Novecento and the Contemporary Period (Narrative and Theatre)

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1 General

2015 marks the centenary of Italy’s entry into WWI in 1915, the year in which many artists and writers such as Scipio Slataper, Giosuè Borsi, Renato Serra, Emilio Ricci and Filippo Corridoni lost their lives at the front. In the same year, the writer Luigi Capuana died and two literary critics, Maria Corti and Luciano Foà, were born. The year also marks the 50th anniversary of the publishing house Oscar Mondadori. In 2015 several publications on regional theatre appeared, indicating a new and growing interest in small productions. Marika Di Cesare, Il teatro Apollo-Piermarini di Foligno. La storia, la musica, gli spettacoli (1827–1944), Perugia, Morlacchi u.p., 237 pp., traces the history of the local theatre in Foligno, of which all but the façade was destroyed in 1944, looking at its artistic production from melodrammi to operette and plays. Teatro della tosse 1975–2015: 40 anni di ..., ed. Matteo Paoletti, Savignone, Grafiche g, 142 pp., is a beautiful book full of illustrations, pictures, sketches, and drawings that testify to the artistic production of this famous theatre in Genoa. Dieci anni di Pim 2005–15: Teatro e antis di uno spazio off, ed. Roberto Rizzente and Antonella Cagali, Bologna, Cue P., 230 pp., is the original history of ten years of an alternative theatre in Milan that is also a centre of culture, experimentation, and innovation. Mimma Valentino, Il nuovo Teatro in Italia: 1976–1985, Corazzano, Titivillus, 579 pp., is a welcome and important contribution to the history and experiences of the new Italian theatre between the years 1976 and 1985, 1976 being important for the ‘Postavanguardia’ and 1985 for the consolidation of new groups. Daniela Cavallaro, ‘Before Filumena: Paola Riccora’s Neapolitan Prostitutes’, Italica, 92.1:43–46, investigates prostitutes as main characters in the plays by Paola Riccora which may have inspired Eduardo De Filippo’s Filumena Marturano. Flora Pitrolo, ‘A Theatre of Many Dimensions: The Italian New Spectacularity and the Inhabitable Image’, NTQ, 67.4:625–642, looks at the use of space in some productions of the early 1980s of two companies, La Gaia Scienza based in Rome and Falso Movimento based in Naples. Drawing on Fredric Jameson’s views on postmodern ‘spatialization’, she tries to answer questions about space and architecture. Luigi G. Ferri, ‘The Dialectal Microcosm of the Cortile in the Theater of the Legnanesi’, SAB, 77.3–4:101–117. Antologia teatrale, ed. Antonia Lezza, Annunziata Acanfora, and Carmela Lucia, Naples, Liguori, 294 pp., is a collection of essays on different aspects of Italian theatre: rewriting, text interpretation, relationship between theatre and direction, philology and language, radio drama and regional theatre. Non finito, opera interrotta e modernità, ed. Anna Dolfi, Florence U.P., 660 pp., collects essays on unfinished projects, journals, notes, and letters by writers such as Gadda, Blake, Leonardo, Morante, Pirandello, and D’Annunzio, showing how these writings allow new interpretations of their work. C’era una volta la terza pagina, ed. Daniela De Liso and Raffaele Giglio, Florence, Cesati, 486 pp., collects the proceedings of a 2013 Naples conference on the literary column in some of the most important newspapers for which writers such as Brancati, Buzzati, Pasolini and Luzi used to write. The essays, with a nostalgic tone, focus on the
importance of these columns from a cultural and literary point of view. The phenomenon of emigration and the American myth are explored in two well written books: Jane Dunne, *The ‘mito americano’ and Italian Literary Culture under Fascism*, Ariccia, Aracne, 564 pp., explores the importance and contradictions of the ‘American Myth’ during Fascism for writers, politicians, journalists and film directors; Paola Calicelli, *Mal d’America: scrittrici italiane dell’emigrazione*, Florence, Le lettere, 176 pp., looks at the relationship between migration and literature through three women writers of the first part of the last century: Maria Messina, Lina Pietravalle, and Paola Drigo, who wrote about the emigration process through the eyes of the women who stayed behind, with an appendix of texts by two Italian American writers who actually travelled to the US, Sister Blandina Segale and Helen Barolini. Migration and its relationship with narration is also the subject of Lucia Quaquarelli, *Narrazione e migrazione*, Milan, Morellini, 95 pp. Ivan Pupo, *Crimini familiari scena teatrale: Ibsen, Pirandello, De Filippo*, Naples, Ligouri, xvii + 225 pp., investigates hypocrisies, crimes, tricks, violence, cruelties and the obsessions of the middle-class families portrayed in some of the most famous works of these playwrights in order to highlight and understand better the family dynamics of the ‘dramma borghese’. Paolo Puppa, *La parola alta. Sul teatro di Pirandello e D’Annunzio*, Bologna, Cue P., 181 pp., is a collection of previously published essays that have in common the analysis of the theatrical production of **P**. and **D.**, especially the way they use language, and the relationship between their scripts and the actual acting. *Rubriche d’autore: Boine, Calvino, Campanile, de Céspedes, Flaiano, Manganelli, Marzini, Morante, Palazzeschi, Serao*, ed. Valentina Russi, Rome, Vecchiarelli, 366 pp., is a collection of ten essays exploring the relationship between famous authors and periodicals, in particular the columns they wrote for important periodicals and the ties with their literary production, revealing how much of this was used in future literary collections or literary works. *Bribes de mémoire: Giorgio Bassani e dintorni*, ed. Pérette-Cécile Buffaria, Paris, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 138 pp., is a collection of articles on the place of memory in the tradition of Modern and Contemporary Italian literature of such writers as **B.**, Foscolo, Gadda, Tomasi di Lampedusa and Levi. *Gendering Commitment: Re-thinking Social and Ethical Engagement in Modern Italian Culture*, ed. Alex Standen, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars, 143 pp., is a collection of essays that looks at intellectuals’ commitment or ‘impegno’ to society through art in a broad sense: literature, criticism, and journalism. The aim is to revisit the canon by giving voice not only to ‘female impegno’, but also ‘queer, globalize and postcolonial impegno’. Andrea Righi, *Italian Reactionary Thought and Critical Theory: An Inquiry into Savage Modernities*, New York, Palgrave, 223 pp. Futurism is the object of literary investigation in the thought-provoking volume by Dario Tomasello, *Il futurismo letterario: storia e geografia dell’avanguardia italiana*, Avellino, Sinestesie, 129 pp., and in Ryan Helterbrand, ‘Ecstasies of War: Anti-Fascism in Italian Futurist Performance, 1909–1919’, *Italica*, 92.4:857–873, who investigates anti-fascist tendencies inside the Futurist Movement, the Italian avant-garde experience that began in 1909, often neglected because of the adherence in the following years to fascist ideology. Mariangela Tartaglione, *Nel nome della madre: Neera, Sibilla Aleramo, Alba de Céspedes e Anna Banti*, Ariccia, Aracne, 132 pp., explores maternal experiences in the work of some of the most interesting Italian writers and how much of their personal experiences is turned into fiction. Monica Seger, *Landscapes in Between: Environmental Change in Modern Italian Literature and Film*, Toronto U.P., viii + 196 pp., positions herself at the centre of the ecocritical debate by investigating the changed Italian landscape, much of it ruined by years of pollution and faulty urban planning that has been in place since the industrialization of