Gilardino has produced a book useful both for the facts expressed and for the deep understanding of the human and critical atmosphere of the time. The examination of Macpherson's own contribution fills a gap in Italian criticism.

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Margherita Marchione's first intention was to prepare a complete bibliography of the works of Giuseppe Prezzolini to honour him on his 100th birthday. But she decided later to enlarge the scope of her volume with the inclusion of 25 hitherto unpublished letters, mostly autobiographical in content. The editor realized that the letters do not present a finished portrait of Prezzolini's many-sided character but do, indeed, throw light on the least known period of Prezzolini's life, the years between 1926 and 1981, spent briefly in Paris, at length in the United States, followed by retirement on the Amalfi coast and finally in Lugano.

Prezzolini's letter of 28 June 1926 to Margherita Sarfatti, author of Dux, a biography, to some extent clarifies the relationship between the critic and Mussolini. Though he had once invited Mussolini to write a review for La Voce and had been impressed with his energetic style, Prezzolini maintained that he did not agree with the policies of Fascism or of its leader. In a letter written some months later, in November, Prezzolini pleaded with Mussolini to release Renzo Rendi, a political prisoner, who had served 6 years of a 12 year prison term for plotting against the Fascist regime.

Prezzolini's letters to colleagues picture a man hard at work on a number of projects, rarely satisfied with the results of his labours. He was disappointed, for example, that his 4-volume Repertorio bibliografico della storia e della critica della letteratura italiana dal 1902 al 1932, still considered a standard reference work, failed to attract Croce's notice. Prezzolini, refusing to write for Curzio Malaparte, founder in 1937 of Prospettive, argued that he was too used to writing for the layman in plain language which would not be acceptable for a learned journal.

In a letter to Giovanni Papini, written 5 July 1945 from Columbia University, but never mailed, Prezzolini states that he will never return to Italy, not because the country has been devastated by war and was now torn by political strife, but because Italians, who are charming as individuals, lack a social consciousness, concerned as they are solely with their own affairs. Two letters to Emilio Cecchi of 1946 and 1949 reveal the business-like attitude occasionally assumed by Prezzolini who expected to be paid in full for his work for publishers or newspapers. This was not the case with his friends. Prezzolini complains in a letter to Enrico Falqui, who had dedicated a special number of the Fiera letteraria to him, that the newspaper Tempo wanted Prezzolini to write some articles on Canada. The editors did not realize that Canada was much larger than the United
States when they offered to pay his expenses for a 3 day visit. Prezzolini refused the offer.

Almost 80 years old, Prezzolini tells Ardengo Soffici in a letter penned in 1961 that he now views their youthful achievements with skepticism, concluding that at La Voce they in no way influenced the course of history. Reflections on the second world war occupy more than half of a letter in 1965 to Dino Grandi, a key figure in the deposition of Mussolini in 1943. The same frank tone pervades a letter to Giorgio Amendola in 1975 in which he describes his happy working relationship with the publisher Longanesi and Il Borghese where he was permitted to write with the utmost freedom. Two letters are addressed to Margherita Marchione and relate how in 1962 Prezzolini and his wife spend their time in retirement at Vietri sul mare, near Salerno, and later in 1981 in Lugano, alone, ill and without friends. Prezzolini tells her that he must continue to work, despite his age, and that he has just undertaken to write 8 articles a month.

Margherita Marchione was a student of Prezzolini’s in the late 1950s. He directed her doctoral thesis at Columbia University on Clemente Rebora, which was later published as a book in 1960. Sister Margherita was the subject of an article of 28 July 1957 in Il Resto del Carlino by her teacher who then noted her fine aptitude for scholarship.

The bibliography compiled by Francesca Pino Pongolini composes the second half of the book which contains a list of editions, anthologies, manuals, translations, reprints, new editions and prefaces by Prezzolini together with his other contributions. The bibliography is a valuable guide to the work of Prezzolini who supplied the compiler with useful information on numerous entries.

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Chi ha finora seguito il cammino narrativo, silenzioso ed eletto, di Alfredo Obertello, potrebbe trovare in queste pagine su Chiavari una sintesi in chiave musicale delle tipiche componenti dello scrittore. Ritorna ancor qui, in forma per altro più sfumata, quella vena machiavellistica-umana che era dominante nei Frati minori (Vallecchi, 1955). Nella cerchia della vita conventuale venivano colti, di quei frati, oltre alla salda radice morale, gli aspetti singolari, talvolta un po’ bizzarri con tratti incisivi, da bulino, ma mai caricaturali, si che le figure rimanevano sempre incorporate nella atmosfera spirituale del convento.

Con “L’oro che è cibo” (Vita e Pensiero, 1957) la porta del convento si apre sul paese che è anche il mondo. Ritroviamo ancora il rifinimento del quadretto, la scrittura ricercata ed appuntita; si introducono simpatiche figure locali (il Pigna, Bacciollu, Geppe), variazioni familiari o note di cronaca quotidiana; nulladimeno si sfoltiscono i primi piani, la visione si apre su più ampi spazi poetici e profondamente umani. Pagine come quelle de Il signor Attilio costituiscono un felice e profondo punto di con-