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is not only masculine, but is also the representation of manliness, autonomy, and dominance, [whereas] *fortuna* is not only feminine, but is the collection of all ostensibly female vices: fickleness, vengefulness, and eruptive predictability' (p. 17). She then considers those values in the context of Machiavelli's two plays and how they operate or fail to operate in these domestic dramas.

Alongside a thorough analysis of play texts and citation of societal ideals pro-pounded in contemporary treatises are digressions into cultural, historical, religious, and medical concepts prevalent during those times, such as Galen's theories of procreation. Some of these are closely tied to the broader arguments of her thesis, but some seem too tangential or at least discussed at excessive length: breastfeeding, or the theories of Jacques Lacan and Luce Irigaray. On the other hand, certain digressions into the wider historical/geographical context could have usefully been extended: towards the end of Chapter 2 she mentions 'the political upheavals that Italian city-states faced between the second half of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century [. . .] as traditionally dominant groups lost power to ultramontane states' (p. 44), but fails then to speculate as to how the emasculation of the father's role in the household setting of these plays could be seen as an echo of the disruptive appropriation of long-existing power bases occurring on the wider political front. Moreover, on more than one occasion there is a lack of clear distinction between Manes' particular interpretation and the playwright's conscious intentions, e.g. 'in Machiavelli's two plays [. . .] this critique of patriarchy, highlighting the contradictory expectations placed on women as wives and mother and the ways both roles can be modified to women's advantage, dramatizes the outcomes of an ineffectual social system' (p. 100). The insertion of the word 'unwitting' or 'unintentional' before the word 'critique' would have served Manes' argument better.

Manes manages to look well beyond the entertainment value of these plays, to see how the behaviour and attitude of the principal characters and the interplay between them serve as a valuable insight into the struggles and potential foundering of their real-life equivalents. A central tenet of her argument is that it is through the prism of *commedia erudita* that we can detect more clearly the existing ills and inadequacies of that society. There is an expression 'many a true word spoken in jest'. In a sense, it is the comic exaggeration, contrived role-swapping, and behaviour counter to expectation featured in these works of fantasy that help us uncover the inadequacies and conflicts inherent in Italian bourgeois society of those times.

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Lo 'Zibaldone' di Leopardi come ipertesto: Atti del Convegno internazionale Barcellona, Universitat de Barcelona, 26-27 ottobre 2012. Ed. by MARÍA DE LAS NIEVES MUÑOZ MUÑOZ. Florence: Olschki. 2013. 506 pp. €52. ISBN 978-8822-26237-0.

Giacomo Leopardi's *Zibaldone* is a text that does many things at the same time. Not least, it instantiates a kind of paradox. Its structure could be represented as a simple

(i.e. chronological) list of otherwise unordered notes. At the same time, the readers (including the author) can disclose the complex meanings of these notes only by creating or recreating non-chronological connections between the parts. It is precisely the foremost merit of the volume *Lo 'Zibaldone' di Leopardi come ipertesto* to incorporate this complexity in the structure of the book. As made explicit in the introduction by María de las Nieves Muñiz Muñiz, editor of the volume, both the conference and the proceedings sought to develop a dynamic perspective on the *Zibaldone*, capable of mirroring back the peculiar interconnections that constitute a striking value of the text. The volume thereby achieves a number of goals: firstly, it sketches a landscape representing research conducted by some of the most important Leopardi scholars, spanning over three generations; secondly, it offers a valuable contribution to scholarly knowledge of Leopardi's *Zibaldone*; finally, it proposes a five-part thematic sectioning of the diverse contributions which may suggest possible further lines of research.

The sections are entitled, respectively, 'Forme del pensiero e della scrittura nello *Zibaldone*'; 'Attraverso lo *Zibaldone* percorsi e intrecci di fili'; 'Dialogo e autoreferenzialità nello *Zibaldone*'; 'Lo *Zibaldone* come ipertesto in prospettiva informatica'; and 'La ricezione dello *Zibaldone*'. The first section addresses the relation between *what* Leopardi writes about, and *how* he writes it—that is, the different forms that his reflection may take in the text. The second is concerned with the multiple possible thematic readings offered by the *Zibaldone*. The third is dedicated to understanding the *Zibaldone* through the different concepts of dialogue that can be discovered in the text. The fourth discusses actual and possible perspectives on the text in a digital humanities framework. The final section is dedicated to the reception of the *Zibaldone*, with a special focus on its Spanish reception.

An important aspect of the book is that it mirrors intersections of two concepts, time and space, which were important to Leopardi's very work (structuring, for example, his *Inno a' patriarchi*). In other words, the book hosts contributions by well-known Leopardi scholars (such as Antonio Prete, Alberto Folini, Luigi Blasucci, to mention just a few of them), as well as by young researchers (such as Roberto Lauro, Martina Piperno, and Cristina Coriasso, again mentioning only some of the many excellent contributors): in doing so it suggests that future research can both build on solid previous experience and reach over the next decades; at the same time, the book represents the geographically wide interest that Leopardi's work raises around the world, hosting contributions from international scholars (for example, the collaboration between Muñiz Muñiz and Susanna Allés Torrent) as well as reflections on the reception of the *Zibaldone* well beyond the boundaries of Italy and of Europe (e.g. Silvia Stoyanova's contribution). Not less important, the volume promotes approaches unfolding the topic of the conference in a critical manner, such as Stefano Gensini's (cf. page 151); and perspectives on the *Zibaldone* disclosing less-known possibilities of research, as, for example, that of Paola Cori, on Leopardi's textual strategies of suspending thoughts.

This volume testifies to the interest around Leopardi's work and confirms that this interest extends to different approaches and generations of scholars. A critical

issue that surfaces thereby is the relationship between these different generations, and how new approaches to this text may arise and compete with existing ones. And, in broader terms, *Lo 'Zibaldone' di Leopardi come ipertesto* also raises two sets of questions, one on how the text *is*, and the other on how the text *is read*. It cannot be considered a shortcoming of the volume if any of these questions remains unanswered, but it is, again, a merit that the volume proposes ways to ask them.

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Leopardi's Nymphs: Grace, Melancholy, and the Uncanny. By FABIO A. CAMILLETTI.
London: Legenda. 2013. xii+198 pp. £55. ISBN 978-1-907975-91-2.

Leopardi studies have undergone a profound renewal in recent years, opening up the prospect of different, unprecedented, interpretative horizons. Fabio A. Camilletti's monograph makes a substantial contribution to this renewal. It is not possible in a short space to render the richness and precision of his readings and textual analyses, taking in poetic texts and philosophical prose, private and scholarly writings, and drawing on appropriate sources, some well known, some concealed (to cite a few: Montesquieu, Petrarch, Tasso). But it is worth reconstructing in general terms the outlines of Camilletti's interpretation, which is based on valid and carefully considered critical hypotheses. The first of these suggests a rather sharp division in Leopardi's career. The first phase (from his earliest studies to 1827) sees Leopardi's self-construction as a public figure (scholar, intellectual, political thinker). This period, which takes shape under the banner of study, writing, rationality, and prose, ends with what amounts to a substantial failure: that of the *Operette morali* (published in 1827—the same year as the first edition of Manzoni's *Promessi sposi*—to little public attention), but also that of the cultural mediator and translator (note the failed 'Greek moralists' project, the importance of which Camilletti rightly underlines). The second phase, which broadly coincides with the 1830s, is one of deep disillusionment, and, under the auspices of a return to the private realm and to memory, sees the recoupling of poetry and philosophy and the predominance of the oral dimension. It is significant here, in a *Zibaldone* that has long since exhausted its function, to see the emergence of Vico and the reflections on Homer, which, in favour of the poet as against the philosopher of the dialectic, resolves and concludes the crisis of Platonism that had already come to a head in Rome in 1823. The hinge between these two phases hangs on the years 1828–29, the period of *nostos* (the loser returns home, withdraws into himself), but also of the spontaneous and unexpected welling up of the great poems (*Le ricordanze*, *A Silvia*, and then the *Canto notturno*) which heal the break, in Western culture, between thought and poetic voice. The scheme outlined above is both compelling and seductive, to demonstrate which Camilletti calls upon three exceptional thinkers who belong to a different climate, namely the period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries during which the paradigm of modernity takes shape: Freud, Warburg, and Benjamin. The strategy of all three thinkers (behind which can be seen the Nietzsche of the second