1860s. In this introduction, rather than immediately after the selection itself, are also to be found the sources for the material chosen by the editor, although some further details are given in the division entitled "About the Authors", which appears after the last "Testimony". The volume is concluded with a "Selected Bibliography" (of two pages), a "Selected Film Chronology" (one page), and a bibliography on "History and Criticism" (three pages), all of which are most useful and would make the volume a valuable addition to courses on Italian culture and history.

Unfortunately, the quality of the English into which the original Italian has been translated makes such a recommendation difficult, if not impossible: the editor's English prose is vitiated by errors of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax too frequent to be able to be overlooked in an academic review such as this one. Prepositions, admittedly a challenge for many translators, are at times unidiomatic or incorrect (e.g. "with their presence," 33; "on their own accord," 107; "at the service of," 145), infinitives are split (e.g. "to actively manage," 9), negatives doubled (e.g. "did not trust him *hardly* at all," 88), intransitive and transitive verbs confused (e.g. "black pitch that *shined* like marble," 88), vocabulary misused (e.g. "swear it on the *saint* evangelists," 36; "[he] was *reduced* to Piazza Rivoluzione," 63; "the murder of an excellent *cadaver*," 150), and the syntax is at times surprisingly warped. What, for instance, is to be made of a sentence like this: "But my intolerance for the very hypothesis of a punishment inflicted upon me required that I exclude any fear of revenge taken out on my administrator's back, according to the workings of evasion of a form of servitude" (126)? Or this: "Now everything was understandable, that repulsion expressed to her by that maternal voice, which expressed only pleasure, rendered dirty by the surroundings and presence in the midst of which it manifested" (165)? These and other serious shortcomings seem to result from the translator's misplaced preference for literal renderings, which can violate the spirit of the target language; but others, too, may in some measure be responsible for such errors, increasingly common in an age of print-ready copy and overworked in-house editors. I hope the money will be found to produce a revised edition of this interesting volume with the necessary emendations, the sources of the selections more clearly indicated, and perhaps even a snapshot or two by Letizia Battaglia, that passionate modern photographer of the Leopard's timeless lair.

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Fabio Ferrari. *Myths and Counter-Myths of America. New World Allegories in 20th –Century Italian Literature and Film.* Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2008. Pp. 222. ISBN 978-88-8063-609-0. €20.

Ferrari's book purports to be an example of the perspective held by someone born in the U.S.A. and, according to Ferrari's own words, "drawing on my intimate knowledge of both Italian and American culture, thereby paying full respect to both my Italian and American origins" (188) on the nature and charge of the *mito*

americano in Italian literature and film, and more broadly in Italian thought. Ferrari indicates that the idea for the book originated during the course of his doctoral studies at the University of Chicago, and indeed the book gives echoes rather of a thesis discussion, both in matter of language and structure. Specifically, at the outset his thesis statement declares, “contrary to the majority of past explanations of the Italian myth of America, there is no evidence of a coherent political agenda implicit to the allegories in question” (9). Ferrari, in his first chapter, proceeds with sweeping historical notions spanning centuries and involving Europe as a whole, with examples from “America’s Lost Generation Writers” who found a ‘creative mecca’ in Paris to the Spanish expulsion of the Moors in 1492, to the Risorgimento and back. Undoubtedly, Ferrari’s research offers a rich *pass partout* of dynamics, ideas, and arguments in support of an alleged historical genesis of the nature of the mythification process of the new continent, the ‘America Frontier,’ its thrusts and functions. What Ferrari, probably in his dissertation-like and circular-like reasoning omits, though, is a clear exposition at the outset of who his contenders are. The legitimacy and merits of Ferrari’s thesis are not at issue, his is not an implausible position. Rather, its ambitious goal and the manner in which he sets out to achieve it leave us with serious doubts regarding its validity. Throughout his book, those who are responsible for “the majority of past explanations of the Italian myth of America” or its “political agenda” as stated in his thesis, elude the reader. Few names, citations, and brief discussions of opinions such as those of Gramsci, Eco, Braudillard, Brunetta, do pop up now and then, but the reader gets the feeling that none are pursued at any fruitful level as purported by the author’s thesis. From the outset Ferrari appears to be failing his own objectives by using two sets of measure which end up thwarting the argument and structure of the entire book. While the people and ideas he claims to be debating are not made sufficiently clear to us, at the beginning Ferrari indicates that his “research neither considers the full corpus of work belonging to the authors I discuss, nor does it extend to other Italian writers or filmmakers, not treated here, that may be pertinent to my subject” (9). It is worth noting the typographical error, which at first sight ‘hides’ Antonio Gramsci in the Works Cited section of the book, whose ideas of “mythification and counter-mythification (terms Ferrari proposes) of America are not fundamentally political in motivation,” according to Ferrari. Chapter two deals with travel memoirs of fascist-era Italian writers Giuseppe Antonio Borgeese, Mario Soldati, Emilio Cecchi, and Margherita Sarfatti. The third and fourth chapters are devoted respectively to “Pavese’s American Allegory: From *Anteguerra* to *Liberazione*” and to “Vittorinian Ideology and the American Symbol: An-Other Allegory, Lost in Translation.” One main point in the author’s argument of defense is that the “commonalities” between writers from different periods, from pre-World War I to post-World War II, allegedly support the idea that their positions towards America are not motivated, exclusively or coherently, by ideological beliefs or political allegiances but that they are rather “transideological” and even “psychological.” He insists on this idea from the beginning to the end when he chronicles more recent historical events and involves contemporary Italian artists such as Dario Fo, Dacia Maraini, and Franco Battiato. What he

names “myths and counter-myths” of America in Italian literature, film, and overall thought, are often in the author’s opinion nothing more than a ‘psychological’ strategy aimed at redeeming, and preserving, the integrity of the Italian Identity. And as such there is little or nothing political and ideological to be read in them, let alone anything that might extend into the realms of left or right-wing allegiances. Unfortunately, the examples, analyses, and criticisms offered by Ferrari appear insufficient and highly selective to warrant a convincing repositioning of thought. His discussion of Italian cinema in chapter five, entitled “Eve of Americanization: The Feminine Embodiment of America in Five Postwar Italian Films,” reconfirms how problematic his position becomes. It is not the meager review of only one selected work taken from five Italian cineastes, namely Rossellini, Visconti, Fellini, Leone, and Antonioni that amounts to a lack of scholarly evidence in support of his statement as much as the cursory and problematic analysis of the “feminine embodiment of America,” as Ferrari names it, done swiftly within one or two scenes of each film without accounting for the entire work, and placed out of the context of the cinematic history and discourse relevant to the larger debate surrounding Italian national cinema. In speaking of *La dolce vita*, he undermines his own paradigmatic argument by further obscuring the distinctions between characters and real personae. Ferrari overrides what is known as ‘the ideology of the film image’ in his look at single works from Neorealism to the revolutionary 1960s. A less finalistic approach may benefit the study of the representations of intricate historical phenomena, which during times of anxiety and crisis may motivate certain people who profess differing ideologies and creeds to bound together in solidarity while it may lead others into dialectical scuffles. Nevertheless, Ferrari’s passionate efforts at raising the interrogatives he hardly provides an answer for must be applauded for their relevance and thrust. As one approaches the sixth and final chapter of Ferrari’s book, “Final Reckoning: Projections from Italy’s Past Converging on America’s Present,” one gets the feeling of having suddenly switched to the reading of a memoir. This last chapter deals mostly with Ferrari’s response to what he perceives to be an apocalyptic reading of the event of 11 September 2001 while residing in Italy.

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