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Della fortuna delle parole by Giuseppe Manno; Bruno Migliorini

Review by: Joseph G. Fucilla

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he hears echoes of Manzoni's historical masterpiece, but he justifies Bacchelli, who was endeavoring to produce a lasting work of art in a field in which Manzoni had established and marked *termini altissimi*.

Far from turning the essay into a résumé, in pages rich in perception and poetic penetration Menapace succeeds in bringing the reader to the heart and soul of Bacchelli's most multiform novel, whose faults are few, whose virtues many. The best chapters of the essay are those titled *Dell'Italia* and *Sintassi e lessico del "Mulino del Po."* In the latter he approves Bacchelli's forsaking of the academy in order to be with the people, especially the people *del veneto*. The bibliographical summary is exhaustive.—*Donato Internoscia*. The University of Akron.

✎ Dario Ortolani. *Sole bianco*. Milano.

Garzanti. 1947. 187 pages.—Realistically descriptive, this book is read, not for the action, but for Ortolani's poetically forceful style and philosophic observations ("Anche il passo del viandante sulle formiche obbedisce alla volontà divina"). Conversation is rare: a line or two in the midst of picturesque pages. The novel takes ethereal shape around a "Casa dell'Ospitalità" while the Italian war in Africa echoes far and near. The action becomes interesting, even tense, in the core of the book, where Giovanna enters the "Casa" with her physically tempting attractiveness. The heat and glare of the "white sun" causes a young priest to lose his judgment, but the blame is placed at Giovanna's door. Sensual and sensuous, Ortolani lingers long on Giovanna's charms, and on the unpleasant odors arising from the unsanitary outskirts of the sixteen-house village.—*Donato Internoscia*. The University of Akron.

✎ B. Curato. *Sessant'anni di teatro in Italia*. Milano. Denti. 1947. 365 pages.—The sub-title of this book is *Da Giovanni Verga a Ugo Betti*, and the author offers a fuller treatment of this pe-

riod than has appeared before. He opens with a detailed analysis of the influence of the French playwrights on the Italian school of *verismo*, and shows that they were responsible for a new type of heroine. His estimate of Roberto Bracco is higher than that of Silvio d'Amico, who will only admit that Bracco wrote one good play, *Il piccolo santo*. He finds all D'Annunzio's plays turgid and false in sentiment except *La figlia di Jorio*, concerning which, however, he agrees with Borgese that it is the finest description of humanity ever written by a playwright who knows humanity only by sight.

On Pirandello he writes an excellent chapter, pointing out, however, that no treatment of Pirandello can ever be either exhaustive or completely satisfactory.

There is a most illuminating chapter on the contemporary dramatists, and finally a whole chapter is devoted to the work of Ugo Betti, in whom Curato sees the poet who may be the precursor of a new drama. He feels that both dramatic writers and critics were injured by the political dictatorship in Italy. It must however be remembered that Marco Praga had complained as early as 1919 about the lowered standards in the theater.

Particularly valuable is the appended critical bibliography of the principal works on the Italian theater written between 1911 and 1942.—*Beatrice Corrigan*. University of Toronto.

✎ Giuseppe Manno. *Della fortuna delle parole*. 2 vols. Bruno Migliorini, ed. Roma. Tumminelli. 1947. 343 pages.—Reading Manno's book used to be one of the favorite pastimes of nineteenth century Italians. This is attested by the fact that it went through nine editions in approximately fifty years, from 1831 to 1884. What does the volume contain to make it so enticing? There is no doubt that the explanation lies in our author's fascination with words and their meanings, a part of which he succeeded in communicating to others. He

further adorned his subject with a polished style, a pure Italian, philosophical and moral observations, liberal quotations from Latin and Italian classics, and a ready wit. His source materials are the best etymologists that immediately preceded him: Du Cange, Ménage, Voss, Muratori, Salvini, as well as the Latins, Varro, Aulus Gellius, Festus, and Servius.

Some four hundred words are here discussed in families or in groups showing changes in meanings. Erroneous etymologies are few in number. That the *Fortuna delle parole* should have attracted the attention of such an outstanding linguistic authority as Bruno Migliorini, who has taken pains to provide it with a preface and notes, is a real tribute to the excellence and lasting qualities of the book.—*Joseph G. Fucilla*. Northwestern University.

✂ *Damna scientiae hungaricae*. Budapest. Ministry of Culture and Public Instruction. 1947. 131 pages, large format, + 57 plates.—The public buildings of Budapest suffered greatly during the siege of 1944–45, largely because the Germans and the Hungarian Fascists fortified themselves in them and the buildings were largely destroyed in dislodging the defenders. This volume, published in four languages—Latin, English, French, and Russian—reminds the rest of the world that Hungary's scientific and cultural contribution has been considerable, but that it cannot be resumed unless there is outside aid for the restoration of her scientific and clinical equipment, her colleges and other schools, her libraries, and art collections. The full-page illustrations which constitute most of the volume show the ghastly effects of bombardment, looting, and weather. One of the most touching of the pictures is of a cozy little room in an art museum, with the handsome plush divan in the center piled high with snow because the roof is gone.—*R. T. H.*

✂ Einar Østvedt. *Christian Magnus Falsen: Linjen i hans politikk*. Oslo. Aschehoug. 1945. ix+654 pages.—In

his thorough analysis of Falsen, punctuated with quotations from and digests of Falsen's own writings, excerpts from the literary remains of Falsen's contemporaries, and generous quotation and syntheses of marked different points of view of historians of the last hundred years, Østvedt produces a complete portrait of the most controversial figure in modern Norwegian history.

By analyzing his educational background and by reconstructing his intellectual, social, and political environment, the biographer shows Falsen's strong sense of order, his general consistency, his devotion to duty in his numerous high offices, and his fervent patriotism, although Falsen's contemporaries generally taxed him with inefficiency, inconsistency, personal ambition, and even treason. Østvedt, in his scholarly, objective, and readable study, clearly delineates Falsen's limitations, but he does not make it clear why Falsen's motives were so often misinterpreted.—*Sverre Ares-tad*. University of Washington.

✂ Paul Rivet. *As origens do homem americano*. São Paulo. Instituto Progresso. 1948. 123 pages.—Translation of a work by the French anthropologist noted for his explorations in the Amazon regions of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The book is described as a synthesis of Rivet's longer studies. The Portuguese version is by Paulo Duarte.—*Samuel Putnam*. Lambertville, N. J.

✂ Luiz Silva e Albuquerque. *Seis destinos embalados pelo amor*. Curitiba. Guaira. 1948. 150 pages.—A novel which, so the author informs us, contains "o enfecho de minh'alma," and he adds: "minh'alma constitue o brilhante lapidado pelas peregrinas virtudes de minha esposa. . . ." This is a good summary of the book. The author, a member of various literary societies, is known also as a poet.—*Samuel Putnam*. Lambertville, N. J.

✂ Manuel Bandeira. *Mafua de Malungo. Jogos onomásticos e outros versos de circunstância*. Rio de Janeiro. Livro