sillizzata sulla vieta sovrapposizione tra salute cagionevole e pensiero pessimista. Se è vero che all’epoca era ancora ignoto lo Zibaldone, che certo avrebbe favorito l’intelligenza delle opere pubblicate, è altrettanto evidente che il clima risorgimentale non poteva inquadrare nei propri ranghi Leopardi e, quand’anche vi tentasse, ne privilegiava una sua presunta vena patriottica individuata nelle canzoni. A questo vanno poi aggiunte una certa pigrizia critica e, per quanto non sempre i curatori ne tenessero conto, la censura, che già nella Napoli borbonica aveva interrotto la stampa delle Operette morali.

Fa da contraltare a questa immagine pubblica di Leopardi una sua fortuna, per così dire, privata a cura di Caterina Franceschi Ferrucci (1803-1887), prima donna, fra l’altro, ad essere nominata membro corrispondente dell’Accademia della Crusca nonché prima ‘leopardista’. I contatti con Leopardi furono mediati da conoscenti comuni piuttosto che diretti; eppure sono singolari, tra i due, certe coincidenze di gusto, come l’adesione impetuosa, poi in Caterina stemperata, ai classicisti nella celebre polemica che li contrappose ai romantici, di temperamento e persino di salute, a partire dalla cecità che colpì temporaneamente entrambi (p. 271).

Dell’ammiratissimo poeta Caterina condivise anche le città: tra le altre, visse infatti a Macerata, tuttora la provincia di Recanati, a Bologna (dove fu invitata a leggere alcune poesie all’Accademia dei Felsinei come Leopardi vi aveva letto l’Epistola al conte Carlo Pepoli), Pisa e Firenze. Dai Versi (propriamente Prose e Versi, 1873) della Franceschi, fin dal titolo ispirato all’omonima raccolta leopardiana del 1826, emergono debiti costanti con tutti i Canti: sono soprattutto tessere lessicali, accanto ad altre tratte dai maggiori, che tuttavia l’autrice cala in un “sistema provvidenzialistico-familiare” ben lontano da quello “sensistico-materialistico” dell’originale (p. 260).

In definitiva, il nuovo volume di Patrizia Landi arricchisce il panorama della già ricchissima bibliografia leopardiana: esso, in particolare, invita a considerare con attenzione la “lingua densa e rarefatta allo stesso tempo” (p. 11) che è cifra di qualità della prosa di Leopardi.

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This comprehensive, and yet compact study collects, collates and concentrates in a single volume excerpts by the most eminent thinkers of modern-time Italy. The scholars’ insightful investigations, intriguing disquisitions and thought-provoking questions range—as specified in the book’s title—from Kant’s demise at the onset of the Eighteenhundreds to Croce’s disappearance from the Italian and international scene of philosophy and politics in the second half of the 20th century. Compiled with the intent to acquaint the anglophone readership with a selective and systema-
tic panorama of Italian philosophers less known outside of their national confines, this conspicuous anthology presents an idiosyncratic corpus of text sorts and genres which, in their diversity, reproduce a complete picture of the era with its historical, cultural and ideological premises and prospects, its climaxes and conclusions.

Arranged in two parts, with the second and central section comprising a wide and varied spectrum of primary sources, the collection is preceded by an extensive and exhaustive introduction which, through a series of twenty-eight articles, expounds in depth and elucidates in detail the authors’ theoretical perspectives within the framework of their works and writings. The first part opens with a succinct afterthought on the late figure of Norberto Bobbio, in which the Copenhavers articulate the rationale behind their study, and outline the route along which their survey will unfold. Drawing on the political engagement that the contemporary Italian thinker exhibited during his lifetime, the scholars’ incipient considerations direct the reader’s attention to the binomial of philosophy and politics that distinguished modern Italy. Departing from Bobbio’s reiterated j’accuse against Fascism, the scholars illustrate the detection of its roots in the Enlightened idealism that the Italian intelligentsia had inherited from their German predecessors, and imported onto local ground where it had found fertile terrain long after its enthusiasm had waned in its country of origin.

What follows is an “episodic history of the philosophy of the period” (vii) which proceeds from the 19th century onwards, and presents the theories of the most influential advocates of German idealism in Italy—in their relation to each other as both disciples and dissidents of thought. Copenhavers’ investigations set in with Antonio Rosmini’s invective against the pandemic of French sensism, and Pasquale Galluzzi’s concomitant cognitive psychology which attempted “to rescue empiricism from the sensists” to conciliate “theology with science” (23). Inspired by Galluzzi, Vincenzo Gioberti—Rosmini’s undoubtedly most fierce opponent—turned into the proponent of a “reflective psychology” (40) which, relying on the rigor of an “ideal formula”, was meant to circumvent the inferential limitations of subjective experience and secure its foundation in an ontological reality. The rejection of sensism in favor of idealism found its sequel in Count Terenzio Mamiani’s historical work, and was embraced with equal zeal by Croce’s cousin Bertrando Spaventa, fervent Hegelian who—as pendant to Mamiani’s “natural method” (46)—inaugurated a positivistic line of thought which was further pursued and promoted by Pasquale Villari’s notion of history as science. In his endeavor of emancipating philosophy from its Hegelian inception upon recognizing its limitations, Villari was following his mentor Francesco De Sanctis whose realism turned into Italy’s “new Hegelianism” (64). If Francesco Fiorentino initially contested De Sanctis’s dichotomy of realism and idealism, in an epistolary correspondence entertained with the marchioness Florenzi Waddington, he eventually postulated a conciliatory alliance of idealism and positivism as necessary. Welcoming Fiorentino’s solution, the historical materialist Antonio Labriola, in turn, posited a philosophy of history that would exert its lasting influence on Croce. The survey of the Eighteenhundreds closes with the neo-Kantian Barzellotti whose critique of Italian idealism and its positivistic outgrowth foreshadows Bobbio’s pole-
mic against the faults and failures of modern Italian philosophy that concludes the first segment of this study.

With Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, the Nineteenthundreds feature the two by far most compelling and charismatic representatives of Italian idealism. As the scholars expound the development of their thoughts, they elicit their increasing disagreements which culminated in the irreconcilable discord that followed the rise of Fascism, and contributed to their ultimate schism. From their prolific oeuvre, the scholars excerpted those writings that most strikingly exemplify their divergency of perspectives on the liberal and conservative front. Their personal and political altercation is interluded by the fate and figure of Antonio Gramsci who questioned and contested the abstractions of Gentile’s idealism and the speculations of Croce’s historiography alike.

These “warring versions of idealism” (6) account ultimately for Italy’s “strange history”, which captions the first and last article on Bobbio that frame the expository preamble. This preliminary section of the book thus closes as it had commenced: with Bobbio’s denunciation against the “self-deception” (163) of Italian idealism, and the anomalous implications derived from its coalescence with nationalism. The religious fervor that had animated both Croce’s and Gentile’s philosophy—despite the insurmountable hiatus that eventually unclasped between the former friends—fueled the impending chauvinistic impetus and impulse that had already found in Gioberti’s claim to primacy and Gentile’s controversial patriotism its most resonant voices.

Upon initiating the reader into the theories that the Italian philosophers elaborate at length in their writings, the subsequent segment gathers the primary literature thus far addressed and analyzed, whose exceptional translations are complemented by a rich apparatus of notes and explanatory remarks. The anthology ends with a detailed bibliography, and two separate indices of names and subjects that facilitate the consultation of this voluminous and valuable collection which constitutes an indispensable reference and an imperative reading both within and beyond the anglophone world.

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The Marquis of Roccaverdina, a translation by Santi V. Buscemi of Luigi Capuana’s Il marchese di Roccaverdina, has finally hit the North American shelves. The novel, which is a masterpiece of Italian Naturalist Literature (Verismo), was published in Italy in 1901 by Fratelli Treves, and is now available in English thanks to Dante University Press. Santi V. Buscemi can also be credited for translating Luigi Capuana’s collection of short stories, C’era una volta, also published by Dante University Press with the title Sicilian Tales in 2009.