nella continua esegesi dell'orrore da cui non riesce a separarsi. Oscillare fra "il ritorno alla propria infanzia spezzata e la biografia di un presente d'impotenza e di sradicamento" (147) sono i nodi epistemologici ed ontologici fondamentali. Quel dolore sordo e continuo di cui le chiedono testimonianza, prove del suo vissuto di internata in un campo, prove sulla 'sorellanza' nel campo, unico elemento di cui Bruck non conserva memoria (cfr. *La lettera da Francoforte*).

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Guido Bonsaver. *Censorship and Literature in Fascist Italy*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Pp. 405. ISBN: 978-0-8020-9301-1 (cloth); 978-0-8020-9496-4 (paper). \$ 80.00 (cloth), \$ 35 (paper).

In the introduction to this work, Guido Bonsaver analyzes the confluence of forces that have delayed the systematic investigation of censorship in Italy during the Fascist era. The persistence of a dualistic vision of history—one that pits Fascism against the Resistance—has discouraged the exploration of the vast terrain between complete acquiescence and open dissidence. Bonsaver also notes that, for decades, Italian culture seemed incapable of conducting a dispassionate analysis of the extensive collaboration between its publishing industry and the Fascist regime—a connivance that bordered on the criminal in the persecution of Jewish authors. Matters were further complicated by the fact that, unlike its Nazi counterpart, "fascist censorship was not a monolithic and tightly coordinated machine of repression. It had many faces and it went through different phases" (5). These same reasons make Bonsaver's book a welcome and important addition to the growing body of critical studies on Fascist Italy.

The book is divided into three parts that follow the chronological development of the regime and the parallel changes in its censorial policies and practices. Part I, titled "Mussolini Takes the Helm, 1922-1933," describes the first repressive measures, starting from the decree of July 8, 1924 that gave prefects the authority to suppress periodicals. Two years later, the Single Text on Public Security described in rather vague terms the publications that could be suspended. Article 112 of the Single Text referred to writings "offensive to the national sentiment, to moral sense, and public decency" (20). Such generic phrasing paved the way for negotiations, exceptions, and ad hoc solutions that were often suggested – or imposed – by Il Duce himself. Bonsaver focuses on a particular instance when an incensed Mussolini responded to a book cover by ordering a draconian tightening of the legislation. The book in question is *Sambadù amore negro*, published in 1934 by Mura (pseudonym of Maria Volpi). Although the content of the novel was very much in line with the Fascist notions of Western and white supremacy, its cover focused on a moment of interracial bliss – a black man and a white woman united in a passionate embrace – that Mussolini found most insulting. On April 2, 1934, all prefects received the order to seize copies of the novel, which was

considered "offensive to racial dignity." The next day, Mussolini signed an even more important order requiring all publishers to submit three copies of future publications to the local prefecture for review. The hastily drawn legislation created quite a bit of confusion—particularly because it did not explicitly oblige publishers to wait for government approval before releasing a title—, but sent a clear and chilling signal. It is therefore appropriate that Part II of Bonsaver's book, titled "Censorship Fascist Style, 1934-1939", begins precisely with the "Mura Case," which predates by a few months the institution of the Undersecretariat for the Press and the Propaganda.

Clearly inspired by Joseph Goebbels's Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, the Undersecretariat would become a full-fledged Ministry in 1935 and be renamed Ministry of Popular Culture in 1937. Foremost among its tasks was the compilation of a list of banned books. Building on Giorgio Fabre's *L'elenco: censura fascista, editoria e autori ebrei* (Torino: Zamorani, 1998), Bonsaver explores the ways in which Minister Dino Alfieri worked to cleanse the Italian publishing industry of the presence of Jewish authors. Alfieri's zeal, however, pales in comparison to that of Giuseppe Bottai, the minister of National Education who, after expelling Jews from public schools and cultural institutions, proceeded to eliminate textbooks written by Jewish authors, regardless of their content. The publishing world, Bonsaver shows, complied with these measures with little or no hesitation. "It is a shameful record that has rarely been mentioned and, more surprisingly, studied since the end of the war" (187).

The situation was destined only to worsen with the war, as discussed in the third and final part, titled "A Nation at War. 1940-1943". The new list compiled by the Ministry of Popular Culture listed 893 forbidden authors, a staggering figure if compared to the meagre 602 entries of its Nazi counterpart. The Italian list did not spare authors such as Sigmund Freud and Hermann Hesse, who were not banned in Germany, or a figure once so close to the regime as Margherita Sarfatti.

In addition to examining the legislation and the initiatives of the various government institutions in charge of censorship, the reaction of the publishing industry and individual authors, and the influence of the Catholic church in matters of public morality, Bonsaver stresses the personal role of Mussolini, "Censor Supremo," whose own background as a journalist and writer predisposed him to intervene in the literary field. The fifteen illustrations that accompany the book include reproductions of several documents from the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome bearing Mussolini's comments and the stylized "M" that constituted his signature. Readers interested in the fate of particular authors will appreciate the attention to detail shown by Bonsaver in his case studies.

The image of some of the protagonists of the literary scene during those years is bound to be made more nuanced by the documents Bonsaver has unearthed. Some of the material is almost embarrassing, such as the lines published by a young Vitaliano Brancati in honour of his idol ("egli dice il suo nome: Mussolini, / i fiori aprono le corolle", 83), Alberto Moravia's emphasis on his mother's "pure blood" and his own Catholic education, and Alba de Céspedes's defence of *Nessuno torna indietro* on the basis of its author's status as an "Aryan mother." The

last two examples, in particular, show that humiliation and acquiescence were the price to pay in order to live or simply survive as a writer in Fascist Italy. Thoroughly researched and ably constructed, Bonsaver's book helps to chart the insidious territory where the intentions of the censors met the craft of the writers, and the complex landscape of dissimulation and complicity, connivance and submission that resulted from their encounter.

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Millicent Marcus. *Italian Film in the Shadow of Auschwitz*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Pp. xii, 187. ISBN 978-0-8020-9189-5.

In 2003, Millicent Marcus became Visiting Goggio Professor at the University of Toronto, where she gave the public lectures that form the nucleus of *Italian Film in the Shadow of Auschwitz*. While the word "Auschwitz" has become emblematic of Nazi persecution of Jews and other groups (as indicated by Roberto Salvadori), Marcus stresses that, for Italians, its symbolic significance does not supersede its literal meaning: "Auschwitz was the material destination of eleven of the fifteen transports that led 6806 victims to their death between October 1943 and December 1944". Therefore, the author powerfully concludes, "Auschwitz was not the synecdoche, but the synonym, for annihilation" (3). Italians have been painfully slow to reckon with the aftermath of this tragedy. In spite of its tradition of political commitment, Italian cinema bears its share of responsibility for this historical neglect, which makes the appearance of several films devoted to the Holocaust in the 1990s all the more surprising and noteworthy.

Marcus employs a psychoanalytical approach in her discussion of these representations, while also analyzing historical and political factors to explain their belated emergence on the Italian cinematic scene. Following a Freudian line of enquiry, she sees in the outpouring of films devoted to the Holocaust "a way of undertaking the mourning work necessary to overcome traumatic shock. [...] To achieve the work of Freudian *Trauerarbeit* [...], Italian Holocaust representations must bring its Jewish victims vividly and convincingly back to life in order to tell the story of their destruction and, with them, the destruction of the integrity and wholeness of the Italian *communitas* to which this minority belonged" (17). Marcus cites various historical reasons that made the 1990s a propitious time to start the *Trauerarbeit* (grief-work), including the end of the rigid ideological dichotomy of the Cold War era and the influx of Third-World immigrants, which led Italians to scrutinize their past and present attitudes towards religious and ethnic minorities.

Marcus's painstaking research uncovers several films that had escaped critical attention. However, the obscurity of this corpus (with a few exceptions) means that these films "had no impact on the course of Italian film history [...], created