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Book Reviews

Fictions of Appetite: Alimentary Discourses in Italian Modernist Literature. By ENRICO CESARETTI. Pp. vii + 272. Oxford: Peter Lang. 2013.

Aside from a few, notable examples, such as Gian-Paolo Biasin's *I sapori della modernità* (1991), gastro-criticism is a fairly new multi-disciplinary approach to literature that incorporates literary studies, anthropology, sociology, semiotics and history to explore cultural production. Enrico Cesaretti's gastro-critical approach to Italian Modernism brings together articles previously published; but here they are revised in order to read early twentieth century Italian writers and texts from a new perspective. The four chapters explore both well-known and nearly forgotten texts by authors such as F. T. Marinetti, Aldo Palazzeschi, Paola Masino, Massimo Bontempelli, and Luigi Pirandello through the common thematic of food, eating, depravation and hunger. Cesaretti notes that "virtually every major twentieth-century Western intellectual from Freud onward, has reflected on the multiple cultural roles and implications of food and eating" (3).

Modernism brought renewed focus on the body, so the trope of food, or lack thereof, becomes an important semiotic concern for writers of the period. Cesaretti's selection of authors and texts stems from a chronological closeness more so than a great stylistic affinity, and he is conscious of trying to unite his authors under the umbrella of the term Modernism, which, as he notes, has been problematic in Italian literary critical circles. For Cesaretti, these five authors all emphasize food, hunger, and related tropes in their works because of historical reality (food shortages in Italy during the interwar years among others) and because of Modernism's emphasis on the body and its functions.

The first and longest chapter, "A Futurist Digest: Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Alimentary Rhetoric," explores Marinetti's futurist texts through the gastro-critical lens. This chapter provides a close reading of: Marinetti's "tragédie satirique" *Le Roi bombance* (1905, first staged in 1909; a proto-futurist text intertextually linked to Alfred Jarry's more famous *Ubu roi* [1896]); the *Futurist Cookbook* (1932); and lesser known texts such as *Novelle colle labbra tinte* (1930); a collection of short stories *Scatole d'amore in conserva* (1927); his "didactic hygienic" treatise *Come si seducono le donne* (1917); and his novels *Isola dei baci* (co-written with Bruno Corra, 1918) and *L'alcòva d'acciaio* (1921). Each of these texts brings to the fore gastronomy, food, or hunger, as a noteworthy element in the text.

Underlying Cesaretti's reading of these works in particular is Marinetti's indebtedness to the French thinker Charles Fourier (1772–1837), among other neo-utopians influential in France. Building on Claudia Salaris' hypothesis, Cesaretti finds in these Marinettian texts "a certain influence of Fourier's utopia," and a conjecture that both Marinetti and Fourier understood the social function of food and the need to increase the amount of time spent on pleasurable activities (41–42). For his analysis, Cesaretti calls on previous scholarly work by Cinzia Sartini Blum and others. In Marinetti's texts, Cesaretti highlights how the trope of food, its abundance, and humans' relationship to it (rejection, anorexia, etc.) links Marinetti's preoccupations to those of the French utopians. Futurist concerns about food also are connected to hygienism in these texts, a topic debated in Italy in the years before World War I, which sought to improve hygiene for sociological, medical but also political and economic reasons.

Cesaretti concludes with reflections on "la morale antropofaga" in *Patriotismo insetticida. Romanzo d'avventure legislative* (1939), a late, obscure text that Cesaretti reads in light of historical considerations. In his view, the anthropophagous moral echoes Fascist colonial and

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expansionist impulses on the threshold of World War II. He concludes that perhaps this text shows Marinetti's divergence from many of Mussolini's more rigid stances. In all cases, Cesaretti traces how Marinetti's texts foreground food tropes as a way to read Futurism's perceptions of society.

The second chapter, "Modernist Effacements: Aldo Palazzeschi's Consuming Bodies," discusses Palazzeschi's *: riflessi* (read as "due punti riflessi") a lesser-known work that Cesaretti relates to Kafka. Palazzeschi's first book can be read together with Kafka (especially, but not exclusively, *Letter to Felice*) in that both authors trace patterns of renunciation, self-effacement and consumption. At the end of *: riflessi*, language has "effaced the self in the very process of attempting to capture it" (123). Cesaretti also examines the much more familiar *Il codice di Perelà*, this time with reference to the Czech author's "A Hunger Artist" (1922). The same patterns that linked *: riflessi* with Kafka are explored in greater depth in the direct comparison of Palazzeschi's well-known work and Kafka's texts about "disappearing subjects." In both these authors, absence of food produces hunger in a kind of "anorexia logic" (138). Cesaretti also examines Palazzeschi's novel *La piramide. Scherzo di cattivo genere e fuor di luogo* (1912–14, published in 1926). Here, too, a progressive pattern of renunciation and a process of reduction are indicative of anorexia logic. Palazzeschi's novel, *Interrogatorio della Contessa Maria* (1925–26) has at its core female voraciousness, which Cesaretti reads in light of sociological and philosophical concepts of sexuality and femininity as expressed in the works of the German sociologist Georg Simmel and the Austrian philosopher Otto Weiniger. In the end, this text may have discomforted the predominantly male Florentine avant-garde of the 1920s. Its voracious character shows us "a specific portrait of a woman with the potential of shaking, if not literally eating away the very foundation of male literary culture" (168).

In the third chapter, "Hard to Swallow: Two Fictions of Paola Masino and a Play by Massimo Bontempelli," Cesaretti explores two texts called (*La) fame*, one written by each author. Cesaretti also notes that the two authors' lifelong relationship inevitably led to literary connections, and provides an opportunity to explore the gendered nuances of the related texts. Masino's *Fame* explores the taboo of infanticide, its cultural and literary implications. For Cesaretti, Masino's choice may indicate she is reacting against patriarchal authority, "be that of fascism or that of the male-dominated Italian world of letters in the Thirties" (180). Bontempelli's *La fame* deals with paternity and the consequences of the absence of food and thus shows an "infanticide logic": "[i]f Masino's alimentary discourse in *Fame* challenges an androcentric mode of representation and the dominance of male expression with the memorable figure of a man being almost simultaneously stripped of both his fatherhood and his ability to eat and utter words, Bontempelli's *La fame*, with a 'trademark' dynamic of 'return to order,' ultimately reverses and ideologically questions Masino's position in terms of gender through the figure of a disempowered perennially hungry woman whose words cannot be taken seriously" (189).

Cesaretti then moves to Masino's *Nascita e morte della massaia* (1939; published in 1945), which takes the literary figure of the mother and motherhood and turns it upside down. In this text, Cesaretti reads a "progressive pattern of sacrifice and corporeal self-obliteration," which is an "eminently anorexic, modernist impulse towards self-consumption" (206).

The fourth chapter, "How to Cope with the Bites of Modernity: Two Literary Recipes by Massimo Bontempelli and Luigi Pirandello," Cesaretti continues his exploration of Bontempelli with *Gente nel tempo* (1937) and links his work to Pirandello' short story "La balia." In the latter, mother's milk and blood become symbols for life and death. This shortest chapter provides an intriguing reading of lesser-known texts by these major authors. Bringing in reflections articulated by Karen Pinkus, Cesaretti relates consumption, lactation, maternity and politics to the increasing consumerist socio-cultural reality in the post- World War I years, when fascism was concerned with creating consumers who identified their needs with the national economy (213). Although Pirandello is not always explicitly associated with the other authors under consideration in this study, in the introduction, Cesaretti does carefully

articulate the concept of modernity, thus providing a framework within which Pirandello's works can be included.

Fictions of Appetite provides a satisfying analysis of an interesting and thus far somewhat neglected intertextual connection between major Italian writers of the early twentieth century. The text could have benefitted from further editorial attention to the spellings of French texts and names, and many of the texts are not translated, which could limit the scope of its readership. Still, Cesaretti has provided an interesting intertextual connection to seemingly disparate texts from the first half of the twentieth century. It is particularly gratifying to see the expansion of gastro-criticism to these Italian literary texts, a very useful theoretical framework for further study. Cesaretti's study sheds light on texts that are now often forgotten but which, as he shows, have interesting meaning for us today, especially when examined in the light of great European philosophers, thinkers and writers. The type of study undertaken here could be expanded to include authors from other periods, or even supplemental texts from other Italian authors of these years. Scholars of twentieth-century Italian literature may find in this text interesting conclusions and comparisons that can add to our understanding of this important period.

DePaul University Clara Orban

Giuseppe Berto: la passione della scrittura. By Alessandro Vettori. Pp. 208. Venezia: Marsilio, 2013.

In questa monografia Alessandro Vettori, studioso del Medioevo e appassionato lettore del Novecento, offre un ritratto sensibile e coeso della scrittura di Giuseppe Berto, autore importante e originale del secondo Novecento ma dalla varia ed alterna fortuna critica.

Lo studio è diviso in quattro capitoli principali. Traendo spunto da sue precedenti letture che sistematizza intercalandole e approfondendole con nuove considerazioni, Vettori discute i temi noti dell'opera bertiana seguendoli nell'arco della carriera dell'autore, dalla loro comparsa nelle prime opere narrative alla loro ultima evoluzione negli scritti della maturità. Nell'opera bertiana, l'idea del male fisico e spirituale e della sofferenza che provoca a livello individuale e collettivo s'intreccia con il sentimento di colpa, la necessità del tradimento, la volontà del sacrificio e della morte e la tensione tra predestinazione e scelta; il perenne conflitto con il padre e l'autorità si complica quando viene vissuto (e analizzato) in relazione al cristianesimo originale dell'autore e all'ambizione che agita in lui ogni esperienza, quella letteraria *in primis*. Autobiografismo (ovvero l'utilizzazione dei materiali della propria esistenza sottoposti ad elaborazione creativa e, attraverso di essi, interrogazione di sé e dell'umanità condivisa con il lettore), psicologismo (ossia l'attenzione ai movimento della mente e dello spirito e al loro impatto su corpo e comportamenti), ironia (come strategia per analizzare ed esprimere artisticamente paradossi, contraddizioni e conflitti) e confronto con la scrittura e le sacre Scritture sono le categorie principali secondo le quali Vettori organizza il suo lavoro critico sull'*opus* bertiano. Se nell'introduzione, oltre a tracciare la parabola esistenziale e artistica dello scrittore, Vettori anticipa i principi guida della sua analisi, nell'epilogo di questo studio, egli mette in evidenza alcune linee interpretative meritevoli di ulteriore considerazione, come il rapporto tra ironia e parodia nella scrittura bertiana e il ruolo che in essa vi giocano tematiche ecologiche secondo le più recenti proposte teoriche della cosiddetta ecocritica.

Vettori non tralascia nessuno degli scritti di Berto, siano essi racconti, memorie, romanzi, drammi o saggi. La sua analisi scorre dalle esperienze di guerra della *Colonna Feletti* (1940) e *Guerra in camicia nera* (1955) alla riscrittura neotestamentaria della *Gloria* (1978) attraverso i più famosi *Il cielo è rosso* (1946), *Il male oscuro* (1964) e *Anonimo veneziano* (1971) e i meno noti *Le opere di Dio* (1948), *Il brigante* (1951), *La fantarca* (1965) e *Oh, Serafina!* (1973), arricchita da uno spoglio attento di saggi brevi e articoli giornalistici e altro ancora ("un proliferare di annotazioni, brevi commenti, introduzioni, note finali, che ruotano attorno ai testi e fanno

loro da cornice" [56]). Né stabilisce una gerarchia di valori per rileggerli e parlarne. Ogni opera viene vista, democraticamente, come momento di contatto significativo tra la vita dell'autore, la sua riflessione (auto)critica e la sua immaginazione, sia come invenzione poetica sia come intenzione espressiva; ogni momento diviene occasione per capire in che cosa consista l'essere "contro-corrente" di Berto (11) e quale sia il contesto esistenziale e culturale in cui lo scrittore opera e a cui risponde, talvolta in modo polemico. Perciò in ogni capitolo ritroviamo spesso gli stessi testi di Berto, ma ogni volta Vettori ce ne chiarisce un aspetto o la forma, legandoli alla loro comparsa ed evoluzione nelle opere precedenti e successive. Nella lettura di Vettori non sono le opere a scandire la vita personale ed intellettuale di Berto, ma è l'esperienza esistenziale ed artistica di questi ad emergere — o a dissimularsi — in esse, ad attraversare e a dare forma alla sua scrittura — mentre a sua volta, personaggi e scrittura informano la sua vita –, ad "interpellare" (58) l'autore stesso, il critico e i loro lettori. L'analisi di Vettori, dunque, enfatizza continuità e consistenza in questo processo.

Uno degli aspetti più interessanti del libro è il riferimento a Dante, ad un'idea di scrittura come viaggio, come itinerario personale per esorcizzare, sublimare e, in qualche modo, purificare esperienze difficili, sensi di colpa, ambizioni e la paura di morire che sempre caratterizzano Berto e i suoi personaggi. Ma Dante e la Commedia non sono solo presenze o richiami testuali negli scritti di Berto, soprattutto nel *Male oscuro*. Consapevole del rischio di un'interpretazione parziale e semplificante dell'opera dantesca, ma anche bertiana, Vettori afferma: "[q]uella che Dante definisce allegoria in Berto diventa psicoanalisi, lo specchio deformato e deformante, ma artisticamente ricco e provocatorio, su cui si legge (e si regge) distintamente la vicenda autobiografica dell'autore" (77). In altre parole, Vettori non si limita ad individuare delle tracce intertestuali, ma usa Dante, e in particolare l'idea di allegoria dantesca, come strumento ermeneutico, come un codice attraverso cui interpretare e descrivere la scrittura bertiana che, sul modello dantesco, nasce dall'esperienza per diventare invenzione, per farsi racconto, ma veritiero (58).

Se il quadro che Vettori propone non è sempre originale nelle conclusioni data la ricca bibliografia critica già disponibile sullo scrittore, esso ha, tuttavia, due grandi meriti. In primo luogo, Vettori offre una sintesi chiara e persuasiva della coerenza, anche nelle contraddizioni, che caratterizza l'opera di Berto, e un utilissimo sguardo d'insieme non solo sulla sua opera ma sulle letture critiche, di apprezzamento o rifiuto, che essa ha suscitato e con cui lo studioso dialoga.

Vorrei sottolineare la dimensione dialogico-discorsiva, a mio giudizio esemplare, di questo studio, che rifiuta il tono polemico e fortemente polarizzato, anche sul piano politico, che spesso caratterizza la letteratura critica su Berto, a favore invece di un equilibrio interpretativo che comunque non esclude perplessità o preferenze testuali. In secondo luogo, Vettori condivide con noi una piacevole ed appassionata lettura che ci consente di apprezzare la ricchezza di Berto anche in chiave comparatistica, avvicinando la sua opera ad altre esperienze letterarie oltre a quella particolarissima e caratterizzante dei testi biblici — da Giovanni Verga a Umberto Saba, da Sibilla Aleramo a Italo Svevo, con riferimenti a Faulkner, Kafka e Joyce, Freud e Wilhelm Reich, senza dimenticare Dante, che, come si è detto, diventa un'interessante, qui sì originale, chiave d'accesso al mondo di sofferenza e ambizione dello scrittore trevigiano.

Fordham University FRANCESCA PARMEGGIANI

Fascist Voices. An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy. By CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN. Pp. XXIII + 501. London: Bodley Head. 2012.

Despite the present-day unspoken assumption of democracy and autocracy as natural opposites, it is a mistake to assume that the latter has always been considered a form of bad governance. Professor Duggan provides proof of such an axiom in his original, carefully researched and crafted *Fascist Voices. An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy*.

As the title suggests, the book sheds light on popular opinion under Fascism showing how ordinary people were enthralled by Mussolini and his powerful, nearly "talismanic appeal," and "experienced and understood the regime in terms of their emotions, ideas, practices and expectations" (xii). Therefore each of the thirteen chronologically ordered chapters that revisit the rise and fall of Mussolini's dictatorship are informed by the private entries and comments of two hundred or more Italians, whose unpublished journals are kept in the *Archivio Diaristico Nazionale* in Tuscany and the *Archivio della Scrittura Popolare* in Trento, as well as by letters sent to the *Segreteria particolare del Duce* in Rome.

Despite the perceived difficulties posed by such type of sources, the author's result is an impressive and enlightening work. Indeed Professor Duggan's rigorous approach to Italians' personal relationship with Fascism challenges some of the deepest assumptions in Italian collective memory: the first being the popular view that Fascism was coercively endured by most of the population, who was victim of the regime and belatedly liberated by the Allies and the Resistance movement between 1943 and 1945. The second that the Catholic Church tried to oppose the regime and did not take too strict a stand against the racial legislation and its everyday violent aspects from fear of the regime's retaliation and to avoid further bloodshed.

Fascist Voices shows a different and truer portrait of the nation during the *Ventennio*. The author makes a convincing case for seeing Italy as a country where Mussolini's will and vision were genuinely shared by the public, united in a sort of collective mystic faith and sense of duty. For instance, we read that Primo Boccaleri called his job as a teacher in a village in Yugoslavia, conquered in the spring of 1941, as "the apostolate of my Italianness" toward a population "that does not even have a sense of civilization" and, accepting Fascist violence against the locals, he added that he would "collaborate with the apostolate or with the revolver, as the occasion requires, in the name of the Duce" (214). Paola Dotti is one of thousands who wrote a letter to Mussolini out of sheer, blind devotion, which testifies to the idealistic veneration for the Leader. She expressed her sentiments in highly religious terms: "I believe in You, Duce, just and strong, the liberator of oppressed humanity. I believe in Your teaching full of sacrosanct truth. I believe in You, Duce, the Man sent by God to preach once again the Doctrine of Christ [. . .]" (349–50).

Records of political protests are given adequate space in the volume, but they form a sideshow. The author successfully demonstrates that in spite of them, popular grievances resulting, for instance, from poverty or dislike of the party were blamed on the inefficiency and corruption of various officials rather than Mussolini. Likewise, repressive legislations, such as the racial laws, were justified either as a regrettable aspect necessary in the greater picture or simply because many people found it difficult to abandon their pledged faith in the regime and the Duce and "accept that independent thought was morally superior to faith" (207).

The other significant myth that the author demystifies, offering instead a convincing truth, is the relationship between Fascism and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Church in Italy was a critical factor in the consolidation of the regime even before the 1929 Lateran Treaty, when Catholicism became the official religion of state and the Holy See received a very generous settlement following its 1870 loss of property and territory. Indeed the Party's message resonated in broad sections of the higher clergy. Even if a degree of rivalry between the regime and the Church existed for the control of youth organizations, the ecclesiastical authorities saw the Duce as the providential savior of the country from the perils of Bolshevism and Liberalism: "Fascism was inspired by the religious and spiritual essence of *romanità* just as it was *romanità* that had invested the Church with much of its greatness" (193). The reader is offered revealing insights into and examples of how the Church provided many forms of support for the conquest and "civilizing mission," as the Regime branded it, of Ethiopia, while adding weight to the anti-Semitic campaign through Catholic periodicals such as *La Civiltà Cattolica* and *Vita e Pensiero*.

In his powerful epilogue, Professor Duggan discusses the resilience of the cult of the Duce and analyses the Italians' lapses of memory, that is is their attitude to forget the recent past by

drawing a veil of oblivion over Fascism. More specifically, he explores the insidious legacy of Fascism in post-war Italy where the proclaimed values of the Resistance movement were undercut in many ways: the foundation by former fascists of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI) party in 1946, inconsistencies within the Constitution, the failed prosecution of war crimes, the ejection of the Left from Italy's ruling coalition in 1947, up to present day events such as the election of Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister.

Fascist Voices is substantiated by the author's invaluable and extensive knowledge of scholarship on the period and is throughout written with great clarity, detail and balance. It is an outstanding addition to the subject's portfolio that thoroughly deserved the prestigious Wolfson Prize for History 2013. In sum, this is a work that will be of true value to both scholars and generalists alike.

King's College London Luisa Morettin

Il romanzo generazionale. By Nicola Ciampitti. Pp. V + 317. Ancona: Italic. 2012.

The project underlying Ciampitti's study is very ambitious, certainly one of the most ambitious ever laid out in regard to the book's subject: the so-called Italian generational novel of the 1980s. This term makes reference to a series of critically acclaimed and commercially successful novels published between the latter half of the 1970s and the mid-1980s by young authors, both male and female. In addition to the age of their writers, the novels analyzed by Ciampitti share the common cultural ground of "il '77," a year synonymous in modern Italy with political turmoil and violent and large demonstrations against the status quo but, also — as Ciampitti repeatedly points out — with the explosion of an unprecedented wave of creativity and transformation in all cultural fields.

Ciampitti's work is organized in three introductory chapters — "Introduzione teorico-storica" (7–33), "Le radici dell'oggi nella dimenticata letteratura degli anni '70" (34–45) and "Il romanzo generazionale tardo-moderno italiano" (46–55) — followed by ten monographic essays. In the three introductory chapters Ciampitti follows the evolution of the genre throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. He explains how writers such as Foscolo and Goethe, but also Pushkin, Lermontov, and De Musset responded to inter-generational conflicts through a wide-range of artistic forms and expressions. He then finds that the closest antecedents of the writers of the 1980s are some Italian authors of the 1970s, such as Renzo Parisi and poets such as Giorgio Manacorda, Dario Bellezza, Valentino Zeichen, Giuseppe Conte, Maurizio Cucchi and Milo De Angelis.

The ten monographic essays are dedicated to the exploration of nine different authors. In the tenth ("La storia") the author summarizes the political context of the 1980s and the 1990s. In the first five essays Ciampitti focuses on Enrico Palandri and Claudio Piersanti ("*Boccalone* di Palandri and *Casa di nessuno* di Piersanti;" "Dall'ala creativa del '77 all'ala terroristica. *Charles* di Piersanti e *Le vie del ritorno* di Palandri"); on Pier Vittorio Tondelli ("Tondelli e la nuova letteratura italiana nel 'postmoderno di mezzo'"); on Andrea de Carlo ("Andrea De Carlo, il romanzo generazionale 'yuppie'"); and on Daniele Del Giudice. The remaining four essays are devoted to authors who started their literary activity between the 1980s and the 1990s: Silvia Ballestra, Enrico Brizzi; Andrea Demarchi; and Giuseppe Culicchia. The book concludes with a very detailed bibliography.

Ciampitti's ten monographic essays examine only those works that directly exemplify examples of the romanzo generazionale. Consequently, Ciampitti discusses *Boccalone* (1979) and *Le vie del ritorno* (1990) by Enrico Palandri; *Casa di nessuno* (1981) and *Charles* (2000), by Claudio Piersanti; *Altri libertini* (1980) and *Pao Pao* (1982) by Pier Vittorio Tondelli; *Treno di panna* (1981) by Andrea De Carlo; *Lo stadio di Wimbledon* (1983) by Daniele del Giudice; *Il compleanno dell'Iguana* (1991) and *La guerra degli Antò* (1992) by Silvia Ballestra; *Jack Frusciante è uscito dal gruppo* (1994) by Enrico Brizzi; *Sandrino e il canto celestiale di Robert*

Plant (1996) by Andrea Demarchi; and *Bla bla bla* (1997) by Giuseppe Culicchia. Ciampitti's analysis starts with the presentation of large portions of quoted text from the original works. This is followed by commentaries that include a quick reminder of the author's biography and literary debut, and a detailed summary of the book under consideration. By and large, Ciampitti's interpretation of the texts draws on the reflection on subjectivity and language developed by theorists and critics of postmodernity, such as Genette, Jameson, McHale, Baudrillard, Ceserani, Lyotard, and Eagleton. Thus, while discussing *Boccalone*, Ciampitti observes that "questo romanzo è tutto immerso in una realtà che viene definita postmoderna: la scissione dell'io e la situazione ontologica [. . .] rappresenta il mondo psicologico [. . .] della generazione del '77" (68–9). When examining *Casa di nessuno*, Ciampitti comments that "la cifra del libro stia tutta [. . .] nell'uso di un linguaggio comune al mondo del '77 [. . .] che maggiormente riafferma la situazione scissa dell'io [. . .] in un tempo che in qualche modo è schiacciato sul presente [. . .] ridotto a spazialità presenziale postmoderna" (90). Likewise, Tondelli's literary style, particularly regarding "l'ethos del narratore, il suo riferirsi a situazioni paradigmatiche, conoscitive ed emotive [. . .] e il suo parlare costantemente con il lettore ideale" is said to be "un atteggiamento postmoderno molto chiaro di tipo ontologico" (117). The theoretical framework adopted by Ciampitti permeates all of his monographic essays and proves to be quite productive in elucidating the writers' works and cultural contexts.

Ciampitti's *Il romanzo generazionale* is an ambitious and comprehensive introduction to an Italian literary period that is increasingly regarded as a milestone in the renovation of Italy's modern literature and culture, the consequences of which continue to be influential and relevant to this day.

Arizona State University Enrico Minardi

Dal modernismo al postmodernismo: Riflessioni teoriche e pratiche della scrittura. By John Picchione. Pp. 5–187. Macerata: eum, 2012.

John Picchione's *Dal modernismo al postmodernismo: Riflessioni teoriche e pratiche della scrittura* is a valuable resource not only for scholars of Italian but for also those seeking a solid theoretical base in literary theory in general. This volume succeeds in succinctly contextualizing modernism and postmodernism. It does so in terms of the historical time periods of modernity and postmodernity; through a coherent discussion of the corresponding philosophies and theories of subject and identity applied to the Italian literature of the period; and, finally, by inserting both movements into a greater discussion of the role of the avant-garde in the second half of the twentieth century.

Picchione begins his first chapter by providing a general definition for modernity in terms of its historical time period before moving on to the concept of modernism in the Italian context. In his view, "[d]etto molto sinteticamente, il modernismo rappresenta le varie reazioni delle arti alle condizioni materiali e psicologiche della modernità" (17). Having defined both the time period and the nature of the movement, Picchione discusses the new artistic programs of modernism, such as an abandonment of traditions and a shift towards the abstract and a-tonal in music, in the movements of Futurism, Cubism and Impressionism, and in the "razionalismo geometrico" (20) in the visual arts, including architecture. In literature Picchione observes a marked departure from realism coupled with an increased tendency towards the representation of identity and the ambiguity and uncertainty of reality. The author also identifies the results of such a shift in non-omniscient narrators, increased narrative and temporal fragmentations, a more self-reflexive literature and a less authoritarian relationship with the reader. These literary developments are associated to the increased angst and desolation caused by modernity and discussed with pertinent references to Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. Always in the first chapter, Picchione addresses the historical moment of postmodernity before delving into various theories on postmodernism as not necessarily a successor to modernism but, rather, an opposition

to it. Throughout this section of the book, Picchione provides a discussion of postmodernity as articulated both by the French school of Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes and the North American school of Paul de Man and Harold Bloom. The chapter concludes with an examination of the different artistic expressions of postmodernism in visual arts, architecture, music and literature. From this overview many of the key tenets of postmodernism are established, such as pastiche, fusion and self-reflexivity.

The second chapter focuses on the role of deconstruction and postcolonial theory in postmodern culture. Picchione begins by describing the break from structuralism and the belief in the truth and objectivity ultimately present in the text brought about by the hermeneutic skepticism of the mid-1960s which characterizes not only the so-called "Yale Critics" but also later postcolonial and feminist theorists such as Barbara Johnson, Shoshana Felman and Gayatri Spivak. He clearly reconstructs the central arguments of deconstruction starting with Derrida's *De la grammatologie* (1967) and considers the theories of intertextuality advanced by J. Hillis Miller, De Man and Bloom. Picchione's examination of deconstruction is especially noteworthy since he addresses its theoretical tenets, the criticism that surrounds it, and the interpretative possibilities offered by a deconstructionist reading of a text. Having thus established the hermeneutic possibilities of deconstruction, Picchione proceeds to discuss the postmodern reader and postcolonial studies. He touches on the North American field of reader response criticism led by Stanley Fish, in which "il testo è visto come un meccanismo intessuto di indeterminato e di lacune che il lettore, con i suoi movimenti interpretativi, è chiamato a riempire" (73). As in the first part of the chapter, Picchione provides a clear definition of reader response theory while at the same time addressing its flaws and pitfalls. The chapter concludes with a nod to the postcolonial theories of Edward Said, Spivak and Homi Bhabha.

The third chapter focuses on other postmodernist theoretical practices. Picchione explains Ihab Hassan's theories on the literature of silence and the identification of a postmodern literature. What Hassan fails to note, in Picchione's view, is the inevitable presence of modernism within postmodernism; Jean-François Lyotard's theories, on the other hand, do acknowledge this connection, though he views the latter as a source of the former. In his examination of Lyotard, Picchione discusses several of Lyotard's central concepts, including the collapse of the "grandi racconti" [80] of modernism, the decentralization of western culture, and dissent as a form of resistance. Picchione addresses other notable French theorists, including Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard. Picchione explains Foucault's attempts to deconstruct scientific knowledge through a focus on the epochal paradigms that define "i confini storici di ciò che viene pensato, scritto, o detto" (87), or "epistemes." According to Picchione, while Foucault seeks meaning behind the appearance of the real, Baudrillard claims that there is no longer a distinction between the symbolic and the real, which results in a hyper-reality and a world that operates according to the logic of the "simulacrum." Other theorists examined in this chapter are the "debolisti" (90) and especially Gianni Vattimo who locates the birth of postmodern philosophy in Nietzsche's notion of "la fine delle verità" (90). These "verità" extend to ideas of self and also of history: nothing is stable and fixed, but rather complex, chaotic and nonlinear. Much like Lyotard, who viewed dissent as a liberating force, so does Vattimo view a society that welcomes ambiguity and plurality as a response to cultural dominion. While discussing Jameson, Picchione clearly outlines Jameson's identification of the three phases of capitalism and their corresponding cultural and artistic periods of realism, modernism and postmodernism to show how parody, pastiche and fragmented individual and historical identities that characterize postmodernist practices diminish the cultural and political force of art.

In the fourth chapter, Picchione provides an in-depth examination of how concepts of subjectivity and identity have been transformed in the evolution from modernism to postmodernism. After a historical overview of the question of the subject from Humanism to the Enlightenment, he argues that the modernist articulation of the subject responds to a desire to create or recreate a unified self whereas the postmodernist subject is celebrated because of its fragmentary nature. The remaining portions of the fourth chapter are organized into four

sections, each devoted to case studies of the representation of subjectivity and identity in Italian modernist and postmodernist literary works. Picchione discusses Guido Gozzano, whose subject is ironic and full of angst, yet aimed towards "progetti assoluti di vita" (108). He also sees a crisis of the subject in Giovanni Pascoli but one that is a prelude to the rediscovery of an authentic self. This same search for "un rapporto autentico con il mondo" (113) is also present in Luigi Pirandello, Italo Svevo and Aldo Palazzeschi, making them modernist writers according to Picchione's definition. By contrast, Picchione identifies signs of postmodernism in the poetic production of Cesare Viviani, Giuseppe Conte and Valerio Magrelli at the end of the 1970s where he notes a shift towards the paranoid or schizophrenic subject typical of postmodernism. Picchione concludes the chapter with a focus on the postmodern narrative production of Italo Calvino, Antonio Tabucchi, Gianni Celati and Aldo Nove. Picchione provides a comprehensive list of the primary characteristics of postmodern narrative and then goes on to identity many of these traits in works such as Calvino's "iper-romanzo" (136) *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (1979), which he considers to be a work born from the anxiety of modernism but ideologically developed through postmodern culture.

In the fifth chapter, Picchione begins by providing a schematic overview of different historical avant-garde movements in relationship to modernism. While there are similarities between the two, he sees the avant-garde as a more radical and politically motivated movement, aimed at a forceful dismantling of dominant conceptual, behavioral and societal models. Picchione also probes the achievement of revolutionary avant-gardist art forms asking for the place of revolution when shock, estrangement and displacement become the norm. In response to this question, Picchione delves into the debate surrounding the Neoavanguardia and Gruppo '63. He discusses writings by Angelo Guglielmi and Edoardo Sanguineti, explaining how the former viewed pastiche as a means to challenge ideological and cognitive issues while the latter united poiesis with praxis (165) in the belief that the subversion of language would lead to an overthrowing of cultural and political institutions. Picchione also examines the positions of Franco Fortini and Alberto Moravia for whom the artistic production of the Neovanguardia was but a form of "mannerism" (166). According to Picchione, the neoavantgarde failed to add up to a cohesive whole, ultimately paving the way for the postmodernist turn. Picchione concludes his fifth chapter with a section entitled "Riflessioni per i nostri giorni." He meditates on the role the avant-garde might have today, when culture is increasingly dominated by electronic media and literary engagement (from both writers and readers) has decreased, and illustrates the debate concerning the role of the avant-garde through the contrasting evalutions of Alessandro Baricco and Giulio Ferroni.

Dal modernismo al postmodernismo: Riflessioni teoriche e pratiche della scrittura provides a clear, cohesive, and well-informed guide to navigate twentieth- and twentyfirst-century cultural expressions. In addition to illuminating the Italian context, Picchione also manages to achieve what the neoavantgarde in Italy never quite succeeded in doing: connecting Italian ideas and practices with those of other like-minded groups around the world.

University of Connecticut, Storrs Melina Masterson

Guido: Italian/American Youth and Identity Politics. Edited by Letizia Airos and Ottorino Capelli. Pp. 131. New York: Bordighera Press. 2011.

Guido: Italian/American Youth and Identity Politics is a collection of articles, interviews, and remarks that grew out of a symposium held January 21, 2010, at the John D. Calandra Institute in New York City on the theme of current iterations of Italian American ethnicity, especially the Guido, among younger generations.

While variations of the Guido have surfaced over the years, with the advent of MTV's *Jersey Shore* and the success of HBO's *Sopranos*, much of Italian America was confronted with a phenomenon that it had not realized was in existence: the Guido youth culture. The

dichotomy between the *prominenti* of Italian America, who have espoused an Italian American culture that bespeaks of Renaissance grandeur and artistic prowess, and the youth(s) of the metropolitan Northeast was placed on full display during the symposium. Not only did the *prominenti* find the phenomenon displeasing, but branded it an affront the very fact that the Institute would deign to consider the topic at all. As Ottorino Cappelli elucidates: "apparently ignorant of the distinction between scientific study and propaganda, [t]hey were appalled that the Calandra Institute 'would even attempt to study and then *add credence* to the idea that Italian Americans or some of them are in fact Guidos or Guidettes'" (15). But the point of this symposium was not to determine if such a phenomenon existed; rather, it was an investigation as to *why* and *how* this phenomenon evolved and how is Italian-American identity reproduced and reconciled with that of geopolitical entity of Italy.

"The Situation," by Robert Viscusi, charts the evolution of Italian American ethnicity, from ethnic shame to overt pride in Italian-ness (55–62); "Dialogue and Debate," by Fred Gardaphé, expounds on the need for scholarly inquiry into divergent manifestations of *italianità* (44–49); "Stereotype, Caricature, or Lifestyle," by Chiara and Franco Montalto, details the way in which one's ethnicity is something that is expressed differently by individuals who are members of the same family (63–66); "Italian Americans in the Trap of TV," by Maria Laurino, tackles the issue of the persistence of the Italian American stereotype and how popular culture and television have furthered certain depictions of Italian Americans (75–78); "Thoughts from a Former Guidette-Turned State Senator," by Diane Savino, underlines the fact that, during the 1970s and 1980s, Italian American youth culture was comparable to the current manifestations of the Guido. Savino recalls that she styled herself in a decidedly ethnic, Northeastern fashion that is now understood to be that of a Guidette (118–24). Johnny De Carlo's "Keyword: Different. What Guidos Are, and Are Not," details the ways in which Italian American youths understand their ethnic selves and comments: "When you take all of the children and grandchildren of Italian immigrants from all the different regions of [Italy] and throw them together, you have your Little Italy neighborhoods on the east coast, and this Guido subculture emerges. Things get translated and changed and carried onto the next generation, but the Italian root is still there. . ." (117). Most significantly, Donald Tricarico's entry, "Guidos on MTV: Tangled Up in the Feedback Loop," traces the development of the Guido from the club culture of the 1980s (109), the New Jersey redefinition of the Guido (111), and the outbreak of Guido-centric television shows and films (112–13). Tricarico demonstrates that the Guido culture is not solely an ethnic identity; rather, it is an organic outcropping of the social history of the industrial Northeast.

Guido: Italian/American Youth and Identity Politics brings to the surface a question that has long been a point of contention within the Italian American community: What do we intend by the descriptor "Italian?" If the Italian American community is truly desirous of a more accurate interpretation of its ethnography and historiography, then scholarly symposia and investigations are the requisite tools. Open discussions outside the confines of the ethnic community (or what Robert Orsi termed "domus") are necessary, rather than public remonstrations and intellectual intimidation. Italian American organizations like NIAF or OSIA would be wise to follow Fred Gardaphé's advice. Referencing the perceived slights accrued to the Italian American community by Guido-centric television and films, Gardaphé proposes serious study and inquiry, rather than blind protestations, especially with regard to *Jersey Shore*-inspired *italianità*: "We know they are no more Italian than [. . .] the food of Olive Garden, so why the protests? Because, as some of the leaders have said, this is the way the rest of the country sees us? Really? Want to know this for a statistical fact? Commission a serious study to check on it" (72).

Italian American cultural identity is more than simply Italo-centrism and Northeastern-accented parlance. In their zeal to promote an Italian American cultural identity detached from its socio-historical roots, Italian American *prominenti* may have fallen into a trap of defending a cultural stasis: an Italy and Italian America that has not evolved beyond the ethnic enclave;

a vision of *italianità* that is devoid of any evidence of the interaction of two cultures, Anglo-American and Italian, of the past one hundred and twenty years. Italian Americans should be cognizant of all aspects of their culture, not just the ones they like.

University of North Carolina Cale Lasalata

Murder Made in Italy. Homicide, Media, and Contemporary Italian Culture. By Ellen Nerenberg. Pp. xiv + 384. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 2012.

Ellen Nerenberg's book situates three infamous criminal cases — the Monster of Florence's murders, the double homicide of Susy Cassini and her son, Gianluca De Nardo in Novi Ligure in 2001, the Cogne case in 2002 — within the larger cultural, social and political contexts of contemporary Italy. Specifically, she investigates the way in which issues of lawlessness, violent youth culture, the perception of immigration and public safety, child abuse and the evolution of the concept of family raised by these crimes has been represented in both fictional and non-fictional narratives. Both illuminating and accessible in its arguments, Nerenberg's analysis owes much of its persuasive appeal to an impressive array of sources. Drawing from press coverage, novels, short stories, televised news broadcasts, talk shows and films, the author astutely shows how these crimes, which elicited an enormous fascination in Italy's public opinion, present important markers of change in Italy and Italian culture. In each chapter, using the concept of moral panic, which she defines as "the result of media's fierce attention to the perceived threats to existing social practices, customs, and mores posed by specific groups" (7), Nerenberg focuses on different facets of such panic: unacceptable sexual practices and Satanism; a reconfiguration of the geography of crime in Italy; youth violence; internal threats to the traditional idea of the Italian family and to the myth of Italy as *Il bel paese*.

In her introduction the author situates moral panic in the context of the "judicial media circus" (9) spurred by the recent expansion of the Italian broadcast media buoyed by former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. The remainder of the volume is organized into three parts. In Part 1 ("Serial Killing") the author analyses the case of a series of sexual crimes attributed to the so-called Mostro di Firenze. For Nerenberg the narrative of Mostro highlighted three subcultures that contributed to the public's perception of impending moral panic: voyeurs engaged in deviant sexual practices; a possible group of Satanists involved in the crimes; and a group of Sardinians, transplanted to Tuscany and perceived by locals as foreigners. The author tackles the numerous representations of this criminal case, from news broadcasts, televised programs and non-fiction books to filmed versions and television series and a number of contemporary Italian prose fiction. Particularly interesting is the analysis of Dario Argento's horror movies, and especially *La sindrome di Stendhal*. The unwanted penetration that accompanies rape in this film, which sees the transformation of the female protagonist from law-enforcer to serial offender, is extended to the Italian landscape "after the corrupt construction practices that Tangentopoli uncovered" (92). For the author, the defamiliarization of the geographical space performed in *La sindrome di Stendhal* also challenges perceived notions of Italian criminal geography (usually seen as confined to the south of the country).

In Part 2 ("Matricide and Fratricide: Erika, Omar, and Violent Youth in Italy") Nerenberg examines the way the Novi Ligure murders functioned as "cultural flashpoints" (107) for a contemporary generation gap. This gap, seen from the perspectives of both adults and adolescents, is analyzed in both contrasting and intersecting types of narrative, with a special reference to the cannibali writers of the 1990s. Drawing upon a number of psychological and sociological studies, the author argues that the generation involved in the 1968 protests, which, among other things, inveighed against the repressive nature of the Italian family, was not able to offer a valid alternative structure to their own children. At the same time the growing propensity of Italian teenagers to live through social media fostered modes of affiliation and identity formation in opposition to the adult generation. An upbringing without boundaries

was a fertile ground for a culture of group identity and violence echoed in the *Gioventù cannibale* narrative which prepared the way for the public reception of the homicidal violence unleashed by Erika De Nardo and her boyfriend, Mauro "Omar" Favaro in 2001.

In Part 3 ("Filicide: The Bad/Mad Mother of Cogne and Violence against Children") the author tackles Annamaria Franzoni's judicial case. Nerenberg explores fictional and nonfictional narrative forms that challenge the myths of family and childhood in contemporary Italy alongside with and in contraposition to the so-called delitto di Cogne, a notorious case of matricide that took place in 2002. In particular, the author examines the public discourse on maternity and the commodification of the child in contemporary Italy. Using, among others, Teresa de Lauretis's concept of "technology of gender," Nerenberg convincingly analyses the construction of a "monstrous maternity" (162) in the Cogne case due to the attempt to make "the defendant conform not only to societal stereotypes of femininity and maternity but also to judicial ones" (186). Drawing from the "coldness" attributed to Franzoni's behavior, the author proceeds to examine other examples of lessons of grief in a number of films and novels. These include Nanni Moretti's *La stanza del figlio* (2001), which reveals cracks in the foundation of the family structure dramatically unveiled by the narrative of Cogne, and Sandro Veronesi's *Caos calmo* (2005), where the elaboration of grief moves from a private performance to its unwilling theatricalization. Equally interesting is her reading of Simona Vinci's *Dei bambini non si sa niente* (1997) through Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject and the notion of group identification.

Nerenberg concludes her text with an illuminating but surprisingly brief chapter, dedicated to Amanda Knox's murder trial in Perugia. This case includes many of the themes already explored in previous chapters, such as the topos of a crime committed in a small environment; the notion of a pristine landscape despoiled by an act of violence; xenophobia in Italian society and the justice system's treatment of immigrants suspected of crimes; youth violence and the demonization of woman. While this is the reason Nerenberg uses the murder of British student Meredith Kercher as an epilogue, a more in-depth analysis of this case would have been preferable since it presents some interesting specificities, including the criticism of the Italian judiciary performed by American media and a contraposition between privileged extracomunitari coming from the United States (such as Knox herself) and extracomunitari coming from Africa (another suspect in the case, Rudy Hermann Guede).

Murder Made in Italy complements A*ssassination and Murder in Modern Italy. Transformations in Society and Cultures* (2007), a collection of essays edited by Stephen Gundle and Lucia Rinaldi which explores a series of murders and political assassinations from the murder of King Umberto in 1900, by an anarchist, to the shooting of the student Carlo Giuliani, by a policeman during the G8 protests in Genoa in 2001. Nerenberg's book cleverly concentrates her analysis on murder cases occurring in the past forty years. Part 2 and 3 in particular are dedicated to murders in the 2000s, a crucial period in Italian history since this was the time when society experienced dramatic changes in terms of family and youth culture, immigration, freedom, privacy, and media.

Though much of the background information that is provided is likely to be familiar to Italian scholars living in Italy, this volume provides a concise and lucid overview of the factual and social contexts of these criminal cases to those readers in need of initiation or review. Indeed, as Nerenberg explains in her preface, this book is tailored to two different kinds of readership: modern Italian scholars as well as "an audience of readers who are interested in media studies, popular culture and Italy but who do not have great familiarity with Italian culture" (xi). The author acknowledges that achieving the right balance between the two readerships has constituted her toughest challenge, but this is a task she has surely accomplished: the book is informative and engaging without lacking in depth. It also makes scholarly research accessible in an academic world that too often indulges in elitist notions of knowledge. This book is therefore commendable for succeeding in communicating with a wide range of readers, from the knowledgeable Italian scholar to the curious and open-minded reader.

By exploring a number of crimes as powerful indicators of boundaries, transgression, and ideology "in a 'minor' register" (17) and tracing the cultural forms they have taken, Nerenberg has assuredly produced an enjoyably perceptive analysis of Italian society. Her work should prove a welcome addition to the field of Italian cultural and media studies.

Australasian Centre for Italian Studies (ACIS) Barbara Pezzotti

Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature. By Jennifer Burns. Pp. viii + 220. Oxford-Bern-Berlin-Bruxelles-Frankfurt am Main-New York-Wien: Peter Lang. 2013.

Burn's *Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature* constitutes a significant contribution to the field of contemporary Italian literature and in particular to the study of migration and diasporic literature. The author states in the introduction that her "commitment to investigating the figures which populate migrant imaginaries stems from a sense that these narratives often privilege, systematically, an imaginative perception of experience and tell the stories of highly charged emotional itineraries" (11).

Five figures are investigated in *Migrant Imaginaries* and each one of them gives the title to a chapter, although it is unquestionable that the sections overlap one another, as the author explains while introducing the volume.

Chapter one, "Identity," focuses on the connection between identity and location and on the consequences of departing from one place and dislocating oneself in a new destination while renegotiating identity. Through the lenses of Michael Fischer, Michael de Certau and Anne-Marie Fortier, as well as from the insights of Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed and Homi Bhabha, the author highlights from the beginning of the chapter that "identity relies to a great extent on recognition: one is what one is recognized as being by those in the surrounding environment" (22).

Considering the fact that nationality, ethnicity and religion are three major factors that play a fundamental role in the transition process, Burns articulates her analysis starting from *Chiamatemi Alì* by Mohamed Bouchane and in particular from the diaristic form of the text. The attention given throughout Bouchane's book to the practices of worship and eating is interpreted as a significant "key element in combating a sense of loss of identity" (23).

This said, Burns's argument is constructed on the consideration that identity is plural, fluid and constantly changing. Four literary examples useful in tracing the processes of identification are analyzed in this chapter: *Immigrato* by Mario Fortunato and Salah Methnani, *La straniera* by Younis Tawfik, and Amara Lakhous's *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a piazza Vittorio* as well as *Divorzio all'islamica*.

In her analyses of the texts mentioned above, Burns argues that these are works where the notion of "italiani brava gente" clashes with the image of "stranieri brava gente" (37), as Tawfik's *La straniera* illustrates. Migrant identity can be considered also as a "performance" (40) and often the protagonists demonstrate "performative power, in the sense that by reproducing this set of behaviors, he instantiates himself in that place and in that moment" (42), as Amedeo/Ahmed does in Lakhous's *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio*.

Burns further expands her inquiry to include the construction and deconstruction of identity as an act of resistance and proposes the idea of a Mediterranean identity built on the fluidity of language, as the case of Christian/Issa in *Divorzio all'islamica* by Lakhous suggests.

The second chapter, "Memory," discusses "the desire to remember and to forget" (65). In analyzing the different modes of recalling the past Burns emphasizes the role of nostalgia and its agency in selecting elements belonging to the past. Furthermore, "cultural memory" reproduced through "direct speech" and intended as "oral sharing of memory" (68) is another important point discussed by the author in this chapter.

The novels selected to explore the topic of "memory" are *Pantanella* by Mohsen Melliti, *Il profugo* by Younis Tawfik and *I lupi della notte* by Amor Dekhis. The excursions into a

fragmented and damaged past, the link between nostalgia and exile, the question of traumatic memory and repression, are, among others, important points that Burns addresses throughout the chapter, often drawing from the trauma studies of Cathy Caruth and Susan Brison.

The third chapter is dedicated to the theme of "Home," which is considered "the focal point and location of many of the processes of memory" (101). In introducing this theme, the author specifies that two principles constitute the foundation of her discussion: "'home' is a construction, imagined and put together from affective, cultural and political principles and memories" (101–102); home is unstable.

Michel de Certeau and Sara Ahmed offer a precious critical perspective on the topic and Burns states that "[w]hat both theorists, differently, bring to light is the operation of desire, and of its corresponding lack or loss, in constructing a sense of home in relation to elsewhere" (104). Burns then proceeds to examine three novels: Younis Tawfik's *La straniera*, Amara Lakhous' *Divorzio all'islamica* and Shirin Ramzanali Fazel's *Lontano da Mogadiscio*.

The conflicting relation between past and present is the background from which a detailed argument develops in order to reach the following conclusion: "The territorialized physical reality of home is a real and potent source of images and affects, but it does not in itself constitute a home until it is animated by the imagination" (130).

"Place and Space" are explored in the fourth chapter, where the focus is on the subtle connection among mobility, displacement, restlessness and representation. According to Burns, migrant writers offer an image of Italy that not only questions "the migrant's position in relation to the Italian city" but also "unprogrammatically [. . .] construct[s] an image of the country" (132). Therefore, after establishing the difference between place and space and clarifying that the terms may overlap, the author, following Marc Augé and Sandra Ponzanesi, emphasizes the significance of non-places and the meaning of "walking" as expressed by de Certeau. The model of Benjamin's "*flâneur* and his particular mode of engagement with urban space and the urban community" (135) is also useful in establishing the distinctive character of the migrant observer. In order to explain how Italian cities are described in relation to different and multiple "elsewheres" (138) Burns examines six novels: Melliti's *Pantanella*, Tawfik's *La straniera*, Smari's *Fiamme in paradiso*, Kubati's *M* and Lakhous's *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a piazza Vittorio* and *Divorzio all'islamica*.

Within her analysis the author stresses how, in *Pantanella*, sensory perception, along with a sense of instability and uncertainty, substitutes the conventional chronological, historical and monumental description of Rome. Burns substantiates her claim through de Certeau's considerations on "texturology" (144), that is, the readings of the urban signs and the kinetic energy of the place in which the walker is immersed. Following this discussion of *Pantanella*, Burns examines *La straniera* and *Fiamme in paradiso*. While *La straniera* shows a contrast between the real and the dreamed city in the representation of Rome and Turin, a different picture of the urban landscape is offered by *Fiamme in paradiso*. The novel takes place in Milan and the protagonist "takes the [. . .] familiar position of an observer and enquirer" (159). His engagement with the environment occurs through the necropolis, where "[h]e meets the crowds [. . .] comes face-to face with the photographs of the deceased in a silent environment which allows him a moment of intimacy and sympathy with the citizens of Milan which his experience in the 'living' city generally denies him" (160).

The choice of including also Kubati's *M* and Lakhous's *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a piazza Vittorio* as well as *Divorzio all'islamica* responds to the necessity of considering a different migrant imaginary, defined "more radical and perhaps postmodern, or postnational" (162). Indeed, while the novels of Melliti, Tawfik and Smari depict the experience of marginalization, the latter three provide various models of engaging the place and trace a "probable or possible action in and interaction with the urban community" (174).

In the fifth and final chapter, Burns focuses on "Literature." The questions that the author poses to her readers are "related to what literature means in the interior world of the narratives and in the exterior one of the Italian literature and culture industry" (177). If creative writing

is often considered "as a source of escape from oppressive conditions" (179), it should be considered also as "the principle of re-exploring history" (185–186) through a "marginalized view" (186). But since, following de Certeau, "To want *to be heard* means being committed to *making* history" (193), Burns points out that migrant writings constitute a fundamental contribution to history and an "inscription in Italian-language literature of stories of migration and of its contexts" (195). In Burns's words: "only an engagement with the histories of migrants will facilitate social and cultural dialogue and cohesion, which will in turn create the conditions in which an inclusive national (or rather, transnational) culture can develop" (195–196).

The volume closes appropriately with an "Afterword," in which the scholar once again underlines the purpose of her study, as stated in the introduction: far from offering any responses she aims to open fruitful discussions about the "aesthetic and affective capital" (4) of the works analyzed.

In conclusion, Jennifer Burns's *Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature* is a valid contribution to the study of texts written in Italian by contemporary writers who have experienced migration. If presenting new questions and exploring new areas of research are two fundamental aspects of a solid scholarship, Jennifer Burns most certainly has pointed out a new approach to a field that belongs not only to our past of migrants, but more importantly to our present. Identity, memory, home, place and space, and literature should be reconsidered as key figures of a transnational imaginary and, at the same time, as figures belonging to a present intersecting its past and its future through the universal experience of migration.

Connecticut College Martina Di Florio Gula

Italia Reloaded. Ripartire con la cultura. By Christian Caliandro e Pier Luigi Sacco. Pp. 146. Bologna: Il Mulino. 2011.

Non è la prima volta che Venezia è associata ad un cadavere e a Las Vegas. Molti turisti americani che giungono nella città italiana per ammirare il Canal Grande, la paragonano a un'immagine a loro familiare: il Venetian Hotel. Ai loro occhi Venezia diventa una replica, praticamente perfetta, al punto che la città reale sembra, a prima vista, la copia di una copia.

Ciò non accade solo per Venezia. I turisti che arrivano in Italia per visitare le sue famose città d'arte — Firenze, Roma, Pisa, ecc. — hanno una sensazione simile. Fotografie su Internet, cartoline, viaggi a Las Vegas, contribuiscono ad imprimere nella loro mente l'impressione di un luogo che, pur nella sua simulazione, appare vero quanto la realtà stessa.

Queste percezioni sono create dagli attori del turismo di massa di oggi che agiscono in una cultura della simulazione. *Italia Reloaded*, scritto da Caliandro e Sacco, colleghi presso la Fondazione Università IULM (Istituto Universitario di Lingue Moderne) di Milano, affronta la questione in un libro la cui co-paternità porta ad un dialogo interdisciplinare e intergenerazionale tra i due studiosi: Sacco è un economista formatosi presso l'Università Bocconi di Milano e l'Istituto Universitario Europeo di Fiesole; Caliandro è un giovane storico dell'arte.

Il libro è un'analisi critica della produzione e del consumo di cultura italiana dagli anni Settanta ai giorni nostri. Il verdetto, pur essendo critico del presente, è ottimista sul futuro in quanto, così sostengono gli autori, il conservatorismo che caratterizza la cultura italiana di oggi sarà superato da un futuro promettente per chi vuole innovare il patrimonio culturale del Paese.

Il testo parte dall'analisi della produzione di cultura nel presente e descrive la trasformazione di molte città italiane in una sorta di musei di tesori nazionali conservati in un'economia precaria che prospera su una ricezione passiva di cultura da parte di un pubblico di turisti. Da qui uno stato di inerzia in cui le città d'arte puntano a soddisfare unicamente le fantasie di turisti alla ricerca di un'immagine romantica e nostalgica dell'Italia. Per esemplificare questa tesi, gli autori riprendono le opinioni di Irving Lavin che nel suo *L'arte della storia dell'arte* (2008), riflettendo sull'occasione mancata di Firenze di rinnovare la sua architettura medievale

dopo le devastazioni della seconda guerra mondiale, scriveva: "Firenze è diventata una sorta di Disneyland in pietra" (cit. Caliandro e Sacco, 23).

Come Lavin, Caliandro e Sacco sottolineano che la cultura della nazione è in pericolo. Usata come merce di vendita a turisti in cerca di colore locale, la cultura diventa simile a quei *prodotti tipici* che, venduti in tutta la penisola, non solo dissociano l'identità locale dei beni da chi li produce secondo logiche commerciali del turismo di massa ma causano la perdita del senso di appartenenza e persino l'interesse al patrimonio nazionale stesso. A detta di Caliandro e Sacco questo è ciò che sta accadendo nelle città d'arte italiane che vivono oggi un presente segnato dal disinteresse degli abitanti e da un disegno urbano che divide i luoghi turistici da quelli frequentati dai residenti. In uno stato di cultura dove il *kitsch* si fa onnipresente e viene venduto come *souvenir* che ha poco o nulla a che fare con l'identità locale, l'innovazione artistica diventa impossibile. Se i tesori e monumenti creano le condizioni per comprendere un loro possibile uso, l'Italia, malgrado i suoi musei, castelli, chiese e rovine, non riesce a sfruttare le sue potenzialità.

Il risultato, sostengono gli studiosi, è quello suggerito dal titolo: l'Italia come un Paese di zombie, una nazione in cui la cultura non è che una mera reliquia del passato: morta come i morti viventi che la curano. Un'immagine, questa, che è senza dubbio un'esagerazione retorica dovuta, forse, dalla predilezione di Caliandro per i film sugli zombie degli anni Settanta. D'altronde, il suo interesse per la cultura popolare e la sottocultura si ripercuote sullo stile disinvolto del libro e sulla direzione che intende intraprendere. Ne è un esempio il primo capitolo "Zombie culturali: l'Italia dei morti viventi," interessante introduzione che, tuttavia, ha il difetto di indulgere troppo a lungo in un'indagine superficiale dei film sugli zombie con fotografie e fotogrammi a tema, che appaiono, tuttavia, gratuiti poiché poco aggiungono all'argomento principale dello studio. Ciò che invece tiene insieme il capitolo è il punto ben argomentato che l'Italia — un paese ammirato per il suo patrimonio artistico in tutto il mondo — è vittima di una situazione di stasi causata forse da un ricco retaggio culturale. In altre parole, perché una nazione dovrebbe creare qualcosa di nuovo quando ha già così tanto da conservare per i posteri? Si sa che nella pratica delle belle arti esistono da sempre tensioni tra la necessità di innovare e il peso della tradizione. Ed è proprio quest'ultima che, a detta degli autori, ha avuto il sopravvento con la complicità di politici e consumatori di cultura che negli ultimi trent'anni hanno salvaguardato il passato disprezzando quegli artisti alla ricerca di nuovi linguaggi.

Ma se tale è lo stato della cultura contemporanea in Italia, i lettori potrebbero chiedersi perché fermarsi agli ultimi trent'anni? Perché non sostenere che questa condizione di paralisi culturale dura ormai da secoli, come scrive Sebastiano Vassalli il quale, nella sua raccolta di racconti *L'italiano* (2007), sostiene: "Bisogna dire a chi ancora non se ne fosse accorto che l'Italia è un Paese vecchio, anzi vecchissimo, dove tutto è già accaduto in passato e dove non accade più niente di veramente nuovo e di veramente importante da circa cinquecento anni" (cit. Caliandro and Sacco, 136). Ma sia le tesi di Caliandro e Sacco che quella di Vassalli sono volutamente polemiche e finiscono per trascurare forme d'arte uniche della modernità italiana, come il cinema, la moda e la fotografia, per citarne solo alcune.

Da queste osservazioni si deduce che il libro, anche se avvincente e pertinente, non è privo di difetti. E la qualità della prosa ne è una chiara testimonianza. Lo stile degli autori ricorre ad un uso eccessivo di termini ed espressioni in lingua inglese, quelli che i linguisti chiamano *prestiti di lusso*. Un'abitudine deprecabile del linguaggio che è, tra l'altro, tipica delle giovani generazioni di scrittori italiani, desiderosi di impressionare interlocutori e lettori con una conoscenza della lingua franca di oggi.

Il titolo ne è un esempio calzante. Per un pubblico contemporaneo di lettori, evoca un film piuttosto mediocre: il secondo capitolo della trilogia di Matrix, intitolato *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003). La riproposizione come *Italia Reloaded* non è agile: anche la ricerca più veloce su Google rivelerà che *Reload* è un duo di musica elettronica; *ReLoad*, un album dei Metallica (1997); una bevanda energetica; e *Re-Loaded*, un videogioco sparatutto del 1996. In

inglese, il verbo "reload" si riferisce più comunemente all'atto di ricaricare un'arma da fuoco con munizioni dopo averla scaricata. Per i co-autori di questo libro, la metafora ne esprime la tesi: l'Italia ha bisogno d'innovazione per "ricaricare" la sua cultura. Eppure questa metafora, come molte altre nel libro, è banale, imprecisa, un esercizio futile e sorpassato del linguaggio figurativo.

Ad abbassare la qualità del libro contribuiscono, altresì, alcune omissioni evidenti come la mancanza di un indice e la strana assenza, in un libro così preoccupato per il gusto, il mercato e l'economia della cultura, del pensiero del sociologo francese Pierre Bourdieu. Nel suo ben noto studio *La distinzione. Critica sociale del gusto* (1983), lo studioso presenta teorie sulla stratificazione sociale, la distinzione di classe e il capitale culturale. Un confronto critico con l'idea di gusto di Bourdieu come segno di una posizione sociale avrebbe rafforzato alcune tesi che Caliandro e Sacco sostengono, soprattutto nel campo del turismo di massa e della mercificazione della cultura.

Altro difetto del libro è l'enfasi eccessiva sulla nazionalità dell'arte contemporanea, la quale, in realtà, mai come oggi, fa parte di una comunità internazionale: le arti perdono presto il loro legame con la nazione, viaggiano in un circuito internazionale per appartenere al mondo. Che il libro sia un'analisi nazionale è palese: l'Italia è la cornice critica/geografica dello studio. Tuttavia, alcuni dei suoi argomenti sono troppo nazionalisti. Ad esempio, la riproduzione degli autori di una tabella dell'UNESCO del 2010 che elenca i siti culturali di interesse mondiale presenti in ogni nazione rafforza l'illusione che la cultura sia un deposito nazionale di siti e di artefatti; che tesori culturali appartengano a una nazione e non al mondo; e che i paesi dovrebbero competere per acquisire più capitale culturale degli altri. E data la vena nazionalistica che percorre il volume, che l'Italia sia classificata al primo posto è, in fondo, irrilevante rispetto alla questione centrale del libro: perché l'Italia è imprigionata nel suo passato e cosa si può fare a riguardo?

Gli autori hanno invece ragione a mettere in discussione la separazione binaria e arbitraria tra produttori e consumatori di cultura, turisti e abitanti locali che non partecipano alla vita culturale della città. Ma questo comportamento è comune in tutto il mondo: in altre parole, quando si vive vicino a un museo, raramente lo si visita, semplicemente perché si sa che è a disposizione in qualsiasi momento. I turisti, al contrario, comprimono esperienze culturali in un periodo breve e in modo spesso superficiale perché essendo in vacanza all'estero, sanno che forse non vi ritorneranno. A tal proposito, Sacco e Caliandro non riescono a percepire che il nodo problematico non risiede nella mentalità dei turisti, bensí nelle infrastrutture difettose di questi musei. In altre parole, invece di criticare i turisti per la loro superficialità, andrebbero forse riformate le strutture organizzative del turismo stesso. Le interminabili code lungo le mura del Vaticano, le folle rumorose, gli altoparlanti in quattro o cinque lingue europee, sono fattori indicativi che spiegano la creazione di un ambiente che rende impossibile un'autentica esperienza culturale ma soddisfa le esigenze del turismo di massa massimizzando il profitto e mercificando la città d'arte in un parco a tema. Ci sono, tuttavia, alternative al modello del turismo di massa che gli autori non discutono nel libro. Ad esempio, le visite a *L'ultima cena* di Leonardo da Vinci, il meraviglioso affresco del santuario di Santa Maria delle Grazie a Milano, o alla cappella degli Scrovegni a Padova richiedono prenotazioni con mesi di anticipo ma limitando le folle queste visite propongono soluzioni alternative che offrono modelli possibili di sviluppi futuri.

Nonostante questi difetti, *Italia Reloaded* rimane un libro utile che sfida il pensiero rassegnato di chi crede che le cose migliori siano accadute nel passato e che il futuro non possa in alcun modo superare il suo splendore. Inoltre, il libro affronta coraggiosamente un bivio: o l'Italia tornerà ad essere un centro di produzione culturale o continuerà ad assomigliare ad un museo. La soluzione, per gli autori, è lo sviluppo di un pensiero creativo e divergente, necessario oggi, anche se malvisto nel Paese. Il libro, dunque, non è solo un'analisi critica della storia culturale recente, ma è un invito all'azione: i turisti vanno educati e gli abitanti delle città devono partecipare alla produzione culturale. In questo quadro, anche le istituzioni

culturali italiane, notoriamente resistenti all'innovazione, devono essere contestate poiché lo sviluppo economico e il benessere della nazione dipendono da una cultura vivace che cresce verso il futuro e non indugia con nostalgia nel suo passato.

Harvard University THOMAS PATRICK WISNIEWSKI

L'antifascismo e l'esilio. By I FRATELLI ROSSELLI. Edited by ALESSANDRO GIACONE and ÉRIC VIAL. Pp. 254. Roma: Carocci. 2011.

Carlo and Nello Rosselli were two of the most influential antifascist activists of the 1920s and 1930s. Only a year apart in age, the brothers developed an early passion for politics and became socialist leaders in Italy. Their political activism, coupled with their Jewish identity, resulted in numerous instances of fascist aggression during Mussolini's reign. After a daring escape to France from *confino* in Lipari, Carlo founded the antifascist group *Giustizia e Libertà* (GL), and led the organization until his death. Nello pursued an academic career as a historian, researching nineteenth-century European politics. While visiting Bagnoles-de-l'Orne in the summer of 1937, the brothers were assassinated by French right-wing activists. The brothers' legacy has continued to influence political thought through the present. Parenthetically, their cousin, Alberto Moravia, famously wrote about their death in his novel *Il conformista*, later adapted into the homonymous film by Bernardo Bertolucci.

In 2001, in preparation for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Carlo Rosselli, many anticipated that new scholarly developments in research on the antifascist brothers were imminent. In fact, in honor of the centennial, Antonio Bechelloni published *Carlo e Nello Rosselli e l'antifascismo europeo* (2001) and called for further study of the brothers' historical and political legacies. However, the promise of renewed interest in the Rosselli brothers did not result in increased publications. Ten years later, this volume, co-edited by Alessandro Giacone and Éric Vial, seeks to remedy this state of affairs.

The eighteen essays in *I fratelli Rosselli. L'antifascismo e l'esilio* represent a broad spectrum of scholarly interests that clearly demonstrate the numerous directions research has taken. The editors divide the volume into four critical sections: "I fratelli Rosselli tra cultura e storia;" "Contatti, scambi e confronti;" "Assassinio e funerali;" and, "Retaggio e memoria." The volume then concludes with a fifth section, "Testimonianze." In their introduction, Giacone and Vial note a few reoccurring themes in this new research, including a growth of interest in Nello Rosselli, an expansion of historiographical research in Anglophone countries, and a more interdisciplinary critical framework that includes gender and media studies. The editors conclude by acknowledging that the newly opened and digitized *Archivio Rosselli* has changed the nature of research, greatly improving access to photos and archival material. Indeed, several authors make explicit reference to content that is now freely available online, and comment on the many directions research on this new material may take in the future.

The first section, "I fratelli Rosselli tra cultura e storia," focuses on the cultural and social contexts of Carlo and Nello's academic and political formation. Particular attention is given to Nello, who has long been overlooked as a sort of junior partner to Carlo (26). Michele Sarfatti, in "Ebrei italiani nel ventennio tra fascismo e antifascismo," outlines the political history of Italian Jews from the turn of the century through the 1930s, highlighting the distinctly "unitario ma non uniforme" (19) nature of Jewish involvement in fascist and antifascist activism. While Italian Jews made up less than one percent of the population during the fascist period, prior to the racial laws of 1938 they accounted for 1.9 to 4.1 % of Fascist Party membership. At the same time, roughly ten percent of Italian antifascists were Jewish.

With this complex situation in mind, Simone Visciola's chapter — "Nello Rosselli: uno storico alla ricerca della libertà in tempi difficili. Appunti sparsi per una biografia complessiva ancora da scrivere" — details Nello's close relationship with Gioacchino Volpe. It also mentions the possibility that a youthful Nello harbored sympathies with the emergent fascist movement. Visciola's analysis of the letters exchanged between Volpe and fascist leaders

throughout Europe demonstrates how Nello — who was arrested numerous times — was able to travel relatively freely until his assassination, thanks to Volpe's assurances that Nello was not a person of concern for the regime. Jean-Yves Frétigné adds to the research on Nello's political development by focusing on Nello's well-known but little-studied graduate thesis in "*Mazzini e Bakunin: dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860–1872)* di Nello Rosselli, storico del Risorgimento." Frétigné highlights the strong Mazzinian influence in the formation of both Rosselli brothers, particularly through Nello's relationship with his teacher and mentor, Gaetano Salvemini.

The chapters that make up Part II: "Contatti, scambi e confronti" focus on the antifascist and socialist networks abroad — particularly in France and Great Britain — and the movement and activities of the members of Giustizia e Libertà. In "Carlo Rosselli e l'esperienza francese" Robert Paris lays out a map — both topographical and relational — of Carlo's stay in Paris and of the circle of intellectuals of which he was a part. Paris focuses on Stefan Priacel, the translator of Carlo's *Socialismo liberale* into French (*Socialisme libéral* 1930) and the key figure for an analysis of the impact — in Spain, Argentina, Brazil — of subsequent Spanish and Brazilian translations of Nello's *Socialismo liberale*, which were based on Priacel's work. Isabelle Richet also looks into the wider context of the Rosselli family and its influence. In "Marion Rosselli, la fuga da Lipari e lo sviluppo dei circuiti antifascisti in Gran Bretagna" Richet examines the ways in which Carlo's wife Marion Cave established and developed informal antifascist networks in her native England, and how her activity there helped counter the generally positive reception that Mussolini received in the early years.

While Marion worked tirelessly in France and England, Gaetano Salvemini felt compelled to travel to America where he was able to find work at Harvard and support his family. Elisa Signori, in "Rosselli, Salvemini e la Francia: esperienze d'esilio, giudizi e discussioni," analyzes Salvemini's choice to spend his exile in Anglophone countries, despite his stronger linguistic and cultural ties to France. Using Salvemini's letters to Carlo, who chose to work from France predominantly despite his numerous family ties to England, Signori highlights the ways in which both Salvemini and Carlo justified their choice of location and subsequently planned their most effective course of action. Catherine Rancon's chapter is based also on an analysis of Carlo's letters. In "Carlo Rosselli e Angelo Tasca: discussione sull'eredità e sul rinnovo del pensiero socialista nella lotta antifascista" she identifies and examines both the early points of contact between the two antifascist leaders in the 1930s, and Carlo's subsequent criticism of the socialist tradition in Italy.

The third section of the book, "Assassinio e funerali," opens with Mimmo Franzinelli's "All'ombra del delitto Rosselli." Revisiting GL's activities leading up to the assassination, his article provides the historical background to other accounts in this volume of the echoes of and responses to the brothers' murder throughout the world. In "L'album fotografico dei funerali di Carlo e Nello Rosselli. Rappresentazione e autorappresentazione di GL," Chiara Colombini explores and decodes the photo album of the funeral procession in Paris, which has been recently digitized and made available to the public.

Bénédicte Deschamps' chapter, "L'eco dell'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli negli Stati Uniti," offers interesting insight into the difficulties encountered by antifascists in America in transmitting the news of the Rosselli assassination. Through an analysis of articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, Deschamps traces the evolving perception of Fascism in the American media. "La traslazione delle spoglie di Carlo e Nello Rosselli a Firenze" by Alessandro Giacone brings to light the numerous hurdles that had to be overcome to organize the event in Florence, and the delicate political relationship between surviving members of GL, Salvemini, Pierre de Gaulle and President Einaudi.

Moving beyond the history and the assassination of the brothers, Part IV "Retaggio e memoria" brings together four essays that focus on Carlo and Nello's intellectual legacy. These survey a broad scope of research, focusing on the brothers' influence on political ideology, as well as the inaccuracies and inconsistencies that have persisted from the historical texts and the artistic adaptations of Moravia and Bertolucci. Nicolas Violle approaches the assassination

of the Rosselli brothers through literature and film in "Il teatro delle ombre, o la rappresentazione del delitto Rosselli attraverso Moravia e Bertolucci." Focusing on Moravia's *Il conformista* and Bertolucci's film adaptation, Violle elucidates the inconsistencies that stem from the narrative liberties taken by Moravia in describing the Rosselli brothers and the artistic license Bertolucci took in his film critique of the bourgeoisie. Éric Vial succinctly identifies many of the historical inaccuracies that continue to surround the memory of the Rosselli brothers in "L'incostanza della memoria: errori e semplificazioni su Carlo e Nello Rosselli." Vial suggests that the assassination itself, which simultaneously catapulted the brothers' identities and activities onto the world stage while shrouding their death in enigmatic uncertainty, has left an enduring legacy of misinformation that scholars perpetuate still today.

As Olivier Forlin demonstrates in "Carlo Rosselli, Giustizia e Libertà e gli intellettuali francesi (dagli anni Trenta agli anni Cinquanta)," Carlo's influence on the French intelligentsia had a profound impact on French thought, guiding it from relative acceptance to distinct rejection of fascist ideology. Part IV closes with an article by Leonardo Casalino titled "La 'metafora della ricerca': note su Carlo Rosselli e Giustizia e Libertà nella storia della sinistra italiana del Novecento." Casalino identifies key influences by future members of GL, notably Emilio Lussu, on Carlo Rosselli's liberal socialism, and then continues to follow Rosselli's political influence throughout the works of scholars like Franco Venturi and Norberto Bobbio.

As stated, the concluding section, "Testimonianze," contains a personal account by Carlo's grandson, David Rosselli titled "Carlo e Nello Rosselli: un punto di vista familiare." Though he never knew his grandfather or great-uncle, David Rosselli reflects on how he was introduced to their legacies through his Italian heritage. In "Narrare la storia: *Lipari 1929. Fuga dal confino*," Luca Di Vito and Michele Gialdroni explain the creative process and organization of their recent publication. Stella Savino details her decision and process to make a documentary about the brothers in "*Il caso Rosselli (un delitto di regime)*: cronaca di un documentario."

In general, the collected essays in this volume meet the editors' goal of opening new points of inquiry regarding the Rosselli brothers and their legacy. At times the emergent nature of some of the studies results in seemingly incongruous leaps. For example, Simone Visciola's chapter veers into an interesting, but underdeveloped discussion of Nello's relationship with the women in his family. This feel of preliminary and undeveloped research is balanced by some more carefully constructed essays, notably the studies by Isabelle Richet and Bénédicte Deschamps', respectively. As a collection, all of the essays inspire new and continued research on the Rosselli brothers.

Significant attention is given to Nello Rosselli and the extended Rosselli family, particularly Marion Cave, yet it is clear that considerably more research can and must be done on these less well-known figures. David Rosselli's remembrance offers a suggestive juxtaposition to the prominent focus on Anglophone countries in the research collected here: despite his familial ties to Carlo and Nello, David's introduction to the brothers' legacy has been facilitated primarily by his Italian family and his study of the Italian language, not through English-language documentation. This suggests that scholars still have much to do to reintroduce the Rosselli brothers to the Anglophone cultures that they surely influenced, but which have seemingly forgotten them.

University of California, Los Angeles NICOLE HARDY ROBINSON

Through Partisan Eyes: My Friendships, Literary Education, and Political Encounters in Italy (1956–2013), With Sidelights on my Experiences in the United States, France, and the Soviet Union. By FRANK ROSENGARTEN. Pp. XX + 212. Florence, Italy: Firenze University Press. 2014.

It has been a rather long time since Italy mattered much to the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, the country that once boasted the largest Communist Party in Europe lost most of its strategic significance to the sole remaining superpower, even though the Sixth Fleet is still

based in Naples. For more than a decade now the major U.S. news outlets have covered the Italian political scene — when they have deigned to report on it at all — with befuddlement, condescension, amusement, or thinly veiled disdain. Italy's political and cultural impoverishment during the Berlusconi years has been accompanied by its almost total marginalization in the discussion of foreign affairs in the U.S. In academia, Italian history and culture still occupy important, even prominent, spaces in various disciplines, especially medieval and Renaissance studies, art history, music, architecture, and cinema. No major institution of higher learning can possibly ignore the centrality of Italy's contribution to the Western humanistic tradition. With few exceptions, however, particularly in film studies, design/fashion and, to a somewhat lesser extent, literature (where Calvino, Eco, and Primo Levi are quite visible, and Agamben is a frequently cited theorist), the Italian writers and thinkers most written about and studied belong to the distant past. Likewise in the social sciences where, apart from Machiavelli, only Gramsci remains an important point of reference; one hardly ever encounters the names of Beccaria, Pareto, Mosca, Gobetti, Einaudi or Sraffa in U.S. academic publications. The same is true of Croce and Gentile; and, although some of Norberto Bobbio's major writings have been translated into English, his name hardly ever crops up in the courses, academic conferences, and scholarly journals of U.S. political theorists. In short, the Italy that most Americans know, study and care about is little more than a great museum, the repository of the remains of ancient marvels. Scholars spend time there to examine the originals of precious artifacts and conduct research in various archives, whereas American tourists flock to it to visit the ruins of classical antiquity, view the works of Michelangelo, marvel at Florence and Venice, and tour the Vatican (and, perhaps, catch a glimpse of the pope).

Frank Rosengarten's *Through Partisan Eyes* is a remarkably powerful antidote to the pervasive view of Italy as a museum. His memoir brings poignantly into relief a vibrant scene of intellectuals (in the capacious definition of the term that encompasses scholars, artists, and many others who help shape a society's self-representation and its broader world view) grappling with urgent social and political issues of national and international import. From as far back as his graduate student years at Columbia University, through the decades he spent as a university professor, to his current activities as a remarkably productive independent scholar, Rosengarten's thinking, research, and writing have always been ineluctably intertwined with a deep concern for social justice and what in today's parlance one would term the plight of the subalterns. He has never adopted the stance of the scholar gazing at his/her object of study with aesthetic detachment or moral indifference — nor has he ever tried to. It is, precisely and paradoxically, because he views and engages the world around him "through partisan eyes" that Rosengarten's recollections of and reflections on his life, career, friendships and encounters differ refreshingly and, often, strikingly from what one normally expects to find and frequently encounters in memoirs of scholars and academics. Whereas most Americans are drawn to Italy as a museum of past glories and masterpieces, for Rosengarten, the museum, the archive and the literary canon stimulate meditations on the living material situations and conditions of people hankering for social justice and equity.

In the earliest stages of his formation as an Italianist, Frank Rosengarten was fascinated by the humanistic tradition that emanated from the Renaissance. That was what first led him to read Eugenio Garin and, although Rosengarten did not in the end make the Renaissance his area of specialization, Garin provided him with the critical orientation, approach to scholarship, and basic intellectual compass to which he has adhered ever since. In Garin's manner of "relating Italian humanism to real social conditions and political issues in Renaissance Italy" (VIII) Rosengarten found a paradigm for a mode of inquiry that is, perhaps, best described as engaged. It is noteworthy that in embracing the example of Garin — and others, such as Carlo Muscetta and Carlo Salinari — Rosengarten was going against the grain. In Rosengarten's student years the reigning orthodoxy in Anglophone literary studies was formalism, generally known as the New Criticism in the U.S. and Practical Criticism in the UK. It was a school of thought that privileged the autonomy of the literary text and that demanded the dissociation of historical, social, and political considerations from the analysis and evaluation of poetry,

fiction, and drama. (It was the dominance of the academy by the New Critics that consigned the work of such formidable philologists as Erich Auerbach to the margins of the field.) This is not to say that Rosengarten's literary studies are inattentive to the formal, aesthetic, and stylistic qualities of texts: far from it, as is particularly evident in his writings on Vasco Pratolini, Marcel Proust, and Giacomo Leopardi. Instead, Rosengarten's early rejection of the New Critical orthodoxy of the 1950s is indicative of a life-long resistance to the allure of the critical and theoretical fashions that succeeded one another over the past six decades. The significance and, above all, the distinctiveness of Rosengarten's unwavering attention to "real social conditions and political issues" (VIII) in his research and writings is best appreciated by contrasting him to the mainstream literary scholarship of his time. The reader will recall that Edward Said describes the lamentable social disengagement of literary intellectuals from the time of the New Criticism to the more recent wave of post-structuralism (including many of its self-proclaimed leftist exponents) as a self-referential group who associated their own parochial interests with those of all humankind, isolated from the the major intellectual, political, moral, and ethical issues of their times. It is when set against this background that Rosengarten's singularity stands out in strikingly sharp relief.

Rosengarten also departed significantly from the standard practices and conventions of his profession by travelling well beyond the disciplinary boundaries of literary studies. His work on Pratolini deepened his interest in the anti-fascist movements that were, in many important respects, the crucible from which emerged the main figures that attempted to shape a "nuova cultura" for post-war Italy. Painstaking research in Italian archives unearthed the materials that inform Rosengarten's books on the Italian anti-fascist press and on Silvio Trentin. His massive contributions to Gramsci studies are only partly literary and the same is true of his book on C.L.R. James. What all these major scholarly works have in common is the profound interest in the nexus culture-ideology-politics that animates them. When he then turned to a purely literary figure, Marcel Proust, the primary focus remains on ideology, as the title of the book he wrote on the subject explicitly announces: *The Writings of the Young Marcel Proust: An Ideological Critique*. As for Giacomo Leopardi, it is his admirable intellectual independence and his care for ordinary people and their quotidian existence that motivated Rosengarten to produce a book-length treatment of him.

Rosengarten explains in his memoir how Leopardi's "humanity, empathy, and obvious desire to make a place in his poetry for the struggles of ordinary people, made him a figure whose importance transcended chronological and geographical boundaries" (199). One can say of Rosengarten's political reflections, which constitute the main thread that runs through his memoir, that they reveal his deep and constant concern with justice/injustice, equity/inequity, oppression/freedom as lived experiences rather than abstract ideological issues. This is as true when he is dealing with the relation of culture to politics as when he reminisces on the great political events and shifts he studied, witnessed or directly participated in over the years. Not by chance, the pages dealing with the seismic geo-political transformation of the late 1980s and early 1970s are as alert to the "struggles of ordinary people" (199) as are his observations on social services and civic activism in Bologna as compared to those of the United States. Politics, for Rosengarten, are never a spectacle but a lived — one could even say, existential — and often painful, disconcerting experience of enormous moral import. This comes through even in the chapter (thirteen) devoted to the intellectual — but no means merely academic — debates on socialism and democracy that accompanied the launch of the journal by the same name that Rosengarten co-founded.

The first three sections of *Through Partisan Eyes* are set in a time and contexts with which many of today's readers are acquainted only through history books, if at all. Rosengarten brings them back to life with his vivid descriptions of the places he visited and lived in, the vast range of fascinating people, some famous and others not, that he met, the friendships he developed, and the conversations he had. However, these pages are much more than a pleasant evocation of the past; they constitute a valuable account by an extraordinarily perceptive and

knowledgeable observer of the cultural politics and political culture of the epoch that in many important ways ended quite abruptly about a decade before the end of the millennium. Yet, as one can see from final section of the memoir, the radical re-shaping of the global configuration of power did not change, much less dispel, the most rudimentary political concerns that have a bearing on the material existence of ordinary people. There is a fundamental continuity between issues Rosengarten addresses when dealing with Proust, James, and Leopardi and the ones he grappled with earlier in his work on Italian writers and political thinkers. Most important of all, Rosengarten's readings, recollections, and reflections, far from being nostalgic or merely evocative, have a direct bearing on the present. Always at the forefront is Rosengarten's concern with the condition of the marginal and largely powerless strata of society.

Through Partisan Eyes is the memoir of an intellectual who never found the ivory tower a refuge from the most urgent social, political, and moral issues of our times. It is the self-portrait of an intellectual whose probity and ethical principles steered him clear from the seductions of the academic and cultural fashions swirling around him. It is a work that provides insight, along with pleasure, to the reader with an interest in post-war Italian culture and politics. More generally, and importantly, Rosengarten's memoir is an account of the kind of leftist intellectual that Edward Said found lamentably absent from the U.S. scene. Progressive intellectuals, literary critics, and Italianists will all find Rosengarten's latest work refreshing, illuminating, enjoyable and, above all, engaging.

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