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nella cit. recensione, p. 2006, il richiamo ai « bigonzoni » e agli altri termini ariosteschi non vale propriamente da citazione testuale, ma da riferimento a memoria. Questo peraltro potrebbe anche confermare la provvisorietà di una redazione del *DL* consistente in pura dinamica di pensiero, senza il soccorso e la mediazione di libri e documenti.

Recent Publications in the Field of Italian Cinema

To date the best introduction to Italian cinema available in English is Peter Bondanella's *Italian Cinema from Neo-realism to the Present* (Ungar, 1983) of which Fellini himself has said: ". . . a very good book, and an accurate one." The material in the Bondanella text is centered around a selection of representative films which are discussed at length and presented in their historical and cultural context. This focus helps the reader orient him/herself and is essential for the newcomer to the rather vast subject of Italian film production. For those who might be interested in tracking down a copy of a film, Bondanella's section on rental information will undoubtedly prove quite valuable.

A more recent attempt on the same subject is Mira Liehm's *Passion and Defiance. Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present* (UC Press, 1984). Liehm's text, while offering a large section on the generally neglected early Italian film (1930–42) and a greater emphasis on Italian cinema before 1952, not to mention a wide selection of photographic illustrations (147 in all!) ends up resembling more a compendium of names and titles while providing only brief descriptions and superficial analyses of the films themselves. In addition to the standard text bibliography, Liehm includes a four page bibliography of articles on the subject of Italian film (although it is indexed by author and not by subject, which would have been more useful), a list of published screenplays and an accurate index of the film titles and their English translation.

A rather disappointing attempt at presenting the more recent Italian film production is R. T. Witcombe's *The New Italian Cinema. Studies in Dance and Despair* (Oxford University Press, 1982). Meant clearly for the already initiated, Witcombe's text focuses on comparisons between the following directors: Antonioni-Ferreri; Bellocchio-Cavani; Bolognini-Bertolucci, Pasolini-Fellini, Rosi-Petri, Olmi-Taviani, Visconti-Wertmüller, with a final chapter devoted to Franco Brusati,

Tinto Brass, Giuseppe Bertolucci, Peter Del Monte, and Nanni Moretti. While worthwhile for the information regarding filmmakers who are lesser known in the U.S. such as Liliana Cavani, Marco Ferreri and Nanni Moretti and for its presentation of the work of some of Italy's newcomers to the director's role, the work is seriously marred by a discourse which, although at times quite original, gets bogged down in lengthy and often marginal quotations, oblique references, imprecise recountings of plot and interpretations which are at best opinionated. Witcombe's work is also frightfully laden with misspellings of the names of directors, actors and actresses, and producers. Nanni Moretti has become Nano Moretti (in Italian *nano* means dwarf!); Shirley Stoler, probably due to her role as the German commandant in *Seven Beauties*, has had her last name changed to Stöler, while Lina Wertmüller has lost her umlaut in the shuffle. Not even Dino De Laurentiis was able to keep both of his "i"'s. Errors appear even in the original titles of films and literary works, with sometimes humorous results: *Ciao Maschio* has been changed to *Ciao Maschler* and the translation, which is *Bye, Bye, Male* appears as *Bye, Bye, Monkey*; *La moglieamante* has been changed to *La mogliamente*, *La macchina cinema* to *La maccina cinema* and *Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* to *Le ultime lettere di Jacobo Ottis*. (Poor, poor Ortis!) To the long list of misspellings one must also add serious lacunae and obvious errors. For example in comparing novel and film versions of *The Conformist*, the author does not even mention Bertolucci's use of a complex structure of flashbacks and claims that what Anna and Giulia dance in the film is a conga (a cuban dance) instead of a tango! All told these problems are not only quite annoying but end up compromising the integrity of a text which seems to have gone from manuscript to printed page without the necessary revisions.

Those interested in the roots of the neorealist movement in Italian film after W.W.II will find Marcia Landy's *Fascism in Film. The Italian Commercial Cinema, 1931-1943* (Princeton University Press, 1986), quite useful. Landy follows the thesis of leading Italian film theorists Gian Piero Brunetta (*Cinema italiano tra le due guerre: Fascismo e politica cinematografica*, and *Storia del cinema italiano 1895-1945*) and Lino Micciché (« Il cadavere nell'armadio » in *Cinema italiano sotto il*

fascismo) who contend that the neorealist "revolution" actually had its origins in fascist film, despite the movement's own mythical claim to "newness." Before 1945 the reclamation of reality had in fact already begun: and films had been made both on location and with non-professional actors. Neorealist films, as Landy demonstrates, are not a dramatic rupture from the films of the fascist *ventennio* but continue many of their concerns. Studies such as this are an attempt to fill a noticeable gap in the history of Italian cinema and to contribute to the understanding of fascist discourse and the manner in which it was encoded in films of the thirties and forties. In her analysis of many fascist film plots Landy focuses in particular on the prominence of the fascist rhetoric devoted to youth, the representation of women, and the dominant images of men who were often presented in the context of a quasi-religious pattern of conversion. In the second section of her book the author analyzes three genres: the historical film, the comedy, and the melodrama to determine the ways in which the uses of history, the role of work and leisure, and the presentation of the family are incorporated in the films of that era. The examination of these films does not offer us a picture of life as it was during the fascist era but many myths and strategies that were used, often self-consciously, to "naturalize experience, to create a sense of the way things are."

The films that Landy discusses are difficult to screen, not only in the U.S. but in Italy as well because they have generally been overlooked and dismissed as propaganda. Since most readers will have seen few, if any, it is quite disappointing that the text only includes 11 photographic illustrations.

Two monographs published recently on the work of Bertolucci and Antonioni are Robert Phillip Kolker's *Bernardo Bertolucci* (Oxford University Press, 1985) and *Antonioni, or the Surface of the World* by Seymour Chatman (UC Press, 1985). Robert Kolker (author of *The Altering Eye* and *A Cinema of Loneliness*) traces Bertolucci's development from *La commare secca* (1962) to *La tragedia di un uomo ridicolo* (1981) focusing on structure in each of his nine feature films, and on the director's continual quest for new forms of expression. The text is organized on a middle course between a chronological and an achronological reading of the film in order to privilege the analysis of formal structure. The

last chapter attempts to fit the analysis within the context of Godardian influence, Oedipal patterns, political issues, and an experimental feminist perspective. Of particular interest is the introduction in which Kolker discusses the question of *auteur* as defined by the relationship between text (and other texts)—author, critic, and audience. Also noteworthy is the author's original analysis of the filmmaker's crucial use of music, especially of Verdi compositions.

Seymour Chatman (author of *Story and Discourse*) presents Antonioni's films in a strictly chronological order, from the early documentaries of the 1940s to his latest works, focusing especially on the classic films of the 1960s: *L'avventura*, *La notte*, *L'eclisse*, and *Deserto rosso* which reveal Antonioni's keen interest in architecture and photography. Although Chatman's interpretation of the filmmaker's work is not essentially a new one, highlighting Antonioni's post-modernist concern with the potential of the camera as opposed to film narrative, it is accurate, complete and well constructed. The author focuses on Antonioni's "visual minimalism" and the "appearance of things"—as the title suggests—the surface of the world as seen by the director. The volume is replete with photographic reproductions, extensive notes, a complete filmography (which includes the director's work as assistant director, producer, and screenwriter) and a vast bibliography. In the words of Peter Bondanella, Chatman's monograph "immediately out-classes anything else available on Antonioni in any language."

Completing the series of newly released monographs on Italian directors is the second edition of Edward Murray's classic study on Fellini and his work: *Fellini the Artist* (Ungar, 1985) originally published in 1976 and now available in paperback for the first time. The second edition is brought up to date with a chapter on Fellini's four films since 1976: *Fellini's Casanova* (1976), *Orchestra Rehearsal* (1979), *City of Women* (1981) and *And the Ship Sails On* (1984). Also included are a revised filmography and bibliography. While a separate chapter is devoted to each of the preceding 15 films, the latter films are discussed in one brief chapter, so the analysis remains very superficial. Especially for *And the Ship Sails On* the reader will be disappointed. Even the still photograph from the film leaves the reader wondering who the "fellow passenger" Orlando is talking to really is. The young woman dressed in white cannot help but remind us of the pure, spiritual and

natural Paola of the closing shots of *La Dolce Vita*. Although Edward Murray has not added significantly to his initial project, the text remains a valuable and sound introduction to the great maestro and his work up to 1976. Despite the new edition the closing sentence of the text has yet to be corrected: “*ciao, il poeta*” should be of course “*ciao, poeta.*”

Peggy Kidney, *UCLA*

REVELLI, NUTO, *L'anello forte (La donna: storie di vita contadina)*, Torino: Einaudi, 1985, pp. 95 (intro.) + 502.

Nuto Revelli's seminal work as a pioneer oral historian over the past several decades, documenting *contadino* culture in Northern Italy (specifically the Cuneo area) is of the highest caliber. It presents a reality often obfuscated, either by the Romantics of the last century and their presentday epigones, or by the radical left which insists on countering excessively rosy portraits with equally distorted visions of unmitigated bleakness. R. corrects such misconceptions and misrepresentations through the only legitimate means: direct interviewing of that strata of society—"vinti" only insofar as these people follow a way of life largely superseded by modern society and its *ragion di mercatura*. Yet, balanced as his microbiographies may seek to be, there is no glossing over the fact that the overall mosaic or portrait of life they form is essentially dark: the depopulation of the countryside, the utter and abject poverty and isolation of scattered and aging *contadini* eking out an existence in a landscape the uncaring observer would call abandoned. R. is haunted by this dying culture, the tragedy of the broken lines of culture's transmission between generations, the desecration of a traditional way of life due to urbanization, blind industrialization, the power of mass culture, political indifference and ignorance (both of the right and the left).

The theme of war, an obsession for well over 20 years, prompted R. to seek out the truth as told by the forgotten world of the *contadini*. W.W.II remained everywhere present decades after the fact; its psychological and economic wounds had not healed. To R., a former officer, the massacres, the lunar landscape of the Russian retreat were