body of the green protagonist. For example, exploring the approximately 1,300 pages of notes for the novel's preparation, he finds a subsequently deleted passage wherein a mummified iguana, transfixated through the neck by a Portuguese flag, appears in one of Ortese's unpublished versions of the work. This pitiful figure explains *lacunae* in the subsequent novel. In the published version, the count observes that the living iguana twists and stretches her bruised neck, as if it were sore. Colonial authority is made visible here, dominating the body of a servant girl, who literally becomes a monstrous, green animal. Annovi effectively finds numerous intertextual references in the novel to confirm his post-colonial reading: Melville's *Moby Dick*, Leopardi's dialogue between Columbus and Gutierrez, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Closing the anthology is Maraini's interview with Ortese, "Who Were You?" (1973), previously unavailable in English. The topic of this interview ties neatly to topics found in so many other essays of the anthology: Ortese's playful, self-contradictory, and complex representations of herself. Initially refusing to engage in this topic, Ortese proceeds to weave a tale of her own childhood and family experiences that matches her fictional narratives for its evocative tone and interest.

Ghezzi's introduction to the anthology cites a uniting objective for its production: the fantastical, mythological vision of America, which served as inspiration for Ortese, also becomes the addressee of these critical essays. Developing this line of criticism in English ensures that new audiences may better find a roadmap to Ortese's *Celestial Geographies*.

MELISSA COBURN

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Cristina Caracchini e Enrico Minardi, a cura di. *Il pensiero della poesia: da Leopardi ai contemporanei*. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2017. Pp. 193. ISBN 9788864534794.

As the ambitious title indicates, the present book explores the complex relationship between poetry and thought, as articulated in 10 critical readings of works by Giacomo Leopardi, the Crepuscolari, Aldo Palazzeschi, Giorgio Caproni, Alfredo Giuliani, Giuseppe Conte, Elisa Biagini, Gian Maria Annovi, Andrea Zanzotto, and Amalia Rosselli, including an essay on poetry translation. Cristina Caracchini

provides a comprehensive and impressive introduction, placing the topic within the context of modern and postmodern theory. She also succinctly inserts each essay within her framework, while Enrico Minardi writes excellent synopses that relate each contribution to the book's overarching theme.

The premise of the volume is the perceived urgent need to defend the diminished importance of poetry in the technological age, where the cognitive templates of the natural sciences and digital technology prevail over alternative paradigms. Using Benedetto Croce's *Difesa della poesia* (1933) as an intellectual springboard, Caracchini reflects on the nature of poetic discourse and its "value" in the Information Age, where "value" appears to be defined almost exclusively in monetary or quantifiable terms. She takes into consideration the views of literary critics, linguists, and philosophers, such as Harold Bloom, Jacques Bouveresse, Alberto Casadei, Jean Cohen, Valerio Magrelli, Wolfgang Iser, Massimo Cacciari, Gianni Vattimo, and Jacques Derrida. These figures focus on different aspects of the thesis developed by the editors, namely, the writer's perspective, the reader's response, and the poem's self-reflexivity. The connecting interpretive thread is the process whereby poetry institutes an epistemological relationship between itself and the external world, a relationship that is not reducible to empirical models of reality. The objective is to identify the specific cognitive activity involved in poetic discourse that distinguishes it from scientific and philosophical discourse, which are characterized by argumentation.

Irene Beccarini cites statements by Giuseppe Conte, lamenting the growing marginalization of poetry and its reduction to cultural decor. She indicts both the political class and the poets of postmodernity, arguing for the necessity of re-asserting poetry as a form of knowledge, which is to be achieved by restoring its mythic dimension. Beccarini then goes on to analyze Conte's poetry, illustrating the poet's belief in the mission of poetry, namely, "attingere i più profondi misteri dell'universo, portandoli alla luce" (32). Giorgia Buongiorno examines the role the body plays in the writings of Elisa Biagini e Gian Maria Annovi, describing the way these texts are intertextually engaged with the postmodern reflections of Artaud, Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty, and Nancy on the basis of such concepts as the "corps sans organs," which is the body that expresses its existential experience through language.

Both Mimmo Cangiano's essay on Aldo Palazzeschi and Danila Cannamela's on the *Crepuscolari* underscore the questioning of epistemological certainties inspired by the technological achievements of the industrial and post-industrial revolutions. For Cangiano, Palazzeschi's "poeta-saltimbanco" adopts an ironic,

“negative,” and paradoxical stance in the face of the knowledge paradigms founded on confidence in science and its laws of probability. Palazzeschi undermines this epistemic model through poetry that visualizes the potentialities inherent in reality, thereby destabilizing the blind acceptance of perceptual data. Cannamela identifies the strategies used by the *Crepuscolari* to invite the reader to question what Jean-François Lyotard would call the illusory “metanarratives” of society in order to arrive at self-knowledge. These strategies include irony, parody, and the Socratic method that introduces doubt in the face of quotidian truths.

Roberta Cauchi-Santoro interprets Giacomo Leopardi’s *Ciclo di Aspasia* as compositions that develop a concept analogous to Jacques Lacan’s *jouissance*, which condenses the Freudian pleasure principle (*eros*) and the death drive (*thanatos*) into a single distressing impulse. In Leopardi, the insatiable desire for knowledge and the anticipation of death lead to a tragic awareness of the fact that lack of definitive solutions is an “ontological condition” that accounts for the human destiny of suffering. Corrado Confalonieri analyzes the poetry of Andrea Zanzotto, in particular the *Sovrimpressioni*, through the filter of Gregory Bateson’s *Steps to the Ecology of Mind*, where the notion of the “double take” renders a more complex view of the relationship between the self and the world than does Cartesian dualism. For Zanzotto, the landscape/world exists on two levels, the actual and the possible, the interior and the exterior, wherein subjectivity and objectivity are “superimposed.”

Andrea Malaguti reads Giorgio Caproni’s *Litania* as an exploration of the possibility of resolving the crisis of poetry’s capacity to represent reality via the re-invention of allegory. Paralleling works by Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin that evoke the image of the city of Paris, Caproni’s poetry depicts Genoa as a fusion of objective historical fact and subjective experience. Federica Santini, meanwhile, interprets the poetry of Alfredo Giuliani and *I Novissimi* through the prism of “schizomorfismo,” which is the perception of reality as continuous transformation without linearity or causal logic. Santini references Lewis Carroll and calls Giuliani a “maestro della realtà ribaltata, smontata e ricomposta in un gioco infinito di specchi deformanti” (135). Carlo Testa compares three Italian translations of Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus* and argues that the play between translatability and untranslatability captures the dilemma of grasping and expressing the real through the poetic word. Finally, Ambra Zarat explores the phrase in the book title “il pensiero della poesia” as it applies to Amalia Rosselli’s lyrics. Zarat conveys Rosselli’s belief that poetry is an instrument that the subject

uses to interrogate reality as well as his or her position within that reality. She sees poetic discourse as deconstruction of the illusion that knowledge is exclusively the realm of logic and scientific thinking. Her *Variazioni belliche* illustrates this fact as well as the fact that knowledge is a linguistic construct and, as such, is subject to the idiosyncrasies of language.

Caracchini and Minardi should be complimented for their call for a renewed appreciation of the value of poetry, which can stimulate thought on the nature of human knowledge, and the capacity for poetic language to express or constitute that knowledge, and they are fully conscious of the precariousness of such a project.

CORRADO FEDERICI

Brock University

Maria Laura Mosco and Pietro Pirani, editors. *The Concept of Resistance in Italy. Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 213. ISBN 9781783489572.

This collection of essays is based on talks given at the “Re-Thinking Italian Resistance: History, Literature, Music and Cinema” conference held at Western University in March 2015. Most of the essays are concerned with literature and cinema. Laura Mosco’s essay, which deals with well-known works by Italo Calvino and Bernardo Bertolucci, is emblematic of this trend; Alessandro Portelli’s “Notes on the Anti-Fascist Singing Tradition (1922–2011)” deals with music. Three of the 11 essays deal more closely with strictly historical (and biographical) issues: Pietro Pirani examines the alleged legacy of the Resistance on Italian “security policy”; Nicolas Virtue deals with the figure of Quirino Armellini and the very ambiguous legacy of alleged dissent in relations between the Italian army and the Fascist regime, which at least some scholars argue Armellini represents; finally, Fabio Rizi deals with some specific details of Benedetto Croce’s biography related to his activities and liaisons with the Resistance. Luca Pucci’s essay, “*Autobiografia di una nazione: Memory and the Italian Resistance*,” could also be included in this “historical” set, but it is actually a (meta-historical) series of reflections on the historiographical ties of memory, ideology, and myth, and of political and institutional history/-ies, as they relate to Fascism, anti-Fascism, and the Resistance (and the Resistance’s