa uccidendo coloro che le avevano causato dolore.

Lo studio di Alex Standen ritorna sulla violenza sulle donne analizzando gli scritti di Dacia Maraini. L’autrice toscana problematizza il binomio vittima-carnefice, non risolto semplicemente in una relazione di dominio maschile e sottomissione femminile. Nei suoi romanzi, Maraini crea dei personaggi femminili complessi che subiscono violenze anche per masochismo e conformismo.

Gli ultimi due interventi del volume si riferiscono al dovere della memoria di due genocidi. Il saggio di Marie Orton affronta il trauma dell’Olocausto partendo da *Il fumo di Birkenau* (1947) di

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Liana Millu, *C'è un punto sulla terra* (1988) di Giuliana Tedeschi e *Gli anni rubati* (1996) di Settimia Spizzichino; lo studio di Andrea Gallo propone un'analisi de *La masseria delle allodole* (2004), il romanzo di Antonia Arslan sul genocidio armeno. Orton rilegge le testimonianze dell'Olocausto come significanti di una sparizione corporale ed identitaria. Lo spazio narrativo ha il triplice scopo di ricostruire l'identità perduta delle scrittrici, rappresentare il senso di comunità creato durante la prigionia e rendere omaggio agli individui non sopravvissuti all'Olocausto. Gallo invece mostra come la violenza e la morte siano trattate in maniera poetica e allegorica da Arslan. La stessa autrice, nell'intervista che chiude il volume, spiega come sia entrata in contatto con la storia del genocidio armeno attraverso i racconti di suo nonno e come la sua storia familiare si intrecci con la storia del popolo armeno.

Questo volume curato da Colleoni e Parmeggiani è uno strumento utile. Senza tralasciare aspetti spesso dibattuti nell'ambito degli studi sulle rappresentazioni della violenza, per esempio il terrorismo o l'Olocausto, il testo include autori e approcci teorici contemporanei. Che sia per saggi specifici o nella sua interezza, *Forme, volti e linguaggi della violenza nella cultura italiana* è un libro che gli studiosi della cultura italiana dovrebbero prendere in considerazione.

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Francesco, Joseph. *Leonardo Sciascia e la funzione sociale degli intellettuali*. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2012. Pp. 159.

Leonardo Sciascia e la funzione sociale degli intellettuali is divided into six chapters, three of which have previously appeared in print. In addition, there is an ample introduction to Francesco's view of Sciascia's literary career and a concluding chapter devoted to the author's last decade post-l'*Affaire Moro*. Throughout the book, Francesco uses *La sesta giornata* as an early declaration of Sciascia's poetics and an aid to interpreting his work.

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The first chapter, “Il ‘pessimismo cosmico’ di Leonardo Sciascia,” discusses Sciascia’s ideas of Sicilian society, individuality and the concept of truth and its relativity. It looks at Sciascia’s relationship with Pirandello’s work, as well as his estimation of the (non)existence of a literary movement during the Resistance, and the Sicilian’s call for a new poetics (“futura memoria”) that would document the history of Fascism and the Resistance retrospectively. Francese also addresses Sciascia’s loss of his “bussola metafisica” during the 1980s and reveals Sciascia’s complex and contradictory identity.

The second chapter, previously published in *La Rivista di studi italiani* (26.1, June 2009: 106-26), considers the characters’ preoccupation with honor, personal dignity, integrity and individualism in *L’antimonio*. Francese points out that to Sciascia, the “sicilitudine,” or mode of being distinctive to Sicily, includes the importance of remaining autonomous and true to oneself, not to any cause, political party or country. This distrust of others coincides with the post-war “uomo qualunque” movement, which arises when the narrator of *L’antimonio* writes. Ultimately, Francese asserts, *L’antimonio* reflects Sciascia’s own political views as a young person.

“La mascolinità e la negoziazione di potere in tre romanzi di Sciascia: l’ironia, l’umiliazione e la gerarchia maschile” is the title of the third chapter, which continues the discourse on honor in the context of gender and a patriarchal society. Francese uses *Il giorno della civetta*, *Il contesto*, and *Porte aperte*, all of which belong to different decades of Sciascia’s career, to underline a gender aesthetics and intellectual undercurrent emblematic of Sciascia’s work. The author frames the chapter with Butler’s understanding of gender as a social and cultural construct, and shows how Sciascia’s characters in the three stories confirm the patterns of traditional gender roles and hierarchy. He analyzes how irony becomes a rhetorical strategy used by the characters to negotiate their ranking, and how it helps them to become men. The characters, however, do not try to subvert the order. They reinstate themselves into society and avoid public humiliation—a fate worse than death for a Sicilian man. The chapter ends by expressing Sciascia’s pessimistic and fatalistic vision of Sicilian life.

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Chapter four, published in the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* (15.5, 2010: 715-733), addresses the *Scomparsa di Majorana*, in which Sciascia suggests that the physicist Ettore Majorana did not commit suicide, but entered a convent so that he could evade association with the creation of the atomic bomb. Sciascia thus equates Majorana's "refusal of science" to "responsible science." Francese makes a case for viewing Majorana as a fictional character, and not the historical person who had been a supporter of Fascism and an unlikely conscientious objector. Francese asserts that Sciascia created such a narrative in order to bring to the forefront issues of science and ethics. He concludes that the public must monitor scientific discoveries and inventions, and how economic and political powers implement them; otherwise, intellectuals cannot be held responsible for the outcome of their choices.

In chapter five Francese takes up a thesis from the previous chapter: he argues that *L'affaire Moro* is a work of fiction that does not reflect the reality of the person. Aldo Moro becomes a literary mouthpiece of Sciascia's political perspective. Moro, the character, is modeled on many other Sciascian characters: he is inclined to sacrifice everything in order to protect his dignity and freedom. Francese makes it evident that Sciascia interpreted the events using a narrative hierarchy that was not true historical fact. Such narrative does not coincide with what really happened and cannot be proven by evidence. This narrative strategy connects the facts to conjectures in order to convince the reader of the moral of what is proposed; thus, Francese says, history is rewritten and public opinion informed by a "futura memoria."

Chapter six, the last one, examines the intellectual trajectory traveled by Sciascia in the 1980s after the Moro affair. Sciascia's perceptions change in a profound and bleak way due to his participation in the case. Sciascia concludes that the search for truth, both in matters of crime and in a larger metaphysical sense, is in vain. Subjective narrations have by now replaced the effectual truth that used to be behind the Pirandellian relativism. It becomes useless to seek the guilty because, if metaphysical truth exists, God is indifferent to every question of good or evil. To illustrate this growing pessimism, Francese divides the chapter into seven sections in which he addresses

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important works or events associated with Sciascia: *La commissione Moro*, *La sentenza memorabile*, *1912+1*, *Il cavaliere e la morte*, *Una storia semplice*, *Interlandi*, and a final postilla. Each section has evidence to prove Francese's points. For example, he compares *Il teatro della memoria* and *La sentenza memorabile* to the 18th century case of Martin Guerre, which was familiar to Sciascia through Montaigne, to show how Sciascia was becoming preoccupied with identity and truth. Francese demonstrates how Sciascia, in elevating the legal microstory of *1912+1* (a comment on a case of murder) to a universal one, cannot even trust natural science because each viewpoint will have evidence to support the opposite theses in a penal process. Francese depicts Sciascia as an author who has less faith in justice and who becomes paralyzed by innate pessimism and conflicting beliefs.

Francese makes a strong case for looking at Sciascia from a literary perspective, and explains how Sciascia's work contributed to a significant chapter in the history of Italian intellectuals of the 20th century. Although the structure of this essay lacks at times cohesiveness, it is a useful study of Sciascia, both as a literary author and as a public intellectual.

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Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, eds. *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Pp. 320.

For over two decades now, Italy and its citizens have witnessed, mostly with preoccupation and anxiety, the growing phenomenon of migration, a phenomenon quite unknown to a country that had experienced at different times, but had quickly erased from its historical memory, the emigration of many of its own people. The larger geopolitical and socio-economic context of the recent migration were also quite unknown to Italians, whose condition of amnesia over their own colonial past was matched only by their lack of awareness

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of the consequences of an increasingly globalized world, where the neocolonial paradigm was in full swing. Immigrants coming from disparate areas of the world would radically transform the social fabric of the nation, posing questions and raising issues that went beyond the economic realm, questions of normalization and integration, of identity and alterity, of political and cultural agency, of historical revision that involved not only the immigrants but Italian society as a whole, its rhetorical representations (and falsifications), its discursive practices, and its intellectual constructs.

A most significant corollary of the migratory experience was the desire of its protagonists to locate their story, in a drive for self-expression that produced a series of testimonial texts that scholars in the Italian academe swiftly welcomed as a new, especially for Italy, but timely poetics of migration. The attention of Italian and international scholars grew as the works (literary, dramatic, cinematic, musical, and artistic) proliferated, setting in motion a vital and at times even contentious debate that centers on the exploration of the emerging materials but contains, or better implicates, a uniquely critical issue, the search for a theoretical definition that would legitimate, historically and philosophically, this body of works, stressing its transnational character and implications, revealing its imbrications with larger, indeed global, literary contexts. It is in this specific historical and critical horizon that Cristina Lombardi-Diop's and Caterina Romeo's edited volume, *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, can find its most appropriate location, as it challenges readers, scholars, and intellectuals alike to elaborate these works in the framework of the postcolonial condition. The title of the volume is in itself not a modest but a daring proposal that inaugurates a more organic systematization of the many discourses, narratives, self-expressive modes, and cultures that are present in contemporary Italy, inviting its inhabitants to accept the complication of their social identity and their cultural practices.

Postcolonial studies, as the authors persuasively state in the introduction, is a paradigm, an inclusive theoretical framework that explores colonialism, emigration, economic and political marginalization, but also stresses issues of gender and racialization, of hegemony and subalternity, while complicating the dichotomy of

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periphery and metropole. It is at the intersection of these elements that new agencies are allowed to emerge and different voices can point to more complex epistemologies, helping us to better understand the mechanisms, legal, political, and economic, that impact on their lives and determine our reality.

In the Italian context, moreover, the study of postcoloniality has an additional *raison d'être*, as it links the Italian colonial past to the present, in the attempt to heal Italy from its amnesic condition regarding its own colonial endeavors while at the same time emphasizing the correlation between them, the Southern Question, and the migration experienced by Italy at the turn of the XX century.

Postcolonial Italy aims at an in-depth exploration of the historical continuum that extends from the nation's unification to the present, highlighting the continuities and discontinuities of its narrative, identifying the ideological purposes that inspired the colonial enterprise as well as pointing to the programmatic construction of a falsely homogeneous national identity predicated on the marginalization, silencing, and racialization of the South, the same strategy and tactics utilized today vis-à-vis the African immigration. Linking the past to the present, the volume's essays invite to a close examination of a colonial legacy whose traces can be found in contemporary Italy in the musical, literary, and cinematic production of Italians, of second generation Italians, and immigrants, most of whom have reappropriated and re-elaborated the postcolonial memory, articulating a counter-narrative aimed at re-writing history from the perspective of the silenced subjectivity.

What is most compelling in the volume is the combination and amalgamation of different but interconnected critical approaches. Next to the obvious postcolonial studies, Lombardi-Diop and Romeo have favored the interweaving of cultural studies, gender studies, and race theory and within these disciplines the intersection of several categories such as gender, class, religion, nationality and citizenship. Particularly fertile has been the intersection, within the realm of race studies, with issues of discrimination (legal, economic, political), sexism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, and exploitation (economic and sexual). Despite the many and obvious episodes of racism which occurred in the last decades and even most recently,

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in Italy both the debate and scientific work on this issue (including studies on the construction of Italianness as white), are in their initial stages. Therefore, the addition of several essays dedicated respectively to the silenced racial dimension of colonial and postcolonial society (Mezzadra, Mellino, Lombardi-Diop), to how processes of racialization and narrative conventions adopted in the representation of immigrants have impacted both these community as well as the Italian imaginary (Giuliani Caponetto, O'Healy, Romeo), and to how the colonial construction of subalternity has been elaborated in terms of countercultures and counternarratives (Green, Portelli, Clò), is most welcome.

Organized in four sections—(I) “European and Global Trajectories,” (II) “Shared Memories, Contexted Proximities,” (III) “Intimations and Intimacies of Race,” (IV) “Postnational Aesthetics, Transcultural Production”—the volume aims at intersecting the selected methodological approaches in order to stress not only the points of contact and productive juncture, but also the most fruitful convergences. The opening chapter is authored by Robert Young, who offers an interesting perspective that runs against the grain of the volume’s discourse, yet it proves important for the articulation of the multiplicity of interpretations that can develop under the paradigm of Italian postcolonial studies.

Part I elaborates on one side the theoretical foundations of Italian postcoloniality, with essays that propose a diachronic examination of Italian history, from unification to globalization, that is rooted in political theory and cultural analysis (Mezzadra, Mellino). On the other, authors seek to situate Italian postcolonialism within a larger, European context (Ponzanesi), and to explore the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion of Italian immigrants returning to Italy (Fiore).

In Part II, oppositional representations of the colonial past challenge the established traditional memorization of national history, refuting its nostalgic ambiguities and presenting a counternarrative that is both scientific (the docu-film approach), and subjective, subversively intersecting modernity with a cultural tradition founded on oral history (Triulzi). Recent cinematic production exploring Italy’s problematic relationship with its colonial past is examined through spatial and temporal categories that problematize the

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notion of *italianità* (Italianness), and of a homogeneous cultural and national identity (Duncan, Spackman). This section also includes the exploration of Italian literary texts dealing with colonialism, as Pasolini's "Eritrean texts" (Trento), or political and economic marginalization (Derobertis), as in Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, where a postcolonial perspective draws a link between the subaltern position of the Southern peasants and that of today's immigration from Africa.

Part III is dedicated to literary and cinematic representations of whiteness and blackness in contemporary Italy. Cinema, as well as literature, is a strong conveyor of constructed images, of conventional and oppressive racialized models originating in the colonial paradigm. From the exploitation of the Black Venus in 1970s cinema, where the representation of the submissive and subordinate body is politically oppositional to the synchronous women's liberation movement (Giuliani Caponetto), to the construction of a racialized sexuality whose origin is blatantly colonial (O'Healy), it is evident that contemporary Italy is still hostage of its poorly elaborated past. Cinema and narrative can however be predicated on subversiveness, resistance, and agency, as is shown in the case of many African postcolonial writers whose texts challenge conventionally fashioned models of identity, defying the rhetoric of national homogeneity in favor of a flexible, open and more layered subjectivity (Romeo).

In Part IV, the final segment of this well organized volume, space is dedicated to the examination of various expressive models, music, literature, and cinema, produced by postcolonial agents, be they immigrants or second generation immigrants, a group of voices, the latter, that is gaining increasing presence and visibility in contemporary Italian culture. Special attention is given in this part to those aesthetics, transnational and trans-historical in nature, that enact a de-centering of the colonial gaze, pointing to a different historical, critical, and cultural narrative. From the exploration of the cinematic production of Nollywood films (Jedlowski), to the analysis of perspectives of colonial history that fracture the continuity and linearity of colonial discourse (Greene), from the ethnographic study of postcolonial music in today's Rome (Portelli), to the charting of a new transnational, diasporic, and postnational hip hop culture (Clò),

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these essays reflect the vivacity and vibrancy of postcolonial culture in a country that has been for decades oblivious to its own history.

Thanks to a well organized and organic structure that takes into consideration and balances history, culture, critical theory, cultural and gender studies, race theory, and intersects them with important epistemological categories, *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* proves to be an extremely valid and important tool to examine contemporary Italy, its cultural paradigms, and to reflect on its transnational and postnational trajectory. Cristina Lombardi Diop's and Caterina Romeo's work is pathbreaking, and is to be considered a welcome instrument of research that invites to further studies and explorations. *Postcolonial Italy* problematizes the many interstices in which social and cultural phenomena are set in motion, generating new paradigms of knowledge, giving space to de-centered and post-historical narratives, and in so doing giving opportunity to different voices and agencies to emerge and be heard.

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Marinetti, F.T. *Venezianella e Studentaccio*. A cura di Patrizio Ceccagnoli e Paolo Valesio. Mondadori, Milano, 2013. Pp. 181.

L'edizione di *Venezianella e Studentaccio*, curata da Patrizio Ceccagnoli e Paolo Valesio, si basa sul dattiloscritto del romanzo composto da Marinetti durante il suo soggiorno veneziano, tra il 1943 e il 1944. Lo scritto, inizialmente sottoposto alla attenzione della casa editrice Mondadori nel 2002 dalla figlia del poeta futurista, è ora conservato alla Beinecke Rare Book Manuscript Library della Yale University. Si tratta della storia della (ri)costruzione estetica della città ministeriale di Venezia da parte dei futuristi compiutasi durante gli ultimi anni della Seconda Guerra Mondiale. Il protagonista e capo del progetto architettonico è Studentaccio il quale, in licenza medica dalla campagna nordafricana, si innamora della figura centrale del romanzo, la irraggiungibile crocerossina Venezianella, il

cui corpo serve da modello per la Nuova Venezia. Il testo integrale di questo “aeroromanzo”—un romanzo sperimentale che rispetta pienamente le regole della parola in libertà, viene accompagnato da un approfondito e indispensabile apparato critico che, oltre a fornire i dati essenziali della genesi e del ritrovamento dell’opera, propone un riassunto di tutti i 19 capitoli, un’analisi degli elementi formali della narrazione marinettiana, una nota al testo—che delinea i parametri della presente edizione critica e le caratteristiche delle sue fonti—, le note per facilitare la lettura di neologismi e termini inusuali, e i due preziosissimi interventi di Paolo Valesio (Introduzione—“Il portasigarette ritrovato”) e di Patrizio Ceccagnoli (Postfazione—“Marinetti e Venezia: dal Romanticismo al feticismo”).

L’introduzione di Valesio, oltre a orientare il lettore verso un esame critico del romanzo, espone le principali caratteristiche del testo, contestualizzandole dal punto di vista storico-letterario. Qui inoltre lo studioso affronta alcuni problemi critici relativi alla produzione marinettiana e alla letteratura futurista in genere. Da un lato, il rapporto, difficile se non ostile, di Marinetti con la città lagunare (“questa lettera d’amore a Venezia,” xxxviii), dall’altro la problematica della sua stessa rappresentazione, che viene risolta felicemente, superando così le soluzioni dannunziane, attraverso “una de-scrizione o de-scrittura o decostruzione di Venezia mediante uno svuotamento preliminare dell’ipertrofia del suo significato” (xxxv). Secondo Valesio quindi, la conquista letteraria suprema del movimento futurista risiede nel fatto che Marinetti riesce a descrivere Venezia con un “lirismo surrealistico” (xlv). La lucida analisi critica spiega eloquentemente che l’elemento fondamentale e il pregio maggiore di questo romanzo risiedono nella dimensione spirituale che tende verso il trascendente, tratto, distintivo e originale, di “uno dei pochissimi romanzi veramente sperimentali nella storia della letteratura italiana moderna” (xvii).

Nella postfazione, Patrizio Ceccagnoli ritorna sul complesso rapporto fra Marinetti e Venezia e sulle sue implicazioni letterarie, spiegando come la città rappresenti un feticcio—nel senso freudiano—utilizzato metonimicamente da Marinetti per i suoi attacchi contro i bersagli canonici del futurismo. Lo studioso segue il percorso di questo rapporto nelle quattro opere marinettiane che hanno come tema centrale la distruzione o (ri)costruzione della città, che viene

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contestualizzata sia dal punto di vista storico che letterario. A partire dal manifesto *Contro Venezia passatista* (1910), l'immagine urbanistica della città simbolizza il passato in aperto contrasto con il programma artistico e culturale dei futuristi. Questa linea viene ripresa parecchi anni dopo nella terza delle opere prese in esame, *Ricostruire l'Italia con architettura futurista Sant'Elia*, un dramma in cui si assiste a un dibattito architettonico su come riedificare la città devastata da un bombardamento (in seguito la città viene ricostruita esattamente com'era prima, riproducendo in maniera artificiale anche i segni del tempo sulle strutture recentemente innalzate). L'ultima tappa di questo percorso è infine il doppio feticcio di Venezia e della donna illustrate verso la conclusione del romanzo. Ceccagnoli interpreta l'immagine della Nuova Venezia come il tentativo di colmare un vuoto, un'assenza, ma quello che Marinetti cerca di annientare viene affermato nella statua gigantesca di Venezianella, fatta con la moltiplicazione dei palazzi più storici ed emblematici della città. In questo modo la rappresentazione feticcistica di Venezia si avvicina, secondo il critico, al *Verleugnung* freudiano, ossia alla "inevitabile affermazione di ciò che nega" (181).

L'inedito romanzo di Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Venezianella e Studentaccio*, pubblicato per la prima volta in versione integrale e completa in questo volume attentamente curato da Paolo Valesio e Patrizio Ceccagnoli, è un lavoro importante e rappresenta un punto di partenza fondamentale per la rivalutazione della poetica marinettiana attualmente in atto.

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Orsitto, Fulvio, ed. *Cinema e Risorgimento: visioni e re-visioni. Da "La presa Di Roma" a "Noi credevamo."* Manziana (Roma): Vecchiarelli, 2012. Pp. 361.

Cinema e Risorgimento: visioni e re-visioni è molto più di un testo sul cinema d'ambientazione risorgimentale. Il volume, costituito di diciannove saggi e curato da Fulvio Orsitto, oltre a presentare una

ricca varietà di interventi sul Risorgimento e la sua rappresentazione cinematografica, permette al lettore di esplorare alcune problematiche irrisolte derivanti da un passato contraddittorio e rimosso dalla storia ufficiale.

Il saggio di Orsitto, “Visioni risorgimentali all’epoca del muto” (25-34), apre l’indagine cronologica partendo da *La presa di Roma* di Filoteo Alberini (1905), definito film “propiziatore di... un tipo di produzione che, specie quando la rievocazione storica riguarda il periodo risorgimentale, incontra i favori ed il sostegno delle autorità governative” (27). In “Anita Garibaldi: tra mito e realtà” (35-54), Giovanni Spani continua il discorso sul cinema delle origini, chiarendo le differenze sostanziali tra *Anita Garibaldi*, cortometraggio di Mario Cesarini del 1910, e *Camicie rosse (Anita Garibaldi)* di Goffredo Alessandrini del 1952, film che “rivaluta e celebra il ruolo della donna nella formazione dello Stato nazionale” (53). *L’exkursus* procede con lo studio di Daniele Fioretti, che in “«Qui si fa l’Italia o si muore!» 1860 di Alessandro Blasetti tra storia e propaganda” (55-67) dimostra che la celebrazione agiografica del Risorgimento e della Spedizione dei Mille nasce dalla necessità di propaganda contenuta in un’opera nata in pieno regime fascista (1934) e “ripropost[a] nel 1951 in una nuova edizione con solo alcune modifiche” (59). Con “«Non è ancora venuto il momento di cantare»: *Un garibaldino al convento*: Tra revisionismo storico e impegno antifascista” (69-81), di Lorenzo Fabbri, si arriva al 1942 e a una pellicola implicitamente antifascista di Vittorio De Sica. Ma sono Germi e Visconti, negli anni cinquanta, ad avviare il discorso critico sull’epopea risorgimentale.

In “Brigantaggio e guerra civile: l’Italia postunitaria in *Il brigante di Tacca del Lupo* di Pietro Germi” (83-92) Simone Castaldi definisce l’opera di Germi “coraggiosa” (84) e capace di sottolineare, attraverso l’immagine disincantata delle vicende descritte, le contraddizioni e le spaccature del nuovo stato italiano. Gloria Pastorino nel suo “Un *Senso* diverso: Luchino Visconti e l’adattamento della novella di Camillo Boito” (93-107) analizza le strategie cinematografiche e la “leggendaria attenzione... ai dettagli” (106) del regista milanese, facendo luce sul messaggio criticamente antiretorico del film. A Rossellini sono dedicati i due contributi successivi. Philip Balma, in “Nostalgia del Neorealismo: il rigore storico in *Viva l’Italia*

di Roberto Rossellini” (109-127), evidenzia come le contraddizioni del film siano spesso imputabili all’intento eccessivamente didattico di un’opera dalla visione “marcatamente agiografica degli eventi del Risorgimento” (109), mentre Maria Elena D’Amelio concentra la sua attenzione su un’altra pellicola dello stesso regista: *Vanina Vanini*. D’Amelio, in “Romantico Risorgimento: Rossellini, Stendhal e il melodramma in *Vanina Vanini*” (129-138), sottolinea il sottile legame tra la trasformazione del racconto stendhaliano, l’anti-ideologismo e la spiritualità del regista.

Silvia Calorosi torna a Visconti e alla critica revisionista con “Anomalie di valzer: un inedito musicale come commento storico nel *Gattopardo* di Visconti” (139-152), soffermandosi sulla scelta del brano musicale utilizzato da Visconti per il ballo tra il principe e Angelica, momento chiave della “visione critica disincantata e disillusa del Risorgimento” (139). Dal revisionismo di Visconti la disamina passa a Vancini e al suo confronto aperto con la storia ufficiale. In “Re-visioni risorgimentali nell’Italia degli anni settanta: *Bronte* di Florestano Vancini” (153-170), Orsitto esamina il “ritorno del «rimosso» negli anni settanta” (155) e chiarisce i motivi per cui il film di Vancini “offusca in maniera definitiva la sacralità dell’epopea risorgimentale” (161). A circoscrivere il discorso di Orsitto, Kathleen Lapenta, nel suo “*Bronte* e la libertà: fonti letterarie del film storico” (171-186), chiarisce il rapporto tra il film e le fonti storico-letterarie d’ispirazione.

A questo punto il volume, restando all’interno degli anni settanta, affronta il cinema dei fratelli Taviani e un’insolita pellicola di Dario Argento. In “Rivoluzione nazionale o rivoluzione sociale? Il Risorgimento dei Taviani in *San Michele aveva un gallo*, tra Pisacane, Bakunin e Tolstoj” (187-201), Federica Colleoni approfondisce i motivi che giustificherebbero la sfalsatura temporale del film, mentre in “Milano dei miracoli: *Le cinque giornate* secondo Argento e Lizzani” (203-218), Sabrina Ovan si occupa del lungometraggio di Argento *Le cinque giornate* (1973) e della miniserie televisiva *Le cinque giornate di Milano* (2004) di Lizzani, chiarendo i motivi per cui le due interpretazioni del Risorgimento risultano antitetiche. “Recepire il postmoderno: *Allonsanfàn* tra storia e memoria” (219-236), di Luca Barattoni, chiude il discorso sui Taviani, definendo

Allonsanfàn un'opera «quietamente» postmoderna” (220) e rivolta ad uno spettatore consapevole del dibattito politico e ideologico contemporaneo.

L'analisi degli anni settanta termina con il saggio di Renato Ventura, che in “1857-1975: Da *La spigolatrice a Quanto è bello lu murire acciso* di Ennio Lorenzini” (237-256) spiega la decostruzione del Risorgimento attuata da Lorenzini come un commento del regista al crollo degli ideali rivoluzionari e la turbolenza degli anni settanta.

Una breve parentesi sugli anni ottanta è data da “*Passione d'amore: tra Risorgimento e introspezione*” (257-271), di Mark Epstein, concentrato sulle sostanziali differenze tra il romanzo di Tarchetti (*Fosca*) e il film di Scola del 1981, allegorica e complessa interpretazione del Risorgimento.

Al cinema del nuovo millennio, infine, sono dedicati gli ultimi tre contributi. In “Il Risorgimento di Roberto Faenza via Federico De Roberto: *I Vicerè* come specchio di un'Italia immobile” (273-294) Chiara De Santi osserva l'aspra critica del regista all'immobile situazione politica italiana e “l'approccio gramsciano al Risorgimento [inteso] come una rivoluzione passiva” (282). Il saggio “Il fantasma della politica: il Risorgimento e l'Italia contemporanea nel cinema di Mario Martone” (295-320), di Fabio Benincasa, offre una lettura ravvicinata degli elementi pittorici e artistici che caratterizzano le immagini chiave di *Noi credevamo*, film revisionista uscito a ridosso del centocinquantenario dell'unificazione nazionale, mentre in “Politica, arte e teatro: disserzione analitica di *Noi credevamo*” (321-330), Roberta Tabanelli, concludendo la raccolta, evidenzia i legami tra Risorgimento e politica internazionale e spiega gli anacronismi che segnalano la transtemporalità ideologica del film di Martone.

Il volume collettaneo è completato da tre interessanti sezioni: “Trama dei film analizzati” (331-338), “Bibliografia indicativa generale” (339-352) e “Filmografia indicativa generale” (353-356). Queste tre parti costituiscono uno strumento utilissimo per chi affronta *ex novo* l'argomento o per chi voglia approfondirlo. Anche per questo motivo *Cinema e Risorgimento* può dirsi una preziosa fonte di materiale e prospettive, un polifonico punto di partenza che, prendendo in esame pellicole significativamente diverse per stile, messaggio, o approccio su un periodo storico controverso, copre l'evoluzione del

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cinema italiano dalle origini ai giorni nostri confermando quanto il curatore sottolinea nella puntuale introduzione: “Il rapporto tra cinema italiano e Risorgimento è talmente stretto da dare l’impressione che la nascita stessa della nostra cinematografia avvenga nel segno del Risorgimento” (12).

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Serra, Maurizio. *Malaparte: Vite e leggende*. Venice: Marsilio, 2012. Pp. 587.

“La question me hante de savoir pourquoi et comment les sociétés pourrissent... Car c’est là la clé de l’énigme. C’est là tout le sens de mon oeuvre d’écrivain” (91-2). This excerpt is taken from *Du côté de chez Proust*, a theater piece by the controversial Italian writer Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957). Maurizio Serra includes the excerpt, translated from the French, in his valuable new biography, *Malaparte: Vite e leggende*. The passage is noteworthy not just because it was originally written in French—although, few authors of the Italian *Novecento* have been so acclaimed abroad and influential all over Europe as Malaparte. This is one of the few passages in which Malaparte develops his poetics and artistic pretensions beyond the literary persona he forged in his books.

It is impossible to summarize here Malaparte’s life and literary production. He fought as a volunteer against Wilhelmine Germany and then became one of the leading fascist intellectuals in the 1920s; he experienced exile for his criticism to fascist *gerarchi* and became famous worldwide as war correspondent and author of modern masterpieces such as *Kaputt* (1944) and *La pelle* (1949). Malaparte’s books defy every strict categorization; his straightforward, and at times horrifying, accounts are an outstanding, yet self-indulgent, accusation of the political and moral collapse of European civilization that occurred during the first half of the 20th century. Going beyond the numerous legends surrounding his eccentric character, Serra strives to reassess Malaparte’s appropriate position in Italian literary

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and intellectual history. Unlike most commentators, Serra does not follow the many prejudices and clichés that relegated Malaparte into the shadows after his death, preventing a full understanding of his figure. No politically biased disparagement and no morbid attention to his private life pile up in Serra's pages. Rather, it is a superb scholarly work achieved through archival research, skillful literary criticism and an impressive array of oral testimonies by eminent people who encountered, worked and lived with Curzio Malaparte—from Giorgio Napolitano, to journalist Lino Pellegrini, who accompanied Malaparte in Ukraine during the Axis invasion of Soviet Russia.

In his work Serra, with his remarkable literary and cultural knowledge of the period, draws from the relevant findings of the two main biographies of the writer, Giordano Bruno Guerri's *L'arcitaliano. Vita di Malaparte* (1980) and Giuseppe Pardini's *Curzio Malaparte. Biografia politica* (1998). Serra turns upside down one of the most enduring stereotypes about the writer. Instead of reading his life as a "work of art," as the output of a belated decadent aesthete to the detriment of his books, Serra investigates the internal coherence of a writer who elaborated in an uncompromising fashion the contradictory history of his times. Always eager to bend to his imagination the reality he was witnessing, Malaparte's books defy every attempt to establish boundaries between fiction and reality. At the same time he provides a compelling account of the *truth* of history. If the main interpreters of 20th Century, from Walter Benjamin to Reinhart Koselleck, focused on the divorce in modern life between experience and expectations, Malaparte represents this divorce as a definitive rupture within Western culture. His writing is the manifestation of a point of no return, both for the winners and for the losers of history, as masterfully depicted in *La pelle*.

Serra underscores the narrative of Malaparte's life with the first comprehensive attempt at a literary and intellectual interpretation of Malaparte's figure. The few monographs on the writer, such as William Hope's *Curzio Malaparte: The Narrative Contract Strained* (2000), engage with partial aspects of his work. Serra's examination provides a convincing appraisal of Malaparte's figure, describing his most blatantly apparent yet totally understudied features. Serra highlights Malaparte's specificity *as a witness*, and his writing as a fundamental testimony of the 20th century, explaining his experience

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alongside the antithetic style and experience of Primo Levi. Serra's insightful comments lead to a comprehension of his texts that approach the great themes of the first half of the *Novecento*. When Serra argues that "Auschwitz e il Gulag nascono, come ogni inquisizione, da una biblioteca mal tenuta, dove il sapere corrotto esala un inebriante odore di cadavere. Lo sterminio totalitario è prima di tutto un'operazione culturale" (340), he not only displays the complexity of a book such as *Kaputt*, but he furthermore hints at a form of literary criticism that is closer to Claudio Magris' profound re-reading of Mitteleuropean literature in books such as *Lontano da dove. Joseph Roth e la tradizione ebraico-orientale* (1971) and *Danubio* (1986), than to en vogue ideological readings of modern texts. Perhaps it is not by chance that this biography was first published in France in 2011 and then translated into Italian last year.

Curzio Malaparte is an uncomfortable witness. For instance, his description of Naples occupied by the Allies in *La pelle* stands out for its total rebuttal of the traditional picturesque image of the city, focusing instead on a haunting depiction of the widespread moral corruption brought on by the war. At the time of publication the book kindled scornful comments on both sides of the Atlantic: how could an ex-fascist denounce the shadows of the new ruling elites? As Serra maintains, the gist of the quarrel was that Malaparte pointed out that the horror and the corruption were present not only in the Warsaw ghetto and in the cattle trains filled with Eastern Jews described in *Kaputt*, but also right here, right now, in the widespread narrative of redemption and forgetting of the early postwar.

My final remark about this groundbreaking study regards Serra's critical distance with his subject throughout his book. According to the biographer, the difficult reception of Malaparte's work was also due to "l'incapacità di Malaparte, in tutto il periodo post fascista, di pronunciare una vera autocritica, col risultato di rendere la sua posizione ancora più difficile e scomoda di quanto già non fosse." *Malaparte. Vite e leggende* is not only a fully comprehensive study about the author of *Kaputt* and *La pelle*, but also a rigorously updated introduction to the intellectual history of 20th century Italy.

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Spani, Giovanni and Philip Balma, eds. *L'Italia letteraria e cinematografica dal secondo Novecento ai giorni nostri*. Cuneo: Nerosubianco, 2013. Pp. 172.

Giovanni Spani and Philip Balma are the editors of this collection of essays, loosely arranged into four sections that cover different aspects of contemporary Italian production in literature, cinema, and the arts. While the first section focuses on various issues of civic engagement, the second sheds light on representations of the Italian Northeast, portrayed as an industrial landscape of decaying opulence and human misery. In the third part of the volume, the focus shifts to the politically-engaged work of Pier Paolo Pasolini, while the final group of essays probes critical issues concerning Italian contemporary films.

In the first essay, the Italian scholar Sergio Ferrarese investigates the poetry of Nanni Balestrini, who played a crucial role in the avant-garde movement *Gruppo 63* and was directly involved in the social turmoil of 1968-9. In Ferrarese's analysis, Balestrini acknowledged the detachment of the Italian intelligentsia from social issues, a fact that compelled him to participate directly in the workers' struggle. Ferrarese portrays Balestrini as an author that was fully involved in the social challenges of his time as a well as an intellectual in pursuit of a coherent idea of civic engagement.

Sciltian Gastaldi examines Pier Vittorio Tondelli (1955-1991), whose work proved fundamental for the development of contemporary Italian prose, even though Marxist critics fiercely attacked his apparent lack of political engagement. Gastaldi disagrees with this position and recognizes a private form of *impegno* in Tondelli's narrative, who was especially concerned with marginalized individuals. In *Camere separate* (1989), the protagonist becomes ill with an unmentioned disease—AIDS, according to Gastaldi—that Tondelli chooses not to name as a form of self-censorship (the novel is loosely autobiographical). Gastaldi, reprising Joseph Cady's thesis, claims this as the first and only instance of an Italian "AIDS novel."

Elizabeth Scheiber bridges the first two sections of the book with an essay on the thriller *Il fiume delle nebbie* (2003), by Valerio Varesi. In her analysis, Scheiber discusses the themes of memory, war,

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and trauma. Most characters in the novel are aging partisans, who become protagonists of a collective portrait of WWII and its legacy. Behind the thriller plot, Varesi conceals a sophisticated reflection on the mythical value of war and on the trauma it forces on future generations. In this regard, Scheiber poignantly recognizes Varesi's representation of the river Po, which becomes a symbol for the flow of history and a witness to its tragedy.

In the following essay, Gregory Pell discusses the literary production of the Italian Northeast by exploring the work of three contemporary novelists, Vitaliano Trevisan, Emanuele Tonon, and Romolo Bugaro. Pell sees the cultural identity of this region as ultimately defined by its literary representations. The authors underscore, in fact, the paradox for which this area is celebrated. On one side, it is one of the most prosperous of Italy, on the other it is the witness of countless episodes of human misery and defeat. In the authors' novels, the Northeast becomes a mythical area of social decay and alienation, a space that allows a wider reflection on the capitalistic dynamics of exploitation and intellectual impoverishment.

Still concentrating on the representation of the Italian Northeast, Giovanni Spani discusses the work of one of the most celebrated authors of contemporary Italian theater, Marco Paolini. In analyzing *I cani del gas* (1999), a collection of stories that the actor performed on various stages, Spani sees Paolini's travelling as a process that results in the re-discovery of Italian identity through its linguistic diversity, a diversity that constitutes, for Paolini, Italy's most authentic wealth.

On a similar note, Anna Rinaldin reflects on the dialectal poetry of Ernesto Calzavara (1907-2000), who recognized that dialectal poetry tended to exclude itself from twentieth-century poetic debates, carving a niche outside of history. The poet's work reverses this trend, as it uses the dialect to address the most current themes and critical issues. In Rinaldin's opinion, Calzavara found in local idioms an expressive tool that was more effective than Italian, one that was more versatile and accurate to grasp the reality.

Two essays discuss different facets of Pier Paolo Pasolini's work. Enrico Minardi analyzes the long poem *Le ceneri di Gramsci* (1957), synthesizing Pasolini's troubled relationship with Marxism

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through the rhetorical figure of the oxymoron and underscoring the ambivalent relationship between Pasolini and Gramsci (including Gramsci's conception of history). Daniele Fioretti focuses on Pasolini's cinema, investigating the theme of the working-class innocence with specific reference to his political writing. Both essays offer an opportunity to reflect on Pasolini's centrality in the post-war intellectual debate as well as on Pasolini's troubled understanding of Marxism, and his struggle to overcome the German's influence.

Fioretti's essay introduces the last section of the book, dedicated to Italian contemporary cinema. Philip Balma discusses the polemic produced by Lizzani's *Hotel Meina* (2007), a film that was attacked for its lack of historical accuracy. The underlying concern is the relationship between the historical vs. the imaginary representation of the Holocaust in cinema. Eleonora Buonocore discusses examples of meta-cinematic representations in the films of Nanni Moretti, Cristina Comencini, and Paolo Virzi, suggesting a new perspective on their works. Lastly, Fulvio Orsitto, probes the intermedial interchanges among different arts, analyzing the adaptation for graphic novel and film of Nicolò Ammaniti's short-story *L'ultimo capodanno dell'umanità* (1996).

L'Italia letteraria e cinematografica dal secondo Novecento ai giorni nostri is a heterogeneous collection of essays, which perhaps might have benefited from a more rigorous thematic organization. However, these insightful essays shed light on critical issues that belong to different lines of scholarly inquiry, and pay critical attention to authors that are generally marginalized, such as Pier Vittorio Tondelli and Marco Paolini. Moreover, this volume addresses the importance of a truly engaged literature, as well as the necessity to redefine civic engagement and the role of literary criticism. In this regard, the apparent lack of cohesion of this collection reflects, rather accurately, today's cultural scenario and Italy's identity, which, these essays attest, is as multifaceted as it is fragmented.

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Stillman, David and Tiziano Cherubini. *The Ultimate Italian: Review and Practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies. 2013. Pp. xiv + 433.

David Stillman, in collaboration with Tiziano Cherubini, has recently published a companion of another Romance language. Published after two similar volumes (one for Spanish and one for French), *The Ultimate Italian* appears to fill the void of a comprehensive volume covering all the aspect of the Italian language and its grammar. It addresses the needs of formal and informal students and it constitutes a handbook, or a reference manual, for reviewing and progressing in the study and fluency of the language.

The volume is structured in four parts: “Verbs forms and uses,” “Nouns and their modifiers: Pronouns,” “Other elements of the structure,” and “Complex sentence and other examples of usage.” Each part presents chapters on specific topics. Each topic is presented and explained clearly, and is followed by exercises for review and reinforcement. “Note culturali” are featured in all chapters and they offer some cultural content which, according to the authors, should “enhance the effectiveness of the grammar exercises by providing an authentic Italian context in which to practice” (xiii). Throughout the volume, the “Note Linguistiche” help the reader to capitalize on her/his knowledge of other Romance languages.

The volume progresses as a traditional grammar book. The first section focuses on verb forms and uses. It includes a brief and general introduction to the Italian verbal system. Surprisingly, this section does not encompass all Italian verb moods. Subjunctive tenses are not analyzed in this first section: they are included in the fourth section which focuses on more complex sentence structure. The second section focuses entirely on the nominal domain, its constituents and modifiers. The following section, “Other Elements of sentence structure” focuses on other linguistic items such as numbers, adverbs, interrogatives, negative and indefinite words, and, finally, prepositions. The last section of the volume is dedicated to “The complex sentences and other example of usage” and encompasses topics such as relative pronouns, the different tenses of the subjunctive, word formation, and an interesting chapter on lexical and structural

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problematic areas such as the differences between “conoscere” and “sapere,” between “partire,” “lasciare,” “uscire,” and “andarsene,” between “essere” and “stare” (important for students with native or near native Spanish knowledge), and two problematic verbs such as “piacere” and “manicare.” At the end of the volume an ample answer key offers the solutions to all the exercises presented throughout the volume.

Designing and publishing a foreign language grammar book represents always a big challenge due to the readers’ different levels of knowledge of that specific language. And this is true also for this volume. As the authors say in the preface, the volume is for “advanced beginners, intermediate students, and advanced learners of Italian” (xiii) and it is designed to provide them “with a powerful tool for review and progress in the language” (xiii).

Focusing on the parts covering verb morphology and use (section one – chapters one to twelve) and most part of section four (chapters 23 to 26), this volume organizes the Italian verb system in a rather obscure way. Understandably not all verb tenses are equally important. Some verb tenses are more frequently used whereas others are not. Some can only be used in independent clauses whereas other tenses can only appear in dependent clauses. It does make sense to relegate all the subjunctive tenses to a domain of the complex sentence structure, but that does not make other tenses, pertaining to the indicative mood, more important. Anybody with some exposure to the Italian languages knows that the present of the subjunctive (even if its use seems to become limited also among native speakers) is far more commonly used than, let’s say, the *trapassato remoto*, or the *futuro anteriore*. Interestingly, chapter eight encompasses the sequence of tenses in the indirect discourse, but no reference is made throughout the entire volume to the coordination of tenses between main and dependent clause, or to the tense coordination between indicative and subjunctive. Chapter five presents the future and the conditional but only their simple and present tenses respectively. The *futuro anteriore* and the *condizionale passato* are introduced in chapter eight with other compound tenses. The explanation of the formation of these two moods—the future and the *condizionale* recalls the pedagogical shortcut frequently used to help the students to learn the formation of

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the *futuro semplice* and of the *condizionale presente*.

A brief and more in-depth explanation about tense formation (to be included for example in chapter one) should have been considered for intermediate and/or advanced readers. It would have avoided statements such as: “Some verbs use an imperfect stem that differs from that of the infinitive” (page 60) to form the *imperfetto*. The three verbs presented—*dire*, *fare*, and *bere*—have an irregular root form in the infinitive. Actually, they are extremely regular in the *imperfetto*: root + thematic vowel + imperfect tense characteristic (-v-) + personal endings. This would have strengthened the opening statement of chapter four: “the imperfect tense in Italian is almost completely regular.” Another aspect that the volume leaves aside is absolute constructions which, again, would benefit speakers and learners with a more intermediate or advanced knowledge of the language.

As previously said, defining the target audience for a volume is extremely important when it comes to a handbook or a reference manual, due to the readers’ different levels of knowledge of that specific field. Despite its shifting target, this volume represents a useful tool for advanced levels of foreign language instruction at the college level. It would be interesting if this volume supplemented the exercises of the printed edition with online material, or include a CD-ROM, as in the French and the Spanish volumes.

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Ferrari, Chiara Francesca. *Since When Is Fran Drescher Jewish? Dubbing Stereotypes in The Nanny, The Simpsons, and The Sopranos.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010. Pp. 176.

In her study, Ferrari analyzes the processes of translation and dubbing of contemporary American television series for Italian audiences. In so doing, she reexamines the widely accepted (but increasingly criticized) concept of globalization as an homogenizing force. Ferrari adopts an interdisciplinary methodology but primarily she surveys dubbing from the perspective of translation studies, as a form of *cultural ventriloquism*, at the core of which is a new text unquestioned by the target audience thanks to the domestication of foreign themes: i.e. the re-elaboration and transformation of foreign cultural forms into domestic ones. Given Italy's lack of national culture in Gramscian terms, Ferrari claims that the domestication of American ethnic stereotypes through dubbing very often reflects the country's strong regionalism—the addition of stereotypical Italian dialects/regionalisms representing a well-tested strategy of domestication. By analyzing three television programs, the author demonstrates that the diversity present in the original is often translated into an Italian “Otherness of the South.”

One of Ferrari's main points in her discussion of *The Nanny* (*La tata*) is the significant transformation of Fran Drescher's character from a Jewish American into an Italian American (named Francesca.) Such a fundamental modification of the main character's ethnicity required the establishment of a cultural and ethnic correspondence to the ‘vulgarity’ of the original Drescher's Jewish princess, found in the rural stereotype of the *burina*. According to Ferrari, one of the chief difficulties for translators of *La tata* was that several original episodes featured indisputably Jewish visual elements or characters, which could not materially be erased from the screen. Due to the show's ethnic recontextualization, the Italian version turns these visual aspects into picturesque rituals, detached from any religious significance.

In the case of *The Simpsons*, Ferrari points out that in order to convey the cultural, racial and ethnic stereotypes present in many of the original show's secondary characters, the translators enacted a process of indigenization through the attribution of primarily Southern Italian accents and dialects. Ferrari concentrates on two groups of characters from *The Simpsons*: the first includes an indigenization based on the use of Italian regional accents which correspond, in some way, to the original. For instance, the Italian translation re-created the marked ethnicity of Groundskeeper Willie, a Scotsman, by transferring his stereotypical character to a similar cultural personality in Italy. In a noteworthy example of re-territorialization, the choice was to have Willie speak with a marked Sardinian accent. As in the case of *La Tata*, however, major visual obstacles remained: Willie's Scottish kilt, when not ignored in the Italian translation, was simply referred to as a skirt, disconnected from any ethnicity. The second group of characters opens to linguistic, ethnic and racial factors, since it includes elements of foreign 'otherness' that are transferred to an Italian context. The author maintains that the indigenization process of Apu Nahasapeemapieton lies at the core of contemporary debates regarding what it means to be Italian in light of the recent influx to Italy of immigrants whose full inclusion into Italian society remains problematic. Apu's original proper English, with a strong Indian accent, becomes in translation a broken Italian marked by poor grammar, thereby perpetuating the Italian stereotype of immigrants who can only express themselves in a very limited fashion.

As for *The Sopranos*, Ferrari argues that, in part due to its adult content, the Italian version was never aimed at a large audience, as was the very successful *La Piovra* (1984-1999), which also dealt with the Mafia. Consequently, the series never became a cultural phenomenon as it was in the United States, but a cult phenomenon, relegated to broadcast on cable and a midnight-hour programming schedule. From a linguistic point of view, the task of Italian translators was not difficult, since Tony Soprano repeatedly indicates his family's origin from Avellino. The use of Italian accents and dialects also divides the characters

along generational lines: while Livia Soprano—Tony's mother—and his Uncle Junior speak in the dubbed version with particularly strong Neapolitan accents, the younger generations in the series do not have accented voices. In light of the series' subject matter, Ferrari points out that the elimination of the word *Mafia*, or its substitution with “mala” or “organized crime,” is the most remarkable change the Italian network imposed on the translation. The author opines that erasure from the dialogue of a word which would have worked perfectly in lip synchronization transmits the idea that the Mafia is still problematic for Italian television.

While a laudable and well-written book, this reader was perplexed by several puzzling remarks made by the author. For instance, the statement that long seriality on prime time (e.g. *The Sopranos*' six seasons) is unusual in Italy (115.)—a statement the author contradicts by mentioning *La Piovra*, as well as other long-running series (e.g. RAI's *Il commissario Montalbano* and Mediaset's *Distretto di polizia*). Similarly bewildering was the author's assertion (117) regarding the alleged reticence of Italian network executives to broadcast series with overly complicated plots, given the success in Italy of imported series such as *Twin Peaks*, *X-Files* and *Lost*. Ferrari also asserts (119) that *The Sopranos*' failure in Italy was partly due to its romanticized portrayal of the Mafia. However, according to Roberto Saviano, whom she quotes, the opposite is true: *The Sopranos* was not successful in Italy because it demystifies, deconstructs and reassembles the myth of the Mafia according to new rules.

The primary drawback of Ferrari's study is the author's overly facile conflation of Italian and Italian American: she fails to take into consideration that the reason of *La tata*'s success in Italy may have been Francesca's conformity to Italian stereotypes regarding the garishness, not necessarily of the South, but of Italian Americans. Indeed, Italian Americans represent the most destabilizing sort of ‘other’ for Italians: exhibiting external similarities that mask profound differences. It is particularly ironic for this reader that, while several works in Italian American studies have questioned the whiteness of Italians (*Are Italians White?* by Jennifer Guglielmo and

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Salvatore Salerno, and *From Paesani to White Ethnics* by Stefano Luconi,) Ferrari should claim Fran is “whitened” (64) because she is transformed into an Italian American. For this reader, instead, Francesca conserves her ‘otherness’ *precisely* because she is Italian American. Differently from *La tata*, one of the causes of the failure of *The Sopranos* in Italy may not have been its subject matter, the Mafia—considering the success of *La Piovra* and *The Godfather*—but the fact that Tony Soprano does *not* conform to the stereotypical buffoonish Italian American depicted in the Italian media.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, Ferrari’s book is quite a useful instrument for those scholars who are interested in the phenomenon of dubbing as a cultural practice. Moreover, in this reader’s opinion, the book should be included in any Italian course syllabus dealing with Italian Cultural Studies and/or Translation in that it provides an intriguing theoretical framework as well as specific examples in support of the author’s theses.

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