

PAU GILABERT BARBERÀ

### ***Il conformista by Bernardo Bertolucci: Alberto Moravia and Plato against Fascism\****

*Il conformista* (*The Conformist*, 1970)<sup>1</sup>, the cinematic adaptation by Bernardo Bertolucci of the homonymous novel by Alberto Moravia, *Il conformista* (*The Conformist*, 1951), introduces a highly significant element that does not appear in the Italian author's original text: the reference to the Platonic image of the cave, that is, to the prisoners referred to in the first chapters of book VII of Plato's *Republic*. The plot of the novel reveals that the protagonist, Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant), a man with a tortured psyche as a result of childhood traumas that he has never overcome, has always wanted to become a normal citizen. His country, Italy, is passing through one of the darkest periods of its history, the so called *Ventennio Fascista* and, far from joining the Resistance, Clerici opts for resigning himself to the political situation and joining the *OVRA*. By identifying himself with the ruling Fascism, he eventually attains the normality of the masses. His soon receives his first, very macabre, mission: taking advantage of his honeymoon in Paris and his relationship as a former pupil, he must ask to be received by Professor Quadri (Enzo Tarascio), a distinguished member of the Italian anti-Fascism political exile community. His assignment is very simple: he must get on close terms with his former professor, get to know his movements and pass on the necessary information to other agents of the regime so that they can assassinate the academic. However, the following passage ensues:

PROFESSOR QUADRI: Sono proprio curioso, Clerici. Lei viene fin qui per vedermi?

MARCELLO: Ricorda, Professore, appena lei entrava in aula, dovevamo chiudere le finestre. Lei non sopportava tutta quella luce e quel rumore. L'ho capito dopo perché faceva così. In tutti questi anni, vuol sapere la cosa che mi è rimasta più impressa nella memoria? La sua voce. "Immagina un grande sotterraneo a forma di caverna. All'interno, degli uomini che vi abitano fin dall'infanzia, tutti incatenati e obbligati a guardare il fondo della caverna. Alle loro spalle, lontano, brilla la luce di un fuoco. Tra il fuoco e i prigionieri, immagina un muro basso, simile a quella piccola ribalta su cui il burattinaio fa apparire i suoi burattini". Era il novembre del '28.

QUADRI: Certo, ricordo.

MARCELLO: "E ora cerca di immaginare degli uomini che passano dietro quel muretto, portando statue di legno e di pietra. Le statue sono più alte di quel muro".

QUADRI: Non poteva portarmi un regalo migliore di questi ricordi, Clerici. I prigionieri incatenati di Platone.

MARCELLO: E come ci somigliano.

QUADRI: Cosa vedono?

---

\* To Inmasculada Sánchez and Eulalia Vintró.

<sup>1</sup> Director: Bernardo Bertolucci. Screenplay: Bernardo Bertolucci. Subject: Alberto Moravia. Executive Producers: Giovanni Bertolucci. Producer: Maurizio Lodi-Fe. Assistant Director: Aldo Lado. Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, Dominique Sanda, Enzo Tarascio, Gastone Moschin, José Quaglio, Pierre Clémenti. Director of Photography: Vittorio Storaro. Camera Operator: Enrico Umetelli. Editor: Franco Arcalli. Music: Georges Delerue. Distributor: Paramount Pictures. Running time: 111 minutes. Country: Italy, France, West German.

MARCELLO: Che cosa vedono?

QUADRI: Lei che viene dall' Italia dovrebbe saperlo per esperienza.

MARCELLO: Vedono solo le ombre che il fuoco proietta sul fondo della caverna, che è davanti a loro<sup>2</sup>.

QUADRI: Ombre. I riflessi delle cose, come accade a voi altri oggi in Italia.

MARCELLO: Se quei prigionieri fossero liberi di parlare, non chiamerebbero forse realtà quelle loro visioni?

QUADRI: Sì, sì, bravo. Scambierebbero per realtà le ombre della realtà. Ah! Il mito della grande caverna!<sup>3</sup>. Era questa la tesi di laurea che lei venne a propormi. L'ha finita poi?

MARCELLO: No. Partito lei, ne ho scelta un'altra.

QUADRI: Mi spiace davvero, Clerici. Io avevo molta fiducia in lei. In tutti voi.

MARCELLO: No, non ci credo. Se fosse vero, non sarebbe mai partito<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Compare it with Plat. *Resp.* 514a-515b: «“Next”, said I, “compare (ἀπείκασον) our nature in respect of education and its lack to such an experience as this. Picture (ἰδέ) men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long entrance open to the light on its entire width. Conceive them (ὄρα)... Picture (ἰδέ) further the light from a fire burning higher up and at a distance behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners and above them a road along which a low wall has been built, as the exhibitors of puppet-shows have partitions before the men themselves, above which they show the puppets”. “All that I see”, he said. “See also, then, men carrying past the wall implements of all kinds that rise above the wall, and human images and shapes of animals as well, wrought in stone and wood and every material, some of these bearers presumably speaking and others silent”. “A strange image you speak of”, he said, “and strange prisoners”. “Like to us”, I said; “for, to begin with, tell me do you think that these men would have seen anything of themselves or of one another except the shadows (τὰς σκιὰς) cast from the fire on the wall (προσπιπτούσας) of the cave that fronted them?”. “How could they”, he said, “if they were compelled to hold their heads unmoved through life?”» – translated by SHOREY (1970).

<sup>3</sup> I strictly follow the Platonic terminology, but it is worth remembering that “myth, fable, simile, allegory, etc.” are some of the terms with which Plato has been “corrected”. HEIDEGGER (1988, 18) says, for instance: «Wir sprechen von einem ‘Gleichnis’, sagen auch ‘Sinn-Bild’. Das heisst: ein sichtbarer Anblick, so freilich, dass das Erblickte allsogleich ein Winkendes ist. Der Anblick will nicht und nie für sich allein stehen; er gibt einem Wink: dahin, dass es etwas und was es bei diesem Anblick und durch diesen Anblick zu verstehen gibt. Der Anblick winkt, – er lenkt in ein zu Verstehendes, d. h. in den Bereich von Verstehbarkeit (die Dimension, innerhalb deren verstanden wird): in einen Sinn (daher Sinn-Bild)». Needless to say, interpreting a text by Heidegger is always risky. I do not dare maintain that «Gleichnis» means here «allegory» or not. SADLER (2002, 12f.) renders it as «allegory» in his translation: «We speak of an ‘allegory’, also of ‘sensory image’ (Sinn-Bild), of a sort that provides a hint or clue...». In any case, it is worth bearing in mind once again that Plato says simply “this image... we must apply...”. Therefore, it deals with a προσαπτεῖα εἰκόν that Plato does not seem to consider a ὑπόνοια, the Platonic term for ἀλληγορία.

<sup>4</sup> *Il conformista* (*The Conformist*, 1970). Produced by Titan Productions, Inc. Edited by Film-Rite, Inc. Paramount. A Gulf + Western Company. All the quotations of the film will correspond to this edition (PROFESSOR QUADRI: It's very curious, Clerici. You come all this way only to see me?)

MARCELLO: Remember, Professor, as soon as you used to enter the classroom, they had to shut the windows. You couldn't stand all that light and noise. Later, I understood why you used to do that. All these years, you know what remained most firmly imprinted on my memory? Your voice. “Imagine a great dungeon in the shape of a cave. Inside men who've lived there since childhood, all chained, and forced to face back of the cave. Behind them, far away, the light from a fire flickers. Between the fire and the prisoners, imagine a low wall, similar to that little stage on which a puppeteer shows his puppets. That was November '28.

QUADRI: Yes, I remember.

MARCELLO: Now try to imagine some other men passing behind that little wall bearing statues made of wood and stone. The statues are higher than the wall.

QUADRI: You could not have brought me from Rome a better gift than these memories, Clerici. The enchained prisoners of Plato.

MARCELLO: And how they resemble us.

QUADRI: And what do they see, the prisoners?

MARCELLO: What do they see?

QUADRI: You, who come from Italy, should know from experience.

MARCELLO: They see only the shadows that fire makes on the back of the cave that faces them.

QUADRI: Shadows. The reflections of things like what's happening to you people in Italy.

MARCELLO: Say those prisoners were at liberty and could speak out. Mightn't they call the shadows they see reality, not visions?

Bertolucci's aim is quite clear<sup>5</sup>: the Platonic image of the cave, as represented on screen, will help the audience to imagine a whole country, Italy, in a cave, that is to say, as a prisoner of the Fascist dictatorship. Italy has mistaken the intellectual and spiritual darkness of its totalitarian regime with the true Light<sup>6</sup>. Freedom of thought has been banished and the citizens have become the subjects of both a single Truth and of the dictator who proclaims it: Benito Mussolini. A friend of Marcello, Italo Montanari (José Quaglio), an ideologist of the regime, even describes Italy and Germany as "two strongholds of light in the course of centuries". He likes to refer to "the Prussian aspect of Benito Mussolini and the Latin aspect of Adolf Hitler", and maintains openly that these two great nations have given the world two revolutions: "the anti-parliamentarian and the anti-democratic". Millions of Italians were seduced by these flattering words, and they were also indolent enough, spiritually and mentally, not to realize that, as Plato said regarding his prisoners, they were seeing only shadows, mere simulacra of greatness and pride, whereas the reality of Justice belongs to another realm without limits or walls in which the true Light does not know any obstacle of a political or military sort.

Nevertheless, despite its effective use in the film script, the Platonic image does not appear in the novel, so that we should ask ourselves whether its inclusion into the film is a mere caprice of an ingenious screenwriter and director or the consequence of a very good knowledge of Moravia's works and, particularly, the consequence of a Platonic reading of *Il conformista*, in my opinion a sage possibility at least with regard to some of its most outstanding passages<sup>7</sup>.

---

QUADRI: Yes, yes. Correct. They would mistake for reality the shadows of reality. Ah! The myth of the great cave! That was the graduate thesis you proposed to do for me. Did you finish it afterwards?

MARCELLO: You departed. I used a different theme.

QUADRI: I'm truly sorry, Clerici. I had so much faith in you. In all of you. Marcello: No, I don't believe it. If that were true, you'd never have left Rome).

<sup>5</sup> On Bertolucci, his films and *Il conformista*, see for example: FRANCIONE-SPILA (2010); SOCCI (2008); SELVAGGI (2007); BARONI (2007); CARABBA et al. (2003); GERARD-KLINE-SKLAREW (2000); CAMPANI (1998); TONETTI (1995); CAMPARI-SCHIARETTI (1994); KLINE (1981; 1994); APRÀ-PARIGIO (1993); DONOVAN (1990); O'HEALY (1988); BERTOLUCCI-UNGARI-RANVAUD (1987); KOLKER (1985); WAGSTAFF (1982;1983); CASSETTI (1978); GOLDIN (1971); VOGEL (1971).

<sup>6</sup> Although the reason for any historical review, according to Bertolucci, must be to speak about the present: «... quando si parla del passato si sta parlando soprattutto del presente... quando giravo *Il conformista* pensavo all'Italia che mi circondava, l'Italia del '69-'70... Cerco di non dimenticare mai che i film sul passato, se non hanno un forte cordone ombelicale con il presente, finiscono per essere delle più o meno riuscite illustrazioni d'epoca» – CARABBA et al. (2003, 13) «... every time we speak about the past, we speak above all about the present... when I shot *Il conformista* I was thinking of the Italy that surrounded me, Italy in '69-'70... I try ever to forget that films about the past, if they lack a strong umbilical cord linking them to the present become the most or least successful depiction of a historical period» – (the translation into English is mine).

<sup>7</sup> On the role played by the Platonic cave in *Il conformista* by Bertolucci, see for example: KOLKER (1985, 96-100): «[...] a consistent literary / philosophical referent that structures the entire work[...] Plato's myth of the cave[...] this is a film about lives in the shadows, about shadows that seek other shadows [...]. But if Clerici is the most unseeing character in this fiction, the one most given to hiding in the dark of his bad conscience, none of the other characters is permitted full entry into the light. Quadri would seem to be Clerici's opposite, the man of the left, of conscience, fighting for the anti-fascist cause. But his comfort in Paris is at the expense of comrades imprisoned in Italy».

Professor Quadri recognized in Clerici's words – which a long time before were also his own – «the myth of the great cave», and one of the protagonists of *Il disprezzo (Contempt)* professes his thesis on the appropriateness of turning Ulysses' adventures into a “psychological film”:

Tutti i miti greci adombrano drammi umani senza tempo né luogo, eterni. [...] sono allegorie figurate della vita umana... cosa dobbiamo fare noialtri moderni per risuscitare questi miti così antichi e così oscuri?... Prima di tutto trovare il significato che possono avere per noi, uomini moderni, e poi approfondire questo significato, interpretarlo, illustrarlo... ma in maniera viva, autonoma [...] i miti greci vanno interpretati in maniera moderna, secondo le ultime scoperte della psicologia [...]. Noi dobbiamo adesso fare con l'Odissea [...] aprirla, come si apre un corpo sul tavolo anatomico, esaminare il meccanismo interno, smontarlo e poi rimontarlo di nuovo secondo le nostre esigenze moderne<sup>8</sup>.

We see in the film that with respect Plato's cave, Bertolucci does not opt for an aggressive dissection but limits himself to taking advantage of the attribute with which the Athenian philosopher endowed it: its applicability<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, as adapted by the Italian director, the image is not only a call to a journey of initiation of an ideal or “ideocentric” sort but also a reminder of a more immediate and earthly duty, namely, to abandon the golden cave of conformism, especially when “conformism” means not to disdain but to embrace that political and ethical degradation peculiar to Fascism. There is no need, then, to dissect the Platonic image, although Bertolucci, like Moravia, calls for the right not to be overwhelmed by the prestige of the Classical Tradition and by the loyalty that it seems to demand. At any rate, Moravia's texts are full of cave images and images of self-imprisonment, intended to awaken our conscience and to help our minds to discover the real temptation or risk of accepting unworthy obligations or living in an unacceptable conformism<sup>10</sup>.

In one of his essays, *Estremismo e letteratura (Extremism and Literature)*<sup>11</sup>, Moravia writes about the «compromesso nella letteratura» (p. 73)<sup>12</sup> and takes the Victorian obligation as the most

---

<sup>8</sup> MORAVIA (1965, 390f.). For English translation see Alberto Moravia, *Contempt*, New York, New York Review Books, 1999, translated by Angus Davidson «All the Greek myths depict human dramas – dramas without time or place, eternal. [...] are figurative allegories of human life... what ought we moderns to do in order to resuscitate such ancient and obscure myths?... To discover the significance which they can have for us of the modern world, and then to fathom that significance as deeply as we can, to interpret it, to illustrate it... but in a live, independent way [...] the Greek myths must be interpreted in a modern manner, according to the latest psychological discoveries [...]. We've now got[...] to do with the Odyssey [...] that is, open it, as a body is opened up on the dissecting table, examine its internal mechanism, take it to pieces and then put it together again according to our modern requirements» – DAVIDSON (1999, 138f.).

<sup>9</sup> Plat. *Resp* 517a-517d: «This image (ἐικόνα) then, dear Glaucon, we must apply (προσαπτέον) as a whole to all that has been said likening the region revealed through sight to the habitation of the prison, and the light of the fire in it to the power of the sun. And if you assume that the ascent and the contemplation of the things above is the soul's ascension to the intelligible region, you will not miss my surmise, since that is what you desire to hear... is likely if in this point too the likeness of our image (ἐικόνα) holds» – translated by SHOREY (1970).

<sup>10</sup> On Moravia, his work in general and *Il conformista*, see for example: FESTORAZZI (2009); UJCICH (2008); SANGUINETI (2008); SORLIN (2008); ONOFRI (2007); MASCARETTI (2006); BASILE (2003); STELLA (2000); PARIS (2001); VOZA (1997); PETERSON (1996) CAPOZZI-MIGNONE (1993); GERVASUTTI (1993); KOZMA (1993); DI BARTOLOMEI (1998); ELKANN (1990); RANDO (1989); PANDINI (1981); ESPOSITO (1978); VITTER (1973); ROSS (1972).

<sup>11</sup> MORAVIA (1964).

<sup>12</sup> «Obligation in literature». From now on, the translations into English are mine until the point where I begin to analyze *Il conformista*.

illustrative example, since it meant the adoption of limits of both formal and content, imposed on Art by the bourgeois industrial society of Nineteenth-Century England. Furthermore, this obligation was accepted freely without state intervention, that is, it was self-imposed; thus, the most important ideas were not stated in order to please a wider range of readers. «Lo scrittore dedito al compromesso si sente tirar la manica dall'angelo custode del conformismo» (p. 75)<sup>13</sup>, and thus surrendering not to that moderation or prudence which is peculiar to any work of art but to the prudence which is the result of aesthetic and moral prejudices and makes the artist a prisoner. «Allo scrittore incombe il dovere di essere *estremo*. [...]. Ma il compromesso fa scendere ed adagiare l'opera nei fondi geologici della letteratura tra i documenti, le curiosità e altri simili fossili» (pp. 75ff.)<sup>14</sup>. This last image goes beyond the difficulty of breathing in a cave, conveying a sense of fatal asphyxia caused by the metaphoric weight of several geologic strata, which so overwhelm both the artist and his / or her work that they become fossilized.

In *Assenza di maestri (Lack of Masters)*<sup>15</sup>, Moravia approaches the terrible consequences of receiving a single message from the police and the ministry of popular culture, a mixture of «nazionalismo, di futurismo e di conformismo controriformistico» (p. 81)<sup>16</sup>, a message sent in this case by a single master: Mussolini. The identity of the cave and the geologic depths become now too obvious: Italy during the *Ventennio* and even later. Moravia focuses on the prisoners and replies those who dare maintain that young people and society in general need neither masters nor messages. Democracy does not want sclerotic minds – or cave-dwelling ones, so to speak – but minds used to the intellectual exercise of choosing after having received, free from restrictions, multiple messages and lessons coming from multiple masters.

With *L'uomo come fine (Man as Purpose)* we face an evident paradox. We are looking for “cave images” in Moravia’s works thinking of Quadri’s and Clerici’s discourse on the Platonic image, which Bertolucci *motu proprio* introduces into the cinematic adaptation of *Il conformista*. Well then, Moravia now takes advantage of the wisdom of the Greek Sophists, who were severely criticized by Socrates-Plato in Plato’s dialogues. The recovery of a centuries-old idea, that is, Protagoras’ “Man is the measure of all things”, is now presented as the antidote to the mental poison that consider human beings as a means and not as a purpose. Moravia mistrusts reason because it is quantitative and tyrannical, and therefore does not know what a human being is, whereas it knows very well, in turn, what one hundred, one thousand or one million human beings are: «che una minoranza politica venga sterminata dalla maggioranza, su questo la ragione non

---

<sup>13</sup> «Writers who surrender to obligation feel the guardian angel of Fascism tugging on their sleeve».

<sup>14</sup> «Writers must be extreme. [...]. But obligation reduces the value of their works and takes them down into the geologic depths of literature among documents, curiosities and other similar fossils».

<sup>15</sup> MORAVIA (1964).

<sup>16</sup> «Nationalism, futurism and anti-reformist conformism».

troverà nulla da obiettare in sede del tutto astratta e assoluta» (p. 113)<sup>17</sup>. Times have changed and from considering themselves as a purpose, a fact that distinguished them from animals, human beings have passed to considering themselves as a means, but «[...] nessuna contemplazione o saggezza [...] nessun nuovo concetto dell'uomo si formeranno se prima il mondo non sarà ridotto una volta di più alla misura dell'uomo» (p. 148)<sup>18</sup>. And it is now that Moravia reveals a wide range of “cave images” – or oppressive images –, so that, if Bertolucci were accused of not respecting the accuracy of the original text, he would now be immediately absolved.

Indeed, in Moravia's opinion the world resembles «scatole cinesi» (p. 116)<sup>19</sup>, in which each box contains a smaller one, which in turn contains an even smaller one, which in turn contains yet a smaller one... The modern world is an «incubo generale» which «contiene degli altri minori, sempre più ristretti, finché si giunge al risultato ultimo che ogni singolo uomo risente se stesso come un incubo» (pp. 116f.)<sup>20</sup>. The modern state, whose purpose is the State Itself is a nightmare, so enormous that man does not realize this fact, «come probabilmente una formica non si rende conto che l'albero sul quale sta camminando è un albero» (p. 117)<sup>21</sup>.

The different Churches pursue only their own preservation and for them man has also become merely a means to an end. This state of prostration of mankind, this problem, has to be solved outside of the «cerchi viziosi» (p. 124)<sup>22</sup> where it resides. Day after day «il senso angoscioso di labirinto senza uscita che è proprio al mondo moderno» intensifies (p. 125)<sup>23</sup>.

Moravia also asks himself what is the difference between the beehive and the ant-hill on one hand and the modern State on the other, and does not hesitate to answer that «[...] nell'alveare e nel formicaio come nello Stato moderno, formiche, api e uomini sono mezzi [...] e il fine è invece l'alveare, il formicaio e lo Stato» (pp. 125f.)<sup>24</sup>. However, from his point of view the most terrible thing is that there is no difference between the young man raised by his family and the State, and

<sup>17</sup> MORAVIA (2000), all the quotations of *L'uomo come fine* in the text correspond to this edition and the numbers between brackets refer to it – «[...] reason will not find any objection, from an abstract and absolute point of view, to the fact that a political minority be exterminated».

<sup>18</sup> «[...] no contemplation or wisdom will appear [...] nor any new concept of man until our world is once again reduced to the measure of man». See e.g. Aristot. *Metaph.* 11, 6, 1062 b 13: «Protagoras said that man is the measure of all things (πάντων εἶναι χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον), by which he meant simply that each individual's impressions are positively true. But if this is so, it follows that the same thing is and is not, and is bad and good, and that all the other implications of opposite statements are true; because often a given thing seems beautiful to one set of people and ugly to another, and that which seems to each individual is the measure (μέτρον δ' εἶναι τὸ φαινόμενον ἐκάστω)» – translated by TREDENNICK (1972).

<sup>19</sup> «Chinese boxes».

<sup>20</sup> «A general nightmare [...] which contains other smaller ones, more and more restricted, until each man gets the feeling of being himself a nightmare».

<sup>21</sup> «As an ant probably does not realise that the tree on which she walks is a tree».

<sup>22</sup> «Vicious circles».

<sup>23</sup> «The anxious feeling of labyrinth without exit peculiar to the modern world».

<sup>24</sup> «[...] in the beehive and in the ant-hill, like in the modern State, bees, ants and men are the means [...] and the purpose is the beehive, the ant-hill, the State».

sent to fight and die, «e la formica soldato, l'ape soldato oppure il gallo da combattimento o il toro da corrida»<sup>25</sup>. Everything: politics, money, propaganda and thousands of means of coercion, «vengono adoperati senza scrupoli contro questo residuo dell'uomo adoperato come mezzo, per distruggerlo, minimizzarlo, soffocarlo, annientarlo» (p. 132)<sup>26</sup>.

In *Il conformista* Moravia insists on the sad nature – why not call it the “cavernous nature”? – of men and women who too often imprison themselves in the darkness of ideologies that annihilate their dignity. First, one might think that Moravia pays excessive homage to a Freudian and almost Calvinist determinism, but, leaving aside any sort of criticism, the result is the literary design of a man too conditioned to demolish either the walls he runs or the walls he builds himself. Indeed, he was «diverso» (Moravia 1998, 10)<sup>27</sup> from other boys of his age and «in un modo misterioso e fatale, era predestinato a compiere atti di crudeltà e di morte» (p. 19)<sup>28</sup>. The cook saw it very clearly: «Chi è cattivo con le bestie, è anche cattivo con i cristiani [...] si comincia con un gatto e poi si ammazza un uomo» (p. 27)<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, taking into account that he had studied at home because of an illness, he had saved himself those unpleasant aspects of the school that make it seem «una prigione», but, during his first year at a state school, he finds out that «Gli piaceva, alla mattina, alzarsi a tempo di orologio» (p. 30)<sup>30</sup>. He is seduced by this normality that does not depend on personal preferences and the natural inclinations of the spirit but is rather «prestabilita, imparziale, indifferente ai gusti individuali, limitata e sorretta da regole indiscutibili e tutte rivolte ad un fine unico» (p. 30)<sup>31</sup>.

When, as an adult, he enters the ministry in order to offer his services to the Fascist State, he feels «quasi contento di attendere come gli altri, tra gli altri»; he even discovers that «quell'ordine e quell'etichetta gli piacevano, come indizi di un ordine e di un'etichetta più vasti e più generali» (p. 71)<sup>32</sup>.

His marriage to Giulia (Stefania Sandrelli), a young girl like many others, was «un anello in più [...] nella catena di normalità con la quale egli cercava di ancorarsi nelle sabbie infide della vita»

<sup>25</sup> «And the worker ant, the worker bee, the fighting cock or the bull in the bullring».

<sup>26</sup> «Is used unscrupulously against this residue of man used as a means in order to destroy him, to minimize him, to strangulate him, to annihilate him».

<sup>27</sup> «Different» (CALLIOPE 1999, 6). From now on, all the quotation in Italian in the text will correspond to this edition: Alberto Moravia, *Il conformista*, Milano, Bompiani, 1998, and the number between brackets refer to it; all the quotation in English in note will correspond to this edition: Alberto Moravia, *The Conformist. A Novel*, Hanover, New Hampshire, Steerforth Press, 1999, translated by Tami Calliope, and the number between brackets refer to it.

<sup>28</sup> «He was, in some fatal and mysterious way, predestined to commit acts of cruelty and death» (p. 17).

<sup>29</sup> «Who's wicked to beasts is wicked to Christians, too [...] it starts with a cat and he ends up killing a man» (p. 25).

<sup>30</sup> «Like a prison [...]. He liked to wake up to the alarm clock in the morning» (p. 29).

<sup>31</sup> «Pre-established, impartial, indifferent to individual tastes, limited and supported by indisputable rules all directed toward a single end» (p. 30).

<sup>32</sup> «Almost glad to be waiting like the others, among the others [...] its order and etiquette pleased him, seemed to him to be signs of a vaster and more generalized order and etiquette» (p. 74).

(p. 89)<sup>33</sup>. Following Giulia's advice he accepts going to confession and taking Communion, although he does not believe in God and has no religion. He even opts for a complete confession «quasi sperando, attraverso la confessione, se non di cambiare il proprio destino, per lo meno di conformarsi una volta di più in esso» (p. 103)<sup>34</sup>. He likes churches as «punti sicuri in un mondo fluttuante», discovering in them that «aveva trovato espressione massiccia e splendida ciò che egli cercava: un ordine, una norma, una regola» (p. 103)<sup>35</sup>. Marcello is, then, like a copy that has been made with the help of a mould of a normal man: «Sono stato un uomo simile a tutti gli altri uomini... ho amato, mi sono congiunto ad una donna e ho generato un altro uomo» (p. 152)<sup>36</sup>.

Nowadays, designing a tortured psychology like Marcello's, hypercharacterizing it with the supposed physical and psychological features of a man who is both effeminate and homosexual is fortunately considered be a false, stereotypical characterization and, politically speaking, improper<sup>37</sup>. I mention this because, in addition to revealing that «aveva ereditato da sua madre una perfezione di tratti quasi leziosa», thus emphasizing the smoothness and beauty of his face and his «caratteri addirittura femminili» which make him «una bambina vestita da maschio» (Moravia 1998, 31)<sup>38</sup>, when the chauffeur, Lino (Pierre Clémenti), tries to abuse him sexually after tempting him with what he most desires, a pistol, Moravia chooses to underline his submissiveness, since he was «contento, in fondo, di esser stato costretto con la violenza a salire nella macchina» (p. 55)<sup>39</sup>. Later on, when Lino wants to force him by setting him on the bed, this very child, who on another occasion with his father's pistol in his hands experienced «un brivido di comunicazione, come se la sua mano avesse finalmente trovato un naturale prolungamento nell'impugnatura dell'arma» (p. 8)<sup>40</sup>, points the pistol at him and shoots while the also tortured corrupter begs him to do it shouting: «Spara, Marcello... ammazzami... sì, ammazzami come un cane» (p. 58)<sup>41</sup>. Nevertheless, the novelist wants Marcello to be submissive even when he grows up or, as we read, when many years later an old man tries to seduce him in Paris, and he discovers with stupor that he felt «la memore soggezione di chi, avendo soggiaciuto già una volta in passato ad una oscura tentazione, colto di

<sup>33</sup> «One more link [...] in the chain of normality with which he sought to anchor himself in the treacherous sands of life» (p. 94).

<sup>34</sup> «Almost hoping that through confession he might change his own destiny, but at least conform to it more fully» (p. 110).

<sup>35</sup> «Points of security in a fluctuating world, [...] they had given massive, splendid expression to what he was seeking: an order, a standard, a rule» (p. 111).

<sup>36</sup> «I have been a man like all other men... I have loved, I have joined myself to a woman and generated another man» (p. 166).

<sup>37</sup> However, it has been suggested that it was Bertolucci and not Moravia who turns *Il conformista* into a tragic novel in which Destiny or Fate play a significant role, in a sociological or Freudian drama where Destiny gives protagonism to the Subconscious; see for example: GERARD-KLINE-SKLAREW (2000, 60-72) or HEREDERO (2000, 65).

<sup>38</sup> «He had inherited from his mother a perfection of features that was almost precious [...] characteristics so very feminine [...] a girl dressed in boy's clothes» (CALLIOPE 1999, 31).

<sup>39</sup> «He was glad, actually, to be constrained by violence to enter the car» (p. 58).

<sup>40</sup> «A thrill of connection, as if his hand had finally found a natural extension in the grip of the gun» (p. 4).

<sup>41</sup> «Shoot, Marcello... kill me... yes, kill me like a dog» (p. 61).



sorpresa, dopo molti anni, dalla stessa insidi, non trovi ragione di resistervi» (p. 207)<sup>42</sup>. He once again takes his pistol and gets rid of his attacker without shooting but not before the old man asserts his assumption: «avevo creduto che, invece, voleste farvi rapire... siete tutti così, avete bisogno che vi si usi violenza» (p. 209)<sup>43</sup>.

In any case, the novelist possesses more resources than those which are politically incorrect to elaborate the complex literary design of a character who is a prisoner of his conformism. For instance, Marcello wants Franco to win the Spanish war simply «per amore di simmetria» (p. 69)<sup>44</sup>. The cases of Italy and Germany, and the Ethiopian and Spanish wars permit him to share his faith with millions of comrades. He does not notice – or perhaps he does – that these comrades are prisoners like himself, but the unifying effect of the recent history satisfies him: «Egli faceva tutta una cosa sola con la società [...] non era un solitario, un anormale, un pazzo, era uno di loro, un fratello, un cittadino, un camerata» (p. 70)<sup>45</sup>.

The political uniformity also implies an intellectual uniformity and, in order to show this, Moravia opts for hyperbole, that is, underlining the morbid mental state of a whole country which became alienated and subsequently confined to the most suitable cavern or prison: an asylum. His father resides there, but his doctor sees quite clearly that «per quanto riguarda il duce, siamo tutti pazzi come vostro marito, nevvvero signora, tutti pazzi da legare da trattare con la doccia e la camicia di forza... tutta l'Italia non è che un solo manicomio» (p. 132)<sup>46</sup>. On one occasion agent Orlando said to Marcello: «*Tutto per la famiglia e per la patria, signor dottore*» (p. 115)<sup>47</sup>, and he knows that, whatever may happen, Marcello will not hang himself like Judas, because he will always be in a position to say that he obeyed or, in other words, that in his case there were not «trenta denari. Soltanto il servizio» (p. 178)<sup>48</sup>. His personal position is certainly sad but a «moralismo assai rigido» had informed his conduct (p. 73)<sup>49</sup>, Giulia maintains that he is «troppo austero» (p. 230)<sup>50</sup>, and his mother has always observed that his husband and her son do not want to enjoy life («... non vi divertite nella vita e non vorreste che gli altri si divertissero...» p. 123)<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> «A sensation of subjection steeped in memory, as of someone who, having been subjected once already in the past to a dark temptation, is caught by surprise many years later in the same trap and can find no reason to resist» (p. 228).

<sup>43</sup> «I thought you wanted to be kidnapped... You're all like that, you want to be forced» (p. 230).

<sup>44</sup> «For love of symmetry» (p. 72)

<sup>45</sup> «He was one with the society [...] he was not a loner, abnormal, crazy, but one of them: a brother, a citizen, a comrade» (p. 73)

<sup>46</sup> «As far as Il Duce is concerned, we're all as crazy as your husband, isn't that right, Signora? All crazy as loons, we should be treated with the cold shower and the straightjacket... All Italy is just one big insane asylum» (p. 144).

<sup>47</sup> «Anything for the family and homeland, Dottore» (p. 124).

<sup>48</sup> «Thirty gold coins. Only service» (p. 174).

<sup>49</sup> «Extremely right morality» (p. 77).

<sup>50</sup> «Too austere» (p. 255).

<sup>51</sup> «Neither of you enjoy life and you don't want anyone else to enjoy it, either...» (p. 134).

Therefore, Marcello Clerici is as bound as the prisoners in the Platonic cave although, when he was informed that his mission has resulted practically nothing, unlike them, he could hardly look straight ahead and he «abbassò il capo» with a sense of «rassegnazione [...], come di fronte ad un dovere che per diventare più ingrato, restava tuttavia inalterato e inevitabile» (p. 159)<sup>52</sup>. He accepts this with the discipline of a subordinate man, just as in a brothel the same sense of discipline leads his subordinate to say: «Dottore se lei vuole, se questa le piace... io posso anche aspettare» (p. 162)<sup>53</sup>.

His conformism and inability to react now becomes unjustifiable if one bears in mind that he is perspicacious enough to perceive even the misery of other submissions, certainly noble but blind, like those of the young men recruited by Professor Quadri: «[...] riusciva [...] a spingerli a imprese ardite, pericolose e quasi sempre disastrose [...] li sacrificava con disinvoltura in azioni disperate» (p. 168)<sup>54</sup>. Quadri was not a daring man and he showed «una crudele indifferenza per la vita umana» (p. 168)<sup>55</sup>, pushing his followers to take fatal risks while «mai si esponeva personalmente» (p. 169)<sup>56</sup>. On the contrary, Lina Quadri, his wife (Dominique Sanda), as the agent Orlando points out:

... non doveva morire... ma si gettò davanti al marito, per proteggerlo e prese per lui due colpi di rivoltella... lui scappò nel bosco dove lo raggiunse, appunto, quel barbaro di Cirrincione... lei viveva ancora e io, poi, fui costretto a darle il colpo di grazia... una donna coraggiosa più di tanti uomini (pp. 252f.)<sup>57</sup>.

And it is precisely this woman who will make us verify the Platonic temper of our protagonist. She desires him and Marcello «notò che nei suoi occhi si era accesa una fiamma torbida e decisa» (p. 197)<sup>58</sup>, but Marcello abandons the concrete space and time of the physical world in order to put her in an ideal or metaphysical one, that is to say, after or beyond *phýsis*:

---

<sup>52</sup> «Lowered his head. [...] resignation, as if confronting an ever more thankless, yet unalterable and inevitable duty» (p. 174).

<sup>53</sup> «Dottore, if you wish, if this one pleases you... I can always wait» (p. 160)<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> «[...] pushing them into enterprises that were daring, dangerous, and almost always disastrous [...] he sacrificed his disciples with nonchalance in desperate actions» (p. 184).

<sup>55</sup> «A cruel indifference to human life» (p. 184).

<sup>56</sup> «He never exposed himself personally» (p. 184).

<sup>57</sup> «... shouldn't have died... but she threw herself onto her husband to protect him and took two slugs for him. He ran away into the woods where that barbarian Cirrincione reached him. She was still alive and I had to give her the coup de grace... that woman was braver than a lot of men» (p. 283). Bertolucci changes the roles in order to emphasize Marcello's cowardice. Lina escapes into the wood and Marcello who, unlike the novel, sees the assassination, does nothing to save her.

<sup>58</sup> «Saw that dark, decisive flame had leapt up in her eyes» (p. 217).

Marcello la guardava, [...] e capì di averla amata sempre, prima di quel giorno, anche prima di quando l'aveva presentita nella donna di S. (p. 197). [...] Il desiderio non era in realtà che l'aiuto decisivo e potente della natura a qualcosa che esisteva prima di essa e senza di essa (p. 200)<sup>59</sup>.

However, some events are still more significant:

Volle riandare con la memoria alla prima volta che aveva avvertito la sua esistenza: alla visita alla casa di tolleranza a S. [...]. Rammentò che era stato colpito dalla luminosità della fronte di lei [...] la purezza che gli era sembrato di intravedere mortificata e profanata nella prostituta e trionfante in Lina. Il ribrezzo della decadenza, della corruzione e dell'impurità che l'aveva perseguitato tutta la vita e che il suo matrimonio con Giulia non aveva mitigato, adesso comprendeva che soltanto la luce radiosa di cui era circondata la fronte di Lina, poteva dissiparlo. [...]. Così naturalmente, spontaneamente, per sola forza d'amore, egli ritrovava attraverso Lina la normalità tanto sognata. Ma non la normalità quasi burocratica che aveva perseguito per tutti quegli anni, bensì altra normalità di specie quasi angelica. Di fronte a questa normalità luminosa ed eterea, la pesante bardatura dei suoi impegni politici, del suo matrimonio con Giulia, della sua vita ragionevole e smorta di uomo d'ordine, si rivelava nient'altro che un simulacro ingombrante da lui adottato in inconsapevole attesa di un più degno destino. Ora egli se ne liberava e ritrovava se stesso attraverso gli stessi motivi che gliel'avevano fatto, suo malgrado adottare» (pp. 202f.)<sup>60</sup>.

Here we learn about the positive feelings that Marcello has towards Lina Quadri and they are compared with the extremely negative ones aroused by the prostitute in the brothel where he received the precise orders referring his mission. The fact that Moravia chooses a brothel is so significant in itself as to not require any further comment. Bertolucci thinks that it is reasonable to make a reading of *Il conformista* based on Platonic notions. From the very beginning of his film he has shown Italian people as prisoners in a cave and, if we bear this in mind, we shall better understand the protagonist's erotic response. Indeed, if Marcello is seen as abandoning the material world in order to attain the ideal one, we can then recognize that the demonic power of *éros* incarnated in Lina becomes essential. Before her appearance all was darkness: the bureaucratic normality that he had always desired, the heavy harness of his political duties, even the burden of his failed marriage, in short, a fading life that is the result of order and discipline considered as absolute duties. Consequently, his life has been a series of shadows or simulacra – like those seen by Plato's prisoners – of something worthier that is capable of generating enthusiasm and not

---

<sup>59</sup> «Marcello looked at her, [...] And he understood that he had loved her always, even before this day, even before he had felt her coming toward him, in the woman of S. (p. 218). [...] desire was no more than the urgent, powerful help of nature to something that had existed before it and without it» (p. 221).

<sup>60</sup> «He wanted to go back, in his memory, to the first time he had intuited her existence: to his visit to the brothel at S. [...]. He recalled that he had been struck by the luminosity of her forehead [...] the purity he seemed to perceive there – mortified and profaned in the prostitute, triumphant in Lina. He now understood that only the radiant light emanating from Lina's forehead could dissipate the disgust for decadence, corruption, and impurity that had burdened him all his life and which his marriage to Giulia had in no way mitigated. [...]. So naturally, spontaneously, by the strength of love alone, he would find through Lina the normality he had dreamt of for so long. But not the almost bureaucratic normality he had pursued all those years, but another, almost angelic kind of normality. And before this luminous and ethereal normality, the heavy harness of his political duties, his marriage to Giulia, and his dull, reasonable, ordered life revealed itself to be nothing but a cumbersome image he had adopted while he was waiting, all unaware, for a worthier destiny. Now he was liberated from all of that and he could rediscover himself» (pp. 223f.).

resignation or conformism. Now – and tragically – he sees himself as a prisoner and eventually perceives the urge to become free. In other words – if we accept Bertolucci's guidance and perhaps Moravia's one –: he must leave the cave in order to be dazzled by Lina's radiant and pure light, a truly ethereal or uranic ascend – “almost angelic”, Moravia says – of a spirit burdened by the black – rather than dark – harness of Fascism.

Finally, Mussolini falls and it is time to become free. He might not attain freedom but this marvellous new condition will be undoubtedly within reach of new generations such as his daughter's:

Si trattava, pensò, di considerare finito e sepolto tutto un periodo della sua vita e di ricominciare daccapo, su un piano e con mezzi diversi. [...] egli era risoluto a non permettere che il delitto commesso davvero, quello di Quadri, lo avvelenasse con i tormenti di una vana ricerca di purificazione e di normalità. Quello che era stato era stato, Quadri era morto, e, più pesante di una pietra tombale, egli avrebbe calato su quella morte la lapide definitiva di un oblio completo. [...]. Egli si era costretto volontariamente, ostinatamente, stupidamente, dentro legami indegni e in impegni ancora più indegni; e tutto questo per il miraggio di una normalità che non esisteva; adesso questi legami erano spezzati, questi impegni dissolti, e lui tornava libero e avrebbe saputo fare uso della libertà. [...]. Tutto nella vita di sua figlia, pensò, avrebbe dovuto essere brio, estro, grazia, leggerezza, limpidezza, freschezza e avventura; tutto avrebbe dovuto rassomigliare ad un paesaggio che non conosce afe né caligini [...]. Sì, pensò ancora, ella doveva vivere in piena libertà (pp. 286ff.)<sup>61</sup>.

Marcello Clerici experienced a mirage, «la normalità in cui quest'istinto si era imbattuto, non era che una forma vuota dentro la quale tutto era anormale e gratuito» (p. 261)<sup>62</sup>, all was shadows or simulacra. Following the combined suggestions of Moravia and Bertolucci, we can easily foresee the inevitable obstinate response of the collaborationist: «[...] non ho fatto che eseguire gli ordini. [...] Non ho fatto che il mio dovere, come un soldato» (pp. 268f.)<sup>63</sup>. In the end, we are asked to think of a cave which, unlike the Platonic one, has no way out and has been closed definitively after all sorts of remains including a crime and a vast degree of remorse on various counts have – metaphorically speaking – been thrown into it. Here is, then, a kind of geologic or sepulchral darkness that encloses an ethical one, in the naïve belief that, blocked in by the weight of a great tombstone, it will remain hidden and unseen right in the centre of his personality. Will he be free

---

<sup>61</sup> «He would now consider a whole period of his life closed and buried, he thought, and start over from the beginning, on another level and in other ways. [...] he was determined not to let the crime he had actually committed, his crime against Quadri, poison him with the torments of a futile search for purification and normality. Quadri was dead; and he would have liked to drop on top of that death, heavier than a tombstone, the definitive stone of complete and utter oblivion. [...]. He had voluntarily, stubbornly, stupidly bound himself in unworthy chains and to even more unworthy duties; and all this for the mirage of a normality that did not exist. But now these chains were broken, those duties dissolved, and he was free again and would know what to do with his freedom. [...]. Everything in his daughter's life, he thought, should be spirited and inspired, graceful, light, limpid, fresh, and adventurous; everything in it should resemble a landscape that knows neither fog nor the close oppression of heat [...]. Yes, he thought again, she must live in full freedom» (pp. 319-21).

<sup>62</sup> «The normality this instinct had collided with was nothing but an empty form, within which all was abnormal and gratuitous» (p. 291).

<sup>63</sup> «[...] I was only following orders. [...] All I did was do my duty, like a soldier» (p. 262).

now? Probably not, because Marcello knows perfectly well that what remains in the human subconscious – into which he had already tried to introduce the darkest events of his childhood although he did not succeed in this – will have its expression. Indeed, sooner or later he will have to be brave enough to opt for practicing a sort of psychological spelaeology – and not to escape – in order to discover with horror all the unworthy duties, bounds and limits that he shamefully pursued and that annihilated him as a person. The cave will not disappear but everything can be different for his daughter. Like the prisoner that Plato asks us to imagine going out, his daughter – and she will not need to be portrayed – will know the light and a wide range of antonyms of the weight of a life *in carcere et vinculis*: energy, inspiration, grace, lightness, freshness and adventure. The fog and the close oppression of heat belong to closed places whereas freedom loves open landscapes. Italy has emerged from the prison and Marcello hopes that at least his daughter will live in full freedom and this new experience will make her radiant and pure like Lina.

We could sum up as follows: obligation, self-criticism and adoption of formal and content limits in Victorian literature; geological depths where freedom becomes fossilized; lack of masters; uncontested message imposed by the police and the ministry of culture; man as a means and not as a purpose or measure; Chinese boxes and nightmares in order to reflect a world full of vicious circles and labyrinths with no exit; human beings who for the State are ants, bees, fighting cocks or bullfighting bulls; absolute rules pre-establishing, limiting and directing human lives; enthusiasm for order, for becoming a link in a chain and for remaining within normality; massive churches suggesting order, norms and rules; submission; love of symmetry; a whole nation in a asylum; “anything for family and homeland”; service, obedience and duty; extremely right-wing morality; human lives turned into a simulacrum of what they could have been; tombstones to bury a shameful past; unworthy bounds and duties.

Bertolucci knew perfectly well what he was doing. His adaptation has succeeded in choosing the Platonic image of the cave in order to emphasize the oppression under Fascism<sup>64</sup>. Certainly he might be reminded that Plato seduced both Hitler and Mussolini, both Nazism and Fascism, but I am quite certain that he would answer that, in spite of being aware of this fact, in spite of knowing the darkest aspects of Plato’s ideology, philosophies in the end, like images, must be applied and, then, the ethics of the person doing it makes obviously the difference.

---

<sup>64</sup> See *e.g.*: FLEMING (2007) and the bibliography she refers to.

Pau Gilibert Barberà

Universitat de Barcelona

Departament de Filologia Grega

Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585

E – 08007 Barcelona.

[pgilibert@ub.edu](mailto:pgilibert@ub.edu)

## References

APRÀ-PARIGIO 1993

A. Aprà-S. Parigi (a cura di), *Moravia al/nel cinema*, Roma, Associazione Fondo Moravia.

BARONI 2007

M. Baroni, *Bernardo Bertolucci*, Assago, Mediane.

BASILE 2003

B. Basile, *La finestra socchiusa: ricerche tematiche su Dostoevskij, Kafka, Moravia e Pavese*, Roma, Salerno.

BERTOLUCCI-UNGARI-RANVAUD 1987

B. Bertolucci-E. Ungari-D. Ranvaud, *Bertolucci by Bertolucci*, London, Plexus.

CALLIOPE 1999

T. Calliope (ed.), *Alberto Moravia. The Conformist. A Novel*, Hanover, New Hampshire, Steerforth Press.

CAMPANI 1998

E.M. Campani, *L'anticonformista. Bernardo Bertolucci e il suo cinema*, Firenze, Edizioni Cadmo.

CAMPARI-SCHIARETTI 1994

R. Campari-M. Schiaretti (a cura di), *In viaggio con Bernardo: il cinema di Bernardo Bertolucci*, Venezia, Marsilio.

CAPOZZI-MIGNONE 1993

R. Capozzi-M.B. Mignone (eds.), *Homage to Moravia*, Stony Brook (N.Y.), Forum Italicum.

CARABBA et al. 2003

C. Carabba et al. (a cura di), *La regola delle illusioni: il cinema di Bernardo Bertolucci*, Firenze, Aida.

CASETTI 1978

F. Casetti, *Bernardo Bertolucci*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.

DAVIDSON 1999

A. Davidson (ed.), *Alberto Moravia. Contempt*, New York, New York Review Books.

DI BARTOLOMEI 1998

S. Di Bartolomei, *Quell'idea di pace: Moravia politico*, Firenze, Pietro Chegai Editore.

DONOVAN 1990

F. Donovan, *La longue marche de Bertolucci*, in «Cinéma» CDLXVIII 10.

ELKANN 1990

A. Elkann, *Vita di Moravia*, Milano, Bompiani.

ESPOSITO 1978

R. Esposito, *Il sistema dell'indifferenza: Moravia e il fascismo*, Bari, Dedalo libri.

FESTORAZZI 2009

R. Festorazzi, *Il segreto del conformista: vita di Giacomo Antonini, l'uomo che spiò Carlo Rosselli ispirando Moravia*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino.

FLEMING 2007

K. Fleming, *Fascism*, in C.W. Kallendorf (ed.), «*A Companion to The Classical Tradition*», Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 342-54.

FRANCIONE-SPILA 2010

F. Francione-P. Spila (a cura di), *Bernardo Bertolucci. La mia magnifica ossessione: scritti, ricordi, interventi (1962-2010)*, Milano, Garzanti.

GERARD-KLINE-SKLAREW 2000

F.S. Gerard-T.J. Kline-B. Sklarew (eds.), *Bernardo Bertolucci: Interviews*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi.

GERVASUTTI 1993

L. Gervasutti, *I fantasmi di Moravia: gli intellettuali tra romanzo e realtà*, Udine, Aviani Editore.

GOLDIN 1971

M. Goldin, *Bertolucci on The Conformist*, in «Sight & Sound» XL/2 64-6.

HEIDEGGER 1988

M. Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (1943), Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann GmbH.

HEREDERO 2000

C.F. Heredero (ed.), *Bernardo Bertolucci. El cine como razón de vivir*, San Sebastián, Festival Internacional de Cine de Donostia-San Sebastián.

KLINE 1981

T.J. Kline, *The Unconformist Bertolucci's The Conformist*, in A. Horton, J. Magretta (eds.), «*Modern European Film-makers and the Art of Adaptation*», New York, Ungar, 222-37.

KLINE 1994

T.J. Kline, *I film di Bernardo Bertolucci*, Roma, Gremese.



KOLKER 1985

R.P. Kolker, *Bernardo Bertolucci*, New York, Oxford University Press.

KOZMA 1993

J.M. Kozma, *The architecture of imagery in Alberto Moravia's fiction*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, Department of Romance Languages.

MASCARETTI 2006

V. Mascaretti, *La speranza violenta: Alberto Moravia e il romanzo di formazione*, Bologna, Gedit.

MORAVIA 1965

A. Moravia, *Opere complete. Il conformista. Il disprezzo. La noia. L'attenzione. Vol. V*, Milano, Bompiani.

MORAVIA 1998

A. Moravia, *Il conformista* (1951), Milano, Bompiani.

MORAVIA 2000

A. Moravia, *L'uomo come fine e altri saggi* (1964), Milano, Bompiani.

O' HEALY 1988

A. O' Healy, *Re-Envisioning Moravia, Godard's Le Mépris and Bertolucci's Il conformista*, in «Annali d'italianistica» VI 148-61.

ONOFRI 2007

M. Onofri, *Tre scrittori borghesi: Soldati, Moravia, Piovene*, Roma, Gaffi Editore.

PANDINI 1981

G. Pandini, *Invito alla lettura di Alberto Moravia*, Milano, Mursia.

PARIS 1996

R. Paris, *Moravia: una vita controvoigia*, Firenze, Giunti.

PARIS 2001

R. Paris, *Ritratto dell'artista da vecchio: conversazioni con Alberto Moravia*, Roma, Minimum Fax.

PETERSON 1996

T.E. Peterson, *Alberto Moravia*, New York, Twayne Publishers, London, Prentice Hall International.

RANDO 1989

G. Rando, *L'illusione della realtà: Verga, Alvaro, Moravia*, Messina, Edas.

ROSS 1972

J. Ross, *The existentialism of Alberto Moravia*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press.

SADLER 2002

T. Sadler, *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, London-New York, Continuum.

SANGUINETI 2008

E. Sanguineti, *Alberto Moravia*, Milano, Mursia.

SELVAGGI 2007

C. Selvaggi, *Lo sguardo multiplo: cinema e letteratura in Bellocchio, Benigni, Bergman, Bertolucci, Dardly e Pasolini*, Milano, Franco Angeli Editore.

SHOREY (1970)

P. Shorey (ed.), *Plato. The Republic*, London, Loeb Classical Library, William Heinemann Ltd., Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press.

SOCCI 2008

S. Socci, *Bernardo Bertolucci*, Milano, Il Castoro Cinema.

SORLIN 2008

P. Sorlin, *Moravia e il cine: passione e rabbia*, in «Studi novecenteschi. Rivista semestrale di storia della letteratura italiana contemporanea» XXXV (Jan-June) 239-50.

STELLA 2000

M.J. Stella, *Self and self-compromise in the narratives of Pirandello and Moravia*, New York, Peter Lang Publishing.

TONETTI 1995

C. Tonetti, *Bernardo Bertolucci. The Cinema of Ambiguity*, New York, Twayne Publishers, London, Prentice Hall International.

TREDENNICK (1972)

H. Tredennick (ed.), *Aristotle. Metaphysics*, London, Loeb Classical Library, William Heinemann, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press.

UJCICH 2008

V. Ujcich, *L'intervista tra giornalismo e letteratura: Alberto Moravia, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Primo Levi*, Roma, Aracne.

VITTER 1973

C. Vitter, *L'interpretazione psicanalitica dell'opera di Alberto Moravia attraverso quarant'anni di critica*, Roma, Guido Pastena Editore.

VOGEL 1971

A. Vogel, *Bernardo Bertolucci, an Interview*, in «Film Comment» VI/3 25-9.

VOZA 1997

P. Voza, *Moravia*, Palermo, Palumbo.

WAGSTAFF 1982

C. Wagstaff, *Forty-Seven Shots of Bertolucci's Il conformista*, in «The Italianist» II 76-101.

WAGSTAFF 1983

C. Wagstaff, *The Construction of Point of View of Bertolucci's Il conformista*, in «The Italianist» III 64-71.