All'interno della raccolta del 1867 spicca un modesto gruppo di "novelle" (*La pastorale*, *Egli stesso*, *Due gondolette* e *L'artista*) che, assieme al "racconto" *Brissard*, risulta caratterizzato dalla presenza di un protagonista d'eccezione realmente esistito, abbastanza in linea con i profili biografici artistico-letterari che spesso i periodici proponevano ai lettori. Si tratta di un "sotto-insieme" artistico-teatrale nel quale è possibile inserire anche *Adolfo*, sorta di "racconto-lungo" che Mastriani pubblicò dapprima a puntate sulle pagine de «Il Sibilo» (sottotitolandolo *I misteri del genio*) ed in seguito "in appendice" a «Il Tempo». Se una maggiore leggerezza nel "novellare" sull'arte della scrittura drammatica e della recitazione aleggia ne *I tre studenti*, tratti satanici avvolgono invece i protagonisti de *Il diavoletto* e di *Vito Bergamaschi*. L'arte quale pericoloso strumento di perdizione torna anche nella "novella/scena artistica" *L'intagliatore*. Un ulteriore gruppo "novellistico" si struttura invece intorno al tipico tema amoroso: l'amore passionale, vissuto quale fonte di sacrificio, è al centro della "novella" *Taddeo lo stoico*, maggiormente tragica è invece *Due passioni* e sulla stessa linea si pone *Due tradimenti*. Sul versante dell'amore calato in contesti ironici e beffardi si collocano le "novelle" *Primo amor più lega il cuore*, *Ludovica*, *Un incontro*, *Un matrimonio* e *La botta del maestro*, alle quali si avvicinano per somiglianza di stile e contenuti anche *Amicizia alla roccò*, *Il fidanzato*, *Nuovo modo di farsi amare*, *La dimanda di matrimonio* ed il lungo doppio-diario *Armonia prestabilita. Memorie di due sposi*.

Il ridotto manipolo di "racconti", pubblicati da Mastriani sui periodici, è rappresentato nella raccolta del 1867 (oltre dal già citato *Brissard*) dal "fantastico" *Brown* - cui accostare per certi aspetti *Un pezzo anatomico* - e dal "popolare" *Graziella*, quest'ultimo accomunabile a *Tre numeri al lotto* e *Filomena* (non individuabili su periodici) e a due "racconti" esclusi dalla raccolta, *Cecco l'idiota* e *Gennaro*. Appartengono alla "caricatura" e al "ritratto sociale" *Il padre d'una bella figliuola*, *Cinque grana*, *Lo sposo di provincia*, *Un brodo*, *Ella!*, *Una serata musicale*, ed infine la *Classificazione delle donne*, "rubriche" molto frequenti sui periodici letterari ottocenteschi, finalizzate ad offrire godibili ritratti ed ironici figurini di determinati "tipi" sociali.

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Deborah Amberson. *Giraffes in the Garden of Italian Literature. Modernist Embodiment in Italo Svevo, Federigo Tozzi and Carlo Emilio Gadda*. Oxford: Legenda, 2012. Pp. 175. ISBN 13 978-1-907975-26-4. £ 45.

Deborah Amberson's *Giraffes in the Garden of Italian Literature* is an important contribution to the critical understanding of the works of Italo Svevo, Federigo Tozzi and Carlo Emilio Gadda. Amberson opens her book by clearly defining the field of inquiry: she argues that these authors' status as "outsiders" in Italian literature is related to their idiosyncratic engagement with, and undermining of, traditional notions of corporeality and embodiment. By examining their difference via the "defining nexus of body, subjectivity and style," (1) Amberson highlights

Gadda, Svevo, and Tozzi's original contribution to Italian and European modernism.

As she explains in the introduction, the title of her book refers to an iconic image used by Gadda in reference to his work and his position within Italian literature. Extending this image to all three authors, their status as "giraffes in the garden of Italian literature" is a useful starting point to understand not only their respective self-perceptions, but also how Italian literary critics have characterized their work as idiosyncratic and unfamiliar, as not "fitting in" the domesticated landscape of modern Italian literature. Amberson's goal is to study Svevo, Gadda and Tozzi within the frame of European modernism so as to re-read and explain their supposed exoticism in its multi-faceted significance. Her notion of modernism, elaborated in part through the work of Sara Danius, Ulrika Maude, and Tim Armstrong is that of an "epistemological and ethical reflection on the lived experience of a radically transformed social and economic reality" (7), that is, one that puts great emphasis on notions of body and embodiment, and on human beings as "both the subject and the object of modernization" (7).

In chapter 1, "Corporeal Revolutions," the author offers a comprehensive overview of the elaboration of modern notions of body. Weaving a complex web of textual references, Amberson describes the changes in the notion of corporeality that occur with (and within) modernism and engages in a historical and conceptual contextualization that goes well beyond national borders, and that draws examples from Melville and Kafka, Woolf and Beckett – to name but a few. Her introduction is less invested in pinpointing one specific aspect of modernist notions of corporeality than in exemplifying the broad implications of modernism as a corporeal experience, that is, an experience in which the subject speaks "from *within* hypersensitive, infirm and gendered bodies" (24). These three adjectives loosely correspond to the specific relationship to bodies that she describes in each of the authors examined: hypersensitive bodies in Tozzi, infirm ones in Svevo, and gendered ones in Gadda.

In chapter 2, Amberson discusses Italo Svevo's modernist strategy as one that emphasizes bodily and linguistic "limping" (39), an arrhythmia that both physically and linguistically signifies the subject's unease with modernity. In the capitalist, commercial universe of Svevo's protagonists, success "derives directly from the regulated instrumentalization of the human organism." (42). Such instrumentalization is not one that the main characters of *Una vita*, *Senilità*, or *La coscienza di Zeno* are able to endorse. Their infirmities and the irregular rhythms of their bodies describe a universe in which harmony and order, the privilege of their "healthy antagonists" (46), are impossible to accept on the part of the protagonists.

In the third chapter, Amberson discusses Federigo Tozzi's works as organized around the uncontrollable and overwhelming sensorial experiences of its protagonists. These experiences lead to frustration and abjection rather than knowledge. Amberson convincingly argues that Tozzi's "programmatically ambivalent representation of somatic processes" (79) reverses the traditional order between emotional states and their physical expressions, because it establishes the body as the primary origin of emotions –and of subjectivity. This subjectivity, rooted in shame

and embarrassment precisely because of the body's uncontrollability, conveys in turn an ethical rejection of paternal authority and of its economic, capitalistic order, that is, an order aimed at "actively exploit[ing] reality and its bodies as abstract resource" (90).

In the fourth chapter, Gadda's work is read through the lens of gender conflict and of conflicting notions of femininity, especially in terms of a narrative misogyny that, while exposing the carnality of woman as a threat to a well-ordered bourgeois male body, also unexpectedly unveils the female body "as the offended material object of the entire edifice of modernity" (116). While Amberson is careful in pointing out that Gadda never explicitly undermines the patriarchal gender ideology that foregrounds his narrative parables, her analysis of both Gadda's novels and essays is extremely useful in allowing us to better understand his poetics of excess and his critique of traditional notions of subjectivity.

In comprehensively analyzing these three authors, Amberson also discusses, together with the thematic importance of corporeality in their works, its stylistic dimension: in Svevo, the refusal of streamlined, "beautiful" Tuscan language and style is an expression of his epistemological arrhythmia, as well as of his conflicting relationship with Italian-ness. Tozzi's "anti-hierarchic and paratactic" (102) style represents a reaction to the domineering causality of the paternal order, and an indirect critique of any attempt to analyze and classify sensory input in a "conceptually meaningful manner" (106). In Gadda's digressive style Amberson reads the manifestation of "a difficult ethics of encounter with a fluctuating reality" (144), an attempt to account for the heterogeneity of reality without reducing it to one "policing" dimension.

In the conclusion, Amberson reiterates the importance of inserting Svevo, Tozzi and Gadda's works within the landscape of European modernism, thus revising Italian-centered critical categories. In this incisive, well-conceived and well-executed book, Amberson productively investigates the nuances of the theme of corporeality while accounting for very different narrative and epistemological experiences. Her work is captivatingly rich in philosophical and theoretical references as much as it is clearly and effectively grounded in textual analyses. *Giraffes in the Garden of Italian Literature* contributes an international reading of Italian modernism while proposing original avenues of critical understanding for each of these authors.

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Annamaria Pagliaro. *The Novels of Federico De Roberto: from Naturalism to Modernism.* Leicester, UK: Troubador Publishing, 2011. Pp 218. ISBN 978-1-84876-608-2. \$ 19.99.

Annamaria Pagliaro's *The Novels of Federico De Roberto: from Naturalism to Modernism*, is the first complete, well structured, and in depth analysis of Federico De Robert's novels and his journalistic and theoretical works.