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.

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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

a series of reflections on Italian interpretations of the world in a post-9/11 era in which historical events have come to the fore and postmodernism seems inadequate as a response. The volume addresses the legacy of Neorealism in shaping the Italian literary and cinematic landscape and in constituting an ever-present influence in considerations of realism. In a similar vein, the question of *impegno* (commitment) and its diverse manifestations since World War II emerges through discussions of artists' motivations for placing reality at the center of their work. Di Martino and Verdicchio's introduction provides a clear and engaging account of the "return" to realism, concentrating on this phenomenon as it appears in literature and film. They review relevant critical literature and explain how this volume seeks to extend the debate through examinations of literary and cinematic expressions of reality. They also present many of the theoretical texts that are used extensively by the contributors, including Maurizio Ferraris's *Manifesto del nuovo realismo* (2012) and the collective Wu Ming 1 and 2's publications on the New Italian Epic and on the new manifestations of realism. This arrangement is effective in defining the collection's theoretical framework and familiarizing readers with works that appear frequently in the book.

Encounters with the Real in Contemporary Italian Literature and Cinema is divided into two sections: "Literary Encounters with the Real" features fiction, non-fiction, and hybrid texts that explore reality through a variety of techniques and methods; "Cinematic Encounters with the Real" performs a similar function with films that are often also hybrid in form, blending documentary and fiction. A strength of the collection lies in the diverse character of its contributions, which include an interview with a writer and a director at the end of each section.

The first section, devoted to literature, begins with Monica Jansen's presentation of "asbestos narratives," in which she considers hybrid novels by Alberto Prunetti and Stefano Valenti that narrate the fatal effects of inhumane labor practices and of the precarization of the workforce. Monica Seger continues with an account of the environmental crisis in Puglia through Flavia Piccinni's novel *Adesso tienimi* and Giliano Foschini's documentary text *Quindici Passi*, arguing that narrative allows the authors to achieve an effective ethical communication of the facts they are relating. The emphasis on ethics is also at the core of Raffaello Palumbo Mosca's contention, supported by an examination of a range of texts in different genres, that the current emphasis on reality should be defined as a "return to ethics" rather than a new realism. Through an assessment of Antonio Scurati's writing, Loredana Di Martino asks how the Italian cultural scene is shaping the

consumption of reality in the face of audiences who are accustomed to “realism” (Ferraris) and the oppressively spectacular nature of televised images and those distributed through other media. The postcolonial experience, specifically as recounted in Wu Ming 2 and Antar Mohamed’s *Timira*, is the foundation for Clarissa Clò’s discussion of the ways in which the New Italian Epic can propose alternative and diverse discourses that use realism as a means to challenge hegemonic interpretations of history. Antonio Franchini’s interview with the editors, which ends the section, reveals the writer’s belief that literature is uniquely equipped to investigate reality and that storytelling is the activity that most consistently brings us closer to understanding the real events of our history and context.

The second section posits film as a medium that necessarily takes into account the verisimilitude audiences expect, so that realism in cinema becomes a highly considered strategy employed by filmmakers. The essays foreground directors’ treatments of the effect of reality and the ontological motivations for it. Pasquale Verdicchio revisits Neorealism through Pasolini’s assessment of the movement as a “vital crisis” in order to provide context for different manifestations of the crisis of reality, as mediated through film up to the present. The Lacanian distinction between “reality” and the “real” offers a lens for Fulvio Orsitto’s analysis of Emanuele Crialese’s *Respiro*, in which he argues that Crialese emphasizes the intrusions of the real in his film as a way of engaging viewers in a reconsideration of reality. Gloria Pastorino examines three different genres—a film, a hybrid documentary/play, and a play—to compare representations of migration that are more or less successful in evoking the stark realities of the crisis as experienced by the migrants and by those receiving washed-up boats and bodies on Italian soil. Through a close reading of Paolo Sorrentino’s *The Great Beauty*, Monica Facchini reflects on the way in which spectacular depiction and seemingly artificial images can bear effective witness to reality as it pertains to the life of the film’s protagonist. In a study of the history of found footage, Marco Bertozzi casts a long view over Italian film history, commenting on how ideas of reality have changed and have been probed by filmmakers in different periods. This last essay returns to the volume’s main theme of the use and interpretation of reality in cultural production. In the closing interview with the editors, Giovanna Taviani discusses how she and other members of her generation have focused on documentary and other ways of foregrounding reality, in films that at once express a commitment to change and rely on storytelling and dreaming.

Encounters with the Real succeeds, through the range and quality of the contributions, both in giving a valuable overview of Italian literature and cinema in this period, since many authors include references to broad categories or groups of work, and in stimulating critical conversations about the nature of cultural engagements with reality, their ontological and ethical purpose, and the future possibilities for this “new realism”.

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