Rita Cavigioli. *I giovani raccontano gli anziani. Il contributo del VideoConcorso Francesco Pasinetti alla riflessione su invecchiamento, dialogo intergenerazionale e trasmissione culturale in Italia*. Venezia: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2010. Pp. 330. ISBN 978-88-7543-256-0. €16.

The recent work of Rita Cavigioli on perceptions of aging and the elderly is part of a rapidly growing area of research that has expanded from the social sciences into the humanities. Until now, however, critical studies on gerontology in the Italian context have been few, a surprising anomaly given the profound demographic changes in Italy in the past few decades. This is despite (as the author herself notes) that the Italian media have increasingly focused their attention on Italy's low birth rate, the disproportion in population between the old and young, and the tendency for Italian children to live at home for much longer.

Author of the 2005 text *Women of a Certain Age. Contemporary Italian Fictions of Female Aging*, Cavigioli (who is pioneering an area of study with enormous potential) has now focused her attention on the realm of visual media rather than literature, choosing as her subject the Francesco Pasinetti *Video Concorso*, an annual film contest in Venice named after the Venetian director and getting its start in the 2003-2004 academic year. "The Pasinetti," as it is called informally, is both a cultural event and pedagogical project that has brought to light more than 100 short films produced by students and independent young visual artists, all of whom are more or less based in or near Venice. The first year's theme was, as the title of Cavigioli's work suggests, "i giovani raccontano gli anziani," but it has since then broadened its scope to include the larger hope of conserving the immense cultural patrimony of the city and its environs.

What separates Cavigioli's work from others in this new field of research is her impressive interdisciplinary approach. The first part of the book is, in fact, a fascinating synopsis of demographic shifts over the past few decades in the Northeast. Comprised of five, notably succinct chapters, Part I of Cavigioli's work outlines the sociological, cultural and political framework within which the *Video Concorso* operates, and she rightly examines gender differences as well as the effects of immigration to the region. Cavigioli nimbly includes in this section important statistical data, but the highlights of this first part are the responses to a survey she administered to the contest's participants. The questions range from how the young people view generational difference; to their opinions on the phenomena of the "famiglia lunga" and economic and social gerontocracy; to how they might envision their own old age and the future of the region. Many of those surveyed seem to espouse their opinions with unexpected maturity. Nineteen-year-old Irene Gislón, for example, responds to the question about where she hopes to live her adult life by saying: "Non che non mi piaccia l'Italia (paesaggi, ecc.) ma non mi piacciono gli italiani perché manca l'unità, la coscienza sociale, il rispetto per le altre persone (sporczia, cani che abbaiano, musica ad alto volume fino a tardi) [...]" (82). In an ironic reversal of expected attitude, the quotation could easily be attributed to an embittered old woman.

Part II of *I giovani raccontano gli anziani* is the most elaborated section of

Cavigioli's work, presenting in-depth though highly accessible critiques of a selection of the Pasinetti's short films from 2004 to 2008. These analyses succeed most strongly because of the author's decision to group them under various thematic considerations rather than present them chronologically. While this organization includes the original theme of the contest, it broadens its scope by including first-person narratives by elder members of the community (many of whom talk about their wartime experience); films about specific geographic sites in the Venice area ("i luoghi della memoria"); accounts of changes to the workplace, trades and artisanal culture; an entire chapter on a film from 2008, *Veli d'angelo e rivoli d'immagini: memoria e creatività nella terza età* (a fascinating documentary on a painting class for the elderly); works about and made by women; films that chronicle social and environmental changes; and a final chapter on animated films, an important addition given the genre's role in popular culture as well its technological innovations. Cavigioli's analysis is complete and enlightening in its focus on the inspiration behind many of these creations, and the circumstances of their production. She also necessarily includes a stylistic analysis of each film by referring to a large set of color and black and white photographs that are included at the back of the book. While certainly a printing consideration, Cavigioli's critiques would read more organically if the film stills were presented within each of the sub-headings.

Cavigioli concludes her work by giving voice to the organizers, film critics, educators, members of the jury, and of supporting foundations, and she shares their conviction that the identity of the Pasinetti lies mostly in its educational function rather than its thematic coherence from year to year. With this new work, the author gives us a view of a unique learning experience that occurs on both the level of interpreting, understanding, and conveying content as well as that of working with the particular language of film. Cavigioli's project is one that succeeds in establishing a critical dialogue, so often overlooked in literary and film criticism today, between cultural context and the texts themselves. The entire Pasinetti project and Cavigioli's excellent contribution are both highly commendable in their nuanced exploration of the dialectic between personal and collective memory within the broader (and still salient) concern of regional identity.

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