the inherent *patavinitas* of Speroni's *Dialoghi* in which one breathes "un'aria provinciale, facilmente percepibile [...] come indicazione temporale, come presenza di docenti universitari, come sfruttamento dei metodi argomentativi, delle pratiche diatribiche e dialettiche" (112). This is also seen in his aristotelianism and inclusion of the figure of Pietro Pomponazzi (Peretto) as interlocutor.

Summarizing the basic tenets of Speroni's theory of dialogue as expressed in his *Apologia*, Vianello continues to claim that the Paduan writer was not looking for deep philosophical truths but rather a point of convergence between high culture and the needs of "una letteratura ormai merce di consumo" (114). The place of the rhetor is more fundamental than that of the philosopher to the society of the times where truth is relative and the appearance of truth, the *verosimile*, is equally valid. While never neglecting the importance of *elocutio* (Speroni's dialogues on language and rhetoric are frequently referred to by Vianello), the importance of the demonstrative cause is particularly celebrated since it "cammina sul filo del puro artificio" (122), and therefore is the culmination of the rhetor's art. Furthermore, since praise or derision is the highest form and morally ambiguous, it falls to the efficiency of the *mimesis* to "inscenare la comunicazione" (122). Therefore, to Vianello, the ideological dignity of the genre accorded to it by Speroni lies precisely with the importance placed on the conveyance of the message based solely on linguistic exchange. This, in the author's opinion, made Speroni "il paradigma del letterato nuovo" (111).

Vianello has successfully put together a collection of essays on aspects of different Renaissance authors of dialogues who, despite temporal, geographical, and in some cases "ideological" differences, display aspects of the socio-cultural change that was sweeping Italian letters in the Cinquecento. By avoiding any attempt at a broad, encyclopedic study of the genre throughout the century, and favouring more precise, particular studies, Valerio has produced a clear vision of the literary and cultural climate of the times. This slim volume truly ranks as one of the most engaging and instructive studies of the dialogue to emerge in recent years.

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Pierantonio Frare. *L'Ordine e il verso: La forma canzoniere e l'istituzione metrica nei sonetti del Foscolo*. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1995. Pp. 227.

With *L'Ordine e il verso*, Pierantonio Frare has written a thoroughly researched, detailed, important and original study of Foscolo's poetry. In it, however, he employs a dense, technically difficult exposition to argue – ultimately convincingly – that Foscolo's poetics synthesize into an organic, unified *canzoniere*. Frare's own text is a synthesis as well: of much of his earlier research and writing; of verses by Foscolo and poets from Petrarch to Leopardi; and of poetic treatises from the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By weaving together all of these elements, Frare proposes a believable chronology of Foscolo's sonnets demonstrating a progressive refinement of his poetic style from a dependence on traditional models toward a more innovative style imitating the classical poetry of the ancients.

Frare has studied Foscolo and his poetry for a long time. Four of the ten chapters have been reprinted here from previously published articles, some of which derived from his university thesis (as he explains in his notes to the article, "L'endecasillabo dei sonetti del Foscolo" *Otto/Novecento* 8.1 [1984]: 175 [here 1.2]). Frare's intimate knowledge of Foscolo's poetic corpus makes him an incredible source of information about the sonnets and odes, which have often been ignored by scholars. Sadly, though, his technical, formal analysis of metrical elements in Foscolo's poetry is a challenge to read and absorb, with his rhetoric at times obscuring his intriguing arguments and his even more intriguing methods of proving them.

In the first section of Frare's text, "La metrica dei sonetti," he defines and examines Foscolo's evolving use of such rhetorical structures as the hendecasyllable, *enjambment*, alliteration and rhyme scheme, comparing how these tools were used by poets before Foscolo and how they were defined and considered by metricists of his day. Philologically, the work is a gold mine of eighteenth-century poetic theorists, including Francesco Saverio Quadrio (1739-52), Irenio Affò (1777), Gianbattista Bisso (1788), and Ugone Blair (1801), frequent citations of whom demonstrate the opinions of poets and critics in Foscolo's time regarding these same metrical structures. Frare begins each chapter with a formal definition of each trope, culled from citations of modern poets, critics and theorists. He then weaves together examples from Foscolo's sonnets with citations from the eighteenth century metricists about each trope – most often from Quadrio, whose encyclopedic, though slightly disorganized, seven-volume *Della storia, e della ragione d'ogni poesia* describes the origin and development of lyric, dramatic and epic poetry and has provided important historical background for scholars of poetry since its publication. By doing so, Frare demonstrates how Foscolo's poetic style evolved away from the theories proposed by these metricists toward the personal, more classical style he later perfected in *Dei Sepolcri*.

In order to show the sonnets as a unified *canzoniere*, Frare divides Foscolo's poetry into three main groups – his youthful sonnets, the eight sonnets from the 1802 edition of the *Poesie*, and the four sonnets added by Foscolo for the definitive 1803 edition – and then shows the poet's progressive refinement of the various metrical tools in each defined phase of his poetic creation. Particularly insightful is the chapter on rhyme scheme, which first defines this structure using many modern critics' definitions. Frare then uses Foscolo's various rhyme schemes to date his sonnets according to his reliance on – or distance from – the opinions on rhyme of metricists of his time, especially Quadrio.

The second section of the book builds upon the first, using the various metrical elements examined to propose a chronological and structural order of the sonnets different from those previously offered by critics. Frare argues that all the technical elements Foscolo later developed were already present in his earliest sonnets and were then refined, at the same time as Foscolo was writing and refining his own theories on poetry (which Frare cites as well). Frare argues interestingly that Foscolo's choice of the sonnet was both a challenge to his own writing and a way of paying tribute to poets like Petrarch.

The consistent presence of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* throughout Frare's text reminds the reader of the organic *canzoniere* Frare proposes for Foscolo's sonnets. After arguing for a convincing series of dates for the sonnets, Frare proceeds to analyze them as if cohered into an organic whole, with "Alla sera" as the prelude to the others. Frare

bases his argument on a microtext/macrotext analysis to show that the first sonnet's structure serves as a framework for the constructions dictating the whole organism of the *canzoniere*. His clear and intriguing examination of "Alla sera" is, thus, mirrored in his analysis of the entire *canzoniere*, which scrutinizes the poems according to, among other aspects, the verbs included, thematic contrasts presented, and competing temporal periods in various sections.

The two Appendices, *Rimario* and *Elenco alfabetico dei versi dei sonetti*, are useful tools for any Foscolo scholar, and the Bibliography is a valuable collection of metric and poetic theory from the past three centuries. Perhaps yet another Appendix with all of the Foscolo sonnets discussed throughout the text – as well as several of the Petrarchan ones, as on pages 187-88 – would have been immensely helpful, since at times it becomes difficult to follow Frare's text without a copy of the sonnets and odes examined in hand. (Only in one chapter of the book, written with Alberto Brambilla, ["Il microtesto. Il sonetto [Alla sera] tra equilibrio formale e ambiguità semantica," 2.2.1], do we find the actual poem, on the second page of the essay, a practice which makes the subsequent analysis much easier to follow [149]).

Frare's text is innovative for its interweaving of treatises of eighteenth century metricists with scholarship of contemporary poets and critics, for its complicated and original analysis of Foscolo's sonnets, and for its mode of proposing these sonnets as part of a unified *canzoniere*. Frare demonstrates that Foscolo's *Poesie* are not unlike Petrarch's own *Canzoniere* in terms of structure, and yet his almost scientific analysis proves that Foscolo's work was unique in its attention to technical aspects and, as his style developed, unique as a poetic mode.

Unfortunately, Frare's exposition is marked by a constant deployment of technical language which, while impressive, can at times be tedious. His formal prose includes numbers, percentage points, decimals, charts and graphs on almost every page, as when he writes: "Il Foscolo sembra prediligere particolarmente gli scontri tra accenti (che non sempre assurgono a scontri tra ictus): nei 295 versi dei sonetti se ne verificano ben 184 (62%; ma si tenga conto che in alcuni versi abbiamo due o addirittura tre collisioni di accento), distribuiti su tutte le posizioni del verso: P1-P2 (9), P2-P3 (24), P3-P4 (33), P4-P5 (7), P5-P6 (9), P6-P7 (75), P7-P8 (14), P8-P9 (2), P9-P10 (13)" (39).

Unfortunately, several typographical errors also mar the text, as on page 121 ("per lo schema a rime **a**lterne"), page 137 ("sorregge soluzioni metriche **dl** carattere più avanzato"), and page 171 ("ai fini del nostro assunto. può agevolmente dividersi"). One cannot help but wish that Professor Frare had encased his innovative and intriguing ideas in a plainer style of writing which would welcome readers instead of risking losing them. If Frare's rhetoric were less formal and technical, more readers would be likely to read his text, thereby benefitting from his interesting discoveries and proposals which unfortunately are enveloped in a very difficult and intimidating writing style.

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