Stefania Segatori. *Forme, temi e motivi della narrativa di Ippolito Nievo*. Florence: Olschki (Biblioteca dell'*Archivum Romanicum* Serie I, vol. 388), 2011. Pp. 186. ISBN 978-88-222-6108-3. € 22.

Italianists celebrated the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification with great fervor around the globe in 2011. This resulted in the production of a wealth of rich materials, which in many cases dusted off the texts and authors of the past and presented them anew to a welcoming public. Stefania Segatori's *Forme, temi e motivi della narrativa di Ippolito Nievo* is one such study. Indeed, in commemoration of the disappearance and the death of the young – yet remarkably prolific – author (also 150 years ago in 2011), Segatori's book is a pleasingly exhaustive tribute to one of the most intriguing figures of the period. The *Fondazione Ippolito e Stanislao Nievo* awarded the author of this four-chapter book its newly established prize in 2011.

Forme begins with a brief preface that clearly and concisely delineates the author's thesis. Put simply, the book examines Nievo's works thematically. Segatori describes her analysis of the unmistakable nexus between geography (both spatial and natural landscapes) and literature (mostly concerning literary forms). What is most remarkable is that the author (re)introduces readers to almost the entirety of Nievo's ample narrative writings in a concise 186 pages.

Segatori divides Chapter 1 into three distinct, yet foundational sections. She begins by setting the parameters of her study and her methodology. She designates Nievo's texts to be "documenti di una vita, di un'ideologia, di un'epoca." (4) *Forme* does not follow any strict chronology or biographical re-telling of the story of Nievo when seeking to divulge a comprehensive examination of the formation, the psychology and the habits of our author.

Segatori proposes that each of the book's sixteen essays can be read independently from the others. The intersection of these literary, geographical and historical interpretations forms a complete portrait of not only Nievo and his works, but it also contributes to the idea of conceptualizing literature as living artifacts of a cultural history and identity.

The second section of Chapter 1 extensively recounts previous scholarly treatment of Nievo and his works. Segatori concludes this portion by reminding contemporary readers about Calvino's critical observations of the intrinsic value of re-reading a "classic" in order to discover something new. The chapter concludes with a third section: the entertaining and detailed account of the myth and facts surrounding Nievo's disappearance and ultimate demise.

Chapter 2 explores the themes of geography and history in Nievo's works. Segatori artfully presents three separate studies concerning the dichotomies of city-country, politics-national poetics and individual-collective identities. The author explores Nievo's profound connections to the various cities in which he lived. She particularly shines when presenting the ever-changing biographical and historical significance of each municipality, and most especially that of Nievo's love-hate relationship with Venice.

Segatori then juxtaposes this urban life with what is widely-recognized to be

Nievo's most influential experience in the Friulian countryside. What emerges from this critical approach is a sort of continuous exchange between physical geography, biography and Nievo's literary productions. The theme of movement continues in the second section of Chapter 2, which mostly concerns politics and national poetics. Segatori skillfully explores Nievo's distinct focus on inspiring his readers to move from apathy to action. She argues that Nievo's approach to the *questione nazionale* actually is threefold: territorial, social and political. Segatori concludes the chapter with a third section examining place and identity in Nievo's work. The author especially demonstrates her comprehensive knowledge of the vast corpus of Nievo's narrative work in this section, surveying not only the lengthy novel *Le Confessioni*, but also numerous *campagnole* stories.

Segatori divides Chapter 3, entitled *Struttura mentale e creazione culturale in Ippolito Nievo*, into four essays. I think that this chapter investigates some of the most intriguing aspects of Nievo's narrative writing. Segatori begins with an erudite examination of his educational formation and influences and re-affirms the classification of *Le Confessioni* as a European – and not simply an Italian – novel. She then discusses the importance of civic engagement and the moral-ethical responsibilities of the middle-class. Segatori further explores these social and civic messages in Nievo's rarely examined theatrical writings, specifically including the exploration of the delicate issues of anti-Semitism and false philanthropy in his dramas and comedies.

The chapter concludes by discussing Nievo's participation in the Milanese journalistic scene. This analysis is a rare-but-innovative exploration of the particular problems inherent with publishing in the journals of the period: the lack of authorial freedom and space and the absence of the authorial voice. She expounds on how Nievo found his niche writing for women.

The fourth and final chapter of Segatori's book carries the exact same title as the book. It is divided into six different sections that cover an array of topics from memory to the comedic to the representation of Jews, women, the old and the young and the significance of water in Nievo's works. It is a thematic odyssey that explores the various manifestations of these themes in the author's narratives. Segatori follows the section with an exhaustive bibliography, including a webography, which meticulously directs today's reader to a wide-range of scholarly writings on our *poeta soldato*.

Segatori's book is a most welcomed contribution to studies on Nievo and the *Ottocento*. Yet, the reader can get a bit lost along Segatori's journey. The disjointed movement that can result from hopping from theme to theme could have benefited from additional editorial attention to help smooth out the transitions. Furthermore, the self-contained nature of the book's essays results in a good deal of repetition. This might have been avoided in large part with a more nuanced approach to consolidating the essays. Yet these are largely quibbles – on the whole, Segatori's book represents a valuable contribution to the study of an emblematic author, his writings, and particular spaces and moments in Italian history. It will no doubt spark further inquiry.

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