

Streets, and Saints represents a baton waiting to be passed and a digital epilogue waiting to be created.

DOMENICA SANTOMAGGIO DIRAVIAM

Broward College

[ddiravia@broward.edu]

Federica Capoferri et al. *Badlands. Il cinema dell'ultima Roma*. Ledizioni, 2022.

As Federica Capoferri notes in her stimulating introduction to this valuable volume on cinema in Rome in recent years, it is almost obligatory to begin any new book about contemporary Rome by noting the impressive quantity of new books about contemporary Rome. Similarly substantial is the list of new books about Italian cinema, yet relatively little has been written on the significance of the burgeoning of films set in and about Rome over the past decade. This book therefore locates itself unapologetically at the fertile intersection of these two streams, exploring through the lens of the cinematic imagination a changed and changing city, and complicating the relationship between center and periphery that has characterized much of the writing about Rome on screen from the postwar period onward. The book engages deeply and productively with the ever-expanding interdisciplinary bibliography on Rome, and with the history of the city's multifaceted relationship with film, in order to analyze in detail how Rome's landscapes and their complex cultural memory have shaped the contemporary cinematic representation of the city.

Capoferri's introduction explains that the "ultima Roma" of the title deliberately plays with the double meaning of the word *ultimo* as both latest and last to refer both to the Rome closest to us in time and to an idea of Rome as (perpetually) nearing its end: "eternamente terminale," as Filippo La Porta has it (qtd p. 8). At the same time, she shows how Rome's multiplicity of identities, cultures and landscapes allows it to offer "vaste possibilità di offrirsi come laboratorio di soluzioni orientate al futuro" (9).

Examining the ongoing impacts of models and archetypes both ancient and modern, the book focuses on contemporary cinematic Rome as a city whose epithet of "Eternal" seems increasingly shaky, whose borders are increasingly porous and ill-defined, and which can no longer be understood through the simple dichotomy between center and periphery. Taking as its starting point Rome's renewed centrality over the past decade as a location and subject for films, it explores how cinema embodies a variety of experiences of the city and creates opportunities to revise viewers' perceptions of it. A central argument of the book is that the

intrinsically intermedial nature of cinema makes it an ideal medium to engage anew with the city's contemporary realities. Reflecting a metropolis made up of a multiplicity of cities both visible and invisible, it examines how contemporary cinema shows us a kind of kaleidoscope of material, virtual, ancient, and modern landscapes of Rome.

Organized in six chapters (two by each of the three authors, plus Capoferri's introduction), the book is enjoyably varied in the approaches, writing styles and voices of each of its authors. It can therefore be read in multiple directions, following the intersections of the three author's themes and interests, as well as from start to finish. At the same time, their chapters are united by their collective commitment to examining the complex relationship between the multiplicity of real and imagined Romes that cohabit within this endlessly fascinating city.

Flaminio Di Biagi's first chapter, "Il secolo del cinema a Roma," underscores Rome's indisputable place as the cinematic capital of Italy and cinematic Rome as the version of the city most widely known around the world after ancient Rome and the pontifical Rome of the Renaissance and Baroque. His lively and discursive account of the first hundred years of cinema in Rome provides a useful overview of the city's central role as backdrop, protagonist, and industry headquarters of cinema in Italy, providing a counterpoint to the rest of the book's primary focus on the contemporary.

The fascinating and erudite second chapter, "Usque ad sidera, usque ad inferos" by Capoferri, examines the ongoing role of the historically produced fabric of narratives, images and commentaries that makes up the "macchina mitologica" that has informed representations and narratives of the city since the myth of Romulus and Remos, and that continues to shape the relationships between contemporary Roman landscapes and cinema.

Chapter 3, "Roma tra terra e Cielo" offers an alternative take on the spaces to be found at the capital's margins, analyzing the intermedial mingling of media, models, myths and clichés through an analysis of films ranging from *Zora la vampira* (Manetti Bros. 2000), to Susanna Nichiarelli's wonderful space race coming of age story *Cosmonauta* (2009), to *Lo chiamavano jeeg Robot* (Gabriele Mainetti 2015), as well as a discussion of the deeply cinematically informed work of animated series author *Zerocalcare* (Michele Rech) and its depiction of the periphery of Rebibbia.

The fourth chapter, "Schermi e scherni vaticani" explores the representation of the Vatican in cinema beyond the Italian context. It shows how its power as an imaginary location, both because of its crucial political, social and religious role and because of the practical impossibility of on-location shooting, is only increased by its symbolic force.

Chapters five and six are by Capoferri and Carolina Ciampaglia respectively and focus on the tragic and the comic. They explore the cinematic histories, bodies,

and places that find themselves in direct dialogue with the contemporary reality of the Roman periphery. Engaging with the legacy of Pier Paolo Pasolini's representations of the *borgate*, these chapters take two different approaches to showing how contemporary images of these radically changed landscapes reveal a view of the periphery that contrasts with that of Pasolini and shows how its narratives have become central to contemporary cinematic representations of the city.

Given the rich range of topics and fields covered and the many fascinating intersections of the book's six chapters, a short concluding chapter might have offered the opportunity to draw these threads back together once more. Nevertheless, the rich critical apparatus provided at the end offers a number of valuable tools for students and scholars, including descriptions of locations; a list of the main film prizes awarded in Italy; a detailed summary of key data on each of the films analyzed in the book; a series of color images from them; and a detailed index of names, titles, and places.

Addressing Rome's contemporary issues and reinterpreting its ancient myths in the context of the Italian capital's present-day landscapes and their relationship to contemporary cinema, this book is an invaluable addition to the literature on the city and its cinema.

SARAH PATRICIA HILL
Victoria University of Wellington
[sally.hill@vuw.ac.nz]

József Nagy. *Dante e Vico: Teologia politica di Dante. Capitoli della ricezione dantesca*. Aracne, 2021.

In his introduction to *Dante e Vico*, József Nagy underlines the interdisciplinary spirit in which his work is written: “la letteratura e la filosofia sono inseparabili e quasi in senso deterministico e permanentemente esercitano tra di loro un’influenza mutua” (15). This statement serves as a guidepost to the crucial project that the author has undertaken in this volume. His aim is to explore whether the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be given special status in Dantean critical reception, and if so, why (17). This enormous undertaking involves examining some of the fundamental political ideas espoused by Giambattista Vico and how these were influenced by Dante's own political vision (the latter drawn essentially from the *Monarchia*, the *Convivio*, and some relevant cantos of the *Commedia*). Throughout his work, Nagy summarizes the positions of many of the most authoritative voices on Dante over the course of several centuries, focusing on the eighteenth-century