Norma, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *La Traviata*. This is due to the reduction of tragedy to its most essential forms, subsequently strengthened by orchestral music of true genius which continues to reach the public by sublimating the tragic discourse through musical notes.

Francesco Spera has produced a well-researched, balanced, and insightful study of Italian tragic theatre. Rich in socio-historical detail and references to contemporary criticism, this study, that won him the 1992 "Val di Comino" prize in Italy, deserves to be consulted by all scholars of theatre and to be placed on the required reading list of all university courses dealing with the subject.

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Aldo Palazzeschi. *Man of Smoke*. Trans. and introd. Nicolas J. Perella and Ruggero Stefanini. New York: Italica Press, 1992. Pp. xxv, 232.

As the translators rightly acknowledge in the thorough and informative introduction to this text, of Italy's major twentieth-century writers Aldo Palazzeschi is perhaps the least known to the English-speaking world. This thoughtful translation of his early *Codice di Perelà* will certainly contribute to rendering Palazzeschi more accessible to Anglophone students and readers.

The introduction offers the main background information on Palazzeschi, outlining his formative years as an actor in the touring company of Virgilio Talli, his association with Filippo T. Marinetti's Futurist Movement, his sojourns in Paris and his extensive literary contributions in both poetry and prose. The translators take great care to situate Palazzeschi in a historico-critical framework also, duly noting that the author's name quickly and most often brings to mind the novel *Sorelle Materassi*, "written in a fairly traditional mode" (xi), and not *Il Codice di Perelà*, "one of the century's most radically innovative masterpieces" (xi). If literary critics today do not fail to acknowledge this experimental 1911 anti-novel, the translators note that this acknowledgement is quite recent, dating back only to the late 1950s.

A section dedicated to the style of *Man of Smoke*, the work Palazzeschi always referred to as his "aerial fairy tale" (xii), alerts the reader to the revolutionary formal aspects of the work: the extraordinary theatricalization of the novel (only a few of the 18 chapters are truly narrative [xii]), the extensive use of dialogue and direct discourse, "without a guiding authorial voice" (xii), and the "surrealistic, fairy-tale atmosphere" (xii), which stand out in Palazzeschi's satire of modern society and human nature in general. It is observed that the classic fairy-tale mode employed by Palazzeschi here "functions as an ironic (and paradoxical) metaphor of existence and of the world as a farcical penitentiary" (xiii).

In the discussion of these formal innovations as well as of *Perelà* as a symbol of the liberating force of the imagination, literary enthusiasts will appreciate the parallels drawn with and the allusions to Manuel Puig's *The Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Rossini's *opera buffa*, Collodi's *Adventures of Pinocchio* and Calvino's *The Cloven Viscount*, *The Nonexistent Knight* and *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*. The role of the protagonist as a stranger/*ingénu* in a strange land reminds the reader of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*

and Voltaire's *Candide*. In the discussion of Palazzeschi's tragicomic play on the lightness-heaviness opposition as well as in the discussion of Christological references, the translators make copious allusions to other literary works: Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Pirandello's *Enrico IV*, and Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*.

Most importantly, the introduction offers the reader/student the key to various levels of metaphorical interpretation: existential ("the weightless protagonist is a metaphor for the heaviness, that is, the pain, of existence" [xviii]); Christian (the "parodic *imitatio Christi*" entrusted with writing the New Code [xvii]), and autobiographical (Perelà as "a metaphor for Palazzeschi's homosexuality" [xviii]). The introduction closes with a brief, selected bibliography of critical studies on *Il Codice di Perelà*. It is mostly in Italian, however (a significant drawback for the Anglophone reader/student for whom the translation is intended), but does include the very recent monograph by A.J. Tamburri, *Of Saltimbanchi and Incendiari: Aldo Palazzeschi and Avant-Gardism in Italy* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1990).

After its initial publication in 1911 (Milano: Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia"), subsequent editions of Palazzeschi's novel appeared with Vallecchi in 1920, 1943 and 1954 and with Mondadori in 1958. Mondadori's republication of the novel in 1974 is the one selected as the definitive text for this translation.

As for the rendition in English, words which would be meaningless in translation are left in the original Italian, with the literal translation offered in parentheses, such as in the derivation of the protagonist's name, Perelà: Pena ["Pain"], Rete ["Net"], Lama ["Blade"]. Palazzeschi's own use of idioms in French ("Que tu es méchant!", for example), rendered in italics in the Italian edition, has been judiciously preserved in the original language and italicized format in this translation.

The language of the translation itself is fluid and unencumbered and captures the spirit and elan of Palazzeschi's original text: "— Voi sareste un uomo per caso? — No. Io sono una povera vecchia, un uomo per caso sarete voi. — È vero, è vero, scusate, avete ragione, voi siete una povera vecchia, un uomo sono io. — Voi che cosa siete? — Io sono leggero . . . un uomo leggero . . . tanto leggero . . ." (Milano: Mondadori, 1974: 5). "— Would you be a man, by chance? — No. I'm a poor old woman, you're probably a man by chance. — Quite so, quite so, forgive me, you're right. You're a poor old woman, I'm a man. — Just what are you? — I'm light . . . a light man . . . very, very light . . ." (1).

This work will be a welcome addition to any reading list for courses in twentieth-century Italian literature in translation, redressing a lacuna far too long neglected and we are all beholden to translators Perella (the felicitous appropriateness of Perella as translator of *Perelà* is inescapable!) and Stefanini for their perspicacity and diligence.

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