



# **Fictive Mediation And Mediated Fiction in the Novels of Giovanni Verga (Studies in Italian Literature)**

*Darby Tench*

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## **Fictive Mediation And Mediated Fiction in the Novels of Giovanni Verga (Studies in Italian Literature)** Darby Tench

This book addresses the question of mediation as it emerges through Verga's narrative and theoretical works from many different and interrelated perspectives. The most prominent literary theorists used by Prof. Tench are Michele Serres and Mikhail Bakhtin. These theories are reinforced, together with many others, and re-emerge throughout the book. Darby Tench has written an important book. "Fictive Mediation and Mediated Fiction in The Novels of Giovanni Verga" is not only a study of one of Italy's most original nineteenth-century novelists, but also a thought-provoking reflection on realism in general. To my knowledge, no other critic before Professor Tench has ever attempted a reading of Giovanni Verga's narrative by using the concept of mediation. Her reading of Verga's narrative, and *I Malavoglia* in particular, is extremely original, and I think it will have a long lasting impact on Verga scholarship. The study shows a rare talent for close reading of literary texts, combined with an exemplary mastery of critical theory. The book is beautifully written, in a style full of metaphors and subtle references to a wide range of fictional and theoretical texts. It is a real pleasure to read, although it is not an easy book. Chapter Three and the first two sections of Chapter Four are truly outstanding. In these 100 pages, Darby Tench gives her most important contribution to Verga studies. In other respects, "Fictive Mediation and Mediated Fiction" reads like a long essay. The four chapters are closely linked, primarily addressing the question of mediation as it emerges through Verga's narrative and theoretical works (mainly prefaces and letters) from different and interrelated perspectives. The most prominent literary theorists invoked by Professor Tench are Michel Serres - in particular his text "The Parasite" - Rene Girard, and Mikhail Bakhtin. However, these theories are not merely "displayed" in the introductory chapter. On the contrary, they constantly reinforce, together with many other theorists, the author's reading of Verga's narrative, reemerging continuously throughout the book.

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