

PRESS RELEASE

“L’infinita scienza di Leopardi”: a new book about a novel point of view on the poet from Recanati and his passion for astronomy, chemistry and the infinite

The book will be previewed on Saturday 26 October at the Ubik bookstore in Trieste. The author, alongside the historian Gaspare Polizzi, is the theoretical physicist Giuseppe Mussardo whose figure of scientist and intellectual will be celebrated in an important conference at the ICTP from 23 to 25 October in the presence of some of the greatest names in Physics



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“This book offers a fresh look at an outstanding author who left us immortal poems, but there is definitely something more about Leopardi. Getting closer to him, one discovers that he was an exceptional intellectual, able to admirably merge science and literature. His scientific training and his deep interest in



scientific topics inevitably emerged later in many of his writings". This is how Professor Giuseppe Mussardo, theoretical physicist at SISSA and multifaceted intellectual himself (besides being a renowned scientist, he is also a writer, photographer and author of different documentaries) speaks of his new book "L'infinita scienza di Leopardi". The book, published by Scienza Express and written together with Gaspare Polizzi, a historian of philosophy and science and prominent scholar of the poet from Recanati, will be previewed at the Ubik bookstore in Trieste on Saturday 26 October 2019 from 6.30 pm.

Leopardi and his passion for science

This book is meant to be "A journey to discover the great scientific passions of Leopardi: his attraction for the Moon, the Cosmo, its stars and galaxies; his fascination for the chemistry and the countless transformations of the matter; his thoughts about the infinite". On the other hand, explains Giuseppe Mussardo, "Since high-school, we have been told many things about him, his interests and his life, but rarely we have had the opportunity to get to know Leopardi as someone who looked at the fascinating phenomena of Nature mixing philosophical and strictly scientific questions. Above all, as a teenager, his interests lay in many different scientific disciplines, which he approached with a rational spirit and a sharp analytical attitude. Indeed, it is quite amazing to discover how he was able to understand the discoveries and the very deep scientific reflections made by a great thinker and scientist as Lavoisier, of whom he appreciated his thorough studies and revolutionary innovations, such as the formulation of the chemical nomenclature, entirely due to this great French scholar".

The book also offers the opportunity to explore in detail the three scientific themes that Leopardi found particularly intriguing: astronomy, chemistry and the infinite. "In the book, besides Leopardi and his poetic world, we take also the opportunity to discuss the present scientific knowledge on these three great topics, which of course Leopardi could not at the time, but which two centuries later offers us a wealth of ideas as well as fascinating new perspectives. Indeed, there are still many of challenges and open problems in the study of the universe and the matter, accompanied as well as by great questions in mathematics as: the scientific panorama given in the text we believe will be of great interest to readers". The book avails of numerous appendices, aiming to provide a closer look at particular topics, such as the nature of comets, the important discoveries which shaped the modern cosmology, the nature of irrational numbers or the vertigo of the infinite, and it also enriched by several sets of beautiful images and photographic contributions.

“The wonders of theoretical physics” at the ICTP

The release of Giuseppe Mussardo’s book coincides with another important appointment to celebrate his exceptional scientific career on his sixtieth birthday. The conference entitled “The Wonders of Theoretical Physics” will be held at the International Centre of Theoretical Physics Abdus Salam (ICTP) from 23 to 25 October, in which many aspects of theoretical and statistical physics will be discussed, areas in which Professor Mussardo has made great contributions. These include, among others, two-dimensional quantum field theories, exactly solvable and integrable models, non-equilibrium quantum systems, low-dimensional cold atoms, topological quantum computation and, more recently, the connection between number theory and physics.

Colleagues, co-workers, students of the PhD course of the past and of the present PhD course in Statistical Physics which Giuseppe Mussardo has promoted at SISSA since 2005 and managed until 2015, will get together to celebrate him with some of the greatest world scientists in statistical physics and mathematics. These include John Cardy, winner of the Onsager prize and the Boltzmann and Dirac medals, Alexander Zamolodchikov, winner of the Onsager prize and Dirac medal, and Don Zagier, winner of the Cole Prize in the Theory of Numbers.

IMAGE

Credits: Scienza Express

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