



Flower of the Desert: Giacomo Leopardi's Poetic Ontology (SUNY series in Contemporary Italian Philosophy)

Antonio Negri

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A profound meditation on Leopardi's art and thought as well as a reframing and reassertion of Negri's own philosophical and political project of liberation.

Antonio Negri, one of Italy's most influential and controversial contemporary philosophers, offers in this book a radical new interpretation of the nineteenth-century Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi. For Negri, Leopardi is not the bitter, idealistic individualist of conventional literary history, but rather a profoundly materialist thinker who sees human solidarity as the only possible solution to the catastrophes of history and politics. Negri traces Leopardi's resistance to the transcendental idealism of Kant and Hegel, with its emphasis on reason's power to resolve real antagonisms into abstract syntheses, and his gradual development of a sophisticated poetic materialism focused on the constructive power of the imagination and its "true illusions." Like Nietzsche (who admired him), Leopardi provides an alternative to modernity within modernity, expressing a force of rupture and recomposition—a uniquely Italian one—that is as relevant now as it was in the nineteenth century, and which connects to the theory of Empire as the political constitution of the present that Negri has elaborated in collaboration with Michael Hardt.

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