Introduction

1 Quoted in Hofmann, *The Fascist Effect*, 19. There is some variety in the capitalization of D’Annunzio’s name. I follow the convention of capitalizing the ‘D’ when it is the first letter of his name and leaving it in lowercase, as D’Annunzio himself preferred, when it is a part of his whole name (Gabriele d’Annunzio): see Gochin Raffaelli and Subialka, “Introduction.” Throughout this book, translations from Italian are my own unless otherwise cited.

2 Amano argues that Japan and Italy share both the experience of marginal modernity and paradigms of literary renewal: Amano, *Decadent Literature*, 28–9.


4 Emilio Gentile’s account of the origins of Italian fascism shows the importance of D’Annunzio’s pairing of poetic leadership and avant-garde aesthetics: Gentile, *The Origins*, 142.

5 Amano, *Decadent Literature*, 61.

6 Mishima read Western literature voraciously, with some emphasis on D’Annunzio: Yourcenar, *Mishima*, 21.

7 “Fascism thus cannot be separated from modernism; modernism and fascism together formed a lingua franca spoken as fluently in Japan as in Europe. An exchange of ideas – both modernist and fascist – across the globe linked Japanese fascism with German, Italian, French, and other fascisms, each of which employed its own ideological mechanisms
and drew on shared but also native rhetorical styles and images. The culmination of a conservative revolutionary tradition, with roots in Nietzsche and Bergson and intellectual branches that reached across national boundaries, fascism encompassed not only state intellectuals but also modernist writers such as Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis in the United States and England, Gottfried Benn in Germany, F.T. Marinetti and D’Annunzio in Italy, Georges Sorel and Louis-Ferdinand Céline in France, and Giménez Caballero in Spain” (Tansman, *The Aesthetics*, 18). I argue that this connection comes into clearer focus when we consider the underlying idealist outlook animating both modernist artistic production and fascist political ideology.

8 D’Annunzio has frequently served as an instance of the troubling connection between decadent aesthetics and fascist nationalism. For example, Umberto Eco observed that D’Annunzio’s dandy aestheticism marks a distinct fusion not seen elsewhere: “The national poet was D’Annunzio, a dandy who in Germany or in Russia would have been sent to the firing squad. He was appointed as the bard of the regime because of his nationalism and his cult of heroism – which were in fact abundantly mixed up with influences of French fin de siècle decadence” (Eco, “Ur-Fascism”).


10 Japanese artists also exoticized the modern West, blending various Western locales in a homogenizing way. For example, Utagawa Yoshitora’s *North America* (*Kita Amerika shō*, 1866) depicts a church in Kent, England; similarly, Utagawa Hiroshige II’s *A Picture of Prosperity: America* (*Amerika shin no zu*, 1861) depicts a castle in Copenhagen.


13 The Impressionist reception of Japanese art from the 1870s on was inspired by the sense of its “immediacy and (by European standards) seeming informality” (House, “Impressionism and Japan,” 105). On Van Gogh’s deep and multilayered engagement with Japan, see *Van Gogh and Japan*.

14 Genova, *Writing Japonisme*.

15 D’Annunzio’s dual-faceted engagement with Japanese modernity is examined by Turoff, “Il Giappone.”

16 Reinvention of sexuality was a key component of self-invention according to Reed, *Bachelor Japanists*, 4; though Reed does not mention him, his
account sheds further light on the connection between D’Annunzio (the dandy-poet-warrior who was also a Hellenist and participated in queer decadence) and Japonisme.

17 Schiermeier, “Imitation or Innovation?,” 164.

18 The connection between Japanese decadence and D’Annunzio is only one facet of a broader cultural exchange, which includes the Japanese reception of Futurism. Marinetti’s famous manifesto circulated by March 1909, just a month after its publication in Paris, in Subaru, the same journal in which D’Annunzio’s Trionfo della morte was translated. See Omuka, “Futurism in Japan”; and Wu, “Transcending the Boundaries,” 353. Japanese modernism connects to multiple Western writers and movements – especially Surrealism, as emphasized by Bush, “Contexts for Modernism,” 17–19.

19 As Pericles Lewis points out in his introduction of the term, at least since 1927 critics have identified modernism as a movement or grouping (Lewis, “Introduction,” 1), starting with Laura Riding and Robert Graves’s Survey of Modernist Poetry. Orr, “Modernism,” offers an overview of the viability of periodizing approaches to modernism, arguing that despite criticism that model retains its institutional power. Potolsky, The Decadent Republic, offers a network-based understanding of the cosmopolitan nature of decadence, which I consider here as an aspect of modernism.

20 Peter Gay’s popular account of modernism defines it as precisely “the lure of heresy” (Gay, Modernism). Diepeveen, The Difficulties, examines modernism as a shift toward difficulty as a means of rejecting traditional aesthetic forms. The view of modernism as a shift in aesthetic paradigms is ubiquitous; interestingly, though, two of the most powerful critical theorizations of this aesthetic shift present themselves as counter-histories: Rancière sees modernism as a subset of a new “aesthetic regime” in art: Rancière, Aisthesis, 62; meanwhile, Agamben, The Man without Content, depicts the historical emergence of an autonomous aesthetic sphere as a long shift beginning in the Renaissance Wunderkammer and culminating in the self-annihilating aestheticism of decadent modernism. Both accounts follow the Marxian line running through Walter Benjamin as well as Horkheimer and Adorno’s critical modernist self-understandings: Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment.

21 Eisenstadt articulates the need for a paradigm shift toward theorizing multiple modernities, separating the concepts of “modernity” and “Westernization” (Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” 2–3). Fourie, “A Future,” shows how the discourse on this multiplicity flourished in the 2000s, though sometimes at the risk of defining “modernity” too broadly. The notion of multiple modernities is at the root of Charles Taylor’s articulation of modern social imaginaries (plural): Taylor, Modern Social Imaginaries.

Mao and Walkowitz, “The New Modernist Studies,” are at the centre of this paradigm shift, showing how the new modernist studies expand temporally, geographically, and beyond the usual division of high and low art. As Susan Stanford Friedman playfully and convincingly shows, this expansion results in “an archive of modernisms that is staggering in its global and temporal reach” (Friedman, “Planetarity,” 491); yet an expansion beyond comfortable limits is necessary (Friedman, Planetary Modernisms, 3). Even so, stubborn disciplinary realities remain. For example, the special issue of Modernist Cultures dedicated to “Global Modernism” frames its task in terms of the spatial expansion of modernist studies, focusing on exchange, reception, and circulation (Jaillant and Martin, “Introduction,” 2). Tellingly, however, these exchanges all involve a relation with the anglophone world, maintaining the anglocentric tendency of the new modernist studies even while promoting its geographical enlargement. There is still need to decentre the anglophone component – without eliminating it – and my elaboration of modernist idealism aims at just such a project. See also (though the list is incomplete): Ross and Lindgren, The Modernist World; J. Berman, Modernist Commitments; GoGwilt, The Passage; Ramazani, A Transnational Poetics; Pollard, New World Modernisms; and Gikandi, Writing in Limbo. Related projects that do not rely on the key term modernism but operate in the same discursive space include Saler, The Fin-De-Siecle World; and Potolsky, The Decadent Republic.

Hayot and Walkowitz, A New Vocabulary, 8.

Hayot and Walkowitz, A New Vocabulary, 9.


See Taylor, Modern Social Imaginaries.

Sherry, Modernism, 32–3.

Sherry articulates that broader sense of “modernism” as relating to its English-language definition, which he claims “operates as a denominator for a more chronic pattern of consciousness and a more diachronic experience of history” than the European notion of modernity, which is a response to the specific crisis time after the French Revolution (Sherry, “Introduction,” 6). He sees the temporal dynamics of modernism as allowing for a critical shift away from exclusivity (a historically restrained notion of where modernity lies) toward a promisingly inclusive alternative (18–19). In principle his argument thus understands itself as participating in the impulse to expand the new modernist studies.

Mazzini’s political idealism was no doubt connected to his education and interest in the work of the German post-Kantian thinkers and romanticism: “He became attracted to and familiar with romantic poetry and idealist
philosophy: he read and admired the works of Vico, Herder, Goethe, Fichte, the Schlegel brothers, and Schelling, and he wrote some innovative essays on the character of Italian literature from Dante Alighieri to Ugo Foscolo” (Recchia and Urbinati, “Introduction,” 4).


32 “Mazzini was a visionary and undoubtedly an idealist, in the sense that he deeply believed in the power of ideas to effect lasting political change” (Recchia and Urbinati, “Introduction,” 30).

33 The characterization of Mazzini as propagator of a religion of altruism is Burnett’s: “Giuseppe Mazzini,” 523.

34 Oriani describes materialism as a base animal form of living, which he connects to Darwinism and positivism as opposed to the high idealist thought of Hegel in philosophy and Christianity in religion: Oriani, La rivolta ideale, 59.

35 The problem of locating a precise definition of idealism is illustrated in Beiser, “Romanticism and Idealism.”

36 My overview here draws on the following for a general concept of idealism: Dunham, Grant, and Watson, Idealism; Bubner, The Innovations; and Ameriks, The Cambridge Companion.

37 Dunham, Grant, and Watson, Idealism, 10.

38 See the OED entry on “idealism, n.”

39 Hampton, for instance, makes realism into a subset of idealism, defining “realism” as a way of describing “objective idealism,” or the notion that ideals exist independently of subjective thought and are thus “real and constitutive of reality” (Hampton, Romanticism, 21).

40 Borges, Ficciones.

41 Kant’s transcendental idealism is articulated throughout The Critique of Pure Reason.

42 Kant, Prolegomena, 40.

43 This is not to imply that Kant is a “relativist.” All the same, an important philosophical source for later notions of relativism comes from precisely this move in Kant’s first Critique.

44 Bubner, The Innovations, is an excellent example of this tendency to think of German idealism as the essential instance of modern idealist thought.

45 Schopenhauer offers his own history of the various philosophical approaches to the question of idealism and the relation it posits between the ideal and the real, insisting that the post-Kantians listed here are merely “sham philosophers” and that their systems of idealism are not dedicated to the pursuit of truth: Schopenhauer, Parerga and Paralipomena, I, 21. De Sanctis picks up on this invective and replicates it in his imaginary dialogue on Schopenhauer, which is translated in the Appendix here.
On German idealism and the relations among the various schools or derivations following Kant’s thought, see: Gabriel and Rasmussen, *German Idealism Today*; Beiser, *German Idealism*; Hammer, *German Idealism*; Pinkard, *German Philosophy*; and Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*.

On the connection between idealism and romanticism, see: Breazeale and Rockmore, *Fichte*; and Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory*.

It would of course be possible to argue that German romanticism constitutes a part of the long modernist period, a response to the conditions of modernity that, like so many others, relies on elements of an idealist outlook to motivate a heightened claim for the power of art to reveal truths of the world that are obscured by the forms of modern thought and life. See Bowie, “German Idealism,” 241.

Beiser suggests that according to the standard narrative, German idealism ends with Hegel; nevertheless, idealist philosophy continues after his death in the work of Trendelenburg, Lotze, and Hartmann, who sought to ground idealist conclusions in new methods from the empirical sciences (Beiser, *After Hegel*, 10). My examination of German idealism is informed by this view, which does not see Hegel as a historical endpoint.

The term “absolute idealism” (*absoluter Idealismus*) was first used not by Hegel but by Schelling in his 1797 work, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (50). Even if Hegel is often seen today as its primary proponent, the term is nevertheless associated with a whole host of “romantic”-era thinkers (Beiser, “The Enlightenment,” 18). De Sanctis describes Hegel in similar terms; see “Schopenhauer and Leopardi” in the Appendix here.

Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetics*, vol. 1, 90.


There are numerous interpretations of Hegel’s philosophy of history and of his phenomenology. I examine some of the key positions in chapter 1.

My summary traces the basic structure of *The World as Will and Representation* and draws on notions from his other works. More thorough overviews of Schopenhauer’s philosophy can be found in (among others): “Arthur Schopenhauer” (2019); Wellbery, “Schopenhauer”; and Janaway, “Introduction.” Cartwright, *Historical Dictionary*, defines key notions and terms in Schopenhauer’s thought.

Schopenhauer is the “philosopher of art with the largest influence on artists, on their understanding of themselves, and on their artistic production” (Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, 111). Cf. Jacquette, *Schopenhauer, Philosophy*. On the fundamentally aesthetic stance of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, see Vasalou, *Schopenhauer*.


Taylor may offer the most philosophically systematic articulation of this crisis of fullness and attendant nostalgia in relation to the transformed
horizons of faith in European modernity, but he is hardly alone. George
Steiner, for instance, asserted that the modern crisis of faith gave rise to
alternative “mythologies,” including Freudian psychoanalysis, Marxian
politics, and philosophical irrationalism (Steiner, Nostalgia for the Absolute).

58 Here I draw on Sherry’s articulation of the deeply intertwined relation
of decadence and modernism as a response to crisis time in modernity
(Sherry, Modernism, 34). This theorization speaks to what David Weir
already articulated in his study of modernity’s debt to decadence: Weir,
Decadence.

59 This is the argument advanced by Mimmo Cangiano in La nascita del
modernismo italiano, which I address at greater length below. While this
extreme characterization may hold true for some modernist writers such
as Aldo Palazzeschi, whom Cangiano describes as the most extreme
proponent of the “phantasmagoric spectacle of contingency” (269), or
for some modernist thinkers, such as Ernst Mach (18), I take issue with
Cangiano’s repeated assertion that this constitutes the “hegemonic”
position in modernist discourse (29). As my readings of Pirandello will
exemplify, it simply is not the case that modernist writers who take
perspectivism seriously all totalize a nihilistic view of absence as the
only truth. All the same, certainly one of the limit cases of the modernist
engagement with new notions of relativity, contingency, and so on,
is expressed in this vision that makes vital flux the new centre of its
decentred world view.

60 Lear, Radical Hope, 80.

61 The interrelations of decadence, the avant-garde, and modernism are
central both in the general theorization of the concepts (Calinescu, Five
Faces) and in the specific history of Italian modernism (Somigli and
Moroni, Italian Modernism).

62 Key recent studies of vitalism in relation to modernism include Mitchell,
Experimental Life; Ardoin, Gontarski, and Mattison, Understanding Bergson;
Packham, Eighteenth-Century Vitalism, 207–16; and Jones, The Racial
Discourses.

63 See Moses, Out of Character, which focuses especially on the vitalist legacy
of Henri Bergson, William James, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

64 Nineteenth-century magical and occult beliefs are not an exception
but a continuation of a long legacy (Josephson-Storm, The Myth of
Disenchantment); indeed, the history of magic is rich, complicated, and
enduring (Copenhaver, Magic in Western Culture).

65 Franklin, Spirit Matters, 2.

66 Rabaté, James Joyce.

67 Coole and Frost, “Introducing the New Materialisms,” 3.
Jonathan Basile goes so far as to dispute the claim to novelty in Bennett’s book, and in the new materialist studies more generally (Basile, “Life/Force”). It is worth pointing out, however, that the lack of radical newness in Bennett’s theory is already highlighted by Bennett herself in an essay on historical vitalism and the new materialism (Bennett, “A Vitalist Stopover,” 47).

The complexity of these debates is visible in efforts to craft a scientific-philosophical theory of evolutionary emergence that could replace the mystical aspects of vitalist dualism with a mechanistic account of life’s (conscious) emergence without, however, engaging in a materialist reduction – an early-twentieth-century ambition for “a synthesis of antimatralist and antidualist thought” (Garrett, “Vitalism,” 152).

Grosz, The Incorporeal, 13.

In this respect my argument aligns with Amanda Jo Goldstein’s suggestion that the investigation of material reality is already expanded and transformed as early as romanticism by conceiving of poetic knowledge as a form of empirical inquiry: Goldstein, Sweet Science. However, where Goldstein unearths a romantic materialism rooted in Lucretius’s non-dualist atomism, my argument shifts the lens to consider the role of idealist thought.

I thus agree with the critique of new materialist ethics posed by Paul Rekret, who argues that the attempt to assert a direct connection between ontology (the reinterpretation of matter) and ethics fails in part because it ignores essential questions about the origins of thought/consciousness: Rekret, “A Critique.”

I have in mind here Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s notion of artistic materiality: Gumbrecht, Production of Presence; likewise, I draw on the discourse about how literature gives shape to thought by engaging the emotions (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought) and how literature trains our cognitive faculties (Landy, How to Do Things). In my view, a philosophical world view or conceptual outlook becomes real, part of the actual world and human interactions, because it is given a material form that can motivate human action through intellectual-affective engagement.

Vasalou, Schopenhauer.


The centrality of artistic practice to Schopenhauer’s afterlife is thus not a problem, as some critics suggest – for example, arguing that Schopenhauer “only” lives on in art and not in an explicitly philosophical reception and thus his ideas “remained isolated in the history of ideas” (Hammermeister, The German Aesthetic Tradition, 111).
See Jodock, *Catholicism*. Wittman, “*Omnes velut aqua dilabimur,*” argues for the importance of Catholic modernism to understandings of modernism more generally.

The most recent overview and discussion of these debates is offered by Cangiano, *La nascita*, 11–29. While the recent theorization of Italian modernism has mostly been contained in Italian-language publications, the globalization of modernist studies has also brought Italian sources into view; Ram, “Futurist Geographies,” and Rainey, “F.T. Marinetti,” show the global dimensions of Futurism, while Somigli, “Italy,” offers an account of Italy’s place in European modernism.


Laura Wittman had already articulated a key way in which Catholic modernism’s mysticism is integral to Italian literary and artistic modernism more generally, though Cangiano does not engage her argument directly: Wittman, “*Omnes velut aqua dilabimur,*” 131.

Cangiano characterizes modernism explicitly as an expression of crisis, “la crisi filosofica che il moderno esprime” (*La nascita*, 21).

Modernism’s elevation of the incomplete privileges the essay as a mode of experimenting, setting forth something without affirming it in absolute terms: Harrison, “Overcoming Aestheticism,” 183. His analysis thus points back to his earlier analysis of figures like Pirandello and Musil in Harrison, *Essayism*.

As Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke puts it, “influences from Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Nietzsche combined in [Evola’s] philosophical idealism to
assert the ‘the ability to be unconditionally whatever one wants’ and ‘the world is my representation’” (Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, 313). Here, again, it is clear that the way in which post-Kantian thinkers like Hegel and Schopenhauer were received does not always align with the best possible interpretation of their thought. Yet these influences characterize the particular forms of idealist thought that operate in modernism.

For example, Richard Spencer, a prominent white nationalist figure in the Trump era, lauded Steve Bannon’s reading of Evola as an indication of Bannon’s potential to usher in radical change to American politics: Beiner, *Dangerous Minds*, 11–12. The paradoxical union of radical or revolutionary opposition to the liberal order and the supposed conservative traditionalism of these far-right thinkers is typical of historical fascism, as well.

Eburne, *Outsider Theory*.

See the volume edited and translated by Massimo Verdicchio, Croce, *A Croce Reader*. This adds to the vast compendium of modern Italian thought translated and introduced in the volume edited by Brian and Rebecca Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce*.


Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano*, sees his theory as a response to the hypotheses of thinkers like Fukuyama, who took up Hegel’s notion of the “end of history” and applied it to the post–Cold War American hegemony: Fukuyama, *The End of History*. In a later interview, Cassano contends that Fukuyama’s hypothesis is fundamentally flawed precisely because it understands history from a limited, Northern European/Western perspective (Cassano and Fogu, “Il pensiero meridiano oggi,” 1). The idea that Italy’s “Southern Question” has created a division in the country that otherizes the south in an instance of intra-national Orientalism is taken up in Jane Schneider’s volume, *Italy’s Southern Question*. Interestingly, as Cangiano has shown, some modernist intellectuals such as Piero Jahier located this “other” to the industrializing Continent not in the south of Italy but in rural alpine communities in the north; this became a part of their push to re-establish a lost moral and epistemic horizon through recourse to “surpassed” forms of life (Cangiano, *La nascita*, 432, 436) while at the same time embracing a cosmopolitan position akin to that of Woodrow Wilson or Giuseppe Mazzini (433, 438).

It is interesting in this regard that Pericles Lewis’s relatively recent compendium of studies on European modernism, which divides Europe into “core” and “peripheral” modernisms, places Italy in the core (in distinction to other southern nations such as Portugal, Spain, and Greece): Lewis, ed., *The Cambridge Companion*. That placement is a testament
to the growing scholarly discourse on Italian modernism that ties it transnationally to other European modernisms.

The formation of a specifically modernist nationalism is described by the historian Emilio Gentile: Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity*; Gentile, “The Conquest of Modernity.”

For Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, Pinocchio represents not only the difficulty facing individual subjects in the new era but also and especially the tricky task facing elite reformers attempting to forge a national identity: Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect*.

As a sometimes Futurist like Bruno Corra suggests, a new nation needs a new art to express its spirit: Corra, *Per l’arte nuova*.

See Ziolkowski, *Kafka’s Italian Progeny*.

1. Italy at the Banquet of Nations: Hegel in Politics and Philosophy

3. My interpretation of modernism as a philosophical problem and idealism’s role in rewriting modern subjectivity draws especially on Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism*; and Taylor, *Sources of the Self*.
5. This interpretation is rooted in an outlook like the historical materialism that Marx advocates in *Capital*. It likewise fits with the brief narrative of the progress from feudalism to modern capitalism popularized throughout nineteenth-century Europe via Marx and Engels’s *The Communist Manifesto*: shifts in relations of production provide the conditions of possibility for shifts in social and political relations, and these in turn require shifts in the intellectual/philosophical discourse. But these ideological shifts can also be traced to the social fabric of the basic structure of what Habermas has analysed under the rubric of the public sphere: Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*.
7. Rockmore, *Before and After Hegel*, offers a broader historical account of how Hegel’s thought develops in the context of Kantian and post-Kantian questions, leading to various afterlives and responses, from the Young Hegelians to Kierkegaard’s rejection of Hegelianism.
9. Habermas, “Hegel’s Critique,” 121. In his lectures collected as *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas traces this link in greater detail, emphasizing the biographical importance of revolutionary politics.
to Hegel and his “young contemporaries in the Tübingen seminary,” who were informed not only by debates about religious Enlightenment but also by Kantian philosophy and the political ideals of the French Revolution (24). “Thus,” he goes on to argue, “[Hegel and Schelling] turned against both the party of the Enlightenment and that of Orthodoxy” (25).

10 Comay, *Mourning Sickness*.

11 The debate has been long and wide-ranging, and these are only a few of the positions taken in it. See also: Ritter, *Hegel*; Wildt, “Hegels Kritik”; Lukács, *The Young Hegel*; and Steven Smith, “Hegel and the French Revolution.”

12 The literature on German idealism and German romanticism in this regard is large. Lougee identifies a traditional list of romantic thinkers, arguing that in multiple respects their philosophies enable a conservative response against modernity while nevertheless insisting that it would be too much to insist on a connection between German romanticism and the nationalism of the absolute state developed in Nazi fascism: Lougee, “German Romanticism,” 644–5. German romantic thought’s role in the development of (an eventually authoritarian) nationalism is argued for by Kohn, “Romanticism”; and Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism*. Morrow, however, in “Romanticism and Political Thought,” contends that the similarities between romantic rejections of radical politics and the conservative response to the French Revolution obscure an important difference in their approaches to nature and the function of government.

13 Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse*, 23–44.


15 Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason*.

16 My analysis thus adds a new dimension to previous work on the relationship between modernism and nationalism, for example, Pericles Lewis’s argument that the modernist novel can be situated as a response to the crisis of liberal nationalism in the aftermath of the Great War: Lewis, *Modernism, Nationalism*, 6.


19 Hegel famously saw Napoleon as a manifestation of the world spirit, riding on horseback to transform history and the world. Eric Michael Dale argues that readings of this element in Hegel’s thought give rise to the “contemporary myth of the end of history,” an interpretation that he traces to Kojève’s reading of the role that Napoleon and the Napoleonic
Wars played in what was supposedly the overcoming of the master/slave dialectic (Dale, Hegel..., 97).

20 Croce, “An Unknown Page,” 170. Croce does not indicate any source for this quotation, which seems to be an inexact paraphrase of a paragraph from an Inaugural Address in which Hegel declares that Germany is the only place in which philosophy can now take place, saying “we have been given custody of this sacred light” though not specifying that it is God doing the giving (Hegel, Political Writings, 183).


23 The discourse on cosmopolitanism has grown significantly in the last several decades, and as Bruce Robbins and Paulo Lemos Horta emphasize in the introduction to their recent volume on the topic, it is now difficult to think of a singular cosmopolitanism; rather, we must identify the concept as plural – not a commitment to a single vision of world citizenship but something varied both in terms of the degree of its globality and in terms of its origins and dynamics. This is what they term the recent “turn to a descriptive, empirical, plural understanding of cosmopolitanism,” one that recognizes not only an elite liberal version of it but also a cosmopolitanism of the poor, the refugee, those whose association to a locality has been uprooted (Robbins and Horta, “Introduction,” 8).

In my use here, “cosmopolitan” implies a commitment to a larger whole and a belongingness to that whole – perhaps even a vision that the local can be constituted as particular only as a part of that whole. There is, however, ample debate about to what extent these cosmopolitan commitments overshadow or preclude local or partial commitments. Kwame Anthony Appiah offers an articulation of cosmopolitanism that attempts to negotiate that separation with a focus on balancing both: Appiah, Cosmopolitanism; Appiah, The Ethics of Identity, 222–3. Likewise, Appiah argues that cosmopolitanism and patriotism are both sentiments rather than ideologies, hence they are not fully mutually exclusive: Appiah, “Cosmopolitan Patriots,” 23. His theorization thus dovetails with what I will identify in this chapter with Bertrando Spaventa’s Hegelianism and his insistence on thinking of patriotic nation-building in consonance with a cosmopolitan philosophical ideal – though for Appiah patriotism is of the state and not the nation (29).

While a cosmopolitan like Martha Nussbaum takes a relatively robust stance on the precedence of the cosmopolitan whole over the partial locality (Nussbaum, “Reply,” 135–6), she also recognizes the limits of the cosmopolitan tradition in terms of its tendency to abstract rationality at the cost of a more human, material approach (Nussbaum, The Cosmopolitan Tradition). Toulmin, Cosmopolis, likewise argues that modernity’s notion of
the cosmopolitan rational order reveals a struggle against humanism; in this regard, the rational idealism of Hegel’s philosophy of history and its push toward a notion of the rational state may sit in tension with the Italian rediscovery of the Renaissance and return to humanism, both of which constitute a major part of the political project of the new Italy (Rubini, *The Other Renaissance*). For this reason, my use of the term “cosmopolitan” should be taken as weak rather than strong, an indication of a transnational notion of building the community in consonance with the whole.

On Neapolitan Hegelianism and the construction of a new state, see Oldrini, *Gli hegeliani di Napoli*.

Palmieri was a man of many talents and fields, as recognized by the eulogistic encomium published in the *Atti del Reale Istituto d’Incoraggiamento di Napoli* (vol. 9, Naples: 1896), an institute in which Palmieri had served as president. While Palmieri’s career at the University of Naples began when he assumed the chair in physics that had previously belonged to Pasquale Galluppi, a philosopher who responded to modern epistemology from Descartes to Kant and who wrote about transcendental idealism, Palmieri was always more of an experimental scientist: *Atti del Reale*, 13. As Rocco Rubini observes, Palmieri’s tenure at the University of Naples was marked by controversy, particularly given his insistence on the need for a thorough nationalization of knowledge and his simultaneous rejection of Hegelian idealism in precisely the moment that Francesco De Sanctis, as Minister of Education, undertook an effort to oust his line of thought from the university: Rubini, *The Other Renaissance*, 68.

Tellingly, Gioberti’s *Del primato morale* was reprinted by the Fascist government in 1938 as a part of a national edition of his texts (the *Edizione nazionale delle opere edite e inedite di Vincenzo Gioberti*, under the direction of Enrico Castelli). The political dimensions of philosophical projects to create an Italian lineage in thought were perceived as very real.

Rubini examines the debate between Gioberti thought and the more open and transnational approach of thinkers like Bertrando Spaventa: Rubini, *The Other Renaissance*, 47–61. While Rubini’s focus is on the reassessment of Italian humanism and the cultural reappropriation of the Italian Renaissance, his intellectual history of this period is an essential source more generally. Cf. Copenhaver and Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce*, 36–44.

This text is translated in Spaventa, “Italian Philosophy.”

Already in 1848 Silvio Spaventa was combining political activism with an investigation of revolutionary movements and the idea of a new Italian identity. This is attested by his articles in *Il Nazionale*, a Neapolitan journal he founded and wrote for starting in March 1848, which addressed topics
such as “The Idea of the Italian Movement” (“L’idea del movimento italiano,” 5 March 1848) and “Italianness” (“Italianità,” 18 April 1848), later collected by Benedetto Croce in S. Spaventa, *Dal 1848 al 1861*, 14–36. That volume also includes letters between the two brothers attesting to the rich overlap of political activism and Hegelian idealist philosophy at work in their shared outlook (216–34). Cf. B. Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. 2.


31 This theory that philosophy circulates across borders and historical moments is repeated across B. Spaventa’s philosophical writings. See L. Gentile, *Coscienza nazionale*.


33 Hegel viewed tribal and foreign civilizations like those of India as pre-historical in the sense that they existed (so he believed) prior to the moment of history’s development toward self-conscious freedom: O’Brien, *Hegel on Reason*.

34 In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel states that “history is the process whereby the spirit discovers itself and its own concept” (62). This relates to the famous way in which Hegel elaborates the necessary conditions of self-consciousness through the master/slave dialectic in his earlier *Phenomenology of Spirit* (108–16). Spaventa’s idea of the “banquet of nations” is already implied in the phenomenological concept of mutual self-recognition, though Hegel’s lectures on history provide a clearer blueprint for Spaventa’s narrative.

35 The legacy of Hegelian intersubjective self-constitution is wide-reaching. Habermas’s notion of intersubjectivity in communicative action (social action) is one example of that discourse’s development. See Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, 11; and, in relation to a cosmopolitan political project for contemporary Europe more broadly, Habermas, *The Crisis of the European Union*.

36 This is what Alessandro de Arcangelis sees as the active, domesticating reception of Hegel in conjunction with Vico, which he sees culminating in the private school started by Francesco De Sanctis between 1839 and 1848: de Arcangelis, “Towards a New Philosophy,” 237.

37 Piccone, “From Spaventa to Gramsci,” 99.

38 Rubini, “(Re-)Experiencing,” 11.

39 Hoffmeister, “Hegel and Hegelianism,” 65. Oldrini argues that Vera typifies the conservative reading of Hegel central to the strand of “right” Hegelians (as opposed to left Hegelians), who are guilty of a “unilateral absolutization of idealism”: Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani*, 13. These are the thinkers who, in Oldrini’s analysis, close down the open dialectical system by fetishizing the categories that Hegel develops in that system.
Oldrini characterizes the reception of Hegel as something of a cult animating a whole circle of thinkers and revolutionaries in Naples in the years leading up to the Risorgimento: Oldrini, *Il primo Hegelismo*, 323.


“Hegel’s Italian legacy during the Risorgimento presents itself as a continuous attempt to elaborate the non-metaphysical and historicist reading of Hegel, highlighting the union between philosophy and history, and the synthesis of idea and fact”: Gallo and Körner, “Challenging the Intellectual Hierarchies,” 216.


In 1941 Croce published his work *Il carattere della filosofia moderna* (Bari: Laterza), in which the first chapter focuses on “Il concetto della filosofia come storicismo assoluto.” In the preface to his recent English translation of this essay, Massimo Verdicchio describes it as a logical endpoint to the way in which Croce’s concept of history developed throughout his career: originally Croce conceived history as aligned with art, in the realm of concrete intuition of life, and gradually he shifted it so as to align it with and finally identify it with philosophy itself: Verdicchio, “Introduction,” xxiv. “This is a reworking of Hegel’s definition of philosophy as absolute Spirit or Idea, which for Croce is didactic and metaphysical, or allegorical. Once philosophy is reformulated in terms of the identity of philosophy and history, there cannot be any metaphysical misunderstanding or didacticism, or allegory; absolute idealism becomes absolute historicism” (Croce, *A Croce Reader*, 40).

That domesticating move was also sometimes a way of taking distance from Hegel. Ciracì emphasizes the often overlooked fact that while De Sanctis certainly was a Hegelian in key respects, he also found Hegel’s philosophy limiting and began looking for alternatives, eventually turning toward realism by way of French naturalist literature. In a letter to Pasquale Villari of 3 October 1857, De Sanctis uses Vico as an alternative model of history, seeking to supplant Hegel’s linear picture of historical stages (religion–art-philosophy) with a view in which all three express the same underlying content and thus the historical forms become recurrent in a Vichian sense: Ciracì, *La filosofia italiana*, 32–3.

I draw here on the broad notion of form delineated by Levine in *Forms*; she highlights how social forms afford new means of acting or interacting.

As Invernizzi has pointed out, Spaventa and De Sanctis both had a two-phase relationship with Naples: they were there in the period around the failed revolutions of 1848, then left only to return with the unification in 1860 or 1861: Invernizzi, “Schopenhauer,” 68.

For a comprehensive biography, see Croce and Croce, *Francesco De Sanctis*. 

Labriola’s “Una risposta alla Prolusione di Zeller” was finished in 1862 but not published until after his death, in a volume of his works edited by Benedetto Croce: Labriola, “Contro il ‘ritorno a Kant.’”

In Drake, *Apostles and Agitators*, 58. However, Labriola likewise wrote against prominent Hegelians like Vera and thus had a complicated or uneasy relationship with Hegelianism. Influenced by Johann Friedrich Herbart, Labriola sought to connect the large-scale Hegelian history with a more empirical and psychological approach: Copenhaver and Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce*, 77–8.


There has been a contentious debate about the historical roots of Marxist politics in the Italian context and the respective roles of Labriola, Filippo Turati, and Antonio Gramsci: Jacobitti, “Labriola,” 297.

Copenhaver and Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce*, 80.

Verdicchio, “Introduction,” describes Croce’s approach to Hegel as one that develops and shifts but is always fundamental to how he establishes his own critical perspective.

Croce’s involvement in education reform likewise became conflicted and complicated with the rise of Fascism, though even under Mussolini’s government Croce continued to support the education reform movement spearheaded by his friend, Gentile: Rizi, *Benedetto Croce*, 52–4.

The description of Gentile as the official philosopher of fascism is ubiquitous. See, for example: Faraone, *Giovanni Gentile*; Moss, *Mussolini’s Fascist Philosopher*; and Gregor, *Giovanni Gentile*.

Another unexpected conjunction can be traced linking Hegel to the fascist thinker Julius Evola, who was inspired by hermetic philosophy and mysticism. Glenn Alexander Magee argues that Hegel himself was likewise influenced by hermetic traditions, Magee thus draws on Evola’s studies of alchemy and other forms of esoteric thought to establish another unlikely connection: G. Magee, *Hegel*. I point out this conjunction not to take a stance on the question of Hegel’s relation to hermeticism but rather to indicate the diverse and far-reaching paths of influence the Hegelian legacy traces into opposing faces of Italian modernity’s political self-imagination – its position not just as hegemonic theory but also in relation to “outsider theory.”

Copenhaver and Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce*, 7.

The institutional history I have traced is of course partial, its aim being not a complete depiction of the institutional channels of Hegel’s reception but rather to broadly illustrate the varied and wide-spanning impact of
his thought and its character. Further consideration of the left-Hegelian legacy, in particular, would offer a different political lens. I have placed less focus on that element of Hegel’s legacy not to indicate some relative unimportance but rather because the goal of my study is to chart the context that gives rise to the modernist push for regeneration and to examine the ambivalent relation of politics to aesthetics within that push.

61 This makes it all the more interesting that Hegel’s philosophy of history has not always been seen as a central component of his thought. Writing as recently as 2001, Joshua Dienstag could sum up the resurgence of interest in Hegel’s thought by saying that “while Hegel’s philosophy of history remains as dead as ever, his Phenomenology of Spirit and Logic and even his historicism are the subject of an increasing number of inquiries” (Dienstag, “What Is Living,” 262–3).

62 Meir Michaelis summarizes this transition nicely, writing that “Alfredo Oriani, whom Mussolini regarded as the sole precursor of Fascism, translated Mazzini’s concept of ‘mission’ into the language of imperialism” (Michaelis, Italy’s Mediterranean Strategy,” 41). Cf. Oriani, Fino a Dogali. On the earlier Risorgimento project for national emancipation and its link to cosmopolitan ideals, see Moggach, “Italian Receptions,” 325.

63 Croce claims Oriani as an idealist, noting in an essay from 1909 that Oriani makes reference to Hegel in each of his works; at the same time, however, Croce sees Oriani as essentially speculative: Croce, “Alfredo Oriani,” 6, 8. The Fascist reception of Oriani then becomes the defining moment of his afterlife: Massimo Baioni, “La lotta politica,” 191.

64 Hegel, Lectures, 62.

65 Taylor, Hegel.


67 Rubini, The Other Renaissance, 31.

68 Cuoco was the author of important works on both the reception of Plato and the legacy of political revolution: see, respectively, his Platone in Italia (1806) and Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione di Napoli (1801).

69 Spaventa was also the author of an important essay that played a role in the diffusion of Hegelian thought in revolutionary circles, his “Studii sulla filosofia di Hegel” (Rivista italiano, 1850), which is now to be found in G. Vacca’s edited collection of Spaventa’s works, Unificazione nazionale ed egemonia culturale, 16–25.

70 For an analysis of this inaugural address with attention to this specific phrase, see Donati, “L’insegnamento della filosofia.”

71 Croce, “An Unknown Page,” 175. Earlier on in the same dialogue, Sanseverino praises Hegel directly: “Now your philosophy, Professor, is quite different, tending not towards the natural and mathematical sciences
but towards poetry – of which it is the complement –, towards religion – in which it brings clarity – and towards history, where it discovers its concreteness and actuality” (172). Ignoring, for the moment, the possibly double sense of the honorific “Professor” here, given Croce’s criticisms of professional philosophy, it is worth noting that Croce conceives of Hegel’s move as a push toward unifying the absolute and universal with the concrete, not only through history but also through poetry and religion. As Croce puts it in a passage from his Logic: “From intuition, which is indiscriminate individualization, we move to the universal, which is discriminate individualization, and from art to philosophy, which is history” (Croce, A Croce Reader, 23).

But historical thought has played a joke on this respectable transcendental philosophy and on its sister, transcendental religion, of which it is the reasoned or theological counterpart. The joke is to historicize it by interpreting all its concepts and doctrines, arguments, and disheartened sceptical renunciations as historical facts and historical statements borne out of certain needs that are left partly satisfied and unsatisfied. In so doing, historical thought gave them their due, which they deserved because of their long domination (which was at the same time their service to human society), and wrote their honest obituary” (Croce, A Croce Reader, 52). The historicization of transcendental thought is ascribed a critical function that buries that thought. In other words, what Croce shows here is how historicization can play the role that Nietzsche’s genealogy plays in the critical reinterpretation of historical facts so as to shift the direction of contemporary life.


See Bellamy, “What Is Living”; and Bellamy, “Croce, Hegel, and Gentile.” Their debate leads to two different readings of Hegel and, ultimately, two different stances on the proper realization of the rational ideal in and through the state.


Hegel, Political Writings, 183.

Hegel, Political Writings, 183.

Lewis, Modernism, 70.

Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, 231. For Montesquieu this notion of national character and how it is suited to the laws is more complex than this quote might suggest. At the end of the same section of his book, pt 3, he examines why it is necessary for the spirit of a nation to be prepared
for the laws in order for those laws to thrive, saying that “even liberty has appeared intolerable to peoples who were not accustomed to enjoying it. Thus is pure air sometimes harmful to those who have lived in swampy countries” (308–9). As such, we might say that Montesquieu’s outlook is similar to Hegel’s in that it recognizes the interplay of circumstantial forces as well as something like “character” in the constitution of a nationality’s “spirit,” although the notion of “spirit” varies significantly. See Mosher, “The Particulars.”

81 Lewis, Modernism, 212.
83 Adamson, “Modernism and Fascism.”
84 Sherry, Modernism, 32–3.
85 This dynamic played out in the cultural sphere in the Church’s struggle to maintain control over public morals through censorship, which conflicted with the Fascist state’s effort to reshape public morality in its image: Brera, Novecento all’Indice.

2. Italy’s Modernist Idealism and the Artistic Reception of Schopenhauer

1 De Sanctis, “Schopenhauer e Leopardi,” 269. All translations come from the Appendix here.
2 Goya, Los Caprichos, Plate 42, my translation.
3 See Amann, Dandyism, 148. Goya’s tie to the revolution is well established, as evidenced for example by the exhibition in Hamburg: Hofmann, Goya. Helmut C. Jacobs has argued that this etching, no. 43 in the series of Los caprichos completed between 1797 and 1798, and published in 1799, can be read as a symbol of its age: Jacobs, El sueño de la razón, 11. At the same time, it can serve as a visual metaphor for the process of artistic creation itself (32). Elsewhere, Jacobs traces the literary afterlives of this seminal image on modernity’s aesthetic self-conception – for instance, in the poetic imaginary of a figure like Baudelaire: Jacobs, Die Rezeption, 36–7. As Robert Havard contends, Goya’s etching aims to refocus artistic creation from rational imitation toward the visible expression of fantasy’s inner workings: Havard, From Romanticism to Surrealism, 11–12.
4 This ambivalence is the starting point for Peter Wagner’s Progress.
5 The earliest English-language studies to focus on Schopenhauer framed him as an anti-Hegelian iconoclast, illustrating how not just Schopenhauer’s philosophy but also his reception have been deeply marked by his polemics against his German contemporary: “Iconoclasm in German Philosophy” (1853). Schopenhauer’s vitriolic critiques of Hegel
have been the subject of much commentary, both from biographers and
in philosophical studies. Fritz Richard Stern goes so far as to suggest
that Schopenhauer’s criticisms of Hegel helped inaugurate a widespread
period of anti-Hegelianism in the latter part of the nineteenth century,
paving the way for a new German ideal of the state ultimately leading to

6 Lukács’s argument in *The Destruction of Reason* maintains that post-
Hegelian thought moves toward an irrationalism that paves the way
for the rise of fascism. In his perspective, Schopenhauer plays a role
in this move, though he places special weight on the existential and
phenomenological philosophies of Nietzsche and Heidegger. His
assessment of the dangerous shift from the philosophy of reason (Hegel)
to irrationalism thus aligns with what Italian philosopher Norberto
Bobbio, in *La filosofia del decadentismo*, articulates as a connection between
existentialist philosophy and Italian decadentism, a connection that he saw
at the root of Italian fascism.

7 Earlier examples of this line in Schopenhauer criticism can be found
especially in Wellbery, *Schopenhauers Bedeutung*; Henry, *Schopenhauer*; and
Jacquette, *Schopenhauer, Philosophy*.


9 Vasalou, *Schopenhauer*, 5, 57.

10 Shapshay, “Poetic Intuition,” 225. Numerous scholars conceive
Schopenhauer’s thought in terms of its aesthetic representation of
insight. Bryan Magee contends that because we never truly know will
but only intuit it, Schopenhauer’s style of argumentation actually aligns
with Buddhist insight: B. Magee, “Misunderstanding Schopenhauer.”
Likewise, Peter Abelsen argues that both Schopenhauer’s philosophy
and Buddhist insight operate by revealing a *Weltanschauung*, despite
the fact that in Abelsen’s view Schopenhauer is much less Buddhist
than is often assumed, at least insofar as his philosophy expresses
a disgust with life that is not consistent with the Buddhist notion
Christopher Ryan shows how Schopenhauer recognizes a distinction
between the “immediate illumination” of mystical Indian insight and
the modern philosophical process of idealist philosophers such as Kant,
in whose footsteps he sees himself following: Ryan, “Schopenhauer on
Idealism,” 18–19.

A version of this idea that we can understand Schopenhauer’s works
as an aesthetic form using intuition to make insight available for
philosophical reason was proposed to Schopenhauer himself by his friend
and follower, Adam Ludwig von Doss, in a letter of 28 March 1858. In
the same letter he also compares Schopenhauer to Leopardi, focusing on


14 Papini describes his book as an attack on philosophy that aims at a general rehabilitation of the human spirit so as to make it more active and meaningful – thus capable of conquest: Papini, *Il crepuscolo*, 8–9.

15 See Ciraci, “Mainländer all’Inferno,” 43. Despite Papini’s rejection of Schopenhauer as a satisfactory endpoint, he comes back to Schopenhauer and his followers throughout his career: Ciraci, “Mainländer all’Inferno,” 46.

16 Schopenhauer’s significance for popular philosophical discourse can be ascertained by the fact that Papini decided to focus a chapter on him in the first place. As Papini writes in his introduction, describing his method, he aimed to put modern philosophy on trial in order to wipe it out; however, he wanted to do this not by discussing philosophy in the abstract but rather by attacking it through its leading representatives: Papini, *Il crepuscolo*, 9.


18 Ciraci, *La filosofia italiana*, 22. If anything, Ciraci is understating the case for this “effetto in ampiezza” here in order to emphasize the philosophical reception he privileges in his study.


20 “For this reason the doctrines that are truly the maîtresses of his philosophy remain those that first made his name: the metaphysical vision [veduta] of will as queen of the universe and the ethical vision [veduta] of evil as king of all human things” (Papini, *Il crepuscolo*, 97). Here the word *veduta* connotes not just a normal vision but a kind of panoramic, encompassing view – somewhere between a vision, a view, a landscape, and a standpoint.

21 As Ciraci points out, there were, in fact, at least three publications prior to De Sanctis’s essay that mentioned Schopenhauer, though only very briefly: two are single citations found in teaching textbooks (manuali) for high schools – Tennemann (1832–1835) and Turri (1854) – and the other is a translation of and commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* that includes a note to Schopenhauer by editor Ruggiero Bonghi (1854): Caraci, *La filosofia italiana*, 595–6.

22 Settembrini’s complete translation of Lucian appeared in six volumes in 1862 (published as *Opere* in Florence by Felice Le Monnier). *I neoplatonici* [*The Neoplatonists*], his homosexual love story set in ancient Greece and written as if it were a “found” document, was written in the period from
1851 to 1859 but never published during his life – indeed, even after Benedetto Croce became aware of its existence he kept it a secret for fear of besmirching the reputation of one of the Risorgimento’s key heroic martyr figures, and the book was released only in 1977, edited by Raffaele Cantarella (Milan: Rizzoli). De Sanctis never completed a full translation of the *Logic*, but large parts were finished and are to be found in his *Opere. La crisi del Romanticismo.*

Here I have in mind Itamar Even-Zohar’s notion of how translated texts enter into the target system in a way that can be either innovative or conservative: Even-Zohar, “The Position of Translated Literature.” While Schopenhauer’s popular diffusion would appear to offer an innovative intervention into the Italian system, in De Sanctis’s philosophical reception we see a conservative effort to domesticate the foreign such that its innovative force is tempered.

The *Rivista contemporanea* eventually incorporated an earlier Torinese journal called *Il cimento*, with which De Sanctis had already begun to collaborate in 1855, during his period in Turin (1853–56) while he was teaching in a private school for girls after being released from jail in Naples (1850–53). De Sanctis wrote several pieces published in the 1855 edition of *Il cimento*, the penultimate published; he then continued his collaboration with the *Rivista contemporanea*, which endured for years and led to the dialogue on Schopenhauer and Leopardi.

*Il cimento* was founded in 1852 as a journal of “science, letters, and the arts.” It was published in Turin by the Tipografia Ferrero e Franco and featured the work of politically engaged thinkers who contributed to the intellectual climate of revolution and unification, such as Gustavo Benso di Cavour, the prominent marquis who became a major Risorgimento figure and was an avid reader of Kantian philosophy (the first issue of *Il cimento* opened with Cavour’s essay, “Saggio sui principii della morale,” 3–22, 129–52, and also featured two more of his contributions). The journal continued to publish with this title for three years and a total of six volumes, 1852–55.

The *Rivista contemporanea* was likewise a journal dedicated to “science, letters, the arts, and theatre.” It began publishing in Turin in 1854 (by the Unione Tipografico-Editrice) and positioned itself as an attempt to revitalize a broken and divided Italy by establishing a common literature. In the “Introduction” to the first volume, the editors justify the need for their work as an intervention into the formation of a national literature that is suited to the needs of social progress (“Introduzione,” 1). It is for this reason, they go on to say in the next section, that they have decided to publish the *Rivista contemporanea*, which is meant to draw together writers and thinkers of various outlooks without
imposing an ideological direction and in the hope of elevating the Italian spirit: “Introduzione,” 1–2.

My references throughout this chapter are to the 1921 edition of De Sanctis’ *Saggi critici*, edited by Paolo Arcari (Milan: Fratelli Treves).


The title here is indicative of the reception of the essay, which is always grouped among De Sanctis’s writings on Leopardi, showing that its afterlife is indeed tied to the Italian poet. De Sanctis collected the dialogue in his own version of *Saggi critici*, published during his lifetime. There, he situated it together with several essays on Leopardi, starting with the “Epistolario di Giacomo Leopardi,” then “Alla sua donna – Poesia di Giacomo Leopardi,” and finally the dialogue “Schopenhauer e Leopardi: Dialogo tra A e D” immediately after these two. This grouping suggests that De Sanctis saw its treatment of Leopardi as the essay’s central feature, at least insofar as it was related to the rest of his own writings. That perspective is further highlighted in “La prima canzone di Giacomo Leopardi,” published not in *Saggi critici* but in the *Nuovi saggi critici* (105–26). There, De Sanctis comments on the fact that there is not yet a concentrated critical study of Leopardi, and refers to his own dialogue as a partial and insufficient treatment of the poet (“La prima canzone,” 109). From De Sanctis’s own perspective, the dialogue on Schopenhauer is a part of his humble contribution to the study of Leopardi’s work.

Margherita Heyer-Caput is the only scholar to offer a sustained discussion of De Sanctis’s essay in English, writing a few pages on the topic in the context of her larger consideration of Schopenhauer’s importance in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Italy: Heyer-Caput, *Grazia Deledda’s Dance*, 213–16. She previously discussed De Sanctis’s work in her essay on “Leopardi tra Schopenhauer e Nietzsche.” In her chapter on “The Way to Britain: French and German Receptions,” Daniela Cerimonia briefly mentions De Sanctis’s essay in her articulation of how Leopardi was received outside of Italy, stating that De Sanctis’s essay was “critically acclaimed” and leaving it more or less at that: Cerimonia, *Leopardi and Shelley*, 52. This brief mention is typical of the other (few) sources in English that refer to De Sanctis’s essay, though they often refer to it as “famous,” evidently describing its Italian rather than anglophone legacy.


There have been multiple, though not entirely aligning, assessments of the role irony plays in De Sanctis’s essay. My own position falls closest to that of Fabio Ciracì, who argues that De Sanctis is using Schopenhauer to counter Hegel, despite the fact that he never embraced Schopenhauer’s
metaphysical pessimism, concluding that “De Sanctis makes use of Schopenhauer’s works as an anti-Hegelian medicine, an effective antidote to Hegel’s pan-logoism” (Ciraci, La filosofia italiana, 34). As such, even if the dialogue is ironic, it nevertheless also points to the merits of Schopenhauer’s philosophy (50). In contrast, Heyer-Caput’s analysis of the dialogue sees its irony as more pervasive and thus totalizing: “‘D’ initially declares himself a staunch supporter of Schopenhauer, ‘il filosofo dell’avvenire’ … misunderstood by his contemporaries. In the course of the conversation, though, ‘D’ infuses his presentation of Schopenhauer’s philosophy with a corrosive irony, which reverses his judgment” (Heyer-Caput, Grazia Deledda’s Dance, 213–14). Her reading thus aligns more with Croce’s, who likewise saw irony as central to the dialogue’s reversal.

Schopenhauer himself had read De Sanctis’s essay as well as many of Leopardi’s writings, all of which were brought to his attention by his growing group of disciples in the later years of his career. This is the topic of Giuseppe De Lorenzo’s study, Leopardi e Schopenhauer, which stitches together a large volume of letters (translated into Italian) written between Schopenhauer and various members of his circle on the topic of Leopardi. For De Lorenzo, Schopenhauer’s keen interest in De Sanctis’s (apparent) praise was heightened by the philosopher’s long-standing fascination with Italy, where he travelled and about which he wrote numerous enthusiastic letters (see 14–18 especially).

33 A note De Sanctis added to the piece when he first collected it in his Saggi critici explicates these characters thus: “The dialogue was written in Zurich in 1858. D. is the author, and A. is an old student of his who comes from Naples” (De Sanctis, “Schopenhauer e Leopardi,” 227).

34 Calling him by an Italianized version of his first name, “Arturo,” De Sanctis domesticates with a strategy that diminishes the sense of grandeur or authority that might be attributed to a prominent philosopher.


36 See the exchange between A and D on page 246. D then goes on to describe the whole third book of The World as Will and Representation as an “exaggerated aesthetic theory” (De Sanctis, “Schopenhauer e Leopardi,” 247).

37 The first English-language review, “Iconoclasm in German Philosophy” (1853), focuses on Schopenhauer’s pessimism and ethics of renunciation, making scant mention of aesthetics except in its focus on Schopenhauer’s style. A number of similar treatments occur in the English-language literature of the following two decades, often condemning Schopenhauer for his pessimism as well as his atheism (or perceived pantheism). An 1863 article in The Saturday Review, for instance, treats Schopenhauer’s thought as a “moment of dark genius” (“Arthur Schopenhauer” 1863, 325).
In 1864, *The Christian Examiner* published its own, much longer study of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, which likewise emphasized the role of pessimism and atheism while underscoring the significance of his thought for its independence and its stylistic clarity (“Arthur Schopenhauer” 1864). These assessments align notably with De Sanctis’s, in that they condemn the content of Schopenhauer’s thought for its negative consequences while simultaneously praising his independence, originality, and style.

Today many critics instead focus on the role of aesthetic liberation. Some particularly interesting interventions into various facets of that discussion can be found in Clifton, “Schopenhauer and Murdoch,” Wellbery, “Emancipation from the Will”; Vandenabeele, “Schopenhauer on Sense Perception”; and Nussbaum, “The Transfigurations of Intoxication.”


Dienstag, *Pessimism*, 37. The earliest studies of Schopenhauer more or less universally examine him in terms of this notion of pessimism, as noted above, with the 1911 article in *The Edinburgh Review*, “Degeneration and Pessimism,” marking a kind of culmination of that discourse. English translations of Schopenhauer often used pessimism as a key term to interest readers, an example being *Studies in Pessimism* from 1891, which a review in *The Spectator* of that year saw as the cream of Schopenhauer’s philosophy with its pessimistic theology (“Studies in Pessimism” 1891, 251).

Leopardi’s pessimism has likewise been discussed to the point that it is now codified in Italian high school textbooks, which classify it into two overlapping forms: historical pessimism and cosmic pessimism. Cosmic pessimism is rooted in a general (metaphysical) view in which happiness has not been granted to human beings, whereas historical pessimism is the result of viewing cultural decline through history (this is the aspect that Dienstag focuses on in his analysis). The traditional view holds that historical pessimism, which is more limited in scope, develops into an increasingly total pessimism as an evolution in Leopardi’s view. Yet new scholarship suggests that there is nevertheless a close conceptual tie between the two “types” of pessimism in Leopardi, who sees not only revolution but history itself as inherently traumatic and thus aligned with a cosmic pessimism: Rennie, *Speculating on the Moment*, 140. Marco Moneta suggests that this distinction and its ramifications can be traced back to the early 1900s, seeing in Bonaventura Zumbini’s 1904 *Studi sul Leopardi* a point of origin: Moneta, *L’Officina delle aporie*, 151. Zumbini did, indeed, suggest that Leopardi is unique as a thinker and poet of pessimism precisely because for him it is both deeply personal/biographical and also universal or philosophical: Zumbini, *Studi sul Leopardi*, vol. 2, 339. It is interesting to note for my purposes here that Zumbini’s treatment of
Leopardi sees him as the unique Italian manifestation of a pan-European turn toward pessimism in which philosophers of human suffering are paired with poets of suffering. Thus in Germany, this is visible in the line from Kant to Hegel, which he sees reflected in Goethe and Schiller (Zumbini, 333–34); in England, we encounter it in a conceptual link between David Hume’s pessimistic outlook and the poetry of Shelley and Byron (334–5). In the Italian case, he believes, Leopardi encompasses both sides of the equation.

40 Dienstag, Pessimism, 82–3.
41 As D says: “Often when you hear Leopardi and Schopenhauer speak it seems like you’re listening to a holy father” (De Sanctis, “Schopenhauer e Leopardi,” 256).
45 “Iconoclasm in German Philosophy.”
46 Lawrence Venuti argues that domestication and foreignization are strategies that translators use in determining the way in which a text is fit into a cultural and linguistic system or allowed to remain foreign to it (and thus disruptive to it). For Venuti, foreignization plays an important critical role that domestication would erase violently: “The ethnocentric violence of translation is inevitable: in the translation process, foreign languages, texts, and cultures always undergo some degree and form of exclusion, reduction, and inscription that reflect the cultural situation in the translating language. Yet the domesticating work on the foreign text can be a foreignizing intervention, pitched to question existing cultural hierarchies” (Venuti, The Translator’s Invisibility, 267). My argument is that De Sanctis can be read as domesticating Schopenhauer explicitly in a way that reveals precisely what Venuti has in mind, as De Sanctis intends to use this domestication as a tool for blocking access to the foreign. In that respect, he has chosen to avoid the foreign so as to render it inaccessible, a purposeful inversion of the dynamic highlighted by Antoine Berman’s argument that accentuating the strangeness of a foreign text is “the only way of giving us access to it” (Berman, “Translating and the Trials,” 285).
48 Here De Sanctis’s dialogue again aligns with the prevailing tendencies of Schopenhauer’s reception, which consistently focused on the philosopher’s pleasing, refined style. As the author of a negative review of Schopenhauer’s recently translated essays wrote for the American journal Self Culture, “The socialism and discontent of the times has of late given Schopenhauer a vogue, and editions of his writings have been numerous
in the past few years, their sale being helped, presumably, by the author’s fine literary faculty” (“The Essays of Schopenhauer,” 1897–98, 335).


De Sanctis’s political interpretation of Leopardi is rooted in his earlier study of the poet’s letters. In 1849, De Sanctis was forced out of Naples and fled to Calabria; there, he wrote the introduction to an edition of Leopardi’s letters, which he then revised and published in Saggi critici as “Epistolario di Giacomo Leopardi.” In it, De Sanctis describes Leopardi as a manifestation of virtues that Nietzsche might term untimely: suffering greatly, the great man lifts himself above misfortune with the special dignity of magnanimity (208). Leopardi can thus be seen as a point of transition between the self-obsessed subjectivity of Enlightenment individualism and the patriotic movements building toward the Risorgimento: “His concept of things is so elevated that it will not cause us to marvel if he seems like a most severe judge and if, more than praising that which we have, he shows us that which we are lacking” (209). This notion of Leopardi’s elevating effect is clearly prescient of how De Sanctis will later contrast Schopenhauer and Leopardi.

Antonio Negri’s study of Leopardi as a critical thinker is of particular importance here. Considering how Leopardi is situated in the historical trajectory of nineteenth-century responses against dialectical thought, Negri argues that rather than seeing Leopardi as aligned with Schopenhauer we should rather see him in relation to left-Hegelianism’s ways of redirecting the dialectic. Where Schopenhauer replaces dialectical thought with a phenomenalism that Negri sees as reintroducing nothingness through “the paradoxical overthrow of the absoluteness of spirit,” Leopardi instead “traverses the nothingness of being in order to regain, in light of it, the reason of critical antagonism” (Negri, Flower of the Desert, 238). In contrast, Leopardi’s ties to the Hegelian left are visible in their shared demystification of the dialectic: “They have in common a violent critical impulse directly inherited from the revolutionary tradition of the Enlightenment” (238). Negri, in other words, inadvertently confirms De Sanctis’s position while rejecting what he perceives to be De Sanctis’s assimilation of Leopardi to Schopenhauer. Ultimately, however, Negri argues that Leopardi’s anti-dialectical thought should be understood as its own model, one that spans from Schopenhauer and the left-Hegelians to a Kierkegaardian existentialism in that it “combines a metaphysical predisposition to a materialist ontology with irrationalism, the sense of demystification and the pleasure of singularity” (239).

This vision of a revolutionary philosophical lineage contrasts with what Frank Rosengarten has described as Leopardi’s ambivalent
position. As Rosengarten notes, reading the Zibaldone’s entries on the French Revolution in relation to Leopardi’s later entries and epistolary exchanges, his initial enthusiasm for the Revolution is limited to the ways in which it may have helped restore our contact with nature, whereas “there is nothing in Leopardi’s writings after the mid-1820s that would justify considering him a militant revolutionary” (Rosengarten, Giacomo Leopardi’s Search, 217). Indeed, he rejected the July Revolution in 1830, asserting that it had ruined Europe and with it literature. Leopardi’s own view of historical revolution is thus much less positive than Negri’s interpretation.


3. Aesthetic Decadence and Modernist Idealism: Schopenhauer’s Literary-Artistic Legacy

1 I discuss Sherry’s position in more detail in the Introduction. See Sherry, “Introduction”; and Sherry, Modernism.

2 Cf. “Iconoclasm in German Philosophy” and “Degeneration and Pessimism.”

3 Potolsky, The Decadent Republic, 11. Cf. Wellbery, Schopenhauers Bedeutung; Jacquette, Schopenhauer, Philosophy; and Henry, Schopenhauer. I will not attempt to trace out all of the directions these studies examine regarding his European and global artistic reception, but it is notable that many of the figures treated in these studies are associated with decadence and/or modernism.

4 I also take to heart the critique of computational models in literary studies offered by Nan Z. Da, who demonstrates through statistical evidence that these computational methods result in either robust but obvious insights or else non-obvious but non-robust insights; there is thus “a fundamental mismatch between the statistical tools that are used and the objects to which they are applied” (Da, “The Computational Case,” 601).

5 This tendency is still visible today, with the most recent reprint of De Sanctis’s essay coming in a volume titled precisely Schopenhauer e Leopardi e altri saggi leopardiani.

6 Ciraci describes Croce’s dominant position in Italian thought and his moves to block Schopenhauer with considerable detail, accounting for Croce’s negative reviews of works on Schopenhauer, his refusal to include translations of Schopenhauer in the series he edited for Laterza, and other strategies: Ciraci, La filosofia italiana, 457–69.


8 Spackman, Decadent Genealogies, viii.

9 See Bettini, La critica e gli scapigliati.


Spackman, *Decadent Genealogies*, 33. On D’Annunzio’s debt to Huysmans, see De Michelis, “D’Annunzio e Huysmans” and De Michelis, “D’Annunzio e i plagi.”


I would thus argue that approaches to decadence have in some sense mirrored the polarity of approaches to the concept of the avant-garde, with Peter Bürger and Renato Poggioli similarly describing that concept in terms of a historical period of transition (for the former) or as a mobile aesthetic category that recurs across historical moments and geographies (for the latter): Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*; Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*.

It is surprising, for example, that in Jeffreys’s thoroughly documented treatment, which makes heavy recourse to anglophone Victorian decadentism as a source for Cavafy’s poetics, Schopenhauer’s name never appears – despite Schopenhauer’s importance for a British decadent like Wilde, for example. Even Sherry’s articulation of the concept, focused on the poetics of loss and its pessimistic view of history, makes only one brief mention of Schopenhauer: Sherry, *Modernism*, 185.

Stephen Romer goes so far as to assert that “in this feckless retinue of disabused young men, seeking to lose themselves in art and novel experience, the influence of Schopenhauer is all-pervasive” (Romer, “Introduction,” xiv).

Likewise, in his 1883 study of decadence, *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (*Essays on Contemporary Psychology*), Paul Bourget connects the decadent aesthetic to the conjunction of Baudelaire’s poetic obsession with death and Schopenhauer’s pessimism (15). For Bourget this is symptomatic of an excess of individualism and detachment from life: Nalbantian, *Seeds of Decadence*, 11. This detachment from life was what Nietzsche, reading
Bourget’s essay, responded against in Baudelaire and the aesthetic cult of the dandy, which is connected to his response to Wagner and thus to Schopenhauer: Downes, *Music and Decadence*, 71–2.


18 Huysmans, *Against Nature*, 197. This forms an interesting point of comparison to the way Schopenhauer’s German disciple, Adam Ludwig von Doss, compared his teacher with Buddhist thought, seeing Schopenhauer and Leopardi in relation to a “Buddhist” pessimism: see De Lorenzio, *Leopardi e Schopenhauer*, 20–2. Ciracì documents the copious literature linking Schopenhauer’s Italian reception to interest in Eastern thought and Buddhism in particular: Ciracì, *La filosofia italiana*, 213–64.

19 Dienstag, *Pessimism*, x.

20 His poem from *Flowers of Evil*, “A Carcass,” turns the usual poetics of praise devoted to the beloved’s beauty into a praise of decomposition, transforming European love poetry and the baroque tradition of the *memento mori*. In *Paris Spleen*, by contrast, he depicts the misery of modern capitalist culture and its unfeeling deadness in “The Eyes of the Poor” (52–3).


23 This is the poetics of what Gautier compares to the twilight stage of poetry in his preface: Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal*, 16.

24 While the aesthetic stance implies a necessary distance from its object – the modern world and its inhabitants – Baudelaire’s poetics nevertheless invests in an ambivalent sense that poetry can influence its readers through the correspondence between beauty and the good: see Simek, “Baudelaire.”


26 In this respect I disagree with Mimmo Cangiano, *La nascita*, insofar as he insists that modernism is essentially nihilistic and necessarily politically suspect, following in the trajectory of the critical theorists cited here. My analysis of how even decadent aestheticism functions beyond the realm of merely reproducing crisis and totalizing it suggests why such readings may prove to be overly simplified.

27 Bobbio, *La filosofia del decadentismo*, 4 and 22.
Gori, *Studi di estetica dell’irrazionale*, 42. Irrationality is frequently associated with decadentism in the Italian critical literature, both during the early twentieth century and in subsequent scholarship. See Tessari, Pascoli, D’Annunzio.

Agamben, *The Man without Content*, 52.

Agamben follows this same logic, arguing that the trajectory of modern art (starting with the Renaissance *Wunderkammer* and the inception of the museum as an aesthetic space) is a long process of turning away from classical praxis. Here Agamben is likewise borrowing from the tradition of Walter Benjamin’s criticism of modern aestheticism and its transformation of the political – the “aestheticizing of politics” (Benjamin, “The Work of Art,” 122).

I abbreviate *The World as Will and Representation* as WWR, and quotes refer to the classic translation by Payne, although a new translation by Norman, Welchman, and Janaway has made some important improvements.

This view of suicide emerges in multiple sources, from Leopardi’s poetry (collected as *Canti* in 1835) to his philosophical reflections in the *Zibaldone* (published posthumously in seven volumes, 1898–1900, and newly translated as *Zibaldone* by Michael Caesar, Franco D’Intino, and Kathleen Baldwin in 2013), to his collection of prose essays and dialogues, the *Operette morali* (published in its definitive edition in 1835, translated as *The Moral Essays* in 1983). But nowhere is it clearer than in his “Fragment on Suicide,” written around 1820 and published posthumously in the *Scritti vari inediti*. There, Leopardi contrasts the happiness of a direct connection to life fostered by ancient forms of illusion and the bleak experience of modern rationality, which has dispelled illusion at the price of being unable to bear life, concluding that: “back then, even when dying one lived, whereas now one dies living. No other means besides the ancient ones will allow us to return to loving and feeling life” (389). The search for a lost connection to vitality, interrupted by modern reason, is a hallmark of the romantic poetics at work in Leopardi’s pessimistic world view – and likewise another possible source of the affinity between Leopardi and Nietzsche that Negri identifies in his reading of *The Gay Science*: Negri, *Flower of the Desert*, 297.

The importance of Wagner as a source not only for decadence but also for modernist innovation more broadly is underscored in Juliet Koss’s impressive study of his legacy and the role of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* in European modernity: Koss, *Modernism after Wagner*.

The second novel in his decadent series, *The Innocent* (*L’innocente*, 1892), focuses on the protagonist’s murderous desires and ultimate decision to commit infanticide; and the motif recurs all the way to his last novel/prose poem, *Nocturne* (*Notturno*, 1916), which is obsessed with heroizing death.

There is likewise a significant rise in rates of suicide and cultural interest in it as a phenomenon in the period: Bernardini, “Introduction,” for an overview of the trend; and Bernardini and Virga, *Voglio morire!* , for a series of in-depth studies.

37 Jacquette, “Schopenhauer on the Ethics of Suicide.”
40 Cited in Schopenhauer, *WWR* I, §68, 384. The citation is to Spinoza’s *Ethics*, V, Prop. 42.
41 Schopenhauer, *WWR* I, §38, 196.
43 My reading of Schopenhauer’s combination of the aesthetic and the ascetic is informed by Julian Young’s treatment of the sublime in relation to death: see Young, “Schopenhauer, Nietzsche”; and Young, “Death and Transfiguration.”

47 Here D’Annunzio echoes Nietzsche’s characterization of Wagner, which is certainly on this count accurate. Wagner’s feelings toward Schopenhauer are captured in a letter that Wagner wrote to his friend, the painter Franz von Lenbach (1836–1904), in 1868, where he comments on Lenbach’s portrait of Schopenhauer that Wagner’s second wife, Cosima, had given him and that remained on prominent display in his study. After describing how Lenbach has succeeded in rendering a bodily representation of Schopenhauer’s clarity and depth of thought, Wagner goes on to say: “I have a hope for the culture of the German spirit, which is that the time will come when Schopenhauer becomes the law of our thought and our understanding” (Schopenhauer, *Schopenhauer-Briefe*, 510). Indeed, Wagner and his circle made a direct link between Schopenhauer’s person(a) and the spirit of a new German age.


Nietzsche had acknowledged something similar in his preface to *The Case of Wagner*: “Through Wagner modernity speaks her most intimate language: it conceals neither its good nor its evil: it has thrown off all shame. … I can perfectly well understand a musician of to-day who says: ‘I hate Wagner but I can endure no other music.’ But I should also understand a philosopher who said, ‘Wagner is modernity in concentrated form.’ There is no help for it, we must first be Wagnerites” (Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*).

Bryan Magee has offered an excellent reading of Wagner’s Schopenhauerian art, and in it he places due emphasis on the way in which *Tristan und Isolde* is a musical manifestation of the impossibility of satisfaction and the will to self-extinction at the core of book IV of Schopenhauer’s *WWR* (B. Magee, “Schopenhauer and Wagner: Part Two,” 54).


On the role of the “superuomo” see Piga, *Il mito del superuomo*; on the literary afterlife of the Dannunzian *superuomo*, see Barnaby, “Superuomini e no.”

Andrea Mirabile characterizes D’Annunzio as situated precisely at the threshold of decadence and modernism: Mirabile, *Multimedia Archaeologies*.

Laura Wittman’s study of Italy’s tomb of the unknown soldier emphasizes D’Annunzio’s central role in the creation of the new rituals commemorating national loss: Wittman, *The Tomb*.


Woodhouse addresses the nascent fascism of D’Annunzio’s Fiume episode: Woodhouse, *Gabriele D’Annunzio*, 324–5. He also argues that the “Carta del Carnaro,” the new legal framework he crafted for Fiume, reveals a poetic and aesthetic impulse in his project that is more liberal than fascist (345). The complex issue of race and colonial aspirations in D’Annunzio’s writing and the development of fascism is treated at length by Welch, who argues that “D’Annunzio tethers rhetorics of race and (re) productivity to a variety of other formulations about Italian modernity and preeminence. Race is inscribed within a poetic constellation that figures blood and territory as the rhetorical conditions for Italy’s conquest of modernity” (Welch, *Vital Subjects*, 130). Cf. Re, “Italians and the Invention of Race.”

Svevo’s broader world view likewise poses a critique of modern decadence and responds with a shift toward a modernist alternative.
Across Svevo’s corpus, two key notions recur – senility and ineptitude; these ways of framing his characters as outsiders or failures in modern culture offer not only a critique of modern decadence (Santi, “Ineptitude as Cultural Senility”) but also a contrasting alternative insofar as ineptitude represents a kind of resistance to the reductive logic of bourgeois modernity and its practical aims, beliefs, and conventions (Di Nunzio, “La differenza”). That resistance, I argue, speaks to the power Svevo attributes to the creativity of the written word, which Terrile identifies as central to Zeno’s Conscience in “La parola all’ombra.” This creativity, I would add, functions precisely as an alternative frame for rewriting modernity – consonant with Caselli’s notion of Svevo’s development toward plurality: Caselli, “<<Bisogna isolare…>>” – and in this way it likewise functions in consonance with the aesthetic response to crisis that I have articulated throughout this chapter. The strategies of decadent aestheticism are thus mirrored in modernist deconstructions of fixed logic.

61 Contarini offers a classical Freudian interpretation of the novel’s function in her “<<Vedere l’infanzia>>”; Anninvi expands on this to suggest that psychoanalysis not only is in the content but also is an integral component of the hybridization of genre that is a hallmark of modernist production more generally, thus putting Svevo in contact with modernists across Europe: Anninvi, “<<Un filo di fumo>>,” 81.

62 Svevo, Zeno’s Conscience, 434.

63 Braida, “Salute o malattia?” Godioli offers a recent approach to Svevo’s irony that emphasizes how it is both corrosive and self-corroding, providing the space for laughter: Godioli, Laughter.

64 Svevo, Zeno’s Conscience, 435, 436.

65 Svevo, Zeno’s Conscience, 437.

66 Svevo, Zeno’s Conscience, 419.

67 Svevo, Zeno’s Conscience, 411.

68 Hegel, translated in Stephen Houlgate, The Opening of Hegel’s Logic, 185.

69 Schopenhauer, WWR I, §39, 202.

70 While the term appears in his most prominent work, Ulysses (1922), he had been toying with the idea of epiphany some two decades earlier, while he was working on Stephen Hero (~1903–5, published posthumously in 1944), the partly lost autobiographical precursor to his A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916). Likewise, around the years 1904–6, Joyce was jotting down a series of Epiphanies, held in manuscript form by the University of Buffalo’s Lockwood Memorial Library and published in 1956. The dates 1904–6 are offered by O.A. Silverman in his introduction to the Epiphanies (xv), which consists of twenty-two short notes of epiphanic moments that Joyce wrote out on separate sheets of paper and kept together.
71 See Hu’s entry on ‘Epiphany’ in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism for the etymology and development of this term.

72 Joyce, Stephen Hero, 210–11.

73 Joyce, Stephen Hero, 211. The centrality of epiphany as a concept in modernist studies is attested in a number of sources. See, for instance, Beja, Epiphany; and Gillespie, “Epiphany.” Joyce is an originating figure at least of the critical term if not of the practice itself; see Aubert, The Aesthetics of James Joyce; Rabaté, James Joyce; and Delville, “Epiphanies and Prose Lyrics.” That being said, the practice is much broader than Joyce’s specific poetics and encompasses multiple dimensions, not only of suddenness and condensed temporality but also in relation to the spiritual and the psychological. On the temporal dimension of epiphany, see Morel, “The Modernists’ Commitment.” On the centrality of the amorphous category of the spiritual, see Kim, Literary Epiphany.

74 Woolf, A Writer’s Diary, 138. See also the volume that uses this concept for its title, Woolf’s Moments of Being.

75 Quotes from Eliot’s Four Quartets are in The Poems of T.S. Eliot; throughout I cite by verse number.

76 Aakanksha Virkar-Yates has noted that the usual association of these verses with Hegel seems unconvincing when considered in light of the numerous ways in which Eliot is directly engaging Schopenhauer’s theory of the sublime in particular and aesthetics more generally: Virkar-Yates, “Erhebung.” That association to Hegel is so common as to be asserted without further discussion in the commentary in Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue’s edition of Eliot’s collected poems, Eliot, The Poems, “Commentary on ‘Burnt Norton’ II 28: ‘Erhebung.’” As Virkar-Yates also shows, Four Quartets is likewise in close connection with the legacy of Wagner in its sense of musical asceticism: Virkar-Yates, “Absolute Music.”

77 Though I am calling it a “Schopenhauerian” conjunction, this is not to imply that Schopenhauer is the only source of that aesthetic notion but rather that looking through the lens of his philosophy helps us recognize and unpack the family resemblance holding together various instances of modernist epiphany. For Montale, for example, Boutroux’s reading of Bergsonian duration plays a fundamental role in establishing the secular miracle so central to his epiphanic mode. Cf. Rosada, “Il contingentismo di Montale.”


79 West likewise emphasizes the importance of the word forse in her readings of Montale’s collected works: West, Montale, 62–4.

80 Beard, The Blind Owl as a Western Novel, 49.
Hedayat’s novel is thus an intensification, in a more hallucinatory and complex style, of themes that are also pervasive in his short stories. See *Three Drops of Blood*.


In his late writings on religion, especially *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), Freud emphasizes that the notion of God/gods is a psychological projection that functions to shore up society and as a defence mechanism against the overwhelming superiority of powers that cannot be controlled. Freud, of course, is another channel through which Schopenhauer’s outlook is transmitted into the imaginary of modernism. See Gupta, “Freud and Schopenhauer.”


Pirandello, *One, No One, and One Hundred Thousand*, 83.

Pirandello, *One, No One, and One Hundred Thousand*, 217–18.

Shapshay argues that Nietzsche’s analysis is only partly right and that Schopenhauer himself already combines aesthetic intuition and philosophical argumentation in a novel way: Shapshay, “Poetic Intuition.”

Nietzsche, of course, operates with multiple formal models throughout his writing, with a work like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885) approaching literary myth while many other texts adopt an aphoristic form. Certainly some are more discursively oriented than others, but in general they embrace a literary-philosophical hybridity that is broadly noted in the criticism.

4. Avant-Garde Idealism: The Ambivalence of Futurist Vitalism

1 “Davanti all’infinito” is collected in Marinetti, Settimelli, and Corra, *Il teatro futurista sintetico*, 42.

2 In the manifesto signed by Marinetti, Settimelli, and Corra on “The Futurist Synthetic Theater” (11 January 1915), they outline their idea for this new art form; see Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, 113–122, translated in Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, *Futurism: An Anthology*, 204–9. This theatrical form builds on Marinetti’s earlier praise of variety theatre as the only salvageable theatrical form in Italy since its speed and dynamic aspects make it anti-traditional and align it with the Futurist aim of inventing new modes of astonishment. See “The Variety Theater” (29 September 1913) in Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, 80–7, translated in Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, *Futurism*, 159–64.

3 On the shift from German cultural identification to its bellicose rejection, see Subialka, “Modernism at War.”

4 This reading coincides with the second conclusion drawn in “The Futurist Synthetic Theater” that their invention of this new form aims to “put onstage all the discoveries (no matter how unrealistic, strange,
or antitheatrical) that our talent is discovering in the subconscious, in
ill-defined forces, in pure abstraction, in pure conceptualism, the purely
fantastic, in record-setting, and body-madness” (Rainey, Poggi, and
Wittman, Futurism, 208).

5 As Thomas Harrison notes, 1910 and the build-up to the First World War
saw an increasing trend of suicide among young men in the Habsburg
Empire: Harrison, 1910, 91. Harrison links this to the proliferation of new
theories on the death instinct (Freud, Jung, etc.) and hauntingly concludes:
“Nineteen ten is the spiritual prefiguration of an unspeakably tragic
fatality, heard in the tones of the audacious and the anguished, the deviant
and the desperate, in the art of a youth grown precociously old, awaiting a
war it had long suffered in spirit” (7).

6 Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, Futurism, 92 (Marinetti, Teoria e invenzione
futurista, 301).

7 Perloff’s description of the Futurist Moment dovetails with Poggioli’s
theory of the Futurist phase of various avant-garde movements as a
“prophetic and utopian phase, the arena of agitation and preparation for
the announced revolution, if not the revolution itself” (Poggioli, The Theory
of the Avant-Garde, 69).

8 Perloff, The Futurist Moment, 36.

9 On medium specificity, see Greenberg, “Towards a Newer Laocoön,”

8. This concept allowed him to trace modernist art to a conceptual
development in abstract expressionism, which showcases the self-critical

10 Poggi, Inventing Futurism.

11 Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, Futurism, 122 (Marinetti, Teoria e invenzione
futurista, 50). Bold type in original.

12 Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, Futurism, 123 (Marinetti, Teoria e invenzione
futurista, 52). Bold type in original.

13 I thus disagree with Frank Kermode’s demarcation of modernist
production as anti-traditionalist or traditionalist: Kermode, The Sense of an
Ending, 103–4.

14 While Futurists would often attempt to downplay the influences of
previous models on their poetics, they were clearly well aware of them:
Gordon, “The Italian Futurist Theatre,” 349.

15 Adamson mentions Corra briefly in two places in reference to one of
the Futurist periodicals he ran, L’Italia futurista: Adamson, Avant-Garde
Florence, 220, 223.

16 Grosz, The Incorporeal. My intervention here into the debate over the new
materialisms is clarified in the Introduction.

17 See Dilthey on how the “enigma” of life’s meaning leads humans to
attempt to intuit a world view that offers them a cosmic sense of their
place and purpose: Dilthey, *Dilthey’s Philosophy of Existence*, 48. Life as immediate experience furnishes the motivating question that makes it necessary for the subject to activate a “cosmic picture” that helps render the world meaningful.

18 The discourse on vitalism has its own long history, and Schopenhauer’s notion of the world as will (the deep, vital core of the world), while unique, is in conversation with earlier forms of spiritual vitalism such as those developed by the ancient and Renaissance Neoplatonists (see, for example, Ficino’s account of the unending system of love’s desire in *El libro dell’amore*, VI.10). But insofar as Lebensphilosophie is seen as a particular approach to the experience of life, Schopenhauer is foundational for later thinkers like Dilthey and Bergson. In addition to his most famous work, his essay *On the Will in Nature* (*Über den Willen in der Natur*, 1836) also gained significant notoriety; I discuss that essay in more detail in chapter 5.

19 Nietzsche famously dubbed Schopenhauer his “educator” while simultaneously taking distance from him in “Schopenhauer as Educator,” in Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*. He thus positioned himself as a response to and cure for Schopenhauerian pessimism, which represents something like the fundamental problem at the root of Nietzsche’s turn toward the will to life and his famous thought experiment for affirmation, the eternal recurrence: see Conant, “Nietzsche’s Perfectionism.” Karl Albert places Nietzsche as an origin point for Lebensphilosophie alongside Bergson and Dilthey, all of whom are responding not only to Schopenhauer but also to Friedrich Schlegel and the far less-known French philosopher Jean-Marie Guyau (1854–1888): Albert, *Lebensphilosophie*.

20 See Gaiger for a definition of Lebensphilosophie as the opposition to conceptual intellect via intuition: “The central claim underlying its various manifestations is that life can only be understood from within” (Gaiger, “Lebensphilosophie,” 487–8). Fellmann offers a more complicated picture of German Lebensphilosophie’s historical manifestations: Fellmann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 269–349.


25 Livio argues that far from being truly participatory and active, the audience is subjected to the political agitations of the Futurists in a way that limits the revolutionary form of the serata (Livio, *Il teatro in rivolta*, 39).
All the same, Marinetti himself theorized his serate as instances of public participation and interaction.


27 The schematic overview I have given here simplifies the changing contours of the Futurist serate. In fact, the first serata, held in Trieste on 12 January 1910, was quite different from later events. There were fewer committed Futurist artists available to take part in the serata, with only Marinetti, Palazzeschi, and Mazza declaiming that evening. The whole event involved only readings and speeches of various sorts. During later serate, the integration of visual and musical art would add further confusion and chaos, and the reactions of the audience-turned-crowd were sometimes much more hostile, violent, and active. See Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre*, 85–145, esp. 86–91.


30 Marinetti, *Futurismo e fascismo*, 18.

31 Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 152.


34 This is the second essay (begun in 1873 and published in February 1874) collected together under the heading *Untimely Meditations* (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*). The notion of “untimeliness” is important to Nietzsche’s philosophical project, which undertakes a diagnosis of the sickness plaguing modern culture. As such, it is essential for Nietzsche that the modern philosopher inhabit a multiplicity of perspectives, both belonging to and also seeing from outside of his contemporary social world. In his later, retrospective, philosophical self-description (*Ecce Homo*, written in 1888), Nietzsche writes: “To be able to look out from the optic of sickness towards healthier concepts and values, and again the other way around … If I became the master of anything, it was this. I have a hand for switching perspectives: the first reason why a ‘revaluation of values’ is even possible, perhaps for me alone” (in Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo*, 76, emphasis Nietzsche’s). This comment on his philosophical method in general is likewise relevant to his rereading of the historical sense in “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” with regard to which he declares, still in *Ecce Homo*: “In this essay, the ‘historical sense’ that this century is so proud of is recognized for the first time as a disease, as a typical sign of decay” (112).

35 Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 75.

36 Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 75.

37 Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 81.
38 As Marinetti puts it in an interview with La Diana, “Germanism must be opposed in order to defend the imaginative spontaneity of Italian creative genius, which has everything to fear from libraries, museums, and professors” (Marinetti, Critical Writings, 144).

39 This phrase is the subtitle of his book from 1886, jenseits von Gut und Böse: “Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft” (Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future).

40 Marinetti, Critical Writings, 233.

41 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 107.

42 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 95.

43 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 149.

44 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 169.

45 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 167.

46 Marinetti, Critical Writings, 146.

47 Marinetti, Critical Writings, 234 (emphasis mine).

48 This term appears in Nietzsche’s later writings, but the notion of a “will to life” or of some kind of striving for higher life is central already in his first publications from the early 1870s. Thus, for example, in his first book, The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music, the power of tragedy is precisely that it enables the Greeks to simultaneously experience the truth of the Dionysian (which pulls against individuated life and speaks through the wisdom of the satyr, Silenus, to decry human life) and nonetheless affirm life itself (Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings, §3, 22–5). In other words, already in Nietzsche’s early work, affirming life is the characteristic activity of healthy culture. Likewise, in his essay “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” positive life is figured as a striving for greatness (Nietzsche, Untimely Meditations, 67), and this depiction resonates closely with the later picture of a noble will to power, as it is developed in his On the Genealogy of Morality, II, §12.

49 Bergson, The Creative Mind, 73.

50 Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, 158.

51 Bergson, The Creative Mind, 74.

52 The rearticulations of this Platonic discourse on light as a metaphysical principle are many. See Moevs, The Metaphysics of Dante’s Comedy, on Dante Alighieri’s light metaphysics (esp. 19–21). See also Walker, Spiritual and Demonic Magic (chapter 2 especially) on Ficino’s philosophy of spiritual and natural magic rooted in notions of splendour and emanation, which are visible in his De amore (Ficino, El libro dell’amore, V.4).

53 On the relation of Bergson’s élan vital and Nietzsche’s will to power, see François, “Life and Will,” 107–8.

54 The rhetoric of sickness and rebirth in Futurism echoes the dynamics of convalescence that Barbara Spackman delineates in the rhetoric of
decadentism, not only in D’Annunzio but also in Baudelaire, Huysmans, and Nietzsche: Spackman, “The Scene of Convalescence,” in Decadent Genealogies, 33–104.


56 See Nietzsche’s Ecce Homo, where he describes his philosophy as offering an alternative to the Christian God: “Have I been understood? – I have not said anything that I would not have said five years ago through the mouth of Zarathustra” (150); and then: “Have I been understood? – Dionysus versus the crucified …” (151).

57 Bergson, The Creative Mind, 104. These remarks come from his lecture on “Philosophical Intuition,” given at the Philosophical Congress in Bologna in April 1911. Bergson is fundamentally working within the same metaphysical horizons as Schopenhauer, but with a different result. His account is close to Schopenhauer’s idea that suffering is the individuated experience of will’s movement. The difference is that for Bergson intuition enables a person to engage sympathetically with life as a whole, indivisible movement (though this sympathy is achieved only after intellect becomes disinterested – another borrowing from Schopenhauer’s aesthetics (The Creative Mind, 194)). In Bergson’s last book, The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, he characterizes the outcome of this sympathetic engagement as a state of spiritual joy (317). For Schopenhauer, even if aesthetic experience can allow a momentary, disinterested escape from will, that escape is never a positive state of joy but is at most the momentary absence of suffering (WWR I, §38, 197–8). Thus Bergson’s philosophy of life operates with a metaphysical system similar to Schopenhauer’s but has developed it toward an optimistic possibility of spiritual redemption that is absent in Schopenhauer’s philosophy.

58 Bergson, Les deux sources …, 317.

59 On the homophobic elements of Marinetti’s ideal, see Spackman, “Mafarka and Son.” Rebecca West examines the gendered aspects of the modernist-era metaphor of artistic creation as a process of giving birth without biological limitations: West, “Diventare un aggettivo.”

60 Marinetti, Teoria e invenzione futurista, 299.

61 Christine Poggi explores the tensions of this fantasy of mechanized love: Poggi, Inventing Futurism, 150–80.

62 Marinetti, Teoria e invenzione futurista, 300.

63 Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, Futurism, 471.

64 On the gender dynamics of Futurism and the role of women writers in the development of its rhetoric of energy and power, see: Re, “Women, Sexuality, Politics,” and Re, “Mater-Materia.”

65 See chapter 3 and chapter 1 on how decadent aestheticism emerges from a Schopenhauerian strand of idealism and the complex relation of fascist politics to various forms of idealism.
66 The discourse on modernist mysticism is multifaceted and complex. Much has focused on individual figures, such as Luigi Pirandello, whose worldview was branded a form of “atheist mysticism” by his contemporary, the philosopher Adriano Tilgher: Tilgher, *Studi sul teatro contemporaneo*. Much of the literature on the topic has referred to anglophone examples; see, for instance: Anderson, *H.D. and Modernist*; Childs, *T.S. Eliot*. On the topic of mysticism and its relation to Catholic modernism, see the volume edited by C.J.T. Talar, *Modernists and Mystics*.

67 I have in mind here Jürgen Habermas’s argument that the transformation of the public sphere into a field of rational discursive exchange represents a step in a larger historical progress, what he terms modernity’s rationalization of the lifeworld: Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*.

68 Brera, *Novecento all’Indice*.

69 See Jodock, *Catholicism*, for an excellent account of Catholic modernism and anti-modernist responses within the Church. See also O’Connell, *Critics on Trial*.

70 The metaphor has a long history of its own, appearing in Dante’s *Paradiso* among other sources. On this metaphor for the union of empirical and transcendent truth, see Ernst, *Tommaso Campanella*; and Gatti, *Il gran libro del mondo*. On the way this naturalist element of Campanella’s thought involves a rewriting of earlier idealist positions such as that of Plato’s *Republic*, see Subialka, “Transforming Plato.”

71 Wittman, “*Omnes velut aqua dilabimur*,” 131, 134.

72 In Church history mystical experience and miracles occupy a space fraught with tension and risk, for the miracle as a material instantiation of transcendent reality has the dangerous potential to undermine doctrine with a voice that is hard to silence. The contentious history of the cult of saints illustrates the point nicely: as it consolidated power and extended its worldly reign, the Church sought to develop mechanisms to control local cults and centralize a process of canonization to control this challenge: Brown, *The Cult of Saints*. Likewise, claims of divine revelation asserted by mystics, particularly women, posed challenges to Church and patriarchal authority that needed to be managed: Jantzen, *Power, Gender*.


74 Barzilai et al., *I processi al futurismo*, offer a first-hand account of the trials as seen by Marinetti’s supporters, including Corra and Settimelli. Ialongo, “Marinetti and the *Mafarka Trial*,” examines the trial of Marinetti’s book, its relation to Notari’s, and the efforts to combat Futurist ideology. Brera reveals the unexpected publicity arising from Church proceedings against D’Annunzio and others: Brera, *Novecento all’Indice*, 198.


76 Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del Littorio*. 
On the history of this conflict between Church and State and the resolution achieved in the “conciliazione,” see John Pollard, *The Vatican*; and Nelis, Morelli, and Praet, *Catholicism and Fascism.*

This journal followed in the footsteps of a Sicilian predecessor, *La Balza futurista,* which published only three issues in 1915 before two of its founders, Guglielmo Jannelli and Vann’Antò (Giovanni Antonio di Giacomo) left for the front lines. Like Corra’s *L’Italia futurista,* *La Balza futurista* exceeded the limits of “official” Futurism: Tommasello, “*La Balza futurista,*” 235–9. In this respect the journal follows in the footsteps of Papini and Soffici’s *Lacerba,* which launched an important critique of how Marinetti dominated Futurist thought in the February 1915 article “Futurismo e Marinettismo,” signed by Papini, Palazzeschi, and Soffici. For them, the Florentine Futurists were the only *true* Futurists.

He is so little-known today that a recent article on Corra began with the words “Bruno Corra: chi era costui?” (“Bruno Corra: Who was he?”): Cigliana, “Diritto di uccidere,” 85.


Corra’s collection of short stories about the bad results of miscegenation, *I matrimoni gialli* (1928), declares itself an attempt to create a “future dictionary entry” for his neologism: “Yellow marriage – a marriage between people of different races, more or less badly matched; a locution derived from others: the yellow press, meaning a hybrid press; yellow dogs, dogs of a bastard race.” Corra’s Orientalist fantasy is also evident in a novel from the same period, *Sanya, la moglie egiziana: Il romanzo dell’Oriente moderno* (1927). On the fascist racial imaginary and its views of hybridity, see Caponetto, *Fascist Hybridities*.

Occult Futurism included not only the Florentine circle but also a group in Milan, as well as interest in Turin and Rome. See, for example: D’Ambrosio, “Notes on ‘Esoteric Futurism’”; Hanstein, “Edith von Haynau”; Chessa, *Luigi Russolo, Futurist*; Cigliana, *Futurismo esoterico.*

Corra, *Battaglie,* 79.

Corra, *Battaglie,* 81–2. My translation here is for the Italian term “gabinetto medianico,” which is described in Fulvio Rendhell’s guide to spiritualist magic as “consisting of a canopy attached to the back wall, surrounded by black curtains” (*Magia spiritica,* 32). The medium might be located in this space during a seance rather than being physically linked to the others, whose hands are clasped to form a “chain.”

The manifesto opens with a condemnation of the scientific establishment, which the authors label German and accuse of a misleading penchant for precision and certainty: Corra, *Battaglie,* 71. The second numbered point in their manifesto is a call to upend established “conceptual schemas” (“schemi mentali”) of scientific prejudice (76).
5. Occult Spiritualism and Modernist Idealism: Reanimating the Dead World

The bibliography on nineteenth-century spiritualism and the occult has expanded considerably in recent years, although already in the 1980s there was significant work being done: Oppenheim, *The Other World*; Owen, *The Darkened Rook*; Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology*; Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy*; Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*; Warner, *Phantasmagoria*. The field has grown so large that it now requires an *Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult* (edited by Kontou and Willburn).

The texts cited above paint a clear and convincing picture of how spiritualism emerged in the period and became a major cultural force, yet they often tend to focus on the Anglo-American development of this “Victorian” mode of thought. It is true that Spiritism (a particular form of
spiritualist belief) and its cognate movements can be traced to America, where in Hydesville, New York, Kate and Margaret Fox launched the century’s fascination with mediums with their alleged communications with the dead via “rappings”: Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead*. This fascination in turn dovetailed with the developing struggles for women’s rights in America and abroad: Braude, *Radical Spirits*. Arthur Conan Doyle examined these origins and the subsequent development of the movement in his two-volume study on *The History of Spiritualism* (1926). This book was one of some twenty volumes on the subject that the author wrote, no doubt contributing in his own right to the continuing interest in spiritualism into the early twentieth century, especially when he went on tour across the anglophone world (the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and South Africa) to discuss spiritualism from 1918 through the mid-1920s. On American spiritualism’s presence in art and the evolution of modern visualizations of creativity, see Colbert, *Haunted Visions*. Kerr, *Mediums, Spirit-Rappers*, examines the American scene in connection with radical politics and literature, while more recently Cox, *Body and Soul*, has reread those connections in light of current interest in affect theory. Tromp, *Altered States*, shows that the confluence of spiritualism with changing social and political views is likewise prominent in its British diffusion.

Notwithstanding the preponderance of anglophone scholarship, spiritualism’s nineteenth-century spread was truly global. One intervention of my study is thus to demonstrate aspects of its transnational development that have not been fully examined. In the global anglophone context, McMullin, *Anatomy of a Séance*, examines networks of diffusion that spread spiritualism among Canada’s elite; Gabay, *Messages from Beyond*, similarly looks at cultural forces that brought spiritualism into vogue in Australia. But the global reach of spiritualism is not limited to the anglophone world. For instance, significant scholarly work has examined its influence in Brazilian culture, with Hess’s study, *Spirits and Scientists*, offering a fascinating view of how European spiritualism and Brazilian spiritualism relate, an argument developed further in his *Samba in the Night*, which (following Allan Kardec) examines European Spiritism’s relations to Afro-Brazilian Spiritism.

2 Condé and Gossling, “The Devil in the Detail,” iii.

3 Surette takes the approach of situating modernist occultism in the broad history of ideas, seeing British modernism’s interest in the occult as a means of unearthing an “indiscretion” in modernist thought that had long been shunned by critics: Surette, *The Birth of Modernism*, 5. Surette demonstrates how “canonical” figures in the modernist genealogy (Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, even Freud) operated in relation to occult discourses in establishing a perennial tradition of secret wisdom. For
Surette, this establishes a sense of modernism in which modernity’s self-understanding as a time separate from the classical past is actually transformed into a sense of belonging to a time outside of time, having “transcended history” (4).

4 Wilson, Modernism and Magic, 14.
8 I thus see a connection between what Kermode would call “traditionalist” modernist responses to crisis time and what Norman has convincingly argued is the useful “shock” of the ancient in an earlier moment of modernity’s move toward self-awareness, the seventeenth-century querelle des anciens et des modernes: Kermode, The Sense of an Ending; Norman, The Shock of the Ancient.

9 Morselli, Psicologia e “spiritismo,” 86.
10 Morselli, Il magnetismo animale, 8.
11 Many spiritualists saw their movement as a direct response to positivist materialism. For example, in a lecture on “Materialism and Occultism” given on 10 October 1915, Rudolf Steiner argued that the mid-nineteenth century was in fact the apex of materialism in human history, the high-water mark of humanity turning away from spiritual knowledge: Steiner, Spiritualism, 144. He claims that those initiated into occult secrets then held an internal debate and decided to begin making part of their knowledge public to combat that materialism by reminding people that the world “is not devoid of the spiritual” (149). Such characterizations notwithstanding, the nineteenth-century rebirth of spiritualism was in important ways fuelled by scientific culture and methods: R. Moore, “Spiritualism and Science,” 477.

12 Josephson-Storm, The Myth of Disenchantment, 1–3. Palladino’s prominence in Italy is widely attested. See, for instance, the first-hand accounts of the prominent Neapolitan physicist Filippo Bottazzi’s Fenomeni medianici (1909), translated as Mediumistic Phenomena.

13 See chapter 4 for my analysis of the “Manifesto of Futurist Science” and Corra’s magical-occult vitalism.
14 I adapt here from the definition of “metapsichica” in Abbagnano’s Dizionario di filosofia, 581.
15 The discourse on modern re-enchantment comes to a head in Landy and Saler’s volume, The Re-Enchantment of the World, which argues forcefully against the narrative of modern disenchantment.
16 Kontou and Willburn, The Ashgate Research Companion, explain this lexical and conceptual complexity further: “If spiritualism sought to make the spiritual world visible, scientifically proven and technologically
advanced, resulting in overcoming death, distances, and socio-economic, racial and gendered differences, the occult did not. Hidden and dark, instead of sunlight at daybreak, the occult signaled secret societies, magic, strange ancient languages and more than a touch of the Gothic … Yet, ironically perhaps, the occult, being a broadly defined older term, could also encompass the term ‘spiritualism’ in both the nineteenth century and today. Especially early in the heyday of spiritualism, the 1850s and 1860s, someone opposed to spiritualist séances or premises might indeed term these practices and concepts as occult” (3).

17 I am grateful to Alessio Baldini for his valuable discussion about this section’s argument and its relation to the anthropological/ethnographic examination of magical culture.

18 “The Nobel Prize in Literature 1926,” online.

19 Deledda’s ethnographic work has been the subject of only limited scholarly interest in comparison with her creative fiction. Fuller analyses her book in relation to the positivist discourse on Sardinia in the age of Lombroso: Fuller, “Regional Identity,” 61–3. Likewise, Aste situates the work as part of an “ethnic” corpus: Aste, Grazia Deledda, 14–15. See also Gunzberg, “Ruralism.” Unfortunately, even Deledda’s creative fiction has been under-studied in comparison with that of her male contemporaries, despite her importance to the articulation of Italian modernity: see Heyer-Caput, Grazia Deledda’s Dance.

20 Fuller, “Regional Identity,” 58.

21 Heyer-Caput, Grazia Deledda’s Dance, 28.

22 Deledda, Tradizioni popolari, 13.

23 Deledda, Tradizioni popolari, 14.

24 Cassano, Il pensiero meridiano, 8.

25 De Martino’s Sud e magia (1960) was reissued by Feltrinelli in 2017 after being translated into English by Dorothy Louise Zinn as Magic: A Theory from the South. See Fabrizio Ferrari, Ernesto De Martino on Religion, on De Martino’s importance for thinking about magic and religion in modernity.


27 Weber, The Vocation Lectures, 30. Weber’s characterization was seminal, with figures like Habermas echoing but also reconfiguring that view: Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse. See also Cascardi, The Subject of Modernity, 16–23.

28 De Martino, Sud e magia.

29 As David Forgacs shows, De Martino’s aim is also political: having recognized that the forces holding back southern Italy’s development are not only economic/material but also discursive/imaginary, he aims to naturalize what others view as the “backwards” views of the south so as
to topple narratives that reinforce southern disadvantage: Forgacs, *Italy’s Margins*, 143.


32 Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* famously critiqued the Enlightenment ideology that placed myth as its antithesis, showing how that ideology is itself mythical – responding to and countering the discourse on modern disenchantment already in 1944. Nevertheless, this progressivist narrative of positive science continues to have traction today: see, for example, Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World*; and Krebs, *Scientific Development*, 12.

33 These examples summarize the section in Deledda, *Tradizioni popolari*, 158–61.

34 An English translation of “The Sorcer” is published in Manley and Lewis’s volume, *Sinister Stories*.

35 Gautier, “The Tales of Hoffmann,” 142. Deledda’s sense of a foreboding, fantastic fatalism likewise resonates with the style of Gautier’s fantasy writing. See, for instance, *The Jinx*, which is also set in an exotic-magical-dangerous Italian locale, Naples.


43 On Saint-Simon’s role in the emergence of “avant-garde” as an artistic-political category: Egbert, “The Idea of Avant-Garde.”

44 In Corra, *Battaglie*.


46 Marinetti, *Teoria*, 299.


See Sinnett, *The Mahatma Letters*, xiii; and Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom*, 116. Leadbeater argued that the Masters are philosophically necessary—that is, there must be such people if Theosophical doctrines about reincarnation are true: Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path*, 4–6. The quasi-hagiographical story of how Madame Blavatsky met one of these Masters, Morya, through a psychic connection during the Great Exhibition of 1851, is recounted in Abdill, *Masters of Wisdom*. Godwin shows that Blavatsky’s Theosophy is in fact deeply indebted not just to an ancient tradition but to an ongoing one, specifically a series of speculative theories about the origins of religion and myth circulating in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment culture: Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, esp. 303–6.

Blavatsky’s fantasy writing is a further testament to the close relationship between the modernist interest in repurposing nineteenth-century generic forms, such as the Gothic, and the spiritual beliefs that were fundamental to re-envisioning modern materialism. See Blavatsky, *Nightmare Tales* (1892).

Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, 3. In her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), Blavatsky likewise describes their system as a synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy.

On Pirandello’s scepticism as part of a broad modern trajectory in Italy, see: De Liguori, *Il sentiero dei perplessi*. Andrea Bini, “L’umorismo di Pirandello,” contends that despite his open scepticism, Pirandello is actually interested in recuperating subjective interiority. Petruzzi, “Nihilism, Errancy, and Truth,” argues that Pirandello’s gaze into the abyss should be read ontologically rather than as a sceptical emptying out of values and meaning.

Stocchi-Perucchio offers the most convincing sustained reading of *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, focusing on epistemological scepticism and lost identity: Stocchi-Perucchio, *Pirandello and the Vagaries*.

In this respect, then, I disagree with Cangiano’s characterization of the supposedly hegemonic form of modernist thought he sees typified in Pirandellian “relativism,” which he claims elevates sceptical nihilism to a kind of orienting first principle or essence to replace the lost “God” at the centre of Western metaphysics: Cangiano, *La nascita*, 25.

Bergson likewise examines the relation between “becoming” and “form” in similar terms, situating his notion in conversation with both ancient and post-Kantian idealist traditions: Bergson, *L’Évolution créatrice*, 323–56.

This is something like a sceptical or negative inflection of Bergson’s understanding of human reason as an evolutionary development allowing us to navigate our external environment. See his section on the “Fonction primordial de l’intelligence”: Bergson, *L’évolution créatrice*, 164–79.
60 Witt, *The Search for Modern Tragedy*, 91.

61 Witt, *The Search for Modern Tragedy*, 133.

62 Puchner, *The Drama of Ideas*, 103.

63 See, for example, Cerasi, *Quasi niente*; and Pomilio, *La formazione*.

64 On Pirandello and Nietzsche, see Witt, *The Search for Modern Tragedy*, 90; Cerasi, *Quasi niente*; and Bini, “Pirandello, Nietzsche.”

65 Harrison, *Essayism*, sees the protagonist of *Henry IV* as renouncing actual life to live a coherently organized fiction (89) in an attempt to achieve a false experience of settled structure (118). This helps to explain the frightening consequences, in Pirandello’s imaginary, of life giving way to an image, which is fixed and coherent in a way that life’s essayistic becoming pointedly is not.

66 Bini, *Pirandello and His Muse*, 107. Seddio suggests that in Pirandello, logical reasoning strips the world bare to reveal human life in an undesirable, almost uninhabitable form, and femininity is posited as a resolution to that loss; however, his reading invokes the religious where Bini’s does not: Seddio, *Le donne di Pirandello*, 295. Cf. Frassica, *Her Maestro’s Echo*.

67 This element of self-destruction in Pirandello’s novel can also be thought of as a form of Zen self-dissolution: Vettore, “Approximation to Nirvana.”

68 Thomas Harrison sees Pirandello as an instance of the effort to achieve existential authenticity in the face of modern disillusionment: Harrison, “Michelstaedter and Existential Authenticity.”

69 I thus disagree with Witt, *The Search for Modern Tragedy*, who sees aesthetic fascism as a key to understanding Pirandello’s outlook. The aesthetic resonance with fascism is actually a subset of this larger mode of non-affirmative affirmation, one instance of a kind of “necessary illusion” but not the definitive such instance. Indeed, following Pirandello’s logic, there can be no definitive instance, as the forms necessitated by life will surely change.

70 Caesar examines the role of the pre-existing character in detail, arguing that it is not specific to Pirandello but rather is shared by writers like Joseph Conrad: Caesar, *Characters and Authors*, 43–4. She holds that this view of characters is symptomatic of a broader modern crisis of authorial omniscience (33).

71 A more detailed examination of Pirandello’s theory of the visual imagination and artistic creation is in Di Lieto, Sarti, and Subialka, *Scrittura d’immagini…*, 119–43.

72 Pirandello, *Maschere nude*, vol. 1, 37.

73 The play thus resembles Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and its themes of magical creation ultimately linked to artistic imagination.
Schopenhauer introduces this notion already in book II of WWR I, where he describes the levels of gradation of will’s objectification in the world as Platonic Ideas (§25, 198).

Verismo is a much-discussed realist movement. As Baldini has argued, Verga’s verismo might be seen as a pluralist alternative to the nationalism of his contemporaries who sought to pose and/or solve a “southern question” about how to integrate the south into Italy’s industrializing modernity: Baldini, “The Liberal Imagination.” The impact of the “southern question” on Italian literature and culture was profound: see Moe, The View from Vesuvius.

Luperini, Luigi Pirandello e il fu Mattia Pascal, 89–94.

Nichols and O’Keefe-Bazzoni, Pirandello and Film; Càllari, Pirandello e il cinema; Lauretta, Pirandello e il cinema.

Pirandello had a copy of Schopenhauer’s magnum opus in his library, the Italian translation published in 1914 (vol. 1) and 1916 (vol. 2) – potentially placing his acquisition of the text around the time he was contending with the First World War and the loss of his mother’s life: Saponaro and Torsello, La biblioteca, 162. He likewise had a 1934 study of Schopenhauer by Pietro Mignosi, Schopenhauer, alongside a volume Mignosi wrote on Il segreto di Pirandello: Saponaro and Torsello, La biblioteca…, 100. The link between Pirandello and Schopenhauer has been discussed by Subialka, The Aesthetics of Ambivalence; Costa, “Pirandello and Philosophy,” 11; Stella, Forma e memoria, 178; Adank, Luigi Pirandello, 66–9; and Tilgher, La scena e la vita, 141.

Schopenhauer, WWR II, 191.


For Schopenhauer, “character” denotes a kind of individual essence, or individual will, which is determined and unchanging. See Janaway, “Necessity, Responsibility, and Character”; Janaway, “Introduction,” 9; Zöller, “Schopenhauer on the Self,” 28–30; and Atwell, Schopenhauer on the Character of the World.


Bobbio argues in La filosofia del decadentismo that irrationalism unites what he terms decadentism (which includes what we would now call modernism) and fascism. Griffin, The Nature of Fascism; and Braun, Mario Sironi, both highlight the irrationality of fascist myth. Antliff, “Fascism,
Modernism, Modernity,” offers an excellent overview of the links between Italian Fascism and modernism.

90 Pirandello, Maschere nude, I, 116.
91 Eliot, Selected Essays, 13–22.
92 Smith, “Proper Frontiers.” In a similar vein, Schwartz argues that Eliot’s essay, like many of his early essays, seeks to problematize the limited one-sidedness of both “idealism” and “realism”: Schwartz, “Eliot’s Ghosts,” 19.
93 Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, 32.
94 Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, 47.
95 On the Italian case of occult fascism, see in particular de Turris, Esoterismo e fascismo. Poggi demonstrates how “traditional” or pagan spiritualist beliefs play an important role in various political struggles, from Risorgimento Neopythagoreanism to Fascist Neopaganism in Evola’s case: Poggi, In Defiance of Painting, 276. This connection aligns with what Emilio Gentile has analysed as the sacralization of politics in Italian Fascism in his The Sacralization.
96 Evola, Saggi sull’Idealismo magico.
97 Evola, Teoria dell’Individuo assoluto.
98 On Evola’s journals and efforts to influence Mussolini, see: Furlong, The Social and Political Thought, 87–8; Iacovella, “Julius Evola”; and Del Ponte, “Quando il Gruppo di Ur.”
99 Evola, Saggi sull’Idealismo magico, 110.
100 Indeed, Mussolini’s cult and the various practices designed to excite and channel the energies of the masses resonate with the language of spiritualist vitalism in multiple respects, an intersection visible in the early crowd theory of thinkers like Gustave Le Bon, Psychologie des foules (1895). Adorno contends that the leader and the crowd are engaged in a mutual performance: Adorno, The Culture Industry, 152. Nye, “Two Paths,” argues that theorists like Le Bon and Sorel provided a template for this fascist repurposing of the crowd (412). Tratner, Modernism and Mass Politics, contends that modernist form is in part a response to this mass psychology. Bragato, Futurismo in nota, points out the way that the language of magnetism and spiritualist ideas likewise shaped the Futurists’ vision of mass communication in Marinetti’s practice (13).
101 Jonathan Eburne, Outsider Theory, is discussed in more detail in the Introduction.
102 Evola, Rivolta contro il mondo moderno. This stance against modernity and in favour of a return to popular tradition has been a major factor in the enduring influence of Evola’s thought on elements of the far right, in Italy and beyond. See, for example, Risé, whose reading of Evola hopefully proclaims how the “desiccating experience of modernity” (“esperienza disseccante della modernità”) has run its course and that humanity will
look away from modernity toward a tradition that allows it to give itself a form again: Risé, “Julius Evola,” 22.

103 Surette, The Birth of Modernism.

104 Emilio Gentile argues that Mussolini bridges fascist modernity with Roman antiquity in a way that harmonizes them through shared drives, such as athleticism and an orientation toward action: Gentile, “The Conquest of Modernity.” See also Arthurs, Excavating Modernity.

105 There is a wide literature on primitivism in the modernist imaginary, particularly focusing on postcolonial readings of race and empire. See, for example: Hutchinson, The Indian Craze; McGarrity and Culleton, Irish Modernism; Flam and Deutch, Primitivism; Lemke, Primitivist Modernism; Barkan and Bush, Prehistories of the Future; Harrison, Frascina, and Gill, Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction; and Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art. This impulse also involves recourse to earlier “primitive” models from within the Western tradition, looking at the Medieval as a pre-modern alternative: Saler, The Avant-Garde, 20. On modernist medievalism more generally, see Ullyot, The Medieval Presence; and Pike, Passage through Hell. Henrike Christiane Lange’s forthcoming book, Giotto’s Triumph, examines Giotto’s art in a similar vein, as both modern rearticulation of the ancient and a point of reference for the primitivist impulse in nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernism.

6. Cinematic Idealism: Modernist Visions of Spiritual Vitality Mediated by the Machine

1 Natale, “A Short History of Superimposition,” shows how the fake spirit photographs of the late nineteenth century directly influenced the development of new effects and techniques in early cinema.

2 Already in 1946, André Bazin was tracing the history of these techniques: translated in Bazin, What Is Cinema? There is now a wide-ranging bibliography examining how early film transformed visual culture, including via a “new spatiality” (Lant, “Haptic Cinema,” 45) and in the enjoyment of “images lingering in uncertainty” (Wiegand, “The Unsettling of Vision,” 34), as well as in relation to the “view aesthetic” (Gunning, “Before Documentary,” 9), which can also be understood in relation to static images informing early film techniques (DeLassus, “Ruptured Perspectives”). For Arnheim, Film as Art, film, like photography, not only reproduces the world but also functions as art in the sense that it is the product of an artistic procedure of creating visual effects; thus it blends reality with artistic vision, exceeding the limits of mechanical reproduction (57). The formal innovations and interests of early cinema are in turn linked
to the developing high-art discourse of modernist art theory: Schweinitz, “Shared Affinities.”

3 Visual culture, celebrity culture, literary culture, and the cinema overlap and sometimes butt heads during this rich period. See, for example: Quaresima and Vichi, *La decima musa*, and Welle, “The Beginnings of Film Stardom.”

4 See Gunning, “The Cinema of Attraction,” which is the starting point of a rich discourse on early film as attraction.

5 Perhaps the most recognizable crystallization of these fears is Charlie Chaplin’s famous film about mechanization, *Modern Times* (1936), in which images of the machine and its inhuman rhythm dominate scene after scene, reducing the Tramp to a literal cog in a wheel. Chaplin’s representation is an instance of an already decades-long discourse. In her reading of Pirandello’s *Shoot!*, Eugenia Paulicelli connects the pessimistic view of the triumph of the machine from that novel to films like Chaplin’s and Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) to characterize a “mechanization of life” that is also “part of the spectacle of cinema” (Paulicelli, *Italian Style*, 5).

6 Syrimis studies this metaphor at length in his rich book on Italian modernist cinema, *The Great Black Spider*.

7 The anxieties of modernists like Pirandello over the technological reduction of life to mere materiality prefigures what Giorgio Agamben would theorize as the biopolitics of bare life. Agamben argues that Hannah Arendt’s description of the Nazi concentration camp misses the way in which it was the reduction of political subjects to mere biological existence, bare life, that “legitimated and necessitated total domination” (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 120). Totalitarian politics and its physical limit case, the concentration camp, are thus extensions of a conceptual shift eliminating the “sacred” from life. Pirandello’s critique of cinematic materialism presciently envisions the ways in which that materialism reduces the value of life, as evidenced by the novel’s gruesome ending in which an actress is brutally murdered by a man who is in turn devoured by a tiger; all while the cameraman continues to mechanically turn the crank, capturing it on film.

8 Levine, *Forms*.

9 Marcus, *The Tenth Muse*. McCabe contends that the new film methods of the early 1900s resonate with the poetics of modernist literary texts, including those by Williams, Stein, and HD: McCabe, *Cinematic Modernism*.

10 Jaffe, *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity*, argues that in the modernist period the author emerges as a celebrity figure in conjunction with the new star system; Goldman, *Modernism Is the Literature of Celebrity*, adds to this an analysis of how the internal features of modernist texts replicate the logic of celebrity (self-)promotion, focusing exclusively on anglophone
modernists. Welle, “The Beginnings of Film Stardom,” examines celebrity culture in the Italian context, linking emerging film culture to literary and journalistic spaces and institutions. Turconi and Bassotto, *Il cinema nelle riviste*, have assembled a bibliography of the various Italian periodicals on or about film up through the 1970s, showcasing the breadth of cinema’s permeation.


12 Both Abel, *French Film Theory*, and Aitken, *European Film Theory*, problematize overly neat periodizations of various avant-garde movements/groups.


14 Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence*, situates Papini’s polemics in relation to his immediate cultural sphere (including local academic figures, an older generation espousing aestheticist views, socialist groups, and the liberal establishment under Giolitti).

15 Papini’s connections to Florentine and Italian intellectual life and to figures such as Soffici and Prezzolini, among many others, are studied by Soldateschi, *Il tragico quotidiano*; Luti, *Papini, Soffici*; and Richter, *Papini e Soffici*.


17 This characterization of Croce’s initial response comes from Eugenio Garin. The philosopher then adds that in fact Papini and his circle drew on a much wider and more varied intellectual foundation than Bergsonian intuitionism: “from Kierkegaard to Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche, from Pascal to Bergson and Blondel, from James to Peirce and Dewey – and then from revolutionary syndicalism to nationalism (and perhaps racism), Buddhism, modernism, magic, theosophy, and all the most extravagant and absurd adventures [of the century]” (Garin, *History of Italian Philosophy*, 1031).

18 The sole year of the journal’s publication has recently been reissued as a book, which includes a helpful introduction and a postscript situating its short-lived interests: Zarlenga and Lucchetta, *L’Anima*.

19 The recent publication of the volume edited by Casetti, Alovisio, and Mazzei, *Early Film Theories*, has taken an important step toward recognizing this overlooked moment of film theory, but there is still more work to be done (28).

20 Welle, “Early Cinema,” 44.
21 As Welle, “Early Cinema,” points out, however, the context around this early theorization is still one of encountering a perceived threat – state and Church authorities were concerned about the moral impacts of the cinema, and if Papini’s article sidesteps some of the concerns about the threat to the system of arts, it is still situated in the broader context of another perceived threat (30).

22 It bears noting that Papini’s essay begins by describing the cinema as a feature of the modern city, in a paragraph filled with italicized foreign words emphasizing the cosmopolitan nature of these modern spaces and the changing public who consume art within them.

23 Papini’s account thus dovetails with the fin-de-siècle intellectual stance against the massification of society, which was often seen as a form of modern social degeneration. Translations of Papini’s article are my own, though an English translation was published in Casetti, Alovisio, and Mazzei, Early Film Theories: Papini, “The Philosophy.” This translation, while making the essay more available, misses important particularities of Papini’s language (such as issues of gender in the passage quoted here, or the historical specificity of spirit photography, which it renders as “ghostly photographs” in a later passage); I have thus opted for my own renditions.

24 Gunning’s notion of the cinema of attraction can be fruitfully compared to scholarship focusing on the documentary impulse in cinema and cinema’s tension with that early function as a medium for disseminating news or information: see, for example, Gahéry, “De la presse illustrée.”

25 Sherry, Modernism…, 42.

26 Here Papini uses a familiar metaphor from Plato onwards: artistic representation’s “illusion” is conceived in terms of the play of shadows on the wall of the cave: Plato, Republic (514a–520a).

27 Shakespeare, As You Like It: “All the world’s a stage, / And all the men and women merely players” (Act II, Scene 7). Calderón’s El gran teatro del mundo (1634) is perhaps the most famous articulation of the wider metaphor here, though it pervades early-modern theatrical discourse spanning national/linguistic traditions. In the Italian context the metaphor took on hermetic meaning in the microcosmic architectural design of Giulio Camillo’s Theatre of Memory, which he described in L’idea del teatro (1550); a similarly magical notion can be seen in the follower of Marilio Ficino’s philosophy, the astronomer Giovanni Paolo Gallucci, who authored the Theatrum mundi et temporis (1588), which circulated widely and tied the metaphor to the creation of an astronomical atlas. Ezio Raimondi offers an overview of the role and development of the Baroque “theatre of the world,” arguing that the equation of life to a stage opens the door toward the historical process of secularization: Raimondi, Un teatro delle idee, 145.
Here I have in mind Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s Production of Presence: the technological materiality of cinema that Papini emphasizes repeatedly in his account is not incidental but rather the whole point. Cinema does not thematize but rather makes present a mode of representation based in reproduction that challenges our notions of what constitutes the real.

Here I have in mind Wittgenstein’s distinction between saying and showing in the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (4.1212), which ultimately points us, as Adrian Moore argues, toward an ineffable insight that cannot be put into propositional content: Moore, “On Saying and Showing,” 475. Stanley Cavell argues that film represents the world at a distance in a way that displaces the spectator and thus confirms our sense of estrangement from the world: Cavell, The World Viewed, 226. In this respect Cavell’s argument resonates with Papini’s theorization of film’s existential significance.

Papini’s stance on Schopenhauer is complicated. In Il crepuscolo dei filosofi, he argues that Schopenhauer is fundamentally significant because he articulates a world view that gives rise to two “heroic” figures of German thought, Nietzsche and Wagner, or what he terms philosophical and musical romanticism: Papini, Il crepuscolo dei filosofi, 94. It is thus telling that Papini’s stance in his article on cinema echoes precisely the insights of those “romantic” approaches.

Fain argues that Papini’s approach to cinema in this article reveals a pessimistic outlook on everyday life: Fain, Giovanni Papini, 92.

Chessa refers to this as a “synesthetical manifesto” and reads it in relation to a series of occult-inspired manifestos and writings by the Futurist Enrico Prampolini, whose journal Noi first published it. Prampolini had written an article in the Gazzetta Ferrarese (26 August 1913) on “Chromophony – The Color of Sounds” (“La cromofonia – Il colore dei suoni”), examining the theory that a sound can produce a light vibration that influences the atmosphere or aura of a body: Chessa, Luigi Russolo, 63.

No English translation of “La idealità del cinematografo” exists; translations here are my own.

Originally published as “Impressionismo scenico” and “Poetica del cinematografo,” these pieces are both translated in Casetti, Alovisio, and Mazzei, Early Film Theories.

Luciani’s views thus resonate with Bergsonian vitalism, so we might think that they prefigure to some extent the later film theory developed by Gilles Deleuze in Cinema 1 and Cinema 2. Marrati, Gilles Deleuze, 2–3. Pursuing this comparison, while potentially quite interesting, goes beyond the scope of my argument here.


Craig, “The Actor,” begins with the familiar idealist/aestheticist claim that actors are not artists, as “accident is the enemy of the artist” (3). He
then goes on to propose a new model, one in which the actor ultimately approaches the ideal of a puppet, enabling the realization of a cohesive aesthetic production.


39 It is no coincidence, I think, that Luciani’s view of the actor so closely mirrors the negative assessments of Pirandello, who likens the actor to a translator and bemoans the distance that the actor/translator creates between the author’s vision and what is realized on stage. Both participate in the age-old, Platonic anxiety about representation’s inability to give access to the ideal form it means to represent. Pirandello’s stance on translation and actors has been widely debated; see, for instance, the long conversation in volume 31 of PSA, the journal of the Pirandello Society of America: Sarti and Subialka, Pirandello and Translation.


42 Croce had already noted the centrality of music in Schopenhauer’s aesthetics, comparing it to Schelling, who Croce argues “considered it [music] a representation of the very rhythm of the universe” (Croce, Estetica, 322).

43 Aitken, European Film Theory, notes that French modernist movements like Surrealism and Dada have received much more attention from film scholars despite having produced far fewer films (86).

44 Bordwell, French Impressionist Cinema, 1; Abel, French Cinema, 280.

45 Of course, grouping early French filmmakers and theorists into one “movement” has come under criticism. Thus, for example, in their introduction to his writings Keller and Paul argue that it is incorrect to consider Epstein an “Impressionist”: Jean Epstein, 267–8.

46 Theories of the avant-garde that focus on political praxis, such as Peter Bürger’s notion that the avant-garde is characterized by the rejection of bourgeois art institutions (Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde, 49), see the discourse of pure art as an instance of “previous” models of art rooted in notions of aesthetic autonomy. My suggestion here is that in order to understand the avant-garde as a political fact, these theories reduce away key elements of avant-garde notions of things such as media specificity and artistic purification. The counter-tradition of the avant-garde builds its own networks for production, diffusion, and reception and challenges the art institution, but it is not reducible to a specific model of political action as such – it remains, in some cases exceedingly so, steeped in romantic outlooks of elevated aesthetic experience. In this respect Poggioli’s notion of the avant-garde “mystique of purity” seems to capture something essential that Bürger’s more insistently Marxist narrative is missing: Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde, 200–1.
For Abel, Delluc’s use of the term already implies an operation whereby we see the ordinary in a previously impossible way: Abel, *French Film Theory*, 110. *Photogénie* is not photographic – it does not simply reproduce; rather it is closer to painting and poetry, in that it creates along with its work of reproducing: Delluc, *Photogénie*, 13.

It is not the case that Delluc “invented” the word, but he was the first to repurpose the term from its “monotonous” mass-cultural meaning of a beauty being “photogenic” to a more complex, theoretical sense: Williams, *Republic of Images*, 97.

Paci, “The Attraction,” suggests that Delluc’s and Epstein’s definitions are distinguished primarily in that for Delluc *photogénie* magnifies an existing beauty in the world whereas for Epstein “*photogénie* is created out of the encounter between the cinema and the world” (135).

“On Certain Characteristics of Photogénie” is translated in Keller and Paul, *Jean Epstein*; “Photogénie and the Imponderable” has not been translated; see Epstein, *Écrits*.


The Austro-Hungarian philosopher and writer Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923) is the key figure of *Sprachkritik*, having written a three-volume work on the critique of language that was published in 1901–3, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*. This strand of thought however resonates more broadly with those modernist writers and thinkers who were sceptical of linguistic meaning and its logical capabilities, from Hugo von Hofmannsthal to Luigi Pirandello. Ludwig Wittgenstein refers to Mauthner in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, arguing that all philosophy must be critique of language yet differentiating his own project from Mauthner’s by seeking to delineate the limits of linguistic philosophy while nevertheless pointing toward an alternative mode of showing what cannot be said.

The connection between Pirandello’s visual philosophy and this tradition of *Sprachkritik*, which also positions him in relation to figures like Carlo Michelstaedter, is examined in Di Lieto, Sarti, and Subialka, *Scrittura d’immagini*..., esp. 99–100.

Chapter 4 of my book examines *Lebensphilosophie* and the emergence of avant-garde vitalism in relation to modernist spiritualism, the focus of chapter 5.


As Laurent Guido, “The Supremacy,” succinctly puts it, “the notion of rhythm occupies a central position among the early attempts by
French critics and cinéastes to grasp the so-called ‘specific language’ of film” (143).
64 Keller and Paul, *Jean Epstein*, 301.
66 Quoted in Abel, *French Cinema*, 279.
67 For example, in the context of the visual arts see Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” and “Towards and Newer Laocoön”; and Fried, “Art and Objecthood.” They suggest that modern art moves toward a self-referential focus on pictorial form and the materiality of representation, making the expression of its own medium the point of art, abstracted from representational content.
68 Aitken, *European Film*, 1.
70 Papini was diffused by many contemporaries, such as Prezzolini, who authored studies of Papini’s work during the period: for example, see Prezzolini, *Discorso*; and Fondi, *Un costruttore*. De Paulis-Dalembert, *Giovanni Papini*, examines the reception and influence of Papini more generally, including in France. Epstein’s significance was likewise impactful in his immediate context as well as on the reception of the broader notion of *photogénie*: Keller, “Introduction,” 26. Jane House and Antonio Attisani refer to Luciani as the most significant Italian theorist of early cinema, particularly in the context of the debate over the new medium’s relation to theatre: House and Attisani, *Twentieth-Century Italian Drama*, 6.
72 Verdone and Berghaus, “*Vita futurista,*” argue that this notion of *cinepittura* represents the only truly “futurist” impulse in the Futurist cinema, in contrast to Bragaglia’s less innovative experiments (398). They situate the Corradini brothers’ experiments relative to the reception of visual Impressionism and spiritualism, connecting Futurist cinema to Kandinsky’s theory of art.
73 Verdone, “*Nascita della cinepittura,*” 387.
75 Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, *Futurism*, 231.
Leander Kaiser argues that Kandinsky is the primary force shaping the ideology of modernist painting, pairing him with Arnold Schönberg’s reconfiguration of an abstracted modernist music: Kaiser, “Geist versus Intelligenz.”

Harrison, 1910, 4. Harrison examines Kandinsky as a key facet of the modernist/expressionist interest in the relation between intuition and formal expression.

Kandinsky, On the Spiritual in Art, 35. In this respect, Kandinsky is replicating the general argument of Saint-Simon’s progressive vision for an avant-garde art at the head of social and political development: Saint-Simon, Opinions, 341.

81 Kandinsky, On the Spiritual in Art, 35.
82 Gori, Studi di estetica, 42–4.
83 Gori, Studi di estetica, 22.
84 Gori, Studi di estetica, 84.
85 Gori, Studi di estetica, 131.
86 Gori, Studi di estetica, 139.
87 See: Poggi, Inventing Futurism.
88 Pirandello, Saggi, poesie, scritti varii, 998; translated in Pirandello, “Will Talkies Abolish,” 198–9. Pirandello’s criticism in “Will Talkies Abolish the Theater?” (“Se il film parlante abolirà il teatro,” 16 June 1929, Corriere della sera) and “Drama and Talkie Cinema” (“Il dramma e il cinematografo parlato,” 7 July 1929, La Nación, Buenos Aires) insists that cinema should not have sound because dramatic realism leads to cinema being nothing but a poor copy of theatre. Pirandello’s stance has been widely examined, for example, in Luzzi, “Sister Arguments”; Syrimis, The Great Black Spider; and Subialka, “The Meaning of Acting.” As Dudley Andrew notes, there was a broad resistance in France to sound cinema among cultural figures, including directors and critics, who were concerned with maintaining the artistic quality of film: Andrew, Mists, 95. Pirandello’s stance is thus consonant with a larger trend. Indeed, the battle over sound became a major flashpoint and is the starting point of Bazin’s treatment of cinema’s evolving language: Bazin, What Is Cinema?, 23–40.
90 L’Herbier’s film forges an important link between Pirandello’s theoretical and creative production and the avant-garde aesthetics of French film at the time.
91 In 2014–15 British artist Anne-Marie Creamer created a film adaptation of Pirandello’s unrealized project, Treatment for Six Characters, an Unrealized Film by Luigi Pirandello, in which she draws directly from the written treatment and visualizes Pirandello’s creative endeavour almost entirely without actors, envisioning what she terms a “cinema of the mind”
Creamer’s version is, as she termed it in an interview with Lesley Sullivan, “a kind of mise en abyme” (Creamer and Sullivan, “Pirandello’s Unrealized Film,” 103). The 41st International Conference on Pirandello Studies (December 2004) examined the question of Pirandello’s relation to film by asking why filmmakers had never attempted an adaptation of his final, unfinished play, The Mountain Giants (I giganti della montagna, 1937); see Lauretta, I giganti della montagna. Milioto and Klem both responded to this call by envisioning proposals for such an adaptation, but unlike Creamer’s film these remain only written scenarios for a project: Milioto, “I giganti della montagna...”; and Klem, “Progetto di un metafilm.”

For Micheli, Pirandello in cinema, this is the contradiction between Pirandello’s theoretical and practical stances on cinema (17). The most detailed accounts of Pirandello’s thought and practice can be found in Càllari, Pirandello e il cinema, and Nichols and O’Keefe Bazzoni, Pirandello and Film. Interest in Pirandello and cinema is however widespread, as indicated by the number of conferences on the topic, leading to a series of collected volumes: Lauretta, Quel che il cinema; Lauretta, Il cinema e Pirandello; Lauretta, Pirandello e il cinema.

The intermedial visuality of Pirandello’s production is demonstrated in Sarti and Subialka, eds., Pirandello’s Visual Philosophy; and Di Lieto, Sarti and Subialka, Scrittura d’immagini.

On the lasting impact of Schopenhauer’s theory of music, which helped shape subsequent European theories and practice, see: Goehr, The Quest for Voice; and Goehr, “Schopenhauer and the Musicians.” On Pirandello’s “visible language of music,” see Comuzio, “Il cinema.”

Schopenhauer, WWR I, §52, 262–3.

For Schopenhauer, musical rhythm aligns with features of human striving and the inner movement of life, contributing to the sense that music offers a revelation of what cannot be said: Alperson, “Schopenhauer,” 158.

Nichols and O’Keefe Bazzoni, Pirandello and Film, 144.


Claudia Sebastiana Nobili argues that Pirandello’s outlook on cinema should be situated relative to the Futurists’ as well as that of Epstein, with focus on how the cinema has the potential to serve as a mirror revealing oneself from various distorted angles: Nobili, La materia del sogno, 46 and 76–7.

Viva Paci claims that Pirandello’s Si gira... already prefigures elements of photogénie, specifically the way in which the film lens penetrates reality and exposes something hidden within: Paci, “The Attraction,” 127–32.

Schopenhauer, WWR I, §52, 257.
Dudley Andrew argues that while Impressionism, Surrealism, and German Expressionism all “aim for a cinema of the imagination” (*Mists of Regret*, 40), Surrealism actually prepares the ground for a new realist “optique” and thus fits unexpectedly with Bazin’s rejection of art cinema’s notion of purity (x).

Dalí, “Abstract,” 65. As Hammond points out in his notes to this essay, Dalí’s stance in this piece marks a direct repudiation of his own earlier writings on film: Dalí, “Abstract,” 67.


Breton’s first “Manifesto of Surrealism” describes what it terms the “Secrets of the Magical Surrealist Art” (*Manifestoes*, 29). It likewise envisions surrealism as an “invisible ray” that revolutionizes the world, playing on popular images of parapsychological and spiritual-scientific interest, such as energy waves that are invisible yet have impact on the actual world: Breton, *Manifestoes*, 47.


**Conclusion: Overdetermined Idealist Legacies**


2 Re, “Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Theater of Memory,” 8–9.

**Appendix. Schopenhauer and Leopardi: A Dialogue between A and D**

1 The title page of the *Rivista contemporanea* lists the topics of interest to the journal in the following sequence: “PHILOSOPHY — HISTORY — SCIENCE — LITERATURE / POETRY — NOVELS — TRAVEL / CRITICISM — ARCHAEOLOGY — FINE ARTS” (*Rivista contemporanea*, Vol. 15).

2 This notion of brotherhood resonates with the case of D’Annunzio and Shimoi that I examine at the opening of the Introduction, highlighting another way in which idealism functions as a transnational paradigm drawing modern writers into literary-philosophical-political constellations of shared spiritual ambition.

3 My translation is based on the version collected in De Sanctis’ *Saggi critici. Prima edizione milanese*, 4 vols., ed Paolo Arcari, vol. 1 (Milan: Treves, 1921), 227–70. Paolo Arcari’s notes have been instructive.
4 Cesare Cantù (1804–1895) was a cultural figure of the mid-nineteenth century. He taught in Como and was the author of numerous historical treatises as well as a historical commentary on Manzoni’s *I promessi sposi,* with a Catholic and somewhat reactionary perspective. De Sanctis’s essay on Cantù, “Una storia della letteratura italiana di Cesare Cantù,” is collected in his *Saggi critici,* vol. 1, 271–87. In his *Prison Notebooks,* Gramsci recounts an entertaining story about an academic battle he witnessed at the university concerning De Sanctis’s negative judgment of Cantù, which was a topic of debate among professors and students: *Prison Notebooks,* vol. 2, 14–15.

Giovanni Prati (1814–1884) was a poet in the Italian romantic tradition, who published numerous relatively well-known collections between 1843 and 1878. De Sanctis collected two essays on Prati in his *Saggi critici:* “Satana e le Grazie, leggenda di Giovanni Prati,” vol. 1, 64–90; and “L’Armando,” vol. 2, 110–34.

5 An infamous cop in the Bourbon government. (De Sanctis’s note.)

Campagna was well-known for enforcing the Bourbon monarchy’s political repression of liberal political activists, including Luigi Settembrini, whom he mentions by name in his *Ricordanze della mia vita* (vol. 2, lxxix–lxxx), to which De Sanctis had written a preface noting Settembrini’s importance for the generations of 1848 and 1860 – the two key revolutionary moments in Naples and Italy. Campagna had a long career and was promoted to the rank of commissario, a chief of police with oversight of key areas, including the port. Throughout the dialogue there are references to Campagna’s “scissors,” an allusion to regulations under Ferdinand II prohibiting long beards, which were associated with liberal revolutionaries.

6 Annibale De Gasparis (1819–1892) was a prominent astronomer, a professor of astronomy at the University of Naples from 1853, who directed the Capodimonte observatory in Naples starting in 1864; he also became a senator of the newly unified kingdom in 1861 and was elected to the prominent Accademia dei Lincei, a Roman group devoted to the renewal of naturalism founded in 1603.

7 Carlo Maria Curci (1810–1891) was a prominent priest in Naples, ordained at the age of twenty-six, who was also an important cultural figure: he edited an edition of Vincenzo Gioberti’s famous essay on the *Primato morale e civile degli italiani* before turning against Gioberti and launching attacks on his thought that were ultimately influential in convincing Pope Pius IX that Gioberti was problematic. Curci was exiled from Naples along with the Jesuit order in 1848–49, and travelled first to Malta and then to Paris: Curci, *Memorie,* 316–43. Pius IX later elevated Curci to make him one of the authors responsible for the periodical *Civiltà*
304 Notes to pages 203–6

*Cattolica*, which grew its circulation during his tenure: see De Mattei, *Pius IX*, 43.]

8 [“Pangloss taught metaphysico-theologico-cosmo-codology. He could prove wonderfully that there is no effect without a cause and that, in this best of all possible worlds, His Lordship the Baron’s castle was the most beautiful of castles and Madam the best of all possible baronesses”: Voltaire, *Candide*, 4.]

9 Warden of the prison where the author was locked up. (De Sanctis’s note.)

10 [The word “idea” is sometimes capitalized and sometimes in lowercase throughout the text. I have maintained those variations.]

11 [There is a pun in the Italian here – “accidenti,” which translates as “damnit,” is also the plural form of “accident,” which is used earlier in the paragraph in its philosophical sense as a non-essential trait or a non-necessary predicate.]

12 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. (De Sanctis’s note.)

13 *Demofoonte*, Act III, Scene 2. (De Sanctis’s note.) [The reference is to a well-known opera libretto by Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782), perhaps the most famous Italian author of the eighteenth century alongside Alfieri; it was first set to music by Antonio Caldara in 1733. The line quoted comes from Timante’s speech at the beginning of the scene, though there are variations on the language here: Metastasio, *Opere*, vol. 2, 199.]

14 See the appendix to his “Sketch of a History of the Doctrine of the Ideal and the Real” in Frauenstädt’s edition of *Parerga und Paralipomena* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1878), vol. 1, 22. (De Sanctis’s citation.) [Schopenhauer’s invective against Fichte and the other post-Kantian idealists is pointed to say the least: “Readers who are acquainted with what has passed for philosophy in Germany in the course of this [nineteenth] century, might perhaps wonder why they do not see mentioned in the interval between Kant and me either the idealism of Fichte, or the system of the absolute identity of the real and the ideal, as they quite properly appear to belong to our subject. But I have not been able to include them because Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel are in my opinion not philosophers; for they lack the first requirement of a philosopher, namely a seriousness and honesty of inquiry. They are merely sophists who wanted to appear to be rather than to be something. They sought not truth, but their own interest and advancement in the world. Appointments from governments, fees and royalties from students and publishers, and, as a means to this end, the greatest possible show and sensation in their sham philosophy – such were the guiding stars and inspiring genii of those disciples of wisdom. And so they have not passed the entrance examination and cannot be admitted into the venerable company of thinkers for the human race”]
(Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 21). Schopenhauer goes on for several pages to level charges against Hegel in particular as a sham philosopher and charlatan, although he likewise continues to disparage the ways in which he perceives Fichte and Schelling as having created confusion in a dishonest way.]

15 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 27. (De Sanctis’s citation.) [This is a paraphrase rather than a quotation from Schopenhauer’s “Appendix,” but the tone is accurate enough: Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 25.]

16 Spinoza, *Ethics*, pt 2, Proposition 7. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

17 Spinoza, *Ethics*, pt 3, Proposition 2. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

18 [La Vicaria (the hall of justice) is another name for the Castel Capuano, a twelfth-century structure built at the juncture in Naples’s city walls where the road leads to Capua, hence the name. Originally a royal palace, the Bourbons used its basement as a prison.]

19 “Some Further Elucidations of the Kantian Philosophy,” in “Fragments for the History of Philosophy,” §13, in *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 101. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

20 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 103. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

21 Letters to Goethe, Herder, Wieland, and Other Significant Contemporaries (Darmstadt: 1835), 239. (De Sanctis’s citation.) [De Sanctis has translated the German edition’s title into Italian, and so I have translated it into English. The reference is to: Karl Wagner, ed., *Brieße*, 239.]

22 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 104. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

23 Chapter 27, “On Women and Other Things,” and chapter 11, “On Politics,” in *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, 649, 256. (De Sanctis’s citation.) [De Sanctis has translated the chapter titles into Italian, so I have rendered them in English here.]

24 [There is a pun in the Italian between will (il volere, which also means desire) and the phrase “ci volea molto a trovar questa,” which plays on another meaning of the term. Throughout the dialogue, but particularly in this paragraph and those that follow, there is an ambiguity or multiplicity in the way that De Sanctis uses the verb volere (“to want,” “to desire,” “to will”) and its cognate forms that cannot be captured in English. I use both “will” and “want” as it seems most appropriate given the context, but the word in Italian is the same.]


26 “Fragmente zur Geschichte der Philosophie,” §2, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 88. (De Sanctis’s citation.)
On Gioberti’s philosophy and its relation to Pythagoreanism, see Copenhaver and Copenhaver, *From Kant to Croce*, 37.

*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, Book II, §18 (Leipzig, 1873), 122. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

On the subject of the intellect see his principal work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, ch. 15, 161 (De Sanctis’s note and citation.)

*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, ch. 25, 367 (De Sanctis’s citation.)


On ideas, see his principal work, volume I, book three, pages 30–52, where you will find an exaggerated aesthetic theory. (De Sanctis’ note.)

*Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 18–43; vol. 2, ch. 5, 105. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

*Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, ch. 5, 105 (De Sanctis’s citation.)

[Again De Sanctis is playing on the ambiguity of meaning in Italian attached to volere and its cognate forms, which I translate as both “to will” and “to want” (and “to desire”) here, according to the context.]

*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, Book IV. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

[“Se la vita è sventura, / perché da noi si dura?” (Leopardi, *Canti*, “Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell’Asia,” vv. 55–56), Translation by Jonathan Galassi, “Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia.” De Sanctis cites pages from an edition of Leopardi’s poems, but he does not specify the bibliographical details of that edition. I have thus chosen not to replicate those citations but rather to add citations to a recent edition instead.]


“Frammento apocrifo di Stratone da Lampasaco.” (De Sanctis’ citation.)


[“Lazzarone” is a term used to describe the poorest class of beggars who live on the streets of Naples, derived from the Spanish “lázaro.”]

*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, §63, 419. (De Sanctis’s citation.)
45 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, §8; *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, Ethik, pt 2, “Critical Appendix on the Kantian Philosophy,” vol. 1, 610. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

46 *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, in *Werke*, vol. 2, 313; *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, ch. 8. (De Sanctis’, citation.)

47 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, ch. 9; *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, ch. 17. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

48 [Saint Januarius (San Gennaro) is the patron saint of Naples, after whom the city’s cathedral is unofficially named (its official name is the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, but it houses the relics of Saint Januarius).]

49 The political part is taken nearly word for word from chapter 9 of *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2. (De Sanctis’s note.)

50 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, 270. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

51 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, 273. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

52 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, 275. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

53 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, 268. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

54 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, ch. 29, “On Physiognomy,” 677. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

55 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, ch. 38, 506. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

56 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, §51, 291. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

57 [Pantalone (Pantaloon) and Colombina (Columbina) are “masks” or characters in the traditional Italian theatrical form of the *commedia dell’arte*, which uses stock characters who never change as the basis for its performances. Pantalone is a well-off merchant typifying avarice and ego, originating in the Venetian *commedia*. Colombina is a servant and the mistress of Harelquin, typifying the clever/tricky servant.]

58 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, §62, 400. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

59 [Daniello Bartoli (1608–1685) became the official historian of the Jesuit order, the Compagnia di Gesù, and wrote numerous volumes of history. He was admired by not only Leopardi but also by leading literary figures of the nineteenth century such as Niccolò Tommaseo and Giosuè Carducci.]

60 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, §62, 414. (De Sanctis’s citation.)


62 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, §55, 347, 348. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

63 [Piazza San Marco, St Mark’s Square, is the main public square in Venice.]

64 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1, 141; *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, ch. VI, 68, and ch. 7, 91. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

65 *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, §126, 269. (De Sanctis’s citation.)

66 Rousseau, *Confessions*, bk 7. (De Sanctis’s citation.)
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