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"I recommend this book."

— Gao Xingjian,

Winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize for Literature



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Humanities \ Language & Literature \ Romance

Luzzi, Joseph. **Romantic Europe and the ghost of Italy**. Yale, 2008. 294p index afp; ISBN [9780300123555](#), \$50.00. **Outstanding Title!** Reviewed in 2009apr CHOICE.

In response to the depressing (but undeniably valid) proposition that "the marginality of the Italian Romantics endures," Luzzi (Bard College) constructs a remarkably rich and subtle argument that shows with definitive clarity why this should not be so. Unlike those many studies that focus on Italian Romantic texts without adequately locating them in their European context, or those many others that, conversely but no less damagingly, describe a "European" Romanticism whose manifestations remain curiously confined to France, Germany, and Britain, this book both examines works by Italian authors (Ugo Foscolo, Vittorio Alfieri, Giacomo Leopardi, Alessandro Manzoni, Giuseppe Parini) and relates them to the writings of contemporary non-Italians (Goethe, de Staël, Voltaire, Wordsworth) with whom the Italian Romantics were, consciously or otherwise, in dialogue. An especially interesting section ("Heirs of a Dark Wood") uses late-18th-century and early-19th-century responses to Dante's *Commedia* as a touchstone for the development of Romantic thinking about literature, religion, and history both inside and outside Italy. The broad sweep of Luzzi's historicism, the lucid strength of his theorizing, and the unflinching analytical power of his reading combine to make this book indispensable to Italianists and comparatists alike. **Summing Up:** Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty. -- *S. Botterill, University of California, Berkeley*

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