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.

In the monograph's introduction, the author gives us a detailed history of the preexisting criticism on De Roberto's literary production, placing her own work within a broader critical context. Fittingly, Pagliaro dedicates the first half of her book to De Roberto's much neglected journalistic and theoretical writings. As she mentions, these works are essential to understanding the writer's "critical approach to art" (6) which, as early as the 1880's, can be viewed as *post-verista*.

The critic groups De Roberto's essays according to the following ten themes: 1) *On the defense of modern art – diverging from Capuana*; 2) *On Zola and the relationship between art and science*; 3) *On Flaubert and the subjectivity of the author*; 4) *Maupassant and De Roberto on artistic impersonality*; 5) *Towards psychological introspection – diverging from Verga*; 6) *Bourget and psychological analysis—the malaise of the century*; 7) *On relative truth—an emerging modernity*; 8) *De Roberto and Pirandello*; 9) *On the novel and literary schools*; 10) *On Russian writers*. Pagliaro's choice of themes clearly highlights De Roberto's active involvement in the literary discussions of the time, his interest in some of the major European and Italian writers and thinkers of his century and his awareness of their new and exciting literary trends.

In the following five chapters, Pagliaro focuses her attention on De Roberto's six novels: *Ermanno Reali*, *L'illusione*, *I Viceré*, *L'imperio*, *Spasimo* and *La messa di nozze*. All, except for *L'imperio*, are presented in chronological order, with the longest chapter being the one dedicated to *I Viceré*, and with a common theme characterizing the analysis of all six novels: "the tension between two literary styles not easily fused: external observation and the representation of an introspective reality" (Pagliaro, 7). The focus is furthermore placed on the narrative techniques used by De Roberto to create his modern novel. What emerges from this study is the true complexity of the writer's narrative along with a deeply tormented De Roberto, conflicted between a "positivist intellectual formation with thematic choices attuned to intellectual and philosophical *fin de siècle* trends" (Pagliaro, 8).

The second chapter of *The Novels of Federico De Roberto* is dedicated to *Ermanno Reali*, considered to be one of his most autobiographical novels. Pagliaro's originality consists in her understanding that the autobiographical elements present in this work have an ulterior motive and are "consciously used and manipulated by the author for his fictional construction" (Pagliaro, 8). The focus is thus shifted from what these elements reveal about their author to how they are used by him as inspiration for his fiction.

Chapter three focuses on *L'illusione* and its female protagonist, Teresa Uzeda. Pagliaro distances herself from those critics who tend to associate Teresa with Flaubert's Emma Bovary: while there definitely are some similarities between the two characters, our critic prefers to focus on their many differences. She analyzes the construction of De Roberto's female character, zooming in on the author's use of interior monologues to express Teresa's existential malaise and personal worldview.

L'illusione is then followed by *I Viceré* (Chapter four). Like Antonio Di Grado in *Gli inganni del romanzo. I Viceré tra storia e finzione letteraria*, Pagliaro underlines the "remarkable narrative innovation within the novel and its complex representation of fin-de-siècle crisis" (9). The chapter is divided into two parts: 1) *Experimenting with levels of narration—external analysis and introspective represen-*

tation and 2) *Subjectivity and the history-making process: The human dimension of the Risorgimento in I Viceré*. Both sections point out the many experimental elements present in the novel as well as outlining its three major issues: 1) the representation of a degraded humanity and its pursuit of power; 2) the polyphonic nature of its narrative and 3) the function of history within the novel.

Pagliaro argues that while many critics tend to consider *I Viceré* as de Roberto's masterpiece and his only novel that carries any literary value, one should place *I Viceré* in the broader context of his entire literary production and narrative experimentation. Pagliaro also questions the traditional view of *I Viceré* as a novel about the Risorgimento as a failed revolution, claiming that the novel's view on these historical events is much more ambiguous.

Following *I Viceré*, our critic takes a close look at *L'imperio* (Chapter 5), De Roberto's unpublished, unrevised and probably his most negatively criticized novel. To those critics who have found in *L'imperio* traces of the author's political immaturity, Pagliaro responds that this novel "constitutes an important step in De Roberto's attempt to take the modern novel to the next phase and develop a narrative technique which draws together 'il romanzo puramente psicologico', as he says in his interview with Ugo Ojetti" (Pagliaro, 11).

The final chapter of *The Novels of Federico De Roberto: from Naturalism to Modernism*, is dedicated to *Spasimo* and *La messa di nozze*. Once again Pagliaro focuses on De Roberto's female characters, and once again her analysis diverges from that of other critics who see in the author's female protagonists the central characters who possess redeeming qualities, seeing them instead as "vehicles through which the complexities of the male intellect are exalted" (Pagliaro, 12).

In conclusion, Annamaria Pagliaro's monograph is a welcomed reevaluation of Federico De Roberto's journalistic, theoretical and fictional works, in which his attempts to advance the modern novel are fully recognized. Pagliaro is not afraid to question those critics who have dismissed De Roberto's literary production as fragmented, proving instead the cohesiveness of his works.

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«Forse che sì forse che no». Gabriele d'Annunzio a Mantova. Atti del Convegno di studi nel primo centenario della pubblicazione del romanzo. A cura di Rodolfo Signorini. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2011. Pp.123. ISBN 9788822261045. € 20.

Gli articoli inclusi negli Atti del convegno coprono una grande varietà di argomenti che rendono questa pubblicazione particolarmente interessante. Gli autori vanno da argomenti immediatamente incentrati su d'Annunzio e sul suo romanzo *Forse che sì forse che no*, all'influenza del romanzo sullo scrittore moderno Nuvoletti e a considerazioni sul degrado del palazzo ducale di Mantova descritto da d'Annunzio. Tutti gli articoli sono il risultato di ricerche approfondite e offrono nuove prospettive su d'Annunzio e la sua opera.

Annamaria Andreoli (*Modernità tra Bibbia e folklore alle origini del romanzo*