Il saggio di Sergio M. Gilardino ricostruisce un modello dell'eroe salgariano inserendolo nell'ottica del titanismo. Superando tutti quei pregiudizi critici che relegano l'opera di Salgari esclusivamente alla lettura per l'infanzia, Gilardino riesce a riallacciare il personaggio e il mondo di Salgari alla tradizione romantica (Goethe, Büchner, Leopardi, Foscolo) e al superomismo di Nietzsche mediato dall'eroe decadente dannunziano. Gilardino riesce, quindi, molto agevolmente, a dilatare gli spazi della narrativa salgariana e a problematizzarne gli orizzonti. Secondo Gilardino, essa si discosta profondamente dalla tradizione italiana la quale, ad iniziare dal romanzo manzoniano, era tutta ripiegata entro i confini del familiare e dell'ordinario. Nella costante ricerca dei brividi dell'esotico e dell'ignoto, i romanzi di Salgari rivelano non solo l'eversiva ribellione dell'eroe romantico, ma una tensione nevrotica — esplicitata dall'esplorazione dell'onirico e delle zone recondite e minacciose dell'inconscio — avvicinata alla sensibilità di un Poe o un Baudelaire. Un'immaginazione fertile e problematica quella di Salgari, quindi, un'immaginazione che, sebbene — precisa appropriatamente Gilardino — non sia aliena da certi esiti stucchevoli e fumettistici, riesce a creare un universo fantastico denso di connotazioni e agganci letterari.

In conclusione, Pugliese è riuscito egregiamente a consegnarci una raccolta di saggi che, nel loro insieme, non solo rappresentano un'attenta ricognizione dei percorsi e degli orientamenti presenti nella narrativa ottocentesca, ma indagano, in vari casi, sintomi e preannunci di quegli sviluppi che verranno a caratterizzare il romanzo di questo nostro Novecento.

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Mario Santoro e Lucia Miele. *Due maestri dell'Ateneo Napoletano: Francesco Torraca e Giuseppe Toffanin*. Napoli: Federico & Ardia, 1990. Pp. 164.

In this book, the critical viewpoints of Torraca and Toffanin are examined as they developed over the years, with illustrations from their works. The relationship of the two critics to Neapolitan and southern Italian culture is also discussed, as are their attitudes and activities as professors at the University of Naples. The authors of the volume have included complete bibliographies of the critics' publications as well.

Lucia Miele notes that right from his earlier writings Torraca desired an integration of opposing methods, such as the historical and the aesthetic. He was influenced by Settembrini for the former, while De Sanctis's *Saggi critici* led him to regard form as a substantial element in the content of a text, a spontaneous expression of a unity of feeling. From these two writers Torraca also developed his interest in southern Italian literature as an independent project. In his pedagogical activity, he viewed artistic works as playing a central role in civilization, and with his penetrating analysis enabled them to be enjoyed by their readers. Torraca met Croce at least as early as 1885, but their correspondence ended in 1933, following a reproof from Torraca.

Miele describes Torraca's work on Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, especially his criticism of Dante, and alludes to the critic's fascination with the feminine element. His knowledge of the historical and cultural pattern of the Middle Ages was vast, while he showed a lively interest in southern culture of the Renaissance. In his *Rimatori napoletani del Quattrocento*, he identifies two tendencies, the Petrarchan

and the popular, while his piece on Pontano shows his examination of technique and the clarity of his definition thereof.

Finally, Miele presents Torraca as a teacher who was punctilious both in his attention to historical-biographical facts and in his reconstruction of genres, traditions, epochs and authors, which he connected synchronically to the realities of the time.

As for Giuseppe Toffanin, the second critic dealt with, Mario Santoro was a student of his and depicts him as being well versed in European culture and as a leading figure in Italian culture up to the 1950s. Toffanin did not adhere to historical criticism or a Crocean aesthetic approach. He was most interested in the problems of man and existence which are manifested and gauged in literary works and thus he let the boundaries between literature and philosophy fall away. Santoro examines Neapolitan culture in the 1920s and 1930s to show the influence of Spaventa, De Sanctis, Croce and Luigi Russo on Toffanin.

Though an "estraneo" in Naples who inserted himself only partly into Neapolitan reality, Toffanin brought a new attitude, which allowed him to examine conventional attitudes critically, to reconstruct the judgements and teachings of Italian culture, and to illustrate the phases and destiny of Italian civilization in the wider context of European culture. Toffanin's favourite fields were humanism and the Renaissance and, in this area, he investigated the dignity and conduct of man in the dramatic struggle for existence.

Santoro describes Toffanin's activity and attitudes as professor and critic in the changing world of the twentieth century and finds that his preferred research was in the examination of ideas, with a recognition, alien to Crocean aesthetics, of the importance of literary technique. According to Toffanin, the past should not be read through the eyes of the present, but with a "senso storico."

Santoro analyses Toffanin's studies on Dante and, after stressing his definition of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, concludes that Toffanin refused to identify Dante with the Middle Ages, which were viewed in a traditional sense as being against "pagan humanism," and was opposed to reading the *Divina Commedia* allegorically. Santoro studies Toffanin's comments on single episodes and characters. Finally, he examines Toffanin's criticism of Foscolo, Leopardi and Carducci, and especially his concentration on Leopardi and the relationship of his ideology with the myths of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism.

Santoro's essay on Toffanin is most revealing. From his own observation, he depicts Toffanin not only as a professor whose teaching and attitude he describes, but also as an individual human being. In this connection, Santoro expresses his personal opposition to some of Toffanin's viewpoints, but he examines Toffanin's critical work, bearing in mind the critic's own attitudes to life.

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Elio Providenti. *Archeologie pirandelliane*. Catania: Maimone Editore, 1990. Pp. 255.

Nel 1920, in occasione dell'ottantesimo compleanno di Giovanni Verga, Pirandello teneva al teatro Bellini di Catania un discorso in cui rilevava come lungo il cammino della letteratura italiana corressero "due lineamenti ben distinti e quasi paralleli