CENSORSHIP AND LITERATURE IN FASCIST ITALY

The history of totalitarian states bears witness to the fact that literature and print media can be manipulated and made into vehicles of mass deception. *Censorship and Literature in Fascist Italy* is the first comprehensive account of how the Fascists attempted to control Italy’s literary production.

In this study Guido Bonsaver looks at how the country’s major publishing houses and individual authors responded to the new cultural directives imposed by the Fascists. Throughout Bonsaver uses rare and previously unexamined archival materials to shed light on important episodes in Italy’s literary history, such as the struggles between Mussolini’s regime and particular publishers, as well as individual cases involving renowned writers such as Moravia, Da Verona, and Vittorini. Thoroughly researched and persuasively argued, the work charts the development of Fascist censorship laws and practices, including the creation of the Ministry of Popular Culture and the anti-Semitic campaign of the late 1930s.

Examining the pervasiveness of censorship in Fascist Italy, from the entrenchment of Mussolini’s role as ‘prime censor’ to the suppression of works by female writers, this is a fascinating look at the vulnerability of culture under a dictatorship.

(Toronto Italian Studies)

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Censorship and Literature in Fascist Italy
Ai miei genitori, Gianni e Jerta, cresciuti all’ombra del Littorio

Tendiamo a semplificare anche la storia; ma non sempre lo schema con cui si ordinano i fatti è individuabile in modo univoco …; la maggior parte dei fenomeni storici e naturali non sono semplici, o non semplici della semplicità che piacerebbe a noi.

Primo Levi, cap. 2 ‘La zona grigia,’ in I sommersi e i salvati

We also tend to simplify history; but the pattern within which events are ordered is not always identifiable in a single unequivocal fashion …; the greater part of historical and natural phenomena is not simple, or not simple with the simplicity that we would like.

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