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

no continuous tradition, no genealogy, no cumulative discourse, no representational traces. In other words, these films did not talk to each other" (29). In the absence of a tradition, these films often have more in common with their cinematic contemporaries than with other works on the same subject.

Marcus devotes the bulk of Part I to reconstructing the chronology of Italian Holocaust films, while developing a more in-depth analysis of individual works in Part II.

Among the few post-war Italian movies dealing with the Holocaust, she lists Goffredo Alessandrini's *L'ebreo errante* (The Wandering Jew, 1947), Duilio Coletti's *Il grido della terra* (The Cry of the Land, 1948), and Mario Segui's *Il monastero di Santa Chiara* (The Monastery of Saint Clare, 1949). In 1960, Gillo Pontecorvo's *Kapò* was the first Italian Holocaust movie to gain widespread popularity, marking the beginning of what Marcus calls "the second wave" (i.e., the years 1960-6). Another internationally renowned film, De Sica's *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* (The Garden of the Finzi-Continis, 1970), marks the beginning of the following decade. During the 1980s, the theme all but disappears from movie theaters but inspires televised mini-series such as Franco Rossi's *Storia d'amore e d'amicizia* (Story of Love and Friendship, 1982). It is during the 1990s, as mentioned above, that the theme figures prominently in films such as Roberto Faenza's *Jona che visse nella balena* (Jonah Who Lived in the Whale, 1993), Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella* (*Life is Beautiful*, 1997) and Francesco Rosi's *La Tregua* (*The Truce*, 1997). This attention is sustained in the present decade, as evidenced by Ettore Scola's *Concorrenza sleale* (Unfair Competition, 2001), Alberto Negrin's *Perlasca, un eroe italiano* (Perlasca: The Courage of a Just Man, 2001) and Ferzan Özpetek's *La finestra di fronte* (Facing Windows, 2004).

I would like to devote a brief aside to a subgenre identified by Marcus as "Holocaust Rescue Narratives." I must confess a certain uneasiness when confronted with stories (such as *Perlasca*, *Senza confini*, *La fuga degli innocenti*) in which persecuted Jews are saved by the benevolent intervention of well-minded Italians. While not underestimating in the least the bravery of those who stood in the way of the final solution, I fear that emphasis on those acts, however heroic, may also work as a convenient smokescreen for Italy's national conscience. The stereotype of the "Italiani brava gente," in other words, and the unquestionable courage of a few brave men and women may be instrumental in postponing all serious debate about the ways Fascist officers and intellectuals paved the way for Auschwitz. Fascism did not last long enough to implement the final solution, and to debate whether or not it would ever have reached such abomination is a moot point. But we know for a fact that when the Nazis arrived in Italy they found a Jewish community that had already been ostracized, impoverished, and blacklisted by the racial laws. As Marcus states, "there is no question that Mussolini's policies laid the foundation for the genocidal program to come" (9). Yet, with the notable exception of Rosetta Loy's *La parola ebreo*, there has been no serious debate about the country's moral responsibility in the Holocaust. As in *Open City*, which shows no link between the past of Fascist consensus and the present of Nazi occupation, Italian representations of the Holocaust often gloss over national attitudes

and policies towards the Jews and cast all the blame on Italy's former ally. A real *Trauerarbeit* can only be achieved once this ghost is confronted.

As a faithful reader of Marcus's books and articles through the years, I found in *Italian Films in the Shadow of Auschwitz* the same features that have made her work crucial in our understanding of Italian cinema. She is, as always, both informative and insightful, sensitive to the specificity of the medium yet bold in tracing its connections to larger historical issues. I often indicate her elegant, engaging and exacting prose as a model for students in my classes on cinema. In this particular book, it is unfortunate that the editing is not as accurate as it should be in a work of this caliber. Mistakes begin even before the title page, with the name of the series editor changed from Olga Zorzi Pugliese into "Olga Zori Pugliese," and continue with several misspellings of Italian words ("crisitiani" [20], "pasticcere" [151]) that do not spare even the Risiera di San Sabba (which becomes "Risiera di San Saba" on page 72).

Editing flaws aside, *Italian Cinema in the Shadow of Auschwitz* traces a useful chronology of the development of the Holocaust theme, while providing insightful analysis of individual works. As if its merits alone were not sufficient to earn it a place on the bookshelf of any person interested in Italian cinema, the volume also includes a short film by Ettore Scola, titled '43-'97. That one of the most famous Italian directors should agree to have his work included in this volume is a telling tribute to Marcus's international stature. For the reader, this brief masterpiece is an unexpected gift. The ten-minute DVD begins on October 16, 1943, with a little boy rushing into a movie theater to escape the Nazi soldier who is chasing him. As the boy sits in the darkness, the propaganda clip featuring Hitler on the screen gives way first to his parody by Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator*, then to a series of Italian movies, from *Roma città aperta* to *Palombella Rossa* and *La tregua*. When the lights go on, the child has become an old man, and another boy comes rushing into the theater, as if fleeing an invisible enemy. The young fugitive finds refuge in a chair behind the old man, who turns around and sees a black boy, as frightened as he was on that fatal day in 1943. The man gives the boy a reassuring, understanding look before turning back to face the screen, waiting for the show to resume. Scola links past and present, ideally uniting the outcasts of yesterday and those of today, while celebrating the role of Italian cinema in tracing the path of national consciousness. It is a moving tribute, appropriately cast as a companion to this beautiful book.

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