



EARLY FILM THEORIES IN ITALY 1896-1922

EDITED BY FRANCESCO CASETTI
WITH SILVIO ALOVISIO AND LUCA MAZZEI



Amsterdam
University
Press

Early Film Theories in Italy, 1896–1922

Film Theory in Media History

Film Theory in Media History explores the epistemological and theoretical foundations of the study of film through texts by classical authors as well as anthologies and monographs on key issues and developments in film theory.

Adopting a historical perspective, but with a firm eye to the further development of the field, the series provides a platform for ground-breaking new research into film theory and media history and features high-profile editorial projects that offer resources for teaching and scholarship. Combining the book form with open access online publishing the series reaches the broadest possible audience of scholars, students, and other readers with a passion for film and theory.

Series editors

Prof. Dr. Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany), Weihong Bao (University of California, Berkeley, United States), Dr. Trond Lundemo (Stockholm University, Sweden).

Editorial Board Members

Dudley Andrew, Yale University, United States

Raymond Bellour, CNRS Paris, France

Chris Berry, Goldsmiths, University of London, United Kingdom

Francesco Casetti, Yale University, United States

Thomas Elsaesser, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Jane Gaines, Columbia University, United States

Andre Gaudreault, University of Montreal, Canada

Gertrud Koch, Free University of Berlin, Germany

John MacKay, Yale University, United States

Markus Nornes, University of Michigan, United States

Patricia Pisters, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Leonardo Quaresima, University of Udine, Italy

David Rodowick, University of Chicago, United States

Philip Rosen, Brown University, United States

Petr Szczechpanik, Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic

Brian Winston, Lincoln University, United Kingdom

Film Theory in Media History is published in cooperation with the Permanent Seminar for the History of Film Theories.

Early Film Theories in Italy, 1896–1922

Edited by
Francesco Casetti with
Silvio Alovisio and Luca Mazzei

Amsterdam University Press

Published with the support of MiBAC



Research in collaboration with Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Torino



Under the Aegis of Consulta Universitaria Cinema



Cover illustration: Cover of the Film Journal *La conquista cinematografica*, August 1921

Cover design: Suzan Beijer

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

Amsterdam University Press English-language titles are distributed in the US and Canada by the University of Chicago Press.

ISBN 978 90 8964 855 6

e-ISBN 978 90 4852 710 6

DOI 10.5117/9789089648556

NUR 670

Creative Commons License CC BY NC ND

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>)



© All authors / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam, 2017

Some rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, any part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise).

Table of Contents

The Throb of the Cinematograph	11
<i>Francesco Casetti</i>	

Section 1

Cinema and Modern Life	35
<i>Francesco Casetti</i>	
Cinematography	42
<i>Edipi</i>	
The Philosophy of Cinematograph	47
<i>Giovanni Papini</i>	
Summertime Spectacles: The Cinema	51
<i>Gaio</i>	
Why I Love the Cinema	55
<i>Maffio Maffii</i>	
The Movie Theatre Audience	57
<i>Giovanni Fossi</i>	
The Art of Celluloid	60
<i>Crainquebille</i>	
The Triumph of the Cinema	66
<i>Ricciotto Canudo</i>	
The Death of the Word	75
<i>Fausto Maria Martini</i>	

Section 2

Film in Transition	83
<i>Francesco Casetti</i>	
The Museum of the Fleeting Moment	91
<i>Lucio d'Ambra</i>	
The Woman and the Cinema	95
<i>Haydée</i>	
Darkness and Intelligence	98
<i>Emanuele Toddi</i>	

A Spectatrix is Speaking to You	102
<i>Matilde Serao</i>	
Motion Pictures in Provincial Towns	105
<i>Emilio Scaglione</i>	
Cinematic Psychology	111
<i>Edoardo Coli</i>	
The Cinematograph Doesn't Exist	117
<i>Silvio d'Amico</i>	
The Cinema: School of the Will and of Energy	123
<i>Giovanni Bertinetti</i>	
The Close-up	135
<i>Alberto Orsi</i>	
The Soul of Titles	140
<i>Ernesto Quadrone</i>	

Section 3

Cinema at War	147
<i>Luca Mazzei</i>	
The War, from Up Close	156
<i>Nino Salvaneschi</i>	
That Poor Cinema...	160
<i>Renato Giovannetti</i>	
Families of Soldiers	164
<i>Luigi Lucatelli</i>	
War for the Profit of Industry	168
<i>Renato Giovannetti</i>	
The War and Cinematograph	171
<i>g. pr.</i>	
Max Linder Dies in The War	173
<i>Lucio d'Ambra</i>	
Cinema of War	176
<i>Saverio Procida</i>	

Section 4

Politics, Morality, Education	183
<i>Silvio Alovisio</i>	
The Motion Pictures and Education	197
<i>Domenico Orano</i>	
The Intuitive Method in Religious Education	205
<i>Romano Costetti</i>	
The Cinema and Its Influence on the Education of the People	213
<i>Giovanni Battista Avellone</i>	
The Cinematograph in the Schools	217
<i>Francesco Orestano</i>	
Speech at the People's Theatre	224
<i>Vittorio Emanuele Orlando</i>	
Cinema for the Cultivation of the Intellect	237
<i>Angelina Buracci</i>	
Educational Cinema	244
<i>Ettore Fabietti</i>	

Section 5

Film, Body, Mind	255
<i>Silvio Alovisio</i>	
Collective Psychology	268
<i>Pasquale Rossi</i>	
About Some Psychological Observations Made During Film Screenings	273
<i>Mario Ponzo</i>	
Concerning the Effects of Film Viewing on Neurotic Individuals	278
<i>Giuseppe d'Abundo</i>	
The Ongoing Battle between Gesture and Word	286
<i>Mariano Luigi Patrizi</i>	
The Cinematograph in the Field of Mental Illness and Criminality: Notes	290
<i>Mario Umberto Masini, Giuseppe Vidoni</i>	
Cinema and Juvenile Delinquency	297
<i>Mario Ponzo</i>	

Section 6

The Aesthetic Side	307
<i>Silvio Alovisio and Luca Mazzei</i>	
Problems of Art: Expression and Movement in Sculpture	318
<i>Corrado Ricci</i>	
Scenic Impressionism	321
<i>Sebastiano Arturo Luciani</i>	
The Aesthetics of Cinema	325
<i>Goffredo Bellonci</i>	
The Poetics of Cinema	329
<i>Sebastiano Arturo Luciani</i>	
Manifesto for a Cinematic Revolution	333
<i>Goffredo Bellonci</i>	
Theatre and the Cinema	339
<i>Antonio Gramsci</i>	
The Futurist Cinematography	341
<i>F.T. Marinetti, Bruno Corra, Emilio Settimelli, Arnaldo Ginna, Giacomo Balla, Remo Chiti</i>	
In the Beginning Was Sex...	346
<i>Antonio Gramsci</i>	
Rectangle-Film (25 x 19)	348
<i>Emanuele Toddi</i>	
The Proscenium Arch of My Cinema	353
<i>Anton Giulio Bragaglia</i>	
My Views on the Cinematograph	359
<i>Lucio d'Ambra</i>	
Meditations in the Dark	368
<i>Michele Biancale</i>	

Section 7

Theory in a Narrative Form	373
<i>Luca Mazzei</i>	
Colour Film	381
<i>Roberto Tanfani</i>	
At the Cinema	386
<i>Luigia Cortesi</i>	

A Phantom Pursued	390
<i>Alberto Lombroso</i>	
Miopetti's Duel	398
<i>Aldo Borelli</i>	
Pamela-Films	405
<i>Guido Gozzano</i>	
Feature Film	411
<i>Pio Vanzi</i>	
Me, Riri, and Love in Slippers	421
<i>Luciano Doria</i>	
A Cinematic Performance	427
<i>Federigo Tozzi</i>	
Life, a Glass Theatre	434
<i>Pier Maria Rosso di San Secondo</i>	
The Shears' Reflection	444
<i>Guido Gozzano</i>	
Sources	450
Author Biographies	455
General Bibliography	490
Acknowledgements	505
About the Editors	507
Index of Names	508
Index of Concepts	513
Index of Films	517

The Throb of the Cinematograph

Francesco Casetti

There is one nuisance, however, that does not pass away. Do you hear it? A hornet that is always buzzing, forbidding, grim, surly, diffused, and never stops. What is it? The hum of the telegraph poles? The endless scream of the trolley along the overhead wire of the electric trams? The urgent throb of all those countless machines, near and far? That of the engine of the motor-car? Of the cinematograph?
– Luigi Pirandello, *Shoot!*

‘Theories’ before Theory

This book assembles 60 texts on cinema that appeared in Italy between 1896 and 1922, most of which are printed here in English translation for the first time.¹ The texts are quite varied in nature: editorials from daily newspapers; essays from illustrated magazines; commentaries in film journals; medical and scientific reports; and fictional stories. The attitudes expressed within them are likewise quite varied: some pieces interrogate cinema from the standpoint of its novelty; others express perplexity, seeing it as a threat to established values; others still are descriptions and reflections from critics, screenwriters, and directors interested in understanding how cinema functions or should function. Taken as a whole, this ensemble of texts helps us to grasp the discourse around cinema that was emerging in the first two decades of the twentieth century. We might also say that it constitutes the core of Italian ‘film theory’ between the late 1890s and the early 1920s, provided that we clarify precisely what we mean by this term.

Early ‘theories’ do not possess those characteristics that the great reflections on film from the mid-1920s onward have made us accustomed to—whether in Italy or in the rest of the world. For example, they do not emerge from systematic thought carried out in books and essays. Instead, they are usually sporadic interventions, related to current events or cultural polemics, and are printed in daily newspapers, promotional journals, illustrated papers, and works of fiction. Only in the late 1910s did the success of sophisticated film magazines provide some sort of point of convergence; and only at the very beginning of the 1920s was there an attempt at a more organized study, such as Sebastiano Arturo Luciani’s *Verso una nuova arte*

(*Towards a New Art*), published in 1921. Furthermore, the authors are not individuals whose research deals entirely or even predominantly with cinema; rather, they are journalists, intellectuals, or writers on a wide variety of subjects, for whom cinema is only one of many interests.² Again, only at the end of the 1910s do we see the by-lines of Sebastiano Arturo Luciani, Lucio d'Ambra, and Emanuele Toddi recur. At the same time, there is not a 'discipline' as a frame of reference that clearly outlines how and why cinema should be examined; instead, the contributions respond to a range of different motivations, from simple curiosity about a recent invention to observations of the effects that films have upon social life. Finally, such discursive production seldom calls itself theory; when it does, it is with reticence. This is the case with Luciani, who, in a text written in 1919, '*Lo scenario cinematografico*' ('The Cinematographic Script'), although he assigns theoretical status to his ruminations, acknowledges that they can raise suspicion, and tries to dissolve the distrust by practically applying his ideas.³ The word theory would become relatively common only in the first half of the 1920s, especially in France, Germany, and the US, as a framework in the broader attempt to define how cinema works at different levels.⁴

Nonetheless, if it is true that early 'theories' (in quotation marks) are not the same as classical theory (without quotation marks), it is also true that they respond to a need that classical theory would continue to take into account, even when its overt goal was to describe the basic laws of the medium. They share the need to provide an image of cinema that facilitates its social comprehension and acceptance. Indeed, the main concern of early 'theories' is precisely to offer a definition of a phenomenon that, at first sight, seems puzzling and even scandalous. How can one grasp an apparatus that seems to capture the fleeting moment and ensure the permanence of life? How can one justify a machine with a gaze that goes beyond human capacities? How can one adapt to something that glorifies ubiquity, simultaneity, speed, and details? And how can the enormous success of cinema be explained? The early 'theories', despite their sporadic character, quasi-anonymous writers, lack of a clear 'method', and hesitation toward self-designation, respond to the need for a practical and shared definition of a phenomenon that challenges our expectations and our habits. In this sense, early 'film theories' do not have the character of scientific theory; rather, they are similar to those personal *accounts* that we formulate to make sense of our daily actions. Described by ethnomethodology as a key component of our social lives,⁵ accounts epitomize the ways members of a community signify, describe, or explain the properties of a specific social situation in order to clarify and share its meaning. Likewise, early

theories seek to make what at first might appear ambiguous and strange into something comprehensible and graspable: they show what cinema is and how we encounter it; what distinguishes it and how we can react to it; what it can offer us and why we must accept it. The result of all of this is a 'public image' of cinema that functions as both definition and legitimation.⁶

The status of early film 'theory' as an account—or even as a gloss—explains why it so often appears in disguise, as if it were something 'other' than a theory. Indeed, even if we limit ourselves to texts included in this anthology, 'theories' appear in the form of editorials, such as the ones signed by Giovanni Papini, Adolfo Orvieto, and Enrico Thovez in the dailies *La Stampa* (*The Press*) and *Corriere della Sera* (*Evening Courier*); or of cultural reports, such as Ricciotto Canudo's *Trionfo del cinematografo* ('Triumph of the Cinematograph'); or as political interventions such as those by Vittorio Emanuele Orlando and Antonio Gramsci; or as letters written to newspapers, such as the one by Giovan Battista Avellone, former General Prosecutor at the Appeals Court in Rome; or as pedagogical essays, such as Domenico Orano's *Il cinematografo e l'educazione* ('The Motion Pictures and Education'); or as scientific reports, such as those by experimental psychologist Mario Ponzo; or as clinical observations, such as those by the neurologist Giovanni d'Abundo; or finally as fiction, written by authors such as Guido Gozzano, Federico Tozzi, and Aldo Borelli. And the variety of the texts is even wider still: 'theory' can surface in reviews, in interviews, and even in self-portraits written by professionals. There are also full-blown essays dedicated to cinema, especially near the end of the 1910s, by authors like Sebastiano Arturo Luciani and Goffredo Bellonci (included in this anthology), but this form would become dominant only midway through the 1920s. In the first two decades of the century, 'theory' is distributed across all the fields and divisions of social discourse: only this sort of presence allows for the true 'accountability' of cinema.

To this diversity of formats corresponds a variety of themes, not one of which is exclusive to a single discursive typology. Just to mention a few: cinema produces new forms of perception and reflection, as stressed by the fiction writer Pio Vanzani and the psychologist Mario Ponzo. It has a special ability to reflect new lifestyles that reconfigure both the structure of social relationships and the notion of subjectivity, as underscored by the philosopher Giovanni Papini and the neurologist Giuseppe d'Abundo. It opens up new aesthetic horizons, in which the value of art works depends not only on their intrinsic quality, but on their relationship to consumption, as highlighted by the art critic Enrico Thovez and the philosopher and pedagogue Francesco Orestano. It marks the advent of the new urban

masses as modern nations' social and historical protagonists, as stressed by columnist Angiolo Orvieto and commentator Giovanni Fossi. It generates social risks, but also offers great possibilities for the advancement of the masses, as suggested by Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (in a serious way) and Emilio Scaglione (in an ironic one). 'Theories' tried to parse the novelty of cinema both as a whole and in its more localized aspects through an extensive circulation of questions and remarks.

Attempts to define what cinema is often merge with an effort to detect what it will be, or can be, or must be. Hence the wide variety of perspectives from which cinema is approached: 'theories' address not only cinema's actuality, but also its possibilities, even its purported obligations. This is true in the obvious case of *La cinematografia futurista* ('The Futurist Cinematography'), a manifesto by the most relevant Italian avant-garde movement, which heralds a cinema that will never find its full realization (Marinetti and others 1916); but also of *Orizzonti del cinema avvenire* ('Horizons of Cinema to Come'), in which Giuseppe Fossa describes a cinema of the future that is amazingly akin to television or even Skype.⁷ 'Theory' was often a 'promise' if not a 'dream' of cinema.⁸

Given the wide variety of formats, topics, and stances, no single text managed to dictate the terms of the debate. There are no key contributions functioning as paradigmatic or universal points of reference, as would be the case in the late 1920s with Sebastiano Arturo Luciani's *L'antiteatro* (*The Anti-Theatre*) or in the early 1930s with Alberto Consiglio's *Cinema. Arte e linguaggio* (*Cinema: Art and Language*).⁹ Undoubtedly, certain texts gained widespread attention and resonance, and were paraphrased in subsequent contributions (often without proper acknowledgment, as occurred with Ricciotto Canudo's essay 'Triumph of the Cinematograph', published in late December 1908 in the Florentine newspaper *Il Nuovo Giornale* (*The New Daily*) and then republished, almost verbatim but under a pseudonym, in *La rivista fono-cinematografica* (*Phono-cinematographic Magazine*) in January and February 1909.¹⁰ We do not, however, find a 'canon' in the proper sense of the word. Instead, we find a kind of muddled, crowded discourse, where different contributions emerge, side by side, even overlapping, in an apparently confused but effective dialogue with each other. For instance, within the timeframe of a few months, Giovanni Papini celebrated cinema's popularity in a widespread daily, while Gualtiero Ildebrando Fabbri described and fictionalized film audiences in a book produced as a gift for the most assiduous spectators of a cinema in Milan. At the same time, Angiolo Orvieto reported in the daily *Corriere della Sera* on the differences between cinema and theatre, while in the competing daily, *La Stampa*,

Enrico Thovez commented on cinema's affinity with contemporary life; Ricciotto Canudo, in correspondence from Paris, highlighted cinema's distinct aesthetic traits, while Mario Ponzio, in a scientific report, focused on the physiology of film reception. This amounts to an impressive circuit of discussion, without a clear and singular centre; Michel Foucault would call it a 'discursive formation'.¹¹ It is within this circuit that the image of cinema takes shape: an image whose contours are continually sharpened and which becomes the public portrait of the new invention.

Beginning midway through the 1920s in Italy and in many other countries, the theory of cinema would begin to arrange and order this rather chaotic circuit of discourses. More precise methodologies would emerge, key themes would become more widely shared, and the sketch of a canon would take shape. The need to define cinema in a practical way, however, would continue, albeit in connection with more specific contexts. What is the cinema as an art? As a national industry? As a language? Even within a more clearly-developed framework, the need for an 'account' would not completely disappear. This need fully re-emerged in recent years, at which point the convergence between different media obligated cinema to radically transform itself. Cinema's new forms of existence reactivated the need to offer immediate and shared definitions of the phenomenon, and theory rediscovered, at least in part, the modality of 'theory'.¹²

A Tentative Periodization

Although the panorama of early 'theories' in Italy may appear varied and complex, one may nonetheless attempt to carry out a periodization of its stages.¹³

Reflection on cinema began just before the new invention's arrival, but real debate would only take shape midway through the first decade of the twentieth century, in conjunction with the opening of the first movie theatres, and in accordance with what was happening in much of the rest of Europe. 1907 is a crucial year: in addition to the interventions by Giovanni Papini and Angiolo Orvieto contained in this anthology, which begin by dealing, not coincidentally, with the increasing number of cinemas in cities and towns, Edmondo de Amicis wrote a short story associating film with the increased relevance of daydreaming, and Gualtiero Fabbri wrote the first Italian novel about cinema, which described the formation of a new public.¹⁴ 1908 is equally dense, with the appearance of texts by Enrico Thovez and Ricciotto Canudo that advance cinema as an exemplary object of modernity.

The same year brings us three notable texts not included in this anthology, namely a brief essay by Pietro Tonini on the social influence of cinema, a text by Tullio Panteo on the personal experience of the spectator, and a discussion between Ettore Janni and Gabriele d'Annunzio, at the time the most popular Italian writer.¹⁵

The venues where these texts appear, the daily newspapers and the nascent magazines on cinema, deserve some attention. In the daily newspapers we find, between the end of the nineteenth century and the onset of the twentieth century, a growing interest in everything related to modernity, and urban modernity in particular. This period also sees the invention of the 'third page', which is devoted to cultural debates and helps Italian intellectuals, in general rather conservative, to familiarize themselves with and weigh in on various aspects of contemporary culture.¹⁶ Finally, daily newspapers host columns (like those of Canudo in *Il Nuovo Giornale*, entitled '*Lettere di vita*' ('Life's Letters') and '*Lettere di arte*' ('Art's Letters'), which seek to keep the reader abreast of emerging phenomena. These developments explain why *La Stampa*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Nuovo Giornale*, and *La Tribuna* (*The Tribune*) begin to devote attention to the cinema. There even is a request that more space be devoted to it.¹⁷ In any case, it is in newspaper pages that the presence of cinema in public discussion begins to be substantial.

In magazines, cinema is first placed alongside other forms of entertainment or other new phenomena.¹⁸ The titles of several publications founded in 1907 are indicative: in Milan, *La Rivista fono-cinematografica e degli automatici, strumenti penumatici ed affini* (*Review of Phonographs, Cinema, Automatic Technology, Pneumatic Instruments and the Like*), in Naples *Il Cinematografo. Giornale mondano illustrato di fotografia-elettricità-proiezioni luminose-macchine parlanti-musica e caffè concerti* (*The Cinematograph: Illustrated and Fashionable Journal of Photography-Electricity-Luminous Projections-Talking Machines-Music and Music Halls*) and *La Lanterna* (*The Lantern*). *Piccolo corriere politico-artistico, letterario* (*The Lantern: Little Politico-artistic and Literary Newspaper*). In the years immediately following, cinema would increasingly come to occupy centre stage: examples are *La Cinematografia italiana. Rivista dell'arte e dell'industria* (*The Italian Cinema: Magazine of Art and Industry*), directed by Gualtiero Fabbri, and *Lux. Rivista mensile di cinematografia, fotografia, fonografia e affini* (*Lux: Monthly Magazine of Cinema, Photography, and the Like*), edited by Gustavo Lombardo, both founded in 1908; but also *La Vita cinematografica* (*The Cinematic Life*), directed by Alfonso A. Cavallaro, founded in 1910, and *Cinema*, directed by Alfredo Morvillo, founded in 1911. The life of these publications is often brief and precarious, with mergers and frequent changes in title.¹⁹

Their contents, too, are often ephemeral, with many news items intended for those in the profession and with many advertisements. In any case, they consider cinema primarily as a 'modern' invention. Thus, many interventions inquire directly into the forms and meaning of cinematic experience, in both individual and collective terms, such as Maffio Maffii's 'Why I Love Cinema' in *La Lanterna* and Giovanni Fossi's 'The Movie Theatre Audience' in *La Cine-Phono e La rivista Phono-cinematografica* (*The Cine-Phono and the Magazine of Phono-Cinema*). The first section of this anthology provides a good representation of this initial moment, both in the sources of the texts (daily newspapers and magazines) and the themes (cinema as emblem of modern experience.)

This vein of reflection continued in the following years, albeit in slightly different ways and in a different tone. In the 1910s, the cinema was no longer a novelty, but a familiar presence; this fact had consequences both for the venues and the themes of the interventions. Now, in newspapers we find lengthy reports (like the one on the place of the cinema in national culture, published in 1913 in Florence's *Il Nuovo Giornale*)²⁰ or vibrant exchanges of opinion (like the one published in *Il Giornale d'Italia* in 1913 on the possibility that the cinema could supplant the theatre).²¹ Magazines also gave more space to general reflections, which seek a deeper understanding of some of cinema's most important characteristics. This is particularly true of a new generation of magazines founded in the second half of the 1910s, including *Apollon*, *L'Arte Muta* (*The Silent Art*), and *Penombra* (*Shadow*). These elegant and sophisticated journals bear witness to the increasing penetration of cinema within the middle- and upper-middle class: the topics discussed reflect the curiosity and the taste of these social strata. Indeed, we find portraits of and interviews with the main divas of Italian cinema, behind the scenes reports, but also essays on the aesthetic nature of film, its capacity to transform habits and gestures (especially in women), the type of language that it constructs (e.g. the use of the close-up), the new forms of perception it introduces (particularly in terms of attention), the different sense of space and time that it creates (in making us assign greater value to the fleeting moment), and eventually its influence on fashion, interior design, and lifestyle. The tone and style of this publication is neatly characterized by the words that open the first issue of *Penombra*: 'A cinema magazine, as it must be now that the cinema occupies so much of the public interest and influences more or less everything, can only be one of supreme elegance, varied, pleasing, interesting, and stylish.'²²

In this approach to cinema there is no lack of contradictions. One is particularly apparent: the prevalence of the male point of view. Italian

society was even more deeply patriarchal than today. The iconic depictions penned by Emilio Scaglione in one of these sophisticated journals, and by Edoardo Coli in a more popular publication offer good examples: underlying the transformations in women's body language and in their attitudes towards sex, the two authors capture a relevant novelty, and at the same time express a subtle fear. And yet we can find counterpoints in the endorsement of cinema by Haydée and in the passionate first-person report by Matilde Serao, at the time a very successful writer, which introduce female voices to the choir.

The second section of this anthology tries to capture this sense of novelty and contradiction. We entitled it *Film in Transition* because it offers a snapshot of the broader evolution—whose apex was in the mid-1910s—from film as unexpected invention to film as an already established presence, able to attract the middle- and upper-middle classes. Consequently, it also charts the change from an approach based on surprise to a more focused exploration. In this vein, even though these texts do not adopt a scientific approach, as do a series of studies rooted in empirical research that are collected in two following sections of the book, they treat with great insight specific phenomena, such as the reconfiguration of social groups and castes (Serao), the transformation of ethical values (Scaglione, Haydée), the construction of new forms of consumption (Toddi), the possible development of an art based on mechanical reproduction (D'Amico), and eventually the ideal of a more active and self-determined man (Bertinetti). The cinema is not only the emblem of modern experience, but also a cultural object that merits careful attention.

Located almost exactly in between the two moments I have sought to summarize above there is a brief period of great interest. This develops in tandem with the Italo-Turkish War, fought between September 1911 and October 1912, over the Italian conquest of Libya. As Sila Berruti and Luca Mazzei clearly demonstrates in their research, the Libyan war is a mediated war—perhaps the very first in the world. The war is not only widely covered by the press, which offers regular correspondence from the front and numerous nationalistic editorials, but also characterized by the military's use of communication technologies like the telegraph and aerial photography, and finally by a substantial use of cinema.²³ Regularly-produced newsreels shot in combat zones and in Italy, are supplemented by fiction films related to the conflict and what Luca Mazzei calls 'postcards from Italy', or films of soldiers' family members meant to be projected for combatants in Libya.

Commentators stress three aspects of cinema pertinent to this new wartime milieu. Primarily, cinema captures reality with an intensity and

truth absent from other media. The realism of war reportage, among other things, makes the traditional genres of cinema seem completely inadequate. As Salvaneschi writes in a text we included: 'The tragedies, sentimental comedies, and gloomy dramas fell by the wayside as soon as the living and vibrant early visions of the war presented themselves with their modern spirit and sharp eyes.' Second, cinema elicits a strong reaction from the public, who gain a sense of patriotic pride from watching the endeavours of the soldiers (this is particularly the case, as Salvaneschi suggests, for the working-class public). Third, cinema has a function that we might call 'telepathic': not only does it allow spectators to experience combat as though they were participating in it directly (and without putting their lives in danger, as Salvaneschi and Giovannetti add ironically), but also allows the soldiers, thanks to the 'postcards from Italy', to see their loved ones on the screen, and to interact with them as though they were really there. Luigi Lucatelli offers an excellent account of this phenomenon: attending a projection in Tripoli, he writes of the enthusiastic reactions of the spectators when they saw their loved ones on the screen, but also the sense of sadness that emerged when the relatives of dead soldiers appeared.²⁴ There were, of course, also critical interventions, in particular those of Renato Giovannetti, who is scandalized by the replacement of real reportage by false documentaries in which soldiers had to perform roles, seeing this as a way of tricking the public rather than making it a participant in the action. And there were claims for a more radical role by cinema: in an intervention written during the First World War, Saverio Procida predicts that military historians will be able to use filmed images as a primary source for their research; thanks to their fidelity to the real, these images allow for a better understanding of how battles unfolded than traditional forms of documentation—but also show the extent to which war is a collective crime and a universal madness. The third section of this anthology, edited by Luca Mazzei, deals with the discussion that war cinema generated within the context of 'theories'.

In the first half of the 1910s, we find two other types of reflections that move beyond the discourses we have encountered up to this point in an attempt to become deeper and more specific. They exhibit professional or scientific skills, not relying on simple and impressionistic observations, but adopting precise points of view based on data, and following pre-existing methods. This starts to be clear in the texts collected in the fourth section: the overriding theme there is the effect that cinema has or could have on the public, in particular the working class, children, and adolescents. Cinema presents itself as a formidable instrument for the education of the masses, but the voice of the expert is needed to truly explore and activate

its full pedagogical potential. We find this in Domenico Orano, whose observations are based on a teaching experiment in the Roman district of Testaccio, or on the opposite ideological front, in the priest Romano Costetti, who advocates the use of an intuitive method, taking into account both his experience as an educator and his theological knowledge. (His justification for the use of images relies, although not explicitly, upon the arguments of the iconodules at the Second Council of Nicea). Another expert is Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, the future prime minister, whose expertise lies in politics and who seeks to align the use of cinema with the process of Italy's modernization. Also from the political field is Giovan Battista Avellone, whose intervention expresses a deep cinophobia as he advocates a potent censorship to prevent the social damage caused by cinema; but here, too, the discourse is marked by an indisputable expertise, acquired by Avellone in his role as General Prosecutor.

In the fifth section, the scientific and disciplinary orientation of the discourse becomes much clearer. Here, the texts revolve around the relationship between cinema and the study of the mind: particular attention is devoted to the way that art, including cinema, externalizes emotions, giving them a more solid form and allowing them to become more widely shared (Pasquale Rossi), to the perceptual modalities activated by a film and to synesthetic processes in particular (Mario Ponzo), to cinema's ability to provoke reactions in neurotic subjects (Giuseppe d'Abundo) or in people with psychic and moral weakness (Mario Umberto Masini and Giuseppe Vidoni), and to the possibilities of exactly rendering feelings in a film through facial expressions and physical posture (Mariano Luigi Patrizi). The expertise of these authors is even more clearly marked: a scholar of collective psychology; a disciple of Gestalt psychology; three psychiatrists, two of them with an interest in criminology; and a physiologist. Ponzo's text, which closes the section and deals with the social effects of cinema, clearly exemplifies the dialogue between sociological and psychological approaches.

The fourth and fifth sections illustrate how early discourse around cinema quickly develops a clearer set of thematic concerns and its own internal specializations. The cinema is a complex object with many different facets, and thus must be dealt with from the perspective of many different specialized approaches. Its many links with mass society and its deep influence upon new types of subjectivity, in particular, call for a deepened and specialized attention. While we are certainly not dealing with established research paradigms, we can see in these efforts the beginnings of what would become scientific approaches applied to cinema (which Filmology,

thirty years later, would seek to gather together into a unified approach). These two sections document the opening of 'theory' to new horizons (even if in some senses the subtlety and sensitivity of a Papini or a Thovez remain unsurpassed). Both sections are edited by Silvio Alovio, whose research offers a detailed picture of the presence of pedagogical, social, and cognitive sciences in early discussions of cinema.²⁵

In a completely different direction, a wide debate on the aesthetic status of cinema develops. This debate finds fertile ground in the appearance of a new type of magazine, which is supported by abundant and lavish advertising, characterized by inventive layouts and sophisticated contents, and directed towards a more educated and demanding bourgeois public. The years between 1916 and 1919 are crucial, representing a phase of consolidation of the Italian film industry, after the boom of the beginning of the decade and prior to the emergence of a crisis that will make itself apparent in the years with which this anthology closes. Among the most representative publications we find the aforementioned journals *L'Arte muta*, published in Naples from 1916 to 1917 under the direction of Antonio Scarfoglio and Francesco Bufi; *Apollon*, a Roman monthly connected to the Giannantoni family's Cosmopoli Film and published from 1916 to 1921 under the direction of Goffredo Bellonci; and *Penombra*, directed by Tomaso Monicelli, which after two issues published in late 1917 and early 1918, takes the title *In Penombra (In Shadow)* and continues publishing from June 1918 to November 1919.²⁶

In these magazines, we find frequent contributions inquiring as to whether or not the cinema is an art, and what sort of art it is, signed by authors like Sebastiano Arturo Luciani, who in 1921 collects his essays in the first Italian volume of theoretical scope or Goffredo Bellonci, who would become one of the leaders of Roman intellectual circles.²⁷ Their approach is more traditional than, for example, that of Canudo's 'Triumph of Cinema', published in 1908, and perhaps the first attempt to deal with the aesthetic problems posed by film: rather than locating the novel characteristics of cinema, they attempt to find analogies between it and the art of forms of the past, or trace within it traits that connect it to artistic processes in general. Bellonci, for example, suggests that cinema (unlike photography) is an art because it implies an author able to transform the reproduction of reality into something expressive, while Luciani sees it as a revival of pantomime and hopes that it will merge with music. Such texts legitimate cinema as an art, rather than show how it challenges the idea of art itself. There are also some more advanced voices, such as those of Lucio d'Ambra and most of all, Emanuele Toddi; but even a text like *Cinematografia Futurista* ('Futurist

Cinematography'), while it praises cinema for being the most innovative art and heralds the ultimate demise of older means of expression, it advances a very traditional idea of film as mere tool for depicting unusual situations or putting side by side contrasting elements.

And yet, the presence of a vibrant debate on the aesthetic nature of cinema is full of interest: it offers evidence of how many worries film raised in a society still imbued with classical values and anxious to re-absorb anything new back into tradition. In this framework, we are far from any clear and univocal definition of cinema as an art. What emerges, instead, are strategies of resistance and negotiation. At the same time, the great variety of aesthetic doctrines professed at the time—each of them claiming to have an answer about cinema, as Silvio Alovio and Luca Mazzei state in their introduction to Section 6—does not help locate a convergent solution to the question. The aesthetic debate in the 1910s is looking neither for a film specificity—as it would be in the following decade—nor for a specificity in its own approach.

Alongside all of the phases noted above, we find the emergence of a rich body of narrative fiction dedicated to cinema. Stories dealing with cinema in a way that carries great theoretical value appear early on: we might think of *Cinematografo. Scene famigliari per fanciulle* (*Cinema: Family Scenes for Girls*), the theatrical piece by Anna Vertua Gentile, or the previously mentioned Edmondo De Amicis novella *Cinematografo cerebrale* (*Cerebral Cinema*) as well as Gualtiero Ildebrando Fabbri's novella *Al cinematografo* (*At the cinema*).²⁸ Of course, the most famous example is Luigi Pirandello's *Si gira...* (*Shoot!*), published serially in *Nuova Antologia* (*New Anthology*) between 1 June and 16 August 1915, and then printed as a book in 1916 (and almost immediately translated into English).²⁹ The field, however, is much wider, thanks to numerous short stories published in magazines, both by well-known authors such as Guido Gozzano, Rosso di San Secondo, or Federigo Tozzi, and lesser known ones demonstrating an extraordinary sensitivity to the cinema and what it represents within the context of modern experience. Section 7 of this anthology represents only a small selection of this narrative production.

In his introduction to Section 7, Luca Mazzei argues the distinctiveness of a 'theory' in a 'narrative form'. On my side, I want to highlight two primary themes that emerge within in this section. On one hand, we find a constant comparison between cinema and life in which the former substitutes for the latter, to the point that life either no longer matters or eludes the grasp of those who want to live it. This is the case, for example, with the two brothers in Pio Vanzi's '*Lungometraggio*' ('Feature Film'): the heroic feats

of the one brother, a film actor, seem more real and are more appreciated than those of the other brother, a soldier at war. This issue also arises in Aldo Borelli's *'Il duello di Miopetti'* ('Miopetti's Duel'), which deals with an actor who can no longer manage to be himself, only the character he plays on screen. On the other hand, there is constant reflection on the body, as if by idealizing the bodies of the actors, cinema shows the feebleness of real bodies; Federigo Tozzi's *'Una recita cinematografica'* ('A Cinematic Performance') and Guido Gozzano's *'Il riflesso delle cesoie'* ('The Shears' Reflection') are two interesting examples of this theme. One can easily locate Pirandellian echoes in both of these themes, but the variations in less well-known stories are, nonetheless, quite symptomatic.

After 1922, the year with which this anthology closes, cinema would continue to be at the centre of a rich series of reflections, but the atmosphere had partly changed. I am referring here to the political atmosphere: 1922 is the year when fascism took power and started to assert increasing control over Italian civil society, introducing an alternative way to modernize the country. Even though the direct supervision of cinema by fascism will come about only in 1934, with the creation of a special Governmental Agency on Cinema, the *Direzione generale della cinematografia*, its interventions were clear from the beginning through entities like L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa or LUCE, founded in 1925, and whose task was to promote the production of educational films and documentaries from the point of view of their political utility. As for the cultural atmosphere, the early 1920s saw the collapse of Italian film production—a crisis that lasted for more than a decade—and Italian screens were invaded by foreign films, especially American. The effects on 'theory' were manifold. On the one hand, whilst many professionals were obliged to migrate elsewhere (mostly to Germany and France), many intellectuals, formerly engaged in cinema as critics, screenwriters, or even directors, moved back to literature, theatre, or journalism. A good example is Lucio d'Ambra who resumed literary activity in the early 1920s. At the same time, the sophisticated journals that defined the second half of the 1910s were no longer generously supported by the Italian film companies and had to cease publication. Although a certain kind of film discourse lost its usual space, new formats and champions arose. Firstly, a stable critical apparatus emerged, responding to an established audience. This was manifest in the fixed sections in newspapers and magazines. Examples here would include the reviews of Alberto Savinio in *Corriere Italiano* (*Italian Courier*) between 1923 and 1924, and of Piero Gadda Conti in *La Fiera Letteraria* (*The Literary Fair*) from 1926 onward; other nationwide dailies would follow, like *Corriere della Sera* in 1929, with a regular column

by Filippo Sacchi, and *La Stampa* in 1932, with one by Mario Gromo. Second, cinema became of interest to a wider category of highbrow critic, who took up film in literary and art journals. Exemplary of this tendency is the March 1927 issue of the Florentine magazine *Solaria*, dedicated to 'Letterati al cinema' ('Writers at the Cinema'), and including pieces by authors, poets, and intellectuals such as Eugenio Montale, Giacomo Debenedetti, Riccardo Bacchelli, Giacomo Alberti, Ugo Betti, and Anton Giulio Bragaglia.³⁰ Finally, there was a wider presence of contributions dealing with cinema in depth, examining its specific modes of expression and production through the lens of established philosophical or ideological paradigms. These become particularly prominent at the beginning of the 1930s from the standpoint both of aesthetic research and political debate. On the aesthetic front, a key role was played by scholars like Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti and Alberto Consiglio, and by magazines like *Cine-Convegno* (*Cine-Conference*).³¹ On the political side, a 'national' cinema debate was first hosted in newspapers like *L'Impero* (*The Empire*), directed by Mario Carli, or *Il Tevere* (*The Tiber*), directed by Telesio Interlandi, and later led in particular by Alessandro Blasetti in magazines such as *Il mondo a lo schermo* (*The World Onscreen*) (1926), *Lo Schermo* (*The Screen*) (1926–1930) and *Cinematografo* (*Cinematograph*) (1927–1930). Such a change in atmosphere, at the political and cultural level, resulted in a deep transformation of the tone of discourses on cinema: in the second half of the 1920s and even more forcefully in the 1930s, in Italy as elsewhere, 'theory' (with quotations marks) became theory (without quotation marks).

An 'Imperfect' Globalization

What about Italian 'theories' in relation to the debates taking place in other countries? Sourcebooks such as Richard Abel's on French film theory 1907 to 1939, Jaroslav Anděl and Petr Szczepanik collection of Czech theory 1908 to 1939, and Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer and Michael Cowan's compendium on German theory 1907 to 1933, offer an invaluable wealth of documents that form a benchmark for comparison to Italian situation.³²

Firstly, the unsystematic character of early 'theory' is not a uniquely Italian trait. During the first two decades of the twentieth-century, both in Europe and, to some extent, in the United States, theoretical discourse is not a precisely-defined category, but rather advances through a variety of approaches that offer a description and explanation of what cinema seems to be.

Second, many themes at the centre of the Italian debate can also be found in other national contexts. The contrast with the other arts, the speculation about audience reaction, and the pedagogical use of cinema are all widespread topics. In particular, the close relationship between cinema and modern experience (speed, ubiquity, mass consumption, mechanical reproduction of life, etc.) is common in debates everywhere. Such commonality can be traced through the recurrence of certain terms across different languages: '*cinema educatore*' (which expressed the hope that film would have a pedagogical role) corresponds to the French '*le film éducateur*'. The Italian '*arte meccanica*' (which underscored the new art's technical qualities) matches the French '*art mécanique*'. '*Scuola di vizio*' (which was meant to capture the fear that film provoked bad behaviour) is reminiscent of the English term 'school of vice' and the French '*école de débaucherie*', etc.

Third, the major phases that Italian 'theory' passes through recall the precise trajectory of theoretical discourse in other countries. Particularly in France, we find an extremely varied period first, with many sporadic accounts, as well as a specialized press attentive to a wide variety of subjects, from the technical innovations of cinema to its moral implications, from its ability to create new types of occupations to its connection with other areas of modern life, like sports.³³ This phase in France is followed by a second one, surrounding the period of the First World War, which is more attuned to the bourgeois public and is characterized by a greater interest in aesthetic themes, more refined and high-brow publications, and a series of cultural initiatives dedicated to cinema.³⁴ The same sequence of development can be traced almost exactly in Germany, as Kaes, Baer, and Cowan have brilliantly proven.

Film is the first modern object that in reaching a universal audience also raises world-wide interest. The parallels between different national and cultural contexts help us to understand the extent to which this was convergent interest. We can recognize the presence of a sort of 'globalization', even though, at the beginning of the twentieth century, we do not find the systemic and deliberate action that would later come to characterize it. And yet, if it is true that early debates speak the language of 'globalization', it is also true that such globalization was 'imperfect'. The lack of systematic references to foreign authors is symptomatic of this insufficiency, except in certain academic essays, where citations are customary,³⁵ or in Catholic journals like *Civiltà Cattolica* (*Catholic Civilization*) based on pre-existing circuits of information,³⁶ and surprisingly in military sources.³⁷ Still, a need to demonstrate being *au courant* is expressed in an assortment of 'news

from the world’—sometimes off the mark or faked, as in Edipi’s text that opens this anthology. It is also voiced through indirect references: Giovanni Papini’s claim about the role of money in the modern world could quite easily lead to Georg Simmel, even though the German philosopher is not directly mentioned.³⁸ This need also finds expression in a series of learned references that connect the discourse around cinema to on-going cultural debates that are not necessarily about cinema: Fausto Maria Martini describes the characters on the screen as ‘men hounded by a nightmare,’ evoking Maurice Maeterlinck, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Abel Bonnard as well as Emanuel Swedenborg and Jaufré Rudel. Finally, the way in which the authors playfully and ironically adopt aliases that refer to famous literary characters by foreign writers and critics—such as Fantasio, a character from the eponymous play by Alfred De Musset, or Crainquebille, the protagonist of a novel by Anatole France—conveys a certain need to stay current.

The ‘imperfect globalization’ of early Italian film ‘theories’, however, calls attention to elements that are unique to Italy—most importantly, the historical context. In terms of modernization processes, Italy lagged behind England, Germany, and France. At the end of the nineteenth century, it remained a barely industrialized country, and its artistic world had yet to experience avant-garde movements. When modernity arrived, it not only had an extremely powerful impact, but also advanced at an accelerated rate, as though seeking to make up for lost time. Cinema became an emblem and an agent of this violent change. Why else would Giovanni Fossi place it among the inventions capable of liquidating the old world and shaping a new one? ‘New discoveries create new places and new customs—after having destroyed the old ones. In the same way, the destruction of certain neighbourhoods and the opening of new roads create new ways of living together and do away with old and traditional customs.’³⁹

These transformations affected living conditions and lifestyles, but also forms of expression. In this respect, Italian ‘theories’ are perhaps more advanced than those found elsewhere. In Europe, the first theoretical writings presented themselves above all as ‘testimonies’ to the transformations that cinema brought about in the modern individual’s habits, values, and ways of thinking; they often express sympathy for and acceptance of these transformation, though rarely indicate that they might change the writer’s own discourse. There are exceptions: in France, authors like Blaise Cendrars or Jean Epstein—and here we are already near the beginning of the 1920s—adopted a form of writing that sought to imitate the object it dealt with, and thus used a syntax rather close to that of film. In Italy, Futurism favoured this mimetic character: a *parolibero* work like Carlo Carrà’s

Cineamore ('Cine-love') attempts to find equivalences between verbal and cinematic expressions.⁴⁰ Pirandello's *Si gira...* also attempts to incorporate the sensibilities created by film from into novelistic writing.⁴¹ But most of all, the syntax and iconography of film is visible in the layout of several film magazines: *L'Arte Muta*, for example, adopts innovative elements like fold-out pages in order to reproduce the big screen, and pages made of different materials to evoke the content (rice paper used for an ad for a film with a Japanese subject, and so on). In short, in Italy cinema at times modifies the very medium of theoretical discourse. And yet, we also find the opposite situation: you will find in this anthology many texts written in a quite traditional manner, laden with literary references, tainted by a stylish—if not baroque—prose. It is as if certain authors must display their traditional culture in order to speak of cinema. Do they aim to leap into the most advanced modernity or to relish lagging behind it? Film 'theory' reflects this typical Italian dilemma.

Indeed, the radical transformation brought about by modernity inevitably elicited resistance. As an exemplary modern object, cinema counted on legions of enthusiastic followers, but also paid the price for its success. Hence, two opposing fronts emerged: on one hand, we find '*cinématophiles*' and, on the other hand, there are '*cinématophobes*', to use two terms introduced in France by Paul Souday in 1917. Resistance to cinema was quite widespread in Europe: and we find these radical positions in Italy as well, like the letter by former General Prosecutor Giovan Battista Avellone, contained in this anthology, or a book by Piero Pesce-Maineri (not contained here) that accuses film of being at the root of an infinite number of cases of criminality, serious mental disturbances, and a general debasing of taste.⁴² Most common, however, is a tentative attitude: critics admit that cinema has threatening aspects, but declare themselves certain (or at least hopeful) that it will manage to avoid these in favour of more positive effects. A sort of 'conditional faith' can be found in many contributions, and constitutes a shared attitude among a rather diverse range of writers (after all, an interest in cinema unites nationalists in favour of war such as Nino Salvaneschi, pacifists like Lucio d'Ambra, Marxists like Ettore Fabietti, radicals like Domenico Orano, and Catholics like Romano Costetti). We find it, for example, at the core of the 1913 speech given in Milan by Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, future prime minister: there is no doubt that cinema propagates models of antisocial behaviour, but it is, at the same time, an exceptional instrument for the elevation of the masses. On the opposing political front, we find the same attitude among Catholics: a magazine hardly sympathetic to cinema like *Civiltà Cattolica* (*Catholic Civilization*), while condemning the new

invention, recognizes its extraordinary effectiveness and hopes that it can be used for educational ends.⁴³ On the aesthetic level above all, 'conditional faith' is practically the norm. Luciani provides a good encapsulation of this tendency: 'Although the cinema is not yet art, it carries within itself the possibilities of becoming one; of becoming, in fact, the most representative and only original art of our times.'⁴⁴ Even an enthusiast like Giovanni Fossa adheres to the same formula: 'I love, I adore, the cinema. I love it for what it is, and I adore it for what it could become.'⁴⁵ In short, in Italy a compromise is sought between detractors and enthusiastic: all agree that the cinema not only *is*, but most importantly, it *will be*.

The three particularities of the Italian film 'theories' that I have noted (related to historical context, the forms of critical discourse, and the attitude towards the new) reinforce the idea of 'imperfect globalization'. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, film debates tend to ignore national boundaries, as they do with borders separating nations, types of discourse, discipline, and ideology; at the same time, they reflect and respond to a national context. 'Theories' are transnational, trans-discursive, trans-disciplinary, and trans-ideological, but also circumstantial. The following years would untie this paradox. During the course of the 1920s, and even more distinctly during the 1930s, a more accentuated national identity emerged. Discussions about cinema would typically refer to Italian philosophical contexts and political processes; in the case of the first, to neo-idealism, and in the case of the second, to fascism and then to anti-fascism. Foreign contributions—including Soviet film theory—would be appropriated by institutions like the State School of Cinema (the *Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia*) and would then become the core of a nationally-oriented project. After the war, the balance was reversed: Italian film theory gained an international echo, and the neo-realistic dogmas influenced foreign debates. The 1970s, in Italy like elsewhere, saw film theory finally reach a global dimension: auteur theory, semiotics, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and avant-garde film theory provide a language that is irreversibly universal.

Notes

1. Many of these texts are hardly accessible, even in Italian, because they have not been republished since their first appearance. For the status of the text included in this anthology, see the section 'Sources'.
2. Many of these authors, despite having occupied prominent positions in intellectual debates of their time, have vanished from historical memory.

Their biographies, which close this volume, and whose reconstruction often entailed substantial effort, allow historical gaps to be filled. For a comprehensive account of the relationship between intellectuals and cinema in the early twentieth century, see Gambacorti, *Storie di cinema*; Brunetta, *Intelletuali italiani*; Andreatza, *Identificazione di un'arte*; Alovizio, *Voci del silenzio*; and Mazzei, 'Quando il cinema'.

3. 'This kind of considerations, I know, raise distrust in professionals. [...] And yet, to demonstrate how these theories can be substantial, I will apply them to a well-known story[...]' Luciani, 'Scenario cinematografico'. It may be interesting to compare Luciani's argument with Freeburg, *Art of Photoplay*, who claims for himself the 'role of theorist and philosopher,' and, at the same time, recognizes the primacy of producers in dealing with cinema. A few years later, Louis Delluc, in an ironical self-portrait also depicts himself as a 'théoricien' and, at the same time, he makes light of such a designation. See Delluc, 'Quelques personnes'.
4. A key role was played by the extremely successful Bálazs, 'Visible Man,' who openly advocates the need of a film theory mostly but not only associated to a *Kunstphilosophie des films* ('art philosophy of films'). As evidence of the circulation of the word in the 1920s, see Seldes 'Open Letter', who praises the usefulness of a competence that apparently is useless. And yet, the pre-Bálazs occurrences of the word must not be forgotten. Contrary to what David Rodowick's *Elegy for Theory* claims, film theory emerged relatively early, and it was not exclusively focused on aesthetic questions.
5. Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*.
6. We can also say that 'early theories' provide a first 'consciousness' about film, if we take the word 'consciousness' in its cultural aspects, instead of in its cognitive ones. On the concept of 'consciousness' as an alternative to the idea of theory, see Hidalgo, 'Early American Film'.
7. Fossa, 'Orizzonti cinematografici avvenire' suggests that the cinema of the future will serve above all to allow us to keep in touch with faraway loved ones—as well as those taken from us by death.
8. On theory as 'promise of cinema,' see the 'Introduction' to the impressive anthology of German theories from 1907 to 1933 by Kaes, Baer and Cowan, *Promise of Cinema*. However, it is worth mentioning that Italian 'theory,' even if it is open to the subjunctive and conditional, is less generous than German theory in imagining 'possible cinemas' and more inclined in describing—or even in disdaining—the 'actual cinema'.
9. Luciani, *Antiteatro*; Consiglio, *Cinema*.
10. Canudo, 'Triumph of the Cinema,' included in this anthology. It was republished in two installments, respectively signed B.C.V and Frac, as 'L'avvenire del cinematografo' in *La rivista fonno-cinematografica* (3), 46–47 (20–26 January 1909), p. 10, and (3), 48 (5 February 1909), p. 10. It is unclear whether Canudo approved the republication of his essay—and, moreover, it is unclear whether the pseudonyms refer to Canudo himself.

11. I describe early film 'theories' as 'discursive formation' instead of an 'episteme', as Albera does in his extremely interesting 'First Discourses on Film', precisely because I primarily want to highlight their 'dispersion' instead of their convergence. An actual convergence would come after, as an effect of an accumulation, and as a symptom of a necessity.
12. I have explored this return of theory to 'theory' in Casetti, 'Theory, Post-theory, Neo-theories'.
13. A first attempt at periodization can be found in Mazzei, '*Percorsi della teoria*' that I take up here with some substantial changes.
14. Fabbri, '*Al cinematografo*'; De Amicis, '*Cinematografo cerebrale*'.
15. Tonini, '*Influenza sociale*'; Panteo, '*Cinematografo*'; Janni, '*Colloquio con Gabriele d'Annunzio*'.
16. The 'third page' was introduced by *Il Giornale d'Italia* in 1901. On the role of the 'third page' in the early film debate, see Mazzei, '*Papini, Orvieto e Thovez*'.
17. See in particular a report entitled '*La stampa quotidiana e il cinematografo*' ('The Daily Press and the Cinematograph') hosted by the monthly magazine *Lux*, directed by Gustavo Lombardo and first appearing in March 1909.
18. A review of early film magazines can be found in De Berti, '*Le riviste cinematografiche*'.
19. One exception is *La Vita cinematografica* (*The Cinematic Life*), founded in 1910 and active until 1934.
20. The report is published in twelve installments from 20 November to 8 December 1913.
21. La Valle, '*Il teatro e il cinematografo*', p. 5; Angeli, '*Teatro contro il cinematografo*', p.3.
22. *Penombra*, 1/1 (December 1917), p. 1.
23. Berruti and Mazzei, '*Giornale mi lascia freddo*'.
24. We can find a brilliant illustration of the 'telepathic' function of cinema in an older text, previously mentioned in Fossa, '*Orizzonti cinematografici avvenire*'.
25. See Alovisio, '*Occhio sensibile*'; Alovisio and Venturini, '*Cinema e scienze*'.
26. It is worth noting that *Cronache d'Attualità* ('*Chronicle of Current Events*'), founded by Anton Giulio Bragaglia and whose first run, now lost, was released in 1916, also published a second and third series in 1919 and 1921–1922. Although not programatically dedicated to the cinema, the magazine—whose collaborators included Matilde Serao, Luigi Pirandello, and Corrado Govoni—devoted much space to it, with articles by, among others, Luciani, B. Galaragi an anagrammatic pseudonym for Bragaglia, Diego Angeli, and Donatello d'Orazio. Also see Riccardo Redi, *Cinema scritto. Il catalogo delle riviste italiane, 1907–1944* (Rome AIRSC, 1992). This and other texts can be downloaded for free at the Associazione Italiana per le Ricerche di Storia del Cinema or AIRSC website at www.airscnew.it.

27. Luciani, *Verso una nuova arte*. It is telling that in the change from *Penombra* to *In Penombra*, the subtitle changes as well, from *Rivista del cinematografo* (*Cinema Magazine*) to *Rivista d'arte cinematografico* (*Magazine of Cinematic Art*). On the role of *In Penombra* and the magazines cited above more broadly, Raffaele De Berti writes, 'Until the second half of the 1910s, critical interventions dealing with single films are hardly systematic, and are limited to simple general observations, without ever approaching an aesthetic analysis. [...] Between 1918 and 1919, thanks in particular to the publication of a magazine like *In Penombra*, edited by Tommaso Monicelli, there is a real leap in the quality of writing on cinema in Italy in relation to the other arts and the overall cultural context.'
28. Vertua, *Cinematografo*.
29. The first English translation of Pirandello, *Si gira* is based on the 1925 edition published under the title *Quaderni di Serafino Gubbio operatore*.
30. On this issue of *Solaria*, and on Italian journals of 1920s in general, see Santoro, *Letterati al cinema*.
31. See Raghianti, 'Cinematografo rigoroso', and Consiglio, 'Estetica generale'.
32. See Abel (ed.), *French Film Theory*. Anděl and Szczepanik (eds.), *Cinema All the Time*; Kaes, Baer, and Cowan (eds.), *Promise of Cinema*.
33. Perhaps the most characteristic example of this type of newspaper is *Le Cinéma*, which begins publication in March 1912.
34. The most characteristic example would be *Cinéa*.
35. It is of some interest the fact that d'Abundo's essay included in this anthology was carefully reviewed on 22 February 1912, in the column 'Au Cinéma' in the influential French newspaper *Temps*.
36. 'Cinematografo e moralità pubblica' and 'Cinematografo e scuola' have a wealth of references to foreign texts; the two Italian essays are in turn quoted by Ramon Rucabado, *El Cinematògraf en la Cultura i en els Costums. Conferència llegida el 21 de desembre de 1919 a l'Institut de Cultura i Biblioteca Popular per la Dona*, (Barcelona: Editorial Catalana, 1920). On the connections between the Spanish and Italian cinephobic attitudes, see Joan M. Minguet Batllori, 'L'Eglise et les intellectuels espagnols contre le cinéma', *Une invention du Diable? Cinéma de premiers temps et religion*, (eds.) Roland Cosandey, André Gaudreault, Tom Gunning (Sainte-Foy, Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1992), pp. 12–20.
37. A review of Boleslas Matuszewski's booklet *Une nouvelle Source de l'Histoire* (*A New Source of History*), published in Paris in March 1898, appeared three months later in the *Rivista di artiglieria e genio* (*Journal of Artillery and Engineering*). See 'Creazione di un deposito di cinematografia storica'.
38. See Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*.
39. Fossi, 'The Movie Theatre Audience'. Included in this anthology.
40. Carrà, *Cineamore. Parolibero*, or literally 'free-word', refers to the free-form style and word associations of Futurist poems.

41. This is particularly true of the opening of the third book, which describes a car passing a carriage as though seen in a shot/reverse shot structure, alternating between the point of view of the car and that of the carriage. On this passage, see Moses 1995.
42. Pesce-Maineri, *Pericoli sociali*.
43. 'Cinematografo e moralità pubblica'.
44. Luciani, 'Idealità del cinematografo'.
45. Fossa, 'Orizzonti cinematografici avvenire'.