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Masters of Two Arts: Re-creation of European Literatures in
Italian Cinema (review)

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is because cinema deals in the montage of faciality. The face is perhaps the primary affective form of human association. The cinematic machine, as Lev Kuleshov's famous experiment showed, operates by montage or juxtapositions: a face can appear happy or sad depending on what image is literally associated to it. In other words, cinematic technologies create new possibilities of association, real, imaginary but always affective. This is not always a good thing – here O'Connor's 'repressive' side returns.

The key question here is one of evaluating the mediated associations that ever more have come to define social interactions – aside, to be sure, from the recognition that they have (a line of argument that alone makes O'Connor's stand out). In other words, of the difference between what Simmel termed 'socialities' and 'sociabilities.' For Simmel, socialities comprise the cultural manners of association in polite society. Sociabilities transcend sociality by rising above everyday interest. O'Connor takes this distinction but alters it so that sociability becomes an undercurrent of social life that from time to time unsettles everyday association. Sociality now is a secondary (social) formation that transforms sociable associations for purposes of control. Here, the cinematic apparatus plays a pivotal role; in O'Connor's take, the dual (and I would add, contradictory) forms of the 'duel' versus 'opinion.'

However much O'Connor may be drawn to the repressive side, he's also not unaware of the other possibilities opened up. Namely, that if there are secondary forms of association, there can be tertiary forms or more – what he calls 'secret associations,' or what Peirce called 'interpretants.' That is, the system of mediated communication and association, however much it has system-components, is also always symbolic. They can rupture and unsettle and disrupt endlessly, always short-circuiting the system-level imposition of controls – gossip, rumour, stories – in a word, social life.

O'Connor uses to great effect a remark of Brian Massumi's that the problem, once we have lost all the grand narratives, is that what remains is affect, but that we have no language for this. There is always psychoanalysis, but that's another affair. For precisely his orienting readers to understand such a language, Daniel O'Connor's *Mediated Associations* has made an enormous contribution. (MICHAEL DORLAND)

Carlo Testa. *Masters of Two Arts:
Re-creation of European Literatures in Italian Cinema*
University of Toronto Press 2002. x, 366. \$68.00

'A genre lives in the present, but always *remembers* its past, its beginning. Genre is a representative of creative memory in the process of literary development.'

Mikhail Bakhtin's remarks on the creative ability that genre has to remember its past even though progressing towards new and unforeseen

territories (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 1984) become pertinent as one evaluates the complex and yet close relationship cinema has always entertained with literature. Indeed, in its early days the film industry considered literature as a grand reservoir from which one could freely draw material for the transcodification of the old literary memory and the production of a new audio-visual memory, a memory that could constitute the fertile terrain for the formation of a largely shared, and thus popular, cultural discourse. In such a process, most canonized literary genres transferred into film genres, but overall cinema freely treated literature as a large isomorphic text from which to draw themes, motifs, and narrative structures.

From the outset, the Italian film industry found in its national literature an equally fertile ground for the transcodification of genres and the transfer of a cultural discourse at times fairly limited in its ability to reach the Italian people, into a medium that would certainly enlarge its audience and soon became the means for production and transmission of a largely shared cultural discourse. Furthermore, cinema also offered Italians the ability to move outside their own borders, and thus acquire international cultural visibility. This doubly coded function of the relationship between literature and cinema – to popularize one's own national culture and acquire international cultural hegemony, or at least, visibility – accompanies the development of the Italian film industry from its outset to the present. Yet, it is unquestionable that, more often than not, a national discourse comes to be shaped in close dialogue with other traditions as well. Notably, Italian literary, cinematic, and largely cultural discourse grew in a close exchange with a number of other European cultures, perhaps most importantly French, German, and Russian. This is the fertile terrain within which Carlo Testa's investigation unfolds in his volume *Masters of Two Arts: Re-creation of European Literatures in Italian Cinema*. In discussing various cases of cinematic adaptation of major works of European literatures, Testa covers a subject left almost untouched by English scholarship in a book-length study that certainly constitutes a far-reaching contribution to Italian, European, and cinema studies, primarily owing to the author's outstanding knowledge of the literary texts he discusses and of European literatures in general. *Masters of Two Arts* is a persuasive and thorough close reading of cinematic adaptations, or rather, 're-creations' of the works of European authors such as Goethe, Tolstoy, Kafka, Stendhal, and Mann, who have greatly influenced generations of Italians, and left a lasting mark in the history of Italian cultural tradition. Interestingly, Testa also deals with less influential authors, such as Sade and Pasternak, who offer intriguing cases of transcodification, in Pier Paolo Pasolini's disquieting last film venture *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (1975) and Nanni Moretti's closure to a significant segment of his personal and professional autobiography with *Palombella rossa* (1989).

The volume opens with an essential introductory chapter in which Testa clarifies a number of cogent matters, and perhaps most importantly the choice of the literatures considered – French, German, and Russian. While recognizing other influences – American being the most obviously absent – Testa explains that the choice of the three literatures in question was largely due to a personal and biographical connection, since, prior to the writing of *Masters of Two Arts*, the author worked for a long time on the modern literary productions of France, Russia, and Germany. Testa then provides a useful and engaging explanation of the reasons that led him to privilege ‘re-creation’ over ‘adaptation.’ Here, the author offers a fairly convincing argument in favour of a term that is certainly much less constrictive than the traditionally accepted ‘adaptation.’ Indeed, the latter always introduces a fairly dangerous notion in the practice of transcodification, that is, the concept of fidelity, and somehow obliterates the many and intricate ways in which a text or an author can become an inspiration for the creation of a thoroughly different text or the development of an utterly diverse authorial discourse.

Following the introduction, the text is organized in four parts that present the reader with diversified cases of cinematic ‘re-creation’ of literary texts – namely epigraphic, coextensive, mediated, and hypertextual recreations – with films such as Francesca Archibugi’s *Mignon è partita* (1988), Federico Fellini’s *Intervista* (1987), the Taviani Brothers’ *The Night Sun* (1990), and Luchino Visconti’s *Death in Venice* (1971). *Masters of Two Arts* then closes with a critical apparatus that constitutes almost half of the entire volume; indeed 159 pages of the total 366 are devoted to thorough annotations to the text, extensive bibliography, and an extremely accurate index.

While some reservations may be expressed about the choice of literatures and texts – both literary and cinematic – Carlo Testa’s *Masters of Two Arts* certainly provides an important contribution to the field of Italian and European studies, and a discussion that will stir a much-needed critical debate on the long and intertwined relationship between literature and cinema in an Italian context. (MANUELA GIERI)

Jyotika Viridi. *The Cinematic ImagiNation: Indian Popular Films as Social History*
Rutgers University Press. 259. US \$22.00

The Cinematic ImagiNation is a significant work that joins several other studies in addressing the lacuna of critical writing surrounding Indian popular cinema, both within cinema studies and by those who study Indian social and political history. As reflected in the book’s title, Jyotika Viridi’s project involves change in post-independence Hindi films, specifically how the focus within popular cinema ‘shifts to emphasize or