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dexes), each encounter envisaged the interpretation of a cluster of cantos, bringing the discussion outside the conventional boundaries of a canto-by-canto reading.

In looking at the 'duets' gathered in the first two volumes, the reader will appreciate the greater breadth granted to scholars navigating Dante's *Inferno*. This is particularly evident not only in the case of cantos that present a strong continuity, for instance *Inferno* xv and xvi (read by Catherine M. Keen), or *Inferno* xxiv and xxv (read by Ambrogio Camozzi Pistoja), but also when approaching cantos that apparently look more isolated, such as *Inferno* vi and vii (read by Franziska Meier). In its own way, each *lectura* offers key reflections on both established and recent critical approaches, discusses and sometimes offers a new perspective on hermeneutical *cruces*, while also setting new research trajectories. For instance, in her reading of *Inferno* v Terzoli cautiously suggests reading ll. 88–96 and 106–07 as uttered not by Francesca but by Paolo, further developing a view that Guglielmo Gorni supported in 1996 and opposing the mainstream interpretation that considers Francesca the only narrative voice of one of the most famous episodes of Western literature (G. Giorni, 'Francesca e Paolo: la voce di lui', *Intersezioni*, 16 (1996), 383–89).

Another important element of *Voci sull'Inferno* is the presence of opening chapters that contextualize the *Inferno* within Dante's biography and other works, thus providing a broader view on the place it holds within his intellectual and poetic journey. While the three essays opening the first volume (by Lino Pertile, Paolo Pellegrini, and Michelangelo Zaccarello respectively) concern the *Inferno*'s reception, popularity, composition, and material transmission, those in the second volume discuss its relation with *Vita nuova*, *Convivio*, and *De vulgari eloquentia* by examining central topics in Dante's oeuvre and scholarship, namely his experience and poetry of love (Donato Pirovano), the relation between knowledge, faith, grace, and salvation (Paola Nasti), as well as the nexus between his cartographic impetus, his linguistic and political concerns, and his status of exile (Theodore J. Cachey, Jr).

By providing the reader with a prolific and comprehensive view on the first *cantica* of the *Commedia*, *Voci sull'Inferno di Dante* is a remarkable, polyphonic instrument for study, research, and teaching. For this reason, among the countless initiatives that marked the 700th anniversary of Dante's death, this collection will certainly survive as a rich contribution to Dante Studies.

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GIULIA GAIMARI

Feeding Fascism: The Politics of Women's Food Work. By DIANA GARVIN. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2022. xv+276 pp. \$36.95. ISBN 978-1-4875-2818-8.

The cover of a home economics treatise for young brides to be called *Regalo di nozze* is punctuated by a quotation from Mussolini: 'I firmly believe that our way of eating, dressing, working and sleeping, the entirety of our daily habits has to be reformed.' Such a declaration might seem antithetical to the felicitous occasion, but

bringing about radical social change on a national scale would require the consent or at least compliance of women, whose energies were monopolized by what Diana Garvin refers to broadly as ‘women’s food work’.

In *Feeding Fascism* Garvin sets out to establish that despite Mussolini’s categorical imperative of unquestioned obedience (*credere, obbedire, combattere*), consensus among women over the twenty-year period of Italian Fascism could not simply be dictated as a top-down directive. It was a negotiation of tensions and intentions: of women’s willingness to proceed in lockstep with the regime, of their power to protest under a dictatorship, and of their ability to acquiesce in the absence of choice. They were, as Garvin says, ‘actors, interpreters and critics: they accept, modify and reject’ (p. 5).

Feeding Fascism is a welcome contribution to currents in Italian Studies scholarship applying post-qualitative analysis to social contexts that veer away from the elite and grandiose. It posits a valuable perspective alongside such works as Carol Helstosky’s *Garlic and Oil: Politics and Food in Italy* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), Victoria de Grazia’s *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993), Christopher Duggan’s *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini’s Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), and Perry Wilson’s *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy: The Massaie Rurali* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). Garvin’s research involves an impressive variety of cultural ephemera, artefacts, and textual resources which not only support, but vividly illustrate her arguments. Her analysis of the resulting narratives that would shape Italy’s culinary trajectory is perceptive and illuminating, although some issues remain debatable.

This is not a who-ate-what culinary history, but a critical examination of women and tabletop politics in both the public and private spheres—that is, the legacy of Fascism as it played out in Italian kitchens. With respect to the intimate nature of the topic and its myriad manifestations, primacy is given to women’s subjectivity. ‘Whenever possible, I use women’s own conceptions of gender, class, and region to describe social categories. In terms of style, these historical subjects express complex thoughts and emotions in clear speech. Their words remind me that educated sources will sometimes use convoluted phrasing as a power play, framing opacity as expertise’ (p. 4).

The task of delineating a state narrative regarding female citizenry and the ways in which women navigated the regime’s often ambivalent expectations of their role may involve the risk of applying blanket assertions to a country as culturally disparate as Italy. Garvin reins in the potentially unwieldy project by selecting specific events or contexts as springboards from which to elaborate broader concepts of women as bodies who produce, consume, and feed. She begins with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and the so-called Futurist Cuisine. As an artiste-provocateur, his interests lay more in self-aggrandizement than gastronomy or the regime. His infamous call for the end of pasta, that doughy culinary relic that softened Italian bellies, reducing them to a nation of sloths, made for titillating newspaper hype, but did not set off a scourge of panic in households. It did, however, impose on the

sphere of women, perhaps as a calculated stab at the gatekeepers of Italian cuisine. In his defence, the plea concurred with the regime's 1925 Battle for Wheat, part of which consisted, ironically, in compelling the nation to eat more rice.

The push for rice production under the auspices of autarky led to the assemblage of a veritable army of female rice workers called *mondine*, whose struggle for rights also had wide-ranging repercussions for women workers beyond the confines of the rice paddy. Their strife is richly documented in songs, diaries, oral histories, photographs, and drawings. The state was gearing up for hyperproductivity and rationalism; they held up the buxom rice worker as the idealized model of a Fascist labourer, but compliance in the use of their bodies as propaganda pin-ups allowed them to voice complaints about working conditions. For one thing, they were sick and tired of eating rice.

The focus turns 180 degrees to entrepreneur Luisa Spagnoli and her Perugian chocolate and clothing industries. Significant as chocolate was, Spagnoli's confectionery stood at the periphery of a complex network of programmes and facilities provided for female factory workers (La Perugina was staffed almost entirely by women), most specifically on-site nurseries. Here Garvin casts her net wide to encompass the body politics of breastfeeding. Harnessing control over the quality and distribution of maternal milk became paramount to the Fascist cause, as it was the foundation of a strong national body.

Taylorism and rationalism—the application of logic, work ethic, and standardization—appealed to the regime's urgency to bring Italy up to contemporary standards as quickly and efficiently as possible. Taylorism, however, was anathema to tradition, making it socially suspect. Under its precepts, the kitchen and food preparation should be geared towards maximum efficiency; gatherings round the hearth had no place in this schema. Such ideas had been approached previously, notably by King Vittorio Emanuele III's *capocuoco* Amadeo Pettini, a proponent of packaged food who was obsessed with nutritional science. He too tried to 'futurize' Italian food, notably in *Massaia 900*, updated and revised in 1935 by Lidia Morelli (*La Cucina moderna interpretata da il capo cuoco del Re Comm. Amedeo Pettini* (Turin: Rebaudengo)).

Morelli was a prolific home economist, author of her own cookbooks as well as yearly almanacs sponsored by top canned food brand Cirio and home design firm Domus. She became a bridge for her readership and architects seeking to reconfigure (both practically and culturally) the home kitchen in the guise of a factory-like workspace of food production, minimizing the necessity for movement and economizing on space with an emphasis on hygiene and speed of execution. Garvin dedicates a chapter to the evolution of these innovations, how they shaped the way women related to the kitchen, and their effect on the future of Italian food. These forward-looking ideas germinated during the Fascist era, but could not come to fruition until a leisure economy emerged from Italy's post-war economic boom, when convenience foods, electric cookers, and refrigerators became commonplace.

Feeding Fascism presents important new perspectives for both scholars and advanced students of Italian Studies, Women's Studies, and Food Studies. The writing

style is, as promised, engaging and unconvoluted while remaining distinctly scholarly. On the occasions when I felt my eyebrow rising in disagreement, I came to rely on the author circling back, as if intuiting the very point I had taken issue with, reassuring me that she and I were still on the same page.

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KARIMA MOYER-NOCCHI

Leopardi e la cultura del Novecento: modi e forme di una presenza. Atti del XIV Convegno internazionale di studi leopardiani (Recanati 27–30 settembre 2017). Ed. by MARIA VALERIA DOMINIONI and LUCA CHIURCHIÙ. Florence: Olschki. 2020. ix+550 pp. €78. ISBN 978–88–222–6692–7.

This volume is a collection of thirty-one essays based on the papers delivered at the XIV Convegno internazionale di studi leopardiani held in Recanati from 27–30 September 2017. The conference aimed to shed light on the relationship between Giacomo Leopardi and the twentieth century, addressing—and here lies its specificity and value—a broad range of art forms. The collection is divided accordingly into four sections: Leopardi and prose writers; Leopardi and poets; Leopardi and philosophers or literary critics; Leopardi and directors or translators. This volume's greatest merit lies in dealing with the polyhedric character of Leopardi's work with precision and philological respect.

The first essay, by Andrea Cortellessa, acts as a perfect introduction not only to the first section but to the entire series of contributions. The Italian critic detects a variety of stylistic traits and ideas that Leopardi introduced into European literature and philosophy, and that have been drawn on by later prose writers (or even poets and philosophers). Furthermore, Cortellessa's way of fixing them in sharp critical formulations in the Italian fashion is worthy of special appreciation (p. 7 and *passim*). The critic also addresses twenty-first-century readers and—transcending the scope of the volume itself—urges them to decode Leopardi's heritage with their own ways of interpreting it. The other essays cover a wide range of authors (not only Italian) and offer valuable and sometimes unexpected insights, such as, for example, the *Canti* being more present than the *Operette* in later prose writers or writers anticipating critics in a deep understanding of Leopardi in the course of the twentieth century (p. 72).

The second section, regarding poets, offers the same width of scope and succeeds, like the first one, in holding together Leopardi's poetic contributions but also his philosophical ones. This is the case, particularly, with the essays by Giuseppe Zappalà and Emanuela Tandello. The former, for example, analyses the relationship between Leopardi and Caproni, but also evinces a masterful and truly deep insight by addressing Leopardi's poetry globally, up to the point of shedding light on its philosophical implications too, which resonated profoundly in Caproni.

The third section is arguably the most interesting and insightful. Luigi Capitano's essay is a perfectly suitable introduction to the whole section and is the most important contribution. He remarks on the greatness of Leopardi's thought