audience. Jones details how these translations (numbering 26) were motivated by fear of denigrating dialect literature in Italy caused by political and linguistic unification as well as the aim of making the *Comedy* more widely accessible. She identifies Carlo Porta's activities at the beginning of the century with his Milanese version (c.1805) as part of a humorous modernization of the *Comedy* (Porta translated only small portions of the *Inferno*). Into the "frammenti" that he did translate, Porta inserted additional elements which Jones characterizes as increasing unfaithfulness to Dante culminating in a "rewriting as well as translating" those fragments (188). Jones concludes that Porta's translation of the *Inferno* is "filtered through quotations from, allusions to and echoes of that *linea lombarda* ... with Balestrieri as his immediate model" and with Carlo Maggi in the background (198).

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Dante, Cinema and Television, ed. Amilcare A. Iannucci. Toronto Buffalo London: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp. 270. ISBN 0-8020-8601-2. \$55 (Cloth).

Amilcare Iannucci has recruited a select pool of scholars from North America and Italy to provide a new and stimulating look at the presence of Dante in cinema and television. In an engaging "Introduction" Iannucci assesses "Dante's cultural predominance" (ix) in cinema and television, particularly for the *Commedia*, due to the peculiarly visual nature of the text. Iannucci notes that Dante's sway in cinema has been continuous from its inception and is still detectable even in today's Hollywood movies.

Iannucci's essay is a survey of Hollywood's debt to Dante. He finds a widespread and continuing presence, dating back to the silent cinema era when such films as New York Vitagraph Company's *Francesca da Rimini* (1907), Henry Otto's *Dante's Inferno* (1924) and D. H. Griffith's *Drums of Love* dominated Hollywood East. In the sound era the appropriation of Dante is more allusive, ranging from the Faustian storyline with Dantean infernal echoes in Deterle's *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941), to contemporary appropriations in films since the 1970s. Dantean ideas and images are found in the work of such directors as Scorsese (*Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*), Coppola (*Apocalypse Now*), Burton (*Batman*), and Lynch (*Blue Velvet*). Dante is used for structure and plot advancement—in Hackford's *The Devil's Advocate*—or to lend a particular mood—in Fincher's *Seven*—or for comedic effects, in Woody Allen's *Deconstructing Harry*. This continuing influence of Dante in Hollywood cinema, defined as "appropriation by metonymy" (Ibid.), leads to a process that brings Dante to the status of a Hollywood star (18).

Particular documentary and philological value is in the essays of John Welle and Vittoria Colonnese Benni, which scour Italian early film culture and provide new and valuable information about two pieces of Italian early cinema: Milano Films' *Dante's Inferno* (1911) and the Dante Trilogy by Helios-Psiche Films. Welle

reveals the importance of such early cinematic exploits in the establishment of a respectable reputation for the new art and of the parameters of Italian film culture at a time when cinema was distancing itself from entertainment to become associated with intellectuals working towards cultural unification; hence the choice of Dante's *Comedy* as the basis for Milano Films' first true colossal, a film that launched the boom of silent cinema. Colonesi Benni attempts to fill a gap in the still obscure history of early Italian silent cinema production: the trilogy on Dante's *Commedia* by Helios-Psiche (c. 1912): *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* (now lost) and *Paradiso* (partly lost). Colonesi Benni, who provides information on the film content and structure, demonstrates that this trilogy was monumental in terms of length, structure, and audience reception, and claims that it marked a pivotal point in early Italian cinema.

Marguerite Waller's and Gabrielle Lesperance's essay shows the impact of Dante's text on post-war Italian film. Waller examines films by Rossellini, Fellini, Wertmueller, Cavani, and Nichetti and finds intertextual connections with Dante's *Commedia*. For Waller post-war film poetics focus on "decentering patriarchal masculinities" (89), as in Rossellini's rethinking of identity in *Roma, città aperta* or in the decentering of masculinities in *La dolce vita* and *Mimi metallurgico*, or in the performativity of identity in *Portiere di notte*. Finally, for Waller in *Volere volare* Nichetti shows, through the poetics of the *Paradiso*, that "the meaning of male sexuality is just as constructed and metaphorical as other significations" (91). Lesperance finds connections with Dante's *Commedia* in Pasolini's last film *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (1975) and pinpoints the moral relativism of Pasolini's "imperfect" *Inferno* (98), which contrasts with the perfection and ideological symmetry of the *Divine Comedy*.

Patrick Rumble and Guido Fink further explore Pasolini's and Fellini's work as it relates to Dante. Rumble sees Dante's *Divine Comedy* as a "structuring and informing model" (153) in Pasolini's corpus, particularly in the films, most notably *Salò*, which Rumble defines as "Dantesque Allegory" (158) depicting as it does both Italian Fascism and modern consumer society. Fink examines the influence of Dante in Fellini's work and finds some recurring Dantean themes, such as the metaphor of the pilgrimage, the interest in and criticism of the Catholic religion, and the penchant for circular structuring. Unlike Dante's pilgrim, who is moving forward toward Paradise, Fellini's characters only follow a circular path that leads them back to the starting point.

In Antonioni's *Red Desert* Victoria Kirkham sees the city of Ravenna, the resting place of Dante, and its periphery depicted as a desert, "a barren present of panglobal modernity" (112) that reflects the depressive state of the female protagonist, whose access to the Earthly Paradise is possible only as a temporary escape in her imagination. Ravenna's Medieval past of Dantean memory has been replaced by the Hell of industrial modernity. Bart Testa takes Antonioni's *Red Desert* to be a *Purgatorio*, reflected in the female protagonist's purgatorial, atemporal suspension, which is the condition of modernity. Testa claims that Antonioni's *Red Desert*, Brakhage's *Dante's Quartet*, and Elder's *The Book of All the Dead*, rather than attempting to reconstruct the Dantean text in modern terms, "make the abyssal

[sic] chasm between us and Dante, between his poem and their films, the issue" (190). While American Stan Brakhage aims at "imaging the *Commedia* paradoxically" (Ibid.) and produces a short but dense eight-minute vision that compresses the hell, heaven and purgatory within us, in a technique analogous to the mode of expressionist painters, Canadian Bruce Elder crafts an extensive forty-hour-long cycle on Dante's *Comedy* that reveals the filmmaker's postmodern penchant for complexity and allusion. In Testa's words the film, while "searching for totalism (...) a myth of completion that might be equivalent to Dante's totality" (203), is doomed to failure, since Elder shows his awareness of the modern destitution of an artist who sees the great divide separating him from Dante.

Dante in Canadian cinema is further investigated by John Tulk, who finds a strong presence throughout the history of Canadian cinema. Canadian filmmakers find Dante's main attraction in the idea of the vision, a *topos* found both in David H. Hartford's *Back to God's Country* (1919), a poetic vision of good and evil, where Hell is located in the wintry wilderness of the Canadian North, and Bruce Elder's *Illuminated Texts* (1986)—one segment in the cycle *The Book of All the Dead*—an experimental film about the *Inferno* that "charts the movement from paradise to apocalypse (...) from plenitude to fragmentation" (181).

Dennis Looney finds that "Dante had acquired moral currency in African-American culture" (138) as a symbol of freedom among abolitionists. Looney provides a unique look into the connection between Dante, African-American culture and cinema. After establishing four degrees of cultural appropriation (the coloured Dante, the Negro Dante, the Black Dante, and the African-American Dante), he examines Spencer Williams's *Go Down Death* (1944) an "All-Negro Production" where Dante's allegory of good and evil is used to illuminate the daily existence of the Negro segregated world in early twentieth-century America. Looney shows that, despite financial limitations, Williams includes actual citations from Milano Films' *L'inferno* and makes an intelligent use of Dante's *Inferno*, thereby showing that "the revelation of Dante's cosmology (...) transcends issues of race" (141).

The successful presence of Dante in television is attested in Andrew Taylor's survey of the British production *A TV Dante* (1990) and Rino Caputo's overview of the "performance" of Dante's *Comedy* on Italian radio and television. *A TV Dante* by avant-garde director Peter Greenaway attempts to convey Dante's plurilinguism in the language of television. Taylor finds an unprecedented complexity for a TV adaptation, which "presumes too much from a mass audience" (147). For Taylor this TV series is a sort of *volgarizzamento* both as a Medieval tradition of translating Dante's *Commedia* into another medium, and as a true vulgarization that encourages viewer's passivity. Caputo charts the uninterrupted success of performances of Dante's *Commedia* on Italian national radio and television in the past ten years and finds that such an extended presence in the media has turned Dante into a national icon. From Petrocchi's academic *lectura Dantis*, to Gassman's technique of declamation in a challenge to link theatre and television, to Sermonetti's execution of the Dantean text as an "oral act of reading" (218) that allows the text to "resonate freely, uninhibited by immediate critical reflection" (218), Caputo finds that, thanks to such adaptations of the *Commedia*, Italy is see-

ing a resurgence of the Dante-cult.

This well researched and documented collection with a special emphasis on Canadian content fully achieves the goal of showing Dante's influence on the visual media of cinema and television, thereby demonstrating that, despite the chronological gap between Medieval Dante and the visually and technologically inclined audiences of the modern days, the cult of Dante and Dantemania continue to grow and will likely thrive in the virtual media as well.

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Louise, Bourdua. *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press in association with The British School at Rome, 2004. xiv, 242pp.; 74 b/w illustrations. ISBN: 0-521-82158-4. \$75 US.

In this well-researched book, Louise Bourdua examines the complex and multi-faceted ways in which Franciscan friars interacted with artists and with lay patrons or benefactors in the artistic embellishment of their churches during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

St. Francis of Assisi himself espoused and embodied the ideals of poverty and simplicity, so it is not surprising that the Constitutions of the Franciscans forbade the handling of money by friars. Very quickly, however, strong tensions developed between these ideals and the need for large churches for preaching and the celebration of mass, not to mention the commissioning of rich and expensive works of painting and sculpture to decorate them and to educate the faithful. One of Bourdua's main interests is the ways in which the Franciscans managed to circumvent the strictures against actually handling money and how they became involved to varying degrees in the management of decorative cycles in their churches.

The book's introduction includes a useful outline of the literature on Franciscan patronage and the developments in Franciscan iconography from about 1250 to 1400. An important area of inquiry over the past thirty years has been the extent to which the Franciscans deliberately used wall paintings as propaganda for the Order. Bourdua reviews in some detail the argument made by Dieter Blume (*Waldmalerei als Ordenspropaganda*, 1983) that the frescoes in the Order's mother church, San Francesco at Assisi, became the dominant models for all other Franciscan churches, and that the mother church actually controlled the painted decoration of other churches so as to provide a consistent image of St. Francis and of the Order itself. The second major aspect of Bourdua's book is a critique of Blume's proposal by testing his findings against the churches whose decoration forms the core of her study. These are three important churches in the Veneto: San Fermo Maggiore in Verona, San Lorenzo in Vicenza, and the basilica of Sant'Antonio (the Santo) in Padua. The churches are chosen in part because of the wealth of surviving archival documentation and in part because focusing on