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Co-conveners of conference:

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ELOQUENT SILENCE: Puppetry, Childhood, and the Sacred Screen

My presentation is more of a series of questions and images than a set of answers. Using traditional puppetry as a focus, I address the following kinds of questions:

Are there ways we can express the sacred on screen, outside of images of “the Passion and the fury”? In particular, I draw on S. Brent Plate’s description of religion as “imagistic, participatory, performative, and world-creating” (*Representing Religion in World Cinema*).

How has a child’s sense of the sacred been expressed on screen? Is it not, perhaps, expressed through a sense of “pretend play,” with its own paradoxical combination of awe and absurdity—its own realms of problem solving, coping strategies, and new creations?

It seems to me that the images of puppetry (and the puppet-like) on screen can be divided into three (somewhat overlapping) areas: images of entrapment, images of exploration, and images of enchantment.

Puppets can be identified by their roletypes, their material (paper, leather, cloth, etc.), and their means of articulation (glove [hand puppets], rod [as in *bunraku*], string [marionettes], “shadow”). Their purposes have been multiple: as entertainment, as education (including the spreading of public service announcements), as part of shamanic curing ceremonies, political activism (e.g. the Bread and Puppet Theatre), avant-garde performance, transmission of legends and religious doctrine, etc.

When we gaze at puppets a kind of double-vision is involved, in that the puppets imitate life but are not a complete set of signs of life. Why is it, then, that some cultures (the Japanese and Javanese, among others) have tended to view their puppets as windows onto the sacred, or at least the “ideal,” while others (the Italians and British, among others) have tended to stress their realistic/heroic/comedic aspects? Why is there the gulf between a “mere” puppet (as in a “puppet government”) and an object viewed with reverence as situated “in the slender margin between the real and the unreal” (Chikamatsu)?

What do puppets on screen have to teach us about the representation of marginalized groups? How do they tie into our definitions of childhood (both as a chronological stage and as a mental construct)?

The sense of enchantment that a skillful presentation of puppetry can inspire resembles the idea that the early cinema was a site of enchantment and a new way of viewing the world. As Rachel Moore writes in *Savage Theory*, the early cinema’s tie to magic was an intrinsic one.

A related topic (that I probably won’t have time to explore now) is: what is the relationship of the puppet to the cyborg and the robot? To earlier forms of automata and to more recent forms of CGI (computer-related images)? As playwright, performer, and director Steve Tillis has proposed, there may be a new way of categorizing puppets: as tangible, as virtual, and as stop-action.

For images of puppetry, the puppet-like, and childhood on screen I turn to the following films:

Shinoda Masahiro, *Double Suicide (Shinju ten no Amijima)*, 1969)
Mizoguchi Kenji, *Ugetsu* (1953), *Naniwa ereji (Osaka Elegy)*, 1936)
Ozu Yasujirō, *Ohayō (Good Morning)*, 1959)
Kurusaki Midori *Love Suicide at Sonezaki (Sonezaki shinjū)*, 1981)

Vittorio De Sica, *The Children are Watching (I bambini ci guardano)*, 1944)
Roberto Rosellini, *Paisan (Paisà)*, 1946), *Shoeshine(Sciuscià)*, 1946)
Roberto Begnini, *Life is Beautiful (La vita è bella)*, 1997)and *Pinocchio* (2002)

Marx Brothers/Norman Z. McLeod, *Monkey Business* (U.S., 1931)
Jean Vigo, *Zéro de conduite* (France, 1933)
Peter Weir, *Year of Living Dangerously* (Australia, 1982)
Zhang Yimou, *To Live (Houzhe)*, PRC, 1994)
Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander (Fanny och Alexander)*, Sweden, 1982)

Francois Truffaut, *Les mistons (The Mischief Makers)*, France, 1957)
V́ctor Erice, *Spirit of the Beehive (El esṕritu de la colmena)*, Spain, 1973)
Robert Mulligan [Harper Lee, Horton Foote], *To Kill a Mockingbird* (U.S., 1962)

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“Il realismo e il realistico”

Da un lato il cinema produce un realismo “ontologico,” alla Bazin, basato sul fatto che l'immagine fotografica è una traccia del mondo; dall'altro dà delle rappresentazioni realistiche basate su una vera e propria retorica. Ontologia e retorica si scontrano, specie nel neorealismo italiano, che alterna la restituzione del reale alla sua ricostruzione. La relazione in particolare cercherà di dare qualche elemento in più sulla retorica del neorealismo.

On the one hand, cinema produces an “ontological” realism à la Bazin, based on the fact that the photographic image is a trace of the world. On the other hand, cinema offers realistic representations based on an actual rhetoric. Ontology and rhetoric clash,

especially in Italian Neorealism, which alternates between the restitution of the real and its reconstruction. My talk will seek in particular to propose some further elements concerning neorealist rhetoric.

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Relational Identity and Self-Invention: Old Age's Victories in *Umberto D.* and *Ikiru*

De Sica's and Kurosawa's films both focus intensely on the existences of old men, and on their struggles, as they near the end of life, to find identities that would allow them to ascribe meaning to their lives. In my paper I apply concepts regarding "relational identity", developed by feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero (in her 1997 book, *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti: Filosofia della narrazione*; translated in 2000 as *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*), in order to analyze the ways in which *Umberto D.* and *Watanabe* interact with others, and are seen and narrated by those others, as well as the ways in which they engage in autonomous self-fashioning that exceeds the limits of relational selfhood and relies instead on autonomous action motivated by imagination, fantasy, and will. I make use of Cavarero's distinction between "whatness" (traditional philosophy's categorical approach to defining "Man," and "whoness" (Cavarero's and others' category for defining unique, irreplaceable and gendered individuals, a category tied to the particular contingencies of each existence), while I also perform a critique of some aspects of her theory of relational identity. My readings of the two films are more textual than contextual; that is, I remain close to thematic and stylistic details rather than to broader cultural, social, or political issues pertaining to old age. I do, however, seek to point out some salient differences between the Italian director's and the Japanese director's visions that may find their origin in their cultural inheritances, differences which I organize around their so-called "humanism," and what in both cases that term might mean. I also consider briefly the issue of cinema's "philosophical" and "essayistic" potential, and ask if primarily visual means of expressing fundamental views on "big ideas" (the meaning of life; the construction of self; the role of imagination in human existence) might be more powerfully and directly transformative for those who see them expressed, than the traditionally verbal means of philosophical and literary discourse.

I film di De Sica e di Kurosawa (Umberto D. e Ikiru) si concentrano sull'esistenza di uomini vecchi, e sulla loro lotta, verso la fine della vita, di trovare delle identità che diano a loro la possibilità di vedere qualche significato alle loro vite passate e presenti. Nel mio saggio cerco di servirvi di concetti che riguardano "l'identità relazionale" così come vengono sviluppati nel lavoro del filosofo femminista Adriana Cavarero (soprattutto nel suo libro *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti: Filosofia della narrazione* [Feltrinelli, 1997]), usando tale strumento metodologico per analizzare i modi in cui Umberto D. e Watanabe, i protagonisti dei film in questione, siano visti e raccontati da altri, ed anche i modi in cui i due vecchi si inventano: modi che non si possono limitare al concetto della "relazionalità" e che puntano invece sull'azione i cui moventi si trovano nell'immaginazione, nella fantasia, e nella volontà autonoma degli uomini stessi. Mi servo anche della distinzione che fa Cavarero tra "il che" come categoria metafisica della definizione dell'Uomo, e "il chi" come categoria contingente della definizione di ogni essere umano unico, mentre elaboro una critica di certi aspetti della sua teoria di "identità relazionale." Le mie letture dei due film sono "testuali"; cioè, invece di indagare sui loro aspetti "contestuali" (temi e problematiche che riguardano la cultura, la società, e la politica dei paesi d'origine dei film), faccio un'analisi dei dettagli tematici e stilistici specifici ad ogni film). Cerco inoltre di sottolineare certe differenze fondamentali tra le visioni di De Sica e di Kurosawa che forse potrebbero trovare origine nelle loro culture diverse, le quali differenze si organizzano intorno al loro cosiddetto "humanism" ossia interessi nei valori umani, un termine applicato spesso ai registi ma che necessita più chiarificazione. Poi, vorrei considerare brevemente la questione del potenziale "filosofico" e "saggistico" del cinema in quanto medium visuale. Essendo essenzialmente "visuale," il cinema può esprimere "filosoficamente" e "saggisticamente" delle prospettive sulle "Idee Grandi" tali "il significato della vita, la costruzione dell'identità personale, o il ruolo dell'immaginazione nell'esistenza umana"? Ed è potenzialmente un medium più potente e trasformativo per il pubblico che guarda i film, che le idee espresse e consummate attraverso il medium verbale della parola scritta, che "racconta" invece di far vedere?

Suggested Readings:

Akiko Hashimoto. *The Gift of Generations: Japanese and American Perspectives on Aging and the Social Contract.*
John W. Traphagan. *Taming Oblivion. Aging Bodies and the Fear of Senility in Japan.*
Fumio Niwa. "The Hateful Age" in Ivan Morris, ed. *Modern Japanese Stories.*
Sawako Ariyoshi. *The Twilight Years.*
Henri Agel. *De Sica*
André Bazin. *De Sica. Metteur en scène*
Peter Bondanella. *Italian Cinema. From Neorealism to the Present*

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secondary interests in Dante and in Italian American film and cultural studies. Her publications include *Eugenio Montale: Poet on the Edge* (Harvard UP, 1981), *Gianni Celati: The Craft of Everyday Storytelling* (U of Toronto Press, 2000), *Italian Feminist Theory and Practice: Equality and Sexual Difference* (Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2002: co-editor with G. Parati), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge UP, 2001: co-editor with Zygmunt Baranski), *Pagina, pellicola, pratica: Studi sul cinema italiano* (Longo Editore, 2000, : editor), and numerous articles on specific contemporary Italian poets and prose writers, on feminist theory, on Italian American and Italian cinema, and on Italian culture.

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Manzai Comedy and Contemporary Japanese Cinema
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Manzai comedy is arguably the most popular form of comedy in Japan. Basically a stand-up form of vaudeville comedy featuring a straight man (*tsukkomi*) and a clown (*boke*), it has been popular since before World War II. Yet with the manzai boom of the 1980s, manzai has recently come to dominant many entertainment media in Japan, especially television. Many of Japan's popular performers, including Beat Takeshi, Tunnels, Utchan Nanchan, Downtown, and a myriad of others, come from or are influenced by the manzai form. In a recent study, sociologist Ota Shoichi has forcefully argued that changes in manzai in the last twenty years, especially in the relationship between *tsukkomi* and *boke*, have profoundly affected much of Japanese popular entertainment, beyond even the realm of comedy. To him, these shifts become a means through which to read or even explain the transformations of contemporary Japanese society. His work, as well as that of scholars studying Japanese cinema, however, largely ignores the question of the relationship between manzai and cinema, and how that relationship helps us narrate the history of modern Japanese film culture. In this paper, after reviewing how more classical forms of manzai have appeared in Japanese cinema, I will discuss how the changes in manzai cited by Ota help us understand the difference of contemporary Japanese film. My analysis will mostly focus on the films of Kitano Takeshi (Beat Takeshi), but it will argue a range of positions in contemporary film that both adopt and react against manzai culture. Concentrating on how the framing structure for comedy (which was usually provided by the *tsukkomi*) has changed not only in relation to the *boke*, but also to how the audience participates in the comedic event, I believe I can investigate transformations in textuality and spectatorship in recent cinema.

If manzai has come to represent a participatory form of self-conscious, self-objectifying comedy that celebrates less criticism than "tracing" the object, I picture some recent Japanese films as attempting to reconfigure this self-conscious participation through critical stance towards repetition. I hope to cite some recent Italian comedies as a means of comparison.

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- Kobayashi Nobuhiko. *Nihon no kikegijin*. Tokyo, Shinchosha, 1982.
- Hara Kentaro and Nagataki Takahito. *Nihon no kigeki eigashi*. Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 1995.
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Profile:

Aaron Gerow, after teaching at Yokohama National University for six years, will become (as of January 2004) an assistant professor in Film Studies and East Asian Languages and Literatures. His books on *Page of Madness* and Kitano Takeshi will be coming out next year, and his manuscript on 1910s Japanese film culture will be published in Japanese by Tokyo University Press.

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Dollari e samurai. Strategie narrative e modelli di rappresentazione nel cinema di Sergio Leone e Kurosawa Akira.

La relazione verterà su un'analisi comparata dei western di Sergio Leone (da *Per un pugno di dollari* [1964] a *C'era una volta il West* [1968]) e dei *jidaigeki* di Akira Kurosawa [da *Rashomon* [1950] a *Sanjuro* [1962] con una particolare attenzione alle modalità di regia e alle scelte di messinscena, alla costruzione dei personaggi e alla dialettica dei punti di vista, alla dimensione dello spazio e a quella del tempo, alla componente grafica delle immagini e alle funzioni del montaggio.

Dario Tomasi è professore associato di storia del cinema all'Università di Torino. Si è specializzato in cinema giapponese grazie ad una borsa di studio del Mombusho che gli ha permesso di frequentare i corsi della Nihon daigaku di Tokyo (1998-1990). Ha pubblicato in volume: *Cinema e racconto: il personaggio*, Loescher, Torino 1988; *Yasujirô Ozu*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1991; *Il cerchio e la spada. I sette samurai di Kurosawa Akira*, Lindau, Torino, 1994; *Il manuale del film. Racconto. Linguaggio. Analisi* (con Gianni Rondolino), Utet, Torino 1995; *Ozu Yasujirô. Viaggio a Tokyo*, Lindau, Torino 1997; *Kenji Mizoguchi*, Il Castoro cinema, Milano 1998; *Letteratura e cinema*, (con Sara Cortellazzo), Laterza, Roma-Bari 1998; *Il cinema giapponese contemporaneo. Tradizione e modernità* (a cura di, con Giovanni Spagnoletti), Lindau - Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema di Pesaro, Torino 2002. Sta attualmente lavorando a un libro che ha per tema lo stile cinematografico.

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>Masumura, Film Study, and the Importance of Film Style

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>Rashomon "dropped a cultural bomb on Venice" but it was really only returning the favor: the impact of Italian neorealism in Japan in 1949 and 1950. The critical interpretation of neorealism in Japan drew on a wartime predilection for "realist" and "documentary" representation -- modes that were far more prevalent than the "monumental" or "presentational" style.

The Japanese "independent production" movement that took neorealism for an example was both praised for its political commitment and investment in naturalism and reliance on the dominant melodramatic form of Japanese cinema by older leftist critics such as Iwasaki Akira. Masumura Yasuzo was a member of the first postwar generation, and the first Japanese to study film at the Centro sperimentale. In his early films and criticism we can see him attempting to leverage that cultural capital into a critique of both melodrama (studio and independent) and the "historical materialist realism" of leftist critics.

Masumura's shameless eurocentrism championed a humanism that he claimed to find in Europe as the lost kernel of Japanese enjoyment, suppressed by the rise of prewar militarism and nationalism. He emphasized bodies, instinct, and desire in his attempt to liberate that suppressed subjectivity, finding a model for that "dionysian" cinema in the post-neorealist Italian comic

films of Visconti and Castellani.

Despite criticism for his caricatural style, Masumura drew on the formally-conscious deep staging of his masters (Mizoguchi and Ichikawa) in order to claim that "style is a form of thought." In particular, his early films take a critical distance from the genres to which they are assigned, and seek instead to find visual analogues of a counterfactual "vernacular subjectivity" for high economic growth Japan.

This confluence of alternative modes of production (genre parody) and reception (the film circle), the rejection of "native" modes of representation, and the assertion of film style over story-centred mainstream criticism, anticipated the "new waves" that changed the definition of cinema in this period.

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Michael Raine is assistant professor in Japanese Cinema at the University of Chicago. He has published mostly on Japanese Cinema in the 1950s and has a chapter on Masumura Yasuzo in the upcoming volume *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*. Other interests include film subtitling, problems in national cinema studies, and the semiotics of Charles Peirce. He is currently writing a book manuscript on *Youth, Body, and Subjectivity in Japanese Cinema 1955-1964*.

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“Return of the Repressed: Contemporary Italian Cinema and Holocaust Memory”

Whereas Italian cinema shied away from the treatment of Fascist anti-Semitism and the Nazi final solution for much of the postwar period, there has been a remarkable outpouring of films on the subject since the 1990s. Using psychoanalytic theories of trauma and mourning, as well as an ideological approach to the analysis of Italian post-

cold War culture, I will consider why Italy is experiencing an urgent need to tell the Holocaust story now, and what cinematic strategies are being adopted for that purpose. I will touch on Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*, and Rosi's *The Truce*, but will concentrate on the films that have come out since 2000: Ricky Tognazzi's *Canone inverso*, Ettore Scola's *Concorrenza sleale*, Andrea and Antonio Frazzi's *Il cielo cade*, Alberto Negrin's *Perlasca: Un eroe italiano*, and Ferzan Ozpetek's *La finestra di fronte*.

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Perlasca, Giorgio, L'impostore
Santner, Eric, "History beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma"
Steinberg, Jonathan, All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust, 1941-43
Zuccotti, Susan, The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival

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Hypermedia and Japanese film

Nel corso degli anni Novanta si è assistito, in Giappone, al formarsi di una particolare commistione tra media differenti: cinema, televisione, manga, narrativa,

videoclip pubblicitari, musica, pittura, videogame, computer grafica, web art e trailer, hanno tutti mescolato parte dei propri codici, stimolando nuove ipotesi di percezione dell'immagine. Spesso la loro commistione si articola intorno a un unico fenomeno multimediale, consistente nella riproduzione circolare di un iniziale spunto tematico: può capitare quindi che un videoclip pubblicitario ispiri la realizzazione di un manga che si rivela poi un successo editoriale, a sua volta adattato come videogame, quindi come dramma televisivo, trasposizione cinematografica e infine novelization, il tutto in ordine intercambiabile. L'incontro di differenti sinergie intorno a uno stesso tema permette la proposizione su ampia scala di alcuni vettori riconosciuti e apprezzati dal grande pubblico, ed è il più delle volte lo stesso spettatore a condizionarne la messa in opera, dal momento che egli rappresenta il nuovo soggetto dell'opera d'arte, a cui spetta il compito di selezionare l'ambiente in cui dar corpo alle proprie aspettative, a partire da una sorta di interfaccia mediatica in cui interseca anche le proprie esperienze e il proprio bagaglio onirico.

L'accesso alle differenti aree avviene attraverso canali induttivi articolati in modo analogo a quanto avviene nella navigazione di internet. Alcune voci "chiave" di cui si riconosca la maggiore ricorrenza, al pari delle parole digitate attraverso un motore di ricerca, inducono le produzioni a privilegiare un'opera rispetto a un'altra, e soprattutto a individuare con maggiore facilità il raggio di pubblico da e a cui riferirla. La traduzione dall'uno all'altro media genera a sua volta la messa a punto di nuove forme d'arte, spesso basate sulla scrematura di generi (filmici, nella fattispecie cinematografica) che vengono così reinventati. E' il caso del cinema horror giapponese della seconda metà degli anni novanta, o dell'amalgama di stili e situazioni di molti prodotti *V shine* (Original Video) realizzati nel corso dello scorso decennio.

Per analizzare come avvengano queste traduzioni di codici, l'ipermedia suggerisce alcuni strumenti di grande utilità, come vedremo, ma nel contesto artistico nipponico resta tuttavia fondamentale il bagaglio di ibridismo di cui il cinema è connaturato sin dai suoi albori. Ciò detto, si penserà sicuramente a come il mondo delle immagini in movimento in Giappone affondi le proprie radici nel kabuki da un lato, nelle performance dei cantastorie di racconti popolari di epoche passate dall'altro, per approdare massicciamente all'ambiente letterario intorno agli anni Venti. Tuttavia, il più

determinante tra gli esempi del passato rispetto alla rivoluzione stilistica avvenuta negli anni Novanta è quello rappresentato dal benshi, il commentatore dei film muti, che ha costituito fino agli anni Trenta una sorta di interfaccia mediatica per la lettura del testo filmico, suggerendo possibili traduzioni delle peculiarità culturali dei differenti paesi e aiutando a creare link di identificazione tra fiction e vita reale.

During the 1990s, we witnessed the development of a peculiar mixture of different media in Japan: cinema, television, manga, novels, advertising, music, painting, videogames, computer graphics, web art and trailers, all mixing with each other part of their codes, stimulating new theories about the perception of the image. Their mixture often articulates around a uniquely multimedia phenomenon, consisting of the circular reproduction of an initial thematic starting point. It can thus happen that a television commercial inspires the carrying out of a successful manga series, which in turn is adapted as a videogame, later a television drama, a cinematographic transposition and finally its novelization, in an interchangeable order. Crossing different synergies around a given theme enables the proposal on a large scale of some of the vectors most recognized and appreciated by a large audience. Often it is the audience itself who influences its realization, since the audience represents the new subject of the artistic work and has the faculty to select the world into which it can give form to its own expectations. In other words, there is a kind of media interface where the audience also interjects its own experiences and oneiric activity.

Access to the different areas is accomplished through inductive channels organized in a way similar to what happens while navigating the web. Some “key” entries are selected more and more frequent, like the words chosen by means of a search engine in the web, stimulating the production of given works which should also meet the agreement of a selected audience. Translating a theme from one media to another also gives birth to new artistic forms, often derived from existing genres (film genres, for example). This is the case of the Japanese horror movies of the second half of the ‘90s, and also of the amalgam of styles and situations of many *V shine* (Original Video) produced in the last decade.

To analyze how this translation of codes takes place, the hypermedia field of studies suggests some extremely useful instruments, as we will see. However, in the Japanese artistic context, it is of primary importance to realize the fund of hybridism peculiar to cinema from the very first period. Of course, the world of moving images in Japan dipped its roots in kabuki and also in the performances of the ballad singers of the previous eras, before it reached the literary world in the '20s. However, among the examples taken from the past in relation to the stylistic revolution of '90s, of extreme importance is the role of the benshi, the old commentators of silent movies, who represented until the late '30s a kind of media interface to read the text of films, suggesting the cultural peculiarity of different countries and also helping to create links between real life and fiction.

Biosketch: Per quanto riguarda le informazioni su di me, il mio nome completo e' Maria Roberta Novielli. Mi sono specializzata in cinema giapponese presso la Nihon Daigaku - Geijutsu gakubu di Tokyo. Sono docente di cinema e letteratura giapponese presso il Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia Orientale dell'Universita' Ca' Foscari di Venezia. Sono autrice, oltre che di vari cataloghi e articoli, del saggio "Storia del cinema giapponese" pubblicato dalla Marsilio Editori nel 2001. Ho curato varie retrospettive monografiche (Yanagimachi, Miike, Tsukamoto, tra le altre) per diversi festival cinematografici italiani.