

explains, Mignosi's main points on art and literature would become clearer in his later works (p. 125). An annotated edition would have made this essay more accessible.

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doi:10.1017/mit.2019.13

Catholicism and Cinema: Modernization and Modernity, by GIANLUCA DELLA MAGGIORE and TOMASO SUBINI, Sesto San Giovanni, Mimesis, 2018, 244pp., €20.00 (paperback), ISBN 9788869770760

Over the years, a segment of the accumulated literature on the relationship between Church and cinema in Italy has sometimes fallen into the temptation to view the Church simply as the great censor and the representative of a policy of control, an institution with the foresight to grasp and exploit the opportunities offered by the seventh art before everyone else. But Gianluca della Maggiore and Tomaso Subini's book designates itself as different right from the subtitle.

That 'and' between 'modernization' and 'modernity' manifests an intention which the analyses and insights that unfold over 200-plus pages do not betray: the intention to spotlight the ambivalence of the Church's position, permanently divided between the desire to benefit from what technical and scientific progress offers for evangelisation, and the fear that the changes brought about by modern advances might harm the Church and undermine its role in society. The authors re-examine and rework the previous readings, describing this dialectic as 'the dynamic processes through which Catholicism has interacted with modernity, creating parallels between the evolution of the Catholic movement and that of contemporary mass movements' (p. 9). Within this tension, a series of events and processes emerge on various levels: the confessional and moral beside the economic, political and aesthetic. The book describes the relationship between Church and cinema in Italy as multifaceted – a relationship that takes different forms over time, finding a balance sometimes when the most conservative impulses are in the ascendant, sometimes when an openness to modernisation, progress, and the winds of social and cultural change predominate.

The volume has two sections: 'Catholic reconquests, totalitarian projects, global perspectives' and 'Sexual and devotional excitement'. Section one covers the first few decades of the twentieth century, taking the analysis up to the threshold of the Second World War; the second section deals with the next 30 years, focusing especially on the key figures and events in the Church's cultural policy on cinema in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s. The two periods reflect different perspectives. In the early twentieth century, the Church's approach to cinema typically involved observing and discussing developments abroad, where cinema had become a more significant proposition, necessitating an urgent risk-benefit appraisal. The analyses in the first part of the book tend, therefore, to look beyond national borders, illuminating the complex web of links that developed between the Vatican and the USA in the 1920s and 1930s. By contrast, in the postwar decades, the Church's teaching with regard to cinema was built almost entirely on what was happening in Italy, sometimes in narrow discussions between conflicting protagonists and movements within the Catholic world. The second part of *Catholicism and Cinema*, then, takes a decidedly local perspective, concentrating on the relationships and interplay between the Church's cultural policy and the national context in Italy.

In both cases, the process by which the documents on the Church's teaching about cinema was developed is pieced together 'from within', based on in-depth knowledge of the Catholic world, its

hierarchies, orders, movements and main figures. But this internal perspective is not reverential. It offers a valuable and far from predictable contextualisation of the analyses that follow in later chapters, uncovering the assortment of factors defining the relationship between cinema and the Church: faith, morality, pastoral needs, national interest, and individual figures and their idiosyncrasies. A quotation towards the end of the first section is brilliantly revealing: Monsignor Cigognani, papal legate to Washington and a prime mover of the anti-Hollywood crusade in the 1930s, says that he cannot ‘personally’ vouch for the effectiveness of the Hays Code – the moral guidelines for US film producers established in 1930 – as he has never set foot in a cinema!

The authors’ masterly touch in navigating the Church’s intricate apparatus, and their ability to relate this story to the wider national and international context, enables the reader to cut through apparently impenetrable complexity to see the rationale linking events, statements and decisions that might otherwise seem fragmented or even inconsistent. The chapter on religious movies is especially interesting. It probes the relationship between making films about St Francis and his order’s growing size and importance around the world.

In line with and responding to many excellent earlier works, *Catholicism and Cinema* is a key addition to the history of the dealings between Catholics and cinema. It underlines the theme’s importance in film studies and, more broadly, in the history of contemporary Italian culture and society.

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doi:10.1017/mit.2019.19

Orizzonti nuovi. Storia del primo femminismo in Italia (1865-1925), by LIVIANA GAZZETTA, Rome, Viella, 2018, 258pp., €28.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-6728-977-6

This volume is part of the series ‘Storia delle donne e di genere’ published by Viella in collaboration with the ‘Società italiana delle storiche’. It is a reconstruction of the early Italian women’s movement, from its inception during the Risorgimento period, through its development within Liberal Italy and the First World War, up to the establishment of Fascism. Noting the backdrop of the broader history of the country, the book highlights the peculiarities of the Italian movement in the context of the contemporary diffusion of international women’s organisations and feminist ideas. From this point of view, Liviana Gazzetta’s work fills a historiographical gap, even if Italian historiography – starting from the first studies by Franca Pieroni Bortolotti in the 1960s – has produced much research and many original interpretations on this topic. A noteworthy one is the category of ‘practical feminism’ (*femminismo pratico*), identified by Annarita Buttafuoco over 30 years ago and widely investigated by other scholars. However, until recently, there has not been an exhaustive study of the theme. Gazzetta provides this analysis, outlining the different phases of a quite diverse movement and tracing its path with respect to civil and political rights, in a country characterised by a deeply hierarchical Civil Code and by gender cultures anchored to a clear division of roles.

The birth of the movement is identified with women’s participation in the process of Italian unification, and the intersection between national and female emancipation, supported by a significant group of women belonging to Mazzini’s democratic milieu – primarily Annamaria Mozzoni. According to the author, this primacy of the nation at the origin of the women’s movement led to its nationalistic overtones in the following century. However, from its very first pages, this book