and fiction in Cerami and Celestini's narrative and staged *tableaux* of techniques, depictions, authorial legitimacy, and transmission of feelings and reflections of one's rapport to the now and then.

In conclusion, Barbato's book is a rich sort of *passé-partout* of ideas, propositions, and questions surrounding the role of the individual artists' representations, and of the increasing authorial presence in contemporary culture. It is a good source of reflection and reference, although it could benefit extensively from a detailed index, which is missing.

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Bernardette Luciano. *The Cinema of Silvio Soldini: Dream–Image–Voyage*. Leicester: Troubador Publishing, 2008. Pp. xvii, 201, b/w ill. 18. ISBN 978-1906510-244. £15.99, US\$ 29.95

Bernardette Luciano's book *The Cinema of Silvio Soldini: Dream – Image – Voyage* is an awaited addition to the bibliography of Italian cinema and cineastes. It is a passionate and first extensive monograph on a little known (not for long) Silvio Soldini and his cinema in the English language. After the year 2000 Soldini's name began to be heard more often in international festival circles and distribution chains thanks to the success of his award-winning film *Pane e tulipani* (*Bread and Tulips*). A masterful comedic twist from an *engagé* auteur of the new Italian cinema, this film captured the interest of critics and viewers alike who immediately turned their attention to any other available work from the Milanese filmmaker. Soldini belongs to the new generation of Italian directors whose talent was nurtured through the years of the "Italian Nouvelle Vogue," and whose emergence in the panorama of international cinema is marked by a solid grasp of technical forms and a "burning" concern for social and transcultural issues. After a formal training in Cinema at New York University, the laborious gestation of his first short films and documentaries, Soldini's career has slowly but steadily risen to international acclamation and critical recognition.

Taking inspiration from Soldini's first work and student film *Drimage* (1982), Luciano proposes an engaging study of the man and his cinema. She approaches the study of Soldini's cinematic vision through a schematic triad of dream-image-voyage as indicated in the title of her book. Speaking of *Drimage* she writes: "[...] is an invented word which intersects the notions of dream, image, and age. By replacing 'age' with 'voyage', I propose an alternative triad, dream-image-voyage [...]" (xi). Such is the suggestion she receives from watching and examining Soldini's early work and subsequent professional development on the basis of a multidisciplinary approach, inclusive of cultural studies and feminist theory. In doing so Luciano underscores important relations between Silvio Soldini's visual philosophy and the landscapes, the characters, the cultures, the languages, and the music that are captured by his vision and which populate his work. The chief of

these being the perpetual search for that dense image(s) that mirrors the complexities of one's inner dilemma with the world we inhabit. In chapter one, which serves as the Introduction to the work, Luciano begins with a systematic study of Soldini's key short films, ranging from the 1982 *Drimage* to the end of the 1990s with *Case, cose, città* (*Houses, Objects, Cities*, 1997). The aim is to lay out the basis of her approach and to bring to the fore the triad dream-image-voyage and its elucidating role in Soldini's cinema: the study of themes, forms, and movements. At the same time this is an opportunity to shed light on the space occupied by the female subject in Soldini's cinematic vision, as is the case in *Femmine, folle e polvere d'archivio* (*Females, Crowds, and Archival Dust*, 1992). A player subjugated by the traditional and limiting use of the camera and its lenses and yet freed by Soldini's apt connectivity to the unexplored potential of the female role. In chapter two Luciano continues her methodical study by looking at Soldini's documentaries and short films in what she calls "Soldini's Laboratory: The Documentaries and Short Films." She traces Soldini's documentary style in the Italian cinematic (realist) tradition of post-war Italy and the New York training experience on a variety of formal styles with its typologies of *cinéma vérité*. Among the works she writes on are *Voci celate* (*Hidden Voices*, 1986) and *Il futuro alle spalle: voci di un'età inquieta* (*Back to the Future: Voices of a Restless Age*, 1998), works concerned with specific socio-political issues such as Italian health care and the prospects awaiting the new generation of young adults. The third chapter is a study of the formal characteristic of two medium-length films, *Paesaggio con figure* (*Landscapes with Figures*, 1983) and *Giulia in ottobre* (*Giulia in October*, 1985), works which Luciano sets apart from the rest because of what she perceives as a sort of limbo of the early eighties, a sense of "suspension" and desire for experimentation. At the end of each chapter, in the 'conclusion,' Luciano reiterates respective key arguments in making her closing remarks. Chapter four is an extended exploration of "The Trilogy of the Three A's: Soldini's Women-Centered Cinema" as elaborated in the title. The films *L'aria serena dell'ovest* (*The Peaceful Air of the West*, 1990), *Un'anima divisa in due* (*A Soul Split in Two*, 1993), *Le acrobate* (*Acrobats*, 1997) lend themselves to a contextual analysis of Soldini's depiction of the female subject, domestic and foreign, through varying spaces, that is, geographical and psychological landscapes, towards a renewed understanding of the self and its habitat. The discussion explores the state of post-feminist Italy, and the trajectory of the woman's voyage in search of a fulfilling existence.

The following chapter is devoted to the case of *Brucio nel vento* (*Burning in the Wind*, 2002), which was nominated for the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival. Luciano points out that this is a European, rather than an Italian, film due to its production itinerary and mixed cast and crew. Most importantly, it is the sense of "mobility," the translation of words and citations into images that Soldini is concerned with here in a rather renewed fashion. Soldini attributes to the reading of Agota Kristof's novel, *Hier*, his desire to turn words into images, enacting the role of a sort of an extradiegetic narrator and exiled intellectual who speaks about and with his homeland from the other side of the border. In Luciano's view this ultimately speaks to the viewers' own sense of

displacement and exile, which is an inseparable part of the human condition. Chapter six is entitled "Soldini's Comedies: Where Dreams Come True." It is a panoramic view of far-reaching landscapes, geographical, folkloristic, and mythological ones. An irresistible and ambivalently humoristic depiction of a global village at the threshold of the new millennium, as portrayed in the vicissitudes of Rosalba and Agata (both characters played by the same Licia Maglietta) respectively in *Pane e Tulipani* (*Bread and Tulips*, 2000), and *Agata e la tempesta* (*Agatha and the Storm*, 2004). According to Luciano, the forging of new connections and sense of being, an attempt on Soldini's part to transcend reality itself. In the closing chapter seven Luciano recapitulates the notion of the triad employed throughout her study of Silvio Soldini's cinema, reiterating her key arguments while pointing to Soldini's continual evolution as an independent filmmaker, a director of cinematic traditions, contemporary realities, and inquisitor of the human soul, both female and male. One useful addition to her book could have been a detailed index of names and titles. Following Luciano's publication, Silvio Soldini has released three novel works, a dramatic film *Giorni e nuvole* (*Days and Clouds*, 2007), an emotionally compelling look at middle-aged relationships, and two more documentaries *Quattro giorni con Vivian* (2008), on poet Vivian Lamarque and her work, and *Un paese diverso* (2008) in support of co-ops and volunteering associations, and aimed at counteracting the loss of authenticity and quality of life that plague modern society.

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Reading and Writing the Mediterranean. Essays by Vincenzo Consolo. Edited by Norma Bouchard and Massimo Lollini. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 2006. Pp. 310. ISBN 978-0-8020-9210-6.

Scrittore tra i più originali e importanti del secondo Novecento Vincenzo Consolo rimane, nelle parole dei due curatori di questo bel volume, "virtually unknown to the English-speaking, and especially the North American, public" (14). Date queste premesse, lo scopo principale di *Reading and Writing the Mediterranean* è, in primo luogo, quello di introdurre lo scrittore siciliano ad un pubblico più vasto possibile, utilizzando saggi letterari, storico-antropologici e culturali. Il risultato, lo si dica subito, è di notevole impatto. Il volume fornisce indubbiamente un contributo importante non solo alla esegesi consoliana ma si pone anche come momento essenziale di quella area accademica in grande espansione che va sotto l'egida di Mediterranean Studies. È infatti proprio il *Mediterraneus* ad impossessarsi, sin dal titolo, della scena principale, con la sua cultura millenaria, le sue tradizioni, le sue civiltà, i suoi conflitti.

Il volume curato da Norma Bouchard e Massimo Lollini si apre con una introduzione ("Vincenzo Consolo and His Mediterranean Paradigm") in cui si riassumono per sommi tratti la biografia dello scrittore di Sant'Agata di Militello,