of English idiom falters, Mazza deserves praise for producing a representative sample of Pasolini's later poetry.

JOHN P. WELLE

University of Notre Dame

Rocco Capozzi and Mario M. Mignone, eds. *Homage to Moravia*. Stony Brook, N.Y.: Forum Italicum, 1993.

The present volume is the fifth in *Forum Italicum*'s FilibRARY Series and contains eleven articles collected from North American and Italian Moravia critics as well as an interview with Dacia Maraini. As the editors state in the Preface, the tribute does not revolve around any specific subject or motif. Instead, the response to a call for papers to commemorate the author's death produced "articles and notes which do not duplicate topics discussed by others [. . . and] the material submitted covered a fairly large panorama of Moravia's literary production." The volume's outstanding feature is its consistent reference to the existing critical framework while presenting "aspects of Moravia's works which have received relatively little critical attention."

"Moravia nell'esistenzialismo italiano" (C. Benussi), "La 'grammatica' degli *Indifferenti*" (M. Bertone), "Voyeurism and Intertextuality as Narrative Strategies in Moravia's Latest Works" (R. Capozzi), "Moravia: le contraddizioni di un'intelligenza aggressiva e impaziente" (M. Lunetta), and "Moravia / Manganelli e la *querelle* tra leggibilità e illeggibilità" (G. Menechella) deal with the novels; "Moravia surrealista satirico: qualche appunto critico" (L. Fontanella), "'La faccia da cameriere': an Existential Glance at Two of Moravia's Waiters" (J.D. Le Blanc), and "Moravia and the Middle Class: the Case of 'Seduta spiritica'" (H. Moss) treat the short stories; "*Il dio Kurt*, ed altri percorsi sulla scena moraviana" (E. Ugnani) concerns itself with the plays; "Moravia, Prezzolini, e l'America: commento a *Vita di Moravia*" (L. Rebay) is essentially a book review; finally, "Alberto Moravia as Journalist: 1930-1935" (L. Kibler) and "Incontro con Dacia Maraini (a cura di R. Capozzi)" integrate biography and literature, as does the Rebay contribution.

Articles dealing with Moravia's novels are, as one would expect, more numerous and, in this, *Homage to Moravia* tends to reflect the pattern, if not the substance, of Moravia criticism over the decades. Nevertheless, there is an impressive coherence and intertextual connectedness among the essays that comment on a variety of topics. Benussi explores the "non poche coincidenze con una gnoseologia già espressa da Dostoevskij in narrativa e da Kierkegaard in filosofia" with respect to *Gli indifferenti* — perhaps Moravia's most studied novel. The critic emphasizes the novel's depiction of a search for "authentic life" amid the superficiality and conformity of middle-class behavioral norms and establishes an equivalency between this quest for authenticity and the thought of Dostoevskij and Kierkegaard where Benussi locates "la denuncia della contraddizione dei momenti della vita interiore che non trova più suture tra sé e la società." Taking also into account *Le ambizioni sbagliate*, Benussi concludes: "avendo modificato i termini del conflitto dostoevskiano [Moravia] sembra allinearsi su posizioni assai vicine a quelle dell'esistenzialismo novecentesco." Along similar philosophical lines, Lunetta develops his critique of the tendency among critics to assert a parallelism between Sartre and Mo-

ravia as he interprets *La noia*. To a certain extent, Lunetta's argument contrasts with that of Benussi, although the two critics are discussing different novels. Lunetta's stance on Moravian existentialism hangs on his perception of an "incongruenza . . . per la palese sproporzione di spessore filosofico che c'era tra l'esistenzialismo involontario di Moravia e l'esistenzialismo consapevole, militante e volontario di Sartre."

Whereas the articles presented in the preceding paragraph concern themselves with defining Moravia's "realismo metafisico," the remaining pieces devoted to Moravia's novels are more technical or stylistic in the methodology applied. Bertoni's essay highlights the "peculiarità linguistico-strutturali notevoli fino ad ora non pienamente sviscerate, ma tali da sovvertire lo statuto ormai accettato, assodato di narrazione apparentemente 'normale'," with respect to *Gli indifferenti*. As well, Bertone introduces a theme that is taken up by several other critics in this volume; namely, the nature of Moravia's "experimentalism" which here resides in the "grammar" of the text (not to be taken in the same way that Todorov uses the term). She argues effectively that there exists an "assemblaggio non casuale di una serie di fatti linguistici . . . e di fatti strutturali . . . la cui analisi consente di appurare in che cosa consista l'originalità narrativa del romanzo colto nel suo 'farsi'." Complementing Bertoni's critique is Menechella's gloss on the role played by Moravia in the Gruppo 63 debate on the legibility of the experimental text. Against Manganelli's rejection of Moravia's novels as traditional middle-class fare whose structures must be demolished in the name of modernity, Moravia's view is that illegibility, a common characteristic of neo-avant-garde texts, "è uno strumento di potere/sopraffazione sulla/contro l'ignoranza di massa" which Moravia rejects by continuing to insist on a coherent story to be narrated and by introducing some experimental techniques of his own, such as those explored in Bertoni's article.

Also concerned with technique is Capozzi who explores voyeurism as a narrative strategy in *L'attenzione* and *L'uomo che guarda*. According to his theory, voyeuristic imagery is correlated to the process of telling and to that of knowing. He writes: "Moravia's narrator/protagonists . . . seem obsessed with wanting to disclose their selves while attempting to know the Other." By scrutinizing this feature of Moravia's novels, Capozzi's work resonates with the efforts of Bertoni and Menechella who direct their critical attention toward the task of defining the experimental aspects of Moravia's narrative. In stressing voyeurism as a device of metanarrative, Capozzi succeeds in interpreting Moravia's work in the context of a postmodern aesthetic, thereby surpassing conventional criticism which usually concerns itself with an existential or psychological thematics. Capozzi underscores the notion that "voyeurism is a vehicle (a metaphor) for narrating" and as such is "a part of his favourite narrative strategies used to fabulate metafictional stories in which he analyzes social and existential themes." In adopting a narratological approach, the critic asserts Moravia's deviation from traditional diegesis.

Fontanella and Le Blanc also discuss Moravia's narrative, but they prefer to isolate features of the *Racconti romani*. Fontanella examines "I sogni del pigro" and "L'epidemia" — written between 1935 and 1945 — in order to illustrate Moravia's experimentation with surreal fiction for the purpose of evading and, at the same time, satirizing Fascist censorship, in other words, "per esprimere le sue 'reazioni' creative . . . di intellettuale scomodo al regime." The critic goes on to point out that the surreal elements are combined with other components such as the grotesque, the metaphysical and the moralizing. In the meantime, Le Blanc's essay compares the figure of the waiter in two of Moravia's short stories, "Il pensatore" and "Le sue giornate," drawing "[c]onnections between Sartre's brand of existentialism and that of Moravia's fiction" which, as the critic notes,

"have often been suggested, but usually dismissed." Le Blanc's thesis is that there is, indeed, a correlation on the basis of the concept of "mauvaise foi," although the specific ontological rationalizations differ. He defines the key term of "mauvaise foi" in the following manner: "Both of Moravia's waiters are in bad faith. Both regard their own transcendence, their own freely chosen acts, as contingent phenomena which are beyond their control" whereas, as Le Blanc states, "[d]eterminism has no place in Sartre's universe." In pursuing this line of interpretation, the Le Blanc essay relates intertextually to those in the present volume which consider the existentialist content of Moravia's work.

Despite the fact that the title of Moss's article mentions the short story "Seduta spiritica," the critical observations he makes are valid across the board for Moravia's work; in fact, the piece integrates references to *Racconti romani* and references to the novels, demonstrating the inherent interdependence of the narrative writings. Moss considers the question of whether or not Moravia expresses a moral judgment as regards his protagonists: members of the middle class. He resolves the issue by taking the short story indicated above as a model and proceeds to refute the view that the tale reflects the author's preoccupation with the "corruption of the bourgeoisie." He counters with the opinion that "[t]he story seems to provide little evidence that the writer's concern is to put across a specifically class-based or ideological message." By rejecting the notion of a class-specific malaise, in favour of a universal sense of alienation, Moss participates in the discourse on existentialism and Moravia already noted.

As stated, Ugnani's text deals with Moravia's "episodic" but not "marginal" experimentation with the theatre genre. The essay falls in line with the general orientation of many of the other essays in *Homage to Moravia* on two scores: it is "rappresentativo della concezione moraviana di un teatro che fosse dibattito filosofico" and it formulates a psychological reading of "il dramma edipico di Kurt." Ugnani does, however, caution the reader that "una lettura esclusivamente psicanalitica rischia di appiattire il significato del dramma." Her critique also embraces other plays such as *La mascherata*, *Beatrice Cenci*, *Il mondo è quello che è*, *L'intervista*, and *La vita è gioco*. Her conclusion is: "Non mi pare . . . che la critica si sia sforzata di comprendere questo teatro per quello che è."

Rounding out the volume are the texts of Kibler and Rebay, both of which merge biography and literary analysis. Kibler examines Moravia's career as a journalist from 1930 to 1935 and repudiates the critical label of "travel articles" commonly applied to Moravia's submissions to *La Stampa* and *La Gazzetta del Popolo*. Kibler's intention is stated clearly as: "an initial effort to fill a scholarly gap in Moravia studies by describing the newspaper articles written during the early thirties and by demonstrating . . . how these varied journalistic pieces illuminate the thought, the character, and the art of the young novelist." Kibler cites in particular Moravia's powers of observation which permit him to take note of the boredom, monotony, and "noia" of modern life and thereby exhibit "most of the ideas and many of the characters of the later writer and man." Rebay reviews *Vita di Moravia*, published in 1990, calling it "il tributo desolato e desolante che Moravia ci lascia del tempo che lui trascorse a New York nel 1936." Rebay is rather critical of the text for what he considers to be egregious omissions. He finds it astonishing that neither Prezzolini's *Diaries* of 1978 and 1980, nor his *Letters* of 1982 were apparently consulted for information about Moravia: "è un vero peccato che di tutto questo non traspia nulla in quello che è purtroppo l'ultimo libro di Moravia — la storia della sua vita raccontata in *extremis*." The absent material to which Rebay alludes are passages in the letters to Prezzolini in which Moravia communicates his observations on American culture. In the same biographical vein, Capozzi's interview with Dacia Maraini is

perhaps too short to shed new light on the writings of Moravia. Nevertheless, the interviewer does manage to blend questions about Moravia's relationships with the women in his life with questions about the author's attitude toward women in his novels.

Although it could have been proofread more carefully, *Homage to Moravia* is a skillful blend of traditional and contemporary critical methodologies which amply attests to the continuing relevance and versatility of one of Italy's most prolific modern writers. The volume's coherence (not frequently found in such a collection of essays on diverse topics) derives from the continual consideration of critical opinion on a given aspect of Moravia's work and from the persistent discussion conducted on the issue of experimentation. Given the interplay between views already formulated and views never before advanced, the text edited by Capozzi and Mignone merits serious reading by both the Moravia specialist and non-specialist alike.

CORRADO FEDERICI

Brock University

Caterina Cicogna. *Un proverbio al giorno. Il libro per lo studente*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: U of Toronto P, 1992. Pp. xi, 95.

Caterina Cicogna. *Un proverbio al giorno. Il libro per il docente*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: U of Toronto P, 1992. Pp. xvi, 95.

As stated in the preface to the workbook, *Un proverbio al giorno* claims "to increase the student's ability to speak proverbial and idiomatic Italian while, at the same time, offering students an opportunity to relate language to culture, given that the essence of a cultural mindset can be discovered in its proverbs and idioms." The book is designed to be used by intermediate and advanced students of Italian as an instructor-mediated, supplementary language practice manual and a cultural reader in the broadest sense of the word.

Each of the twelve units is structured around a specific proverb. Related proverbs and idiomatic expressions are also interspersed throughout the unit. The images associated with each proverb and idiomatic expression are divided into their constituent semantic categories, so that the student acquires the structure of figuration in Italian both progressively and methodically.

Variety is the hallmark of this workbook as it attempts to nip boredom in the bud through a series of written and oral activities based on receptive/perceptual and productive skills. The exercises in each unit encourage as many as five types of activities: comprehension, vocabulary-building, personal reactions, discussion (or composition) and individual or group projects. The author has endeavoured to maintain student interest by varying exercise formats, and discourages the tendency to revert to English by using only Italian throughout the exercises. The exercises have been designed to elicit creative rather than simple mechanical responses, and a serious effort has been made to provide ample stimuli for the development of oral communication skills.

The exercises in the workbook are divided into four sections. In the first, *Messaggio ricevuto*, the exercises are of two types: fill-in-the blank with the appropriate Italian word in a given context and various comprehension questions related to the proverb. While the latter is not difficult, the former presents the students with excellent but challenging