In conclusione, *La Colombiade, le poesie in dialetto, gli scherzi* si propone come indispensabile supporto alla ricerca, punto di partenza per i futuri approcci interpretativi a Parini e alle sue opere minori. Il lavoro di ricostruzione, contestualizzazione e interpretazione di questi versi misconosciuti costituisce un notevole passo in avanti negli studi sul XVIII secolo, poiché fornisce un'edizione filologicamente e criticamente attendibile di opere che a tutt'oggi necessitano di ulteriori approfondimenti critici.

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Roberto Salsano. *Tra scrittura e riscrittura. Saggi e note su Alfieri tragico*. Caltanissetta-Roma: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 2014. Pp. 193. ISBN 9788882413811. € 20.00.

One cannot simply speak of Alfieri's tragedies as "writings"; rather, his works are also "re-writings". This volume by Salsano seeks to articulate Alfieri's creative process while defining the playwright's ambiguous yet dynamic relationship with outside sources and with his own tragedies.

The essays collected in this volume are divided into two parts. In the first section, entitled "Alfieri tra 'angoscia dell'influenza' e progettualità", Salsano provides a theoretical framework for his antipositivist approach to studying Alfieri as a writer and critic. The second part, "Scritture e riscritture. *Filippo*, *Polinice*, *Merope*", features a reading of three of Alfieri's tragedies: *Filippo* (1783), *Polinice* (1783), and *Merope* (1782). Two of the fourteen essays—incidentally among the most substantial of the volume—are revised chapters previously published in the late 1970s by Bulzoni Editore.

While recognizing the significant contribution of critics such as Mario Fubini and Walter Binni to Alfieri studies, Salsano identifies the limitations of the quantitative or positivist readings of his predecessors, namely their methods' inability to capture some of the abstract qualities of Alfieri's poetry, such as his lyricism and dramatic sensibilities. Salsano defines his approach as antipositivist, yet not as strictly idealist as that of Benedetto Croce. The philological analysis of the past, in Salsano's view, is incapable of responding to the hermeneutic problem posed by the vast spheres of influences in Alfieri's formation, his numerous

texts and peritexts. For this reason, the critic turns to tools offered by theorists of the twentieth century, especially by structuralists and poststructuralists, in order to propose a fresh approach to interpreting Alfieri. Salsano's analysis uncovers a strong dialectic exchange between history and the author's personality, difference and repetition, tradition and innovation, Sensationalism and Protoromanticism, ideality and historicity, reason and pathos. One might say that the key word of this volume's title is "*tra*".

Salsano is mainly interested in Alfieri's act of writing (*atto di scrittura*) as a phenomenon to consider in and of itself. While Alfieri's impulse to write initially stems from his love of himself (*amor proprio*), he is also greatly driven by a competitive search for originality. The playwright writes and rewrites, he wishes to go beyond, to surpass other authors and to better his own texts. This inner drive for improvement leads him to make comparisons, to show how his tragedies are different from other dramatists' texts. He wants to distance himself from them while concurrently using them as models. Salsano perfectly illustrates Alfieri's view of writing by analyzing the metaphor of the box (*scrigno*) from Alfieri's *Vita*: in this treasure trove, the playwright keeps what is good of his own works—that is, his creativity—while forever seeking improvement in his poetic competencies.

Alfieri's reading, writing and rewriting reveal the rich intertextuality and dialogue inherent to the playwright's creative program. As Salsano succinctly states, Alfieri "non utilizzava il già scritto da altri se non in funzione inventiva del riscrivere, overosia del suo proprio scrivere" (72). Curiously, Alfieri expresses a negative view of intertextuality, which he interprets as a loss of originality. He reveals his sources, yet aspires to create something new, of his own. This certain experimentalism pushes him to surpass even a number of aesthetic rules of his time. Salsano coins a term for this creative transformation or variation on themes and motives, characters and subjects: "alfierizzamento" (137).

In the essay "Percorsi nelle 'postille' alfieriane alla *Merope* di Maffei", Salsano elaborates the topic of intertextuality in Alfieri's authorship most brilliantly. In this chapter, Salsano claims that Alfieri's glosses criticising his predecessor's work may hold a key to reading the entirety of his *corpus*. While the letter to Calzabigi *Parere dell'autore su le presenti tragedie* and other texts (such as the *Vita*) elaborate on Alfieri's view of his poetics, the glosses differ in that they are more impressionistic, due to their private and unofficial nature. These succinct comments in reaction to Maffei's *Merope* disclose his psychology and ideals, his conception of tragedy, his idea of how to represent heroes and tyrants, his desire for consistent dramatic

register (i.e. excluding comic elements from tragedy) and his search for cohesion in dramatic structure and character development. Moreover, Alfieri's glosses show his attentiveness to the interior psychology and emotions of characters. His harsh criticism of structural flaws in *Merope* reveal his ideal of simplicity (e.g. eliminating secondary characters such as the *confidenti*). Beyond these formal elements, Salsano reveals that Alfieri's marginal notes contrast more abstract qualities in the playwright, that differentiate him from Maffei, those qualities which emerge from his antipositivist reading: one sees his energy ("forma energica", 160), his warmth ("calore vigoroso di espressioni calde", 160), his profoundly human poetry ("variamente e profondamente umana", 160), his intimate and familiar humanity ("più intima e familiar umanità", 166).

The annotated bibliography proposed by Salsano provides a list of chosen publications on selected topics, useful for scholars or students wanting to explore some of the themes or methodologies more in depth.

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Gianluca Cinelli. *La questione del male in Storia della colonna infame di Alessandro Manzoni*. Leicester, UK: Troubador, 2015. Pp. 143. ISBN 9781784622299. £ 14.95

When the philosopher Gottfried Leibniz published his seminal work *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil* in 1710, he could not have foreseen the effect it would have on Alessandro Manzoni, writing more than a century later, struggling to answer satisfactorily for himself similar essential questions. If man is free and God omnibenevolent, why does evil exist?

In the volume under review here, we find the detailed introspective journey that Manzoni experienced as he developed a coherent and reasonable answer. His was not a philosophical treatise. Rather, he chose to consider the conundrum through the measured deliberation and reflection on the egregious injustices that he describes in the *Storia della colonna infame*. As he had done with his novel, *I promessi sposi*, Manzoni prepared several drafts of the *Storia*. In fact, this recounting of the trial, held in 1630, of the dreaded anointers who supposedly