trasformando virtualmente ogni cultura tradizionale, il suo modo di relazionarsi alla realtà è fondamentalmente diverso da quelli stabiliti dalle culture tradizionali. È sempre più la tecnica e non la cultura a costituire l'ecologia sociale per la vita umana. La teoria della cultura come ecologia sociale costituirà, conclude l'autore, la mappa principale per guidarci nella nostra prossima ricerca sulla nascita dell'era post-culturale. Le riflessioni di Vanderburg in questo volume contribuiscono senz'altro a dare una nuova luce al dialogo multidisciplinare tra gli intellettuali intorno a scienza, tecnologia e tecnica e alla loro influenza sulla vita umana.

PAOLA BASILE

Lake Erie College

Patrizia Sambuco, editor. *Transmissions of Memory. Echoes, Traumas and Nostalgia in Post-World War II Italian Culture*. Vancouver et al.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018. Pp. 217. ISBN: 978-1-68393-143-0.

This attention-worthy volume revolves around memory in history, in fiction, in culture and in nostalgia, all presented through the lens of personal and collective traumas. Its twelve chapters draw heavily upon the work of Maurice Halbwachs whose seminal work, *On Collective Memory*, was among the early confirmations of how memory is at once intrinsically personal and simultaneously affects with profound implications our attempts to explicate and understand History. Then, further enhanced by a rich and impressive critical corpus of studies on memory, whether collective (of select groups), or cultural or deeply disturbing (counter memory), each chapter expertly articulates how History is more than a sum of its composite histories/stories.

Under the capable charge of the editor, Patrizia Sambuco, the volume never resorts to the maudlin or emotional. Instead, each of the chapters ask us to consider how the ripple effect of the stories elucidated and critiqued continue to influence Italian sociopolitical and cultural attitudes today. Martin McLaughlin opens the volume with his view of how two masters of historiographic metafiction, Umberto Eco and Italo Calvino, have informed their pages through Medieval writings and Renaissance history respectively. Their carefully honed and “never passive” (15) commitment to history allows for the transmission of cultures across time. Similarly, Eugenio Montale’s *Xenia* poems, the focus of Adele Bardazzi’s study

"Between Myth and Poetic Tradition," reaches back in time to fictions even more ancient such as the stories of Eurydice and Persephone. Bardazzi shows how, in the case of Montale, the themes connect across time with the poet's memories of his vision-impaired wife, nicknamed Mosca, with her thick, bottle glass eyeglasses set in their large tortoise shell frames. Bardazzi offers that Montale's work constitutes a type of *canzoniere in morte*, a remembrance of a beloved now deceased in which the poet highlights the simple domesticity of their relationship. Yet it is potent enough to "become the pretext for some of the most powerful and poignant" of Montale's writings (26), even though, like Eurydice, Mosca herself is silenced.

Silence and its complementary but not necessarily synonymous repression of memory constitute the principal motif in many other chapters of this volume. First there is the personal repression described in Charles L. Leavitt's essay on the genesis of Alberto Moravia's novel *The Woman of Rome* (*La Romana*). Moravia's hour with a young prostitute recasts itself in his imagination as the story of Adriana. The tale of a woman slowly and inextricably pushed into selling her body has precedent in narratives echoing back into the furthest reaches of History, far beyond Maupassant's *Boule de suif* mentioned here as its antecedent. The French writer is an important connection, nonetheless, for he shows in his recounting the interplay between a single woman lost and a nation similarly debased. Moravia saw it as well, and furthermore, saw he himself was implicated. He may have railed against bourgeois indifference that led to Fascism in Italy but in the end, as Leavitt indicates, Moravia also had to admit that his repressed memory of the sexual encounter holds up a mirror to him, reflecting back that he too was just as bourgeois, just as indifferent, just as exploitative as those in the wider political arena whom he condemns (49).

Following are three essays which address the highly problematic remembrances of wartime Trieste, the camp at the Risiera di Saba and the *foibe*, especially at Basovizza. John Foot, Sandra Parmegiani and Katia Pizzi offer studies that emphasize how profoundly traumatic the events of the immediate postwar years were in a land much tormented, devalued, and scarred (literally and figuratively). Whether from the historical (Foot and Pizzi) or the fictional (Parmegiani), Basovizza continues to rankle today; it gnaws at history like a wounded animal in intense pain, on both the Italian and Slovenian sides. What exactly happened? To whom? When? How? These are questions that a dolorous mythology has tried to recover but has often only succeeded in covering up even more. My own attempts at describing the issue at a public conference many years ago, were met by

a vociferous and intensely hostile rebuke by an audience member, prominent in the Italian community who insisted that the whole event should be forgotten, as if a “falso storico” (85). But should it? Foot, Parmegiani and Pizzi clearly see the need for recognizing how memory is “always contaminated and indebted to other memories.” (101), “a flotsam and jetsam of signification” (113) that must resist (and as Pizzi shows, has resisted) many layers of traumatic palimpsests.

Just how valid this resistance can be is underscored in David W. Ellwood’s pages on the “Trauma of Liberation: Rape, Love, and Violence in Wartime Italy.” Ellwood’s conclusion that “[t]oday, in Italy as elsewhere, it is historians, institutions and media who do the remembering, while everyone else does the forgetting” (139), concisely sums up the work of the remaining essays which also beg the question: who tells the story such that it *will* be remembered? Maria Cristina Seccia’s presentation of how Igiaba Scego remembers her Somali mother, as do Toruun Haaland’s and Patrizia Sambuco’s essays on respectively Ferrante’s *La figlia oscura* and Di Pietrantonio’s *Mia madre è un fiume*, add the element of how nostalgia reshapes our remembering. Similarly, Andrea Hajek’s essay “A Future without Nostalgia” calls for a reconsideration of Italy’s Second Wave Feminism through a new interrogation of the past. Finally, Incoronata (Nadia) Inserra’s essay entitled “Transnational Nostalgia in an All-Female Italian Facebook Group and Cooking Blog” points to how such a re-interrogation ultimately leads both to an understanding of the old and an opening to new possibilities and experiences.

Transmissions of Memory confirms that there is no easy way to understand the echoes, traumas and nostalgias of difficult histories. Nonetheless, it impels us to begin the process by scrutinizing and acknowledging them.

ANNE URBANCIC

Victoria College in the University of Toronto

Loredana Di Martino and Pasquale Verdicchio, eds. *Encounters with the Real in Contemporary Italian Literature and Cinema*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. Pp. 255. ISBN 9781443811231.

Since the 1990s, a renewed focus on accessing, prioritizing, and communicating real events and real stories has become a prominent feature of cultural production in Italy and beyond. This collection of essays explores this new realism through