tutto in quanto erede dei beni di Pirandello alla stregua dei figli di lui. Lietta in particolare era gelosissima dell'attrice. Lei era stata la figlia prediletta di Pirandello, ma si era allontanata dal padre in seguito al suo matrimonio a un diplomatico cileno e aveva avuto molte liti con lui per ragioni di denaro. In seguito all'arrivo della Abba nella vita del padre, si era sentita messa da parte e ora, dopo la morte di lui, lei e i fratelli volevano fare di tutto per far dimenticare al pubblico la presenza dell'attrice. Anche se costretti dal testamento di Pirandello a consegnare alla Abba le nove commedie composte dal maestro per lei, cercarono in tutti i modi, tramite la loro parentela con la potente famiglia dei D'Amico, di impedire che l'attrice ritornasse a recitare.

Nell'epilogo Frassica racconta con vivacità e sentimento il suo rapporto con Marta negli anni ottanta, allo scopo di curare l'edizione dell'epistolario tra Pirandello e Marta Abba. L'incontro del giovane studioso in *sabbatical* che si avvicina alla diva di 84 anni per lavorare sulle preziose lettere è paragonato all'incontro di Joe Gillis con Norma Desmond, nel film *Viale del Tramonto*. La "divina" Abba, che assume arie da grande diva, pretende obbedienza e devozione assoluta da Frassica, ne monopolizza il tempo e ne fa uno specchio delle proprie volontà così come essa stessa era stata specchio di Pirandello. Quando Frassica, costretto dalle sue incombenze accademiche, non può scrivere assiduamente alla Abba e pubblicarne l'epistolario, lei si vendica tagliandolo fuori completamente (cioè lo "uccide" mentalmente). Con questo ritratto di diva degli anni trenta l'Autore conclude il suo studio che ci dà un quadro ravvicinato di una personalità affascinante di donna 'fatale'.

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Laura Wittman. *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. Pp 439 + illustrations. ISBN 978-1-4426-4339-0. \$ 85.

Embodiment studies addresses sentient and social lived experience as well as affective and discursive investigations of bodies. Laura Wittman, Assistant Professor of French and Italian at Stanford University, has made a noteworthy contribution to embodiment scholarship that includes an impressive presentation of historical research and cultural analysis. Further, her work is poignant because she grapples with both the material and discursive elements of how living bodies identify with, absorb and commune with the dead.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is an examination of dismemberment, disfigurement and death generated by World War I and the establishment of Unknown Soldier Monuments in Italy, France, Britain and the United States. Wittman examines literary texts, films, and archival materials to argue that despite attempts to guide and control public mourning, expressions of public and private grief cannot be contained, nor neatly articulated, by political processes and discourse.

Wittman discusses the multiple and contradictory meanings of the Unknown Soldier in, for example, how ownership of his body was constructed and contested. The Unknown Soldier, in addition to being a soldier, was cast as a brother, a son, a husband, a citizen, a peasant, and particularly in Italy, the Unknown Soldier became a mystical body; a body imbued with religious meaning that upset homogeneous forms of religiosity. Wittman's comparison of Unknown Soldier Memorials highlights that each nation gestured toward a common humanity and universal sense of loss. However, her comparative study also provides a closer reading of the Italian monument in order to focus on anonymity and embodiment as the central conceptual concerns of the book.

In Part One, titled *Anonymity and Sacrifice*, Wittman provides ample substantiation for her argument that far from a stable bellicist project, Unknown Soldier Monuments presented the opportunity to launch a critique of gender, class, and racial hierarchies underpinning nationalist attempts to appropriate the inconsolable loss of human life during the Great War. This is not to say that the monuments were unproblematically appropriated for pacifist, anarchist or fascist meaning making either. Wittman argues that response to these monuments can be read as a new form of mourning used to commemorate loss without necessarily being heroic; instead, they represent an attempt to acknowledge the dehumanization of war as along with the need to mourn deaths as not in vain—even when the political meaning of these deaths are contested.

For example, Wittman claims that insistence on the anonymity of the Unknown Soldier hinged on constructing a body that was common, having no elite ranking in the military or society. This was intended to garner national unity; however, to highlight the common social standing of so many lives lost also risked animosity towards elites. This discursive messiness is paralleled by the material aspects of finding, more so assembling, corpses from battlegrounds; a process obscured from view for the purpose of producing the “blank bones” (63) of pure and innocent Unknown Soldier candidates. Wittman's investigation of subversions of this narrative is particularly interesting in the case of the Italian memorial ceremony and Maria Bergamas, the grieving mother and wife who was described as a woman of the people; and thus, chosen to select the body of the Unknown Soldier (66). Bergamas refused the state script of rational mourning by wailing, ripping off her black veil and throwing it over the second of the eleven coffins arranged before her. Wittman presents a compelling reframing arguing that far from asserting the state as an extension of family by way of performing herself as mother of the nation and fallen sons, Bergamas disrupted efforts to make mourning mundane by redirecting collective awareness to the power of birth and death as a visceral and vital aspect of embodiment that demands recognition of a material rather than abstract body.

The next section, *Part Two: Embodiment and Spectacle*, moves deeper into the sublime experience of near death experiences (i.e., being wounded and witness to carnage) to more deeply consider forms of mourning and healing that tear away from traditional religious and political ideologies. This section of the book picks up speed in terms of Wittman's theoretical dexterity, exemplified in part by her cri-

tique of the social construction of trauma that then enables her discussion of mourning and healing that departs from hegemonic definitions. It is the last chapter, *Mourning, Transcendence and Re-enchanting the Flesh*, that is perhaps most interesting and at the same time begs a more pointed critique of race, whiteness and embodiment. An explicit consideration of whiteness seems apt regarding Wittman's discussion of the photos of the torture of detainees by U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib Prison. Throughout the book she articulates the conflation of violence, sexuality, women's bodies and land that underpin the cultural texts in her study. However, the final chapter that deals with contemporary texts would benefit from a more sustained treatment of the racialized, "killable" body (123), Ellison's body that is present only through absence (125), and further discussion of Italy as a European colonial power as a means of embellishing her commentary on the Abu Ghraib photos. The scholarship of Sherene Razack addressing the tortures at Abu Ghraib, and Sara Ahmed's work on embodiment and the politics of emotions, come to mind in this regard. That said, Wittman's analysis speaks volumes regarding understandings and responses to war and death generating social relations, past and present.

Wittman's superb writing style, detailed descriptions and analysis keep a reader engaged in the depth and breadth of her study. It is a book to return to in appreciation of the nuances of her scholarship. Furthermore, this work should be of great interest to embodiment scholars due to its multifaceted interdisciplinary scope. Wittman's recourse to psychoanalysis, spatial analysis, and literary and cinematic theory is on one hand intellectually impressive, and on the other, suggests what many would agree is necessary for the kind of project she has undertaken: that is, the problem of addressing how material and discursive embodiment figure in hegemonic and subversive responses to alterity, abjection, alienation and the desire to mourn and heal from the violence that pervades our society.

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Marinella Cantelmo, Antonio Lucio Giannone. *In un concerto di voci amiche. Studi di Letteratura italiana dell'Otto e Novecento in onore di Donato Valli.* Galatina (Lecce): Congedo Editore, 2008. Two volumes, Hardbound. Vol. 1 pp. 1- 504, vol. 2 pp. 505-1003. ISBN 978-88-8086-789-0. \$ 30 per volume.

Marinella Cantelmo and Antonio Lucio Giannone have gathered in two volumes articles of scholars and friends, who have come together to pay homage to Donato Valli, the eminent scholar and professor of the Università di Lecce, to whom this work is dedicated. Locally based in Lecce, Donato Valli's research focuses on the authors of the Salento region of Puglia, and on authors and poets of the *Otto-Novecento*. The variety and richness of articles in this collection demonstrate Valli's wide range of interests, and the vast participation of the intellectual community in honouring his contribution and legacy.

The book opens with remarks by Bruno Pellegrino, who stresses the "impe-