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Divided into five chapters, Waddington's study goes into great detail about all the portraits. Regarding the two lost paintings, he derives all the available information from letters and contemporary descriptions. With the others, Waddington blends art history with historical studies, examining the documentation around the creation of the portraits. Additionally, he discusses the intended uses of the portraits, often as gifts to powerful individuals, and the book provides ample background on the political figures of the age. Waddington also writes exacting descriptions of the artworks, and this is where the inclusion of the color plates is a benefit. He is able to discuss Titian's color palette and artistic techniques, as well as incidental items such as jewelry and clothes, without losing his readers. For example, in the two major portraits, those held in the Fricke Gallery and Palazzo Pitti, respectively, Aretino wears a chain that was a gift from King Francis I of France. This characteristic allows Waddington to explore the nature of presents in the Cinquecento, broadening the study to be more than just analysis of the works of art. Instead, he launches into the wider issue of how political figures exerted soft power during the very decades they were also waging the Italian Wars. Part biography and part history, Waddington weaves together episodes from Aretino's life, historical events of the early sixteenth century, and Titian's portraiture.

In conclusion, Waddington's latest study demonstrates how important figures in the sixteenth century cannot be confined to only one field of academic study. Aretino was a major author, it is true, but he also involved the artistic community as a means to curry favor with kings and princes. He used the visual arts to enhance his public reputation, and in the process, he became an actor in the political machinations of the age. Hence, Waddington again makes an important contribution to the field of Aretino criticism.

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Bryan Brazeau, ed. *The Reception of Aristotle's* Poetics *in the Italian Renaissance and Beyond*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Pp. 299. ISBN 9781350078932.

This volume, part of the "Bloomsbury Studies in the Aristotelian Tradition" series directed by Marco Sgarbi, is the latest addition to the scholarship on Aristotle's legacy in the Renaissance and on early modern poetics in general that, in this past decade, developed especially thanks to projects carried out between the University

of Warwick, the Warburg Institute, and University of Ca' Foscari — all mentioned by the editor in the Introduction (5).

The volume has two main merits. The first is that it shows why and precisely how early modern poetics resist attempts to produce a comprehensive history of the kind that Bernard Weinberg published in 1961 with his seminal *History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*. The volume has Weinberg and his predecessors as its main interlocutors (and this fact alone speaks to how overdue a contribution like this is) and succeeds in providing not a "new monographic history of literary criticism" but rather "a space for dialogue," as Brazeau writes in the Introduction (6).

Weinberg's approach was rooted in the Chicago School of Criticism, which maintained that the method of Aristotle's *Poetics* — to identify what poetry's unique function is, as opposed to the function of neighboring fields like rhetoric, ethics, or psychology — should be at the heart of literary criticism in every age. As Lazarus demonstrates in his chapter, this leads Weinberg to consider early modern commentaries of the *Poetics* that appear not to conform to such a method, such as those of Robortello and Castelvetro, as wrong readings of Aristotle, with "little recognition … that Robortello's and Castelvetro's *Poetics* was no more or less a fixed point for them than Weinberg's was for him, little recognition that the Chicago School itself was equally vulnerable to the charge of trying to 'modernize' Aristotle … in a manner scarcely authorized by the Aristotelean text" (41).

Another bias is examined in Brljak's chapter, which studies how the scholarship by Burckhardt, Spingarn, and Weinberg placed the emergence of literature's aesthetic autonomy and modernity in the Renaissance, excluding from their studies several texts that employed allegory — a device felt as medieval and at odds with the notion of modernity — and thus producing an impasse: "A viable history of Renaissance poetics has not yet been because it cannot be written, since the very concept of the Renaissance … was formed without taking into account a substantial portion of the literary and literary-critical materials produced in the period it is supposed to cover" (87). This essay closes part 1 of the volume, which also includes a chapter by Baldassare, Gehl, and Markey that studies how Weinberg's work as a book collector intersected with his work as a critic.

Other chapters critique Weinberg's lack of concern with "the circumstances of the debates, personalities and related facts and dates influencing the documents" or with the "intricate dialogue" that each text entertains with the others (134, 137), as Gilson writes in his chapter. Such data are necessary to fully appreciate the critical value of some early modern texts of literary theory, as Gilson

demonstrates in relation to the documents concerning the quarrel over Dante in the Renaissance. This chapter is in part 2, which is dedicated to case studies that similarly indicate the need to go beyond broad accounts like those proposed by Weinberg, namely by focusing on manuscript sources (indeed, these are underrepresented in Weinberg's collection, as the chapter by Baldassare, Gehl, and Markey reveals). The chapter by Blocker studies a manuscript transcribing Vettori's Latin translation of the *Poetics* that was collectively annotated at the Accademia degli Alterati. The chapter by Van der Laan examines Lombardelli's annotations in a translation of the *Odyssey* and shows possible connections with Lombardelli's *Discorso* on Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*.

The essays in part 3 propose innovative approaches, but they still demonstrate how focusing on single authors and their evolution yields the most interesting results. Tylus examines the notion of *peregrinità* in Tasso's theoretical and poetic parabola. Brazeau's chapter revisits Castelvetro's commentary and translation of the *Poetics* with the tools of the history of emotions in order to reveal the subtle and complex psychological insights offered by this work.

The last chapter of part 3, by Ramachandran, suggests how early modern literary theory offers resources to address issues on which critics are still working today — for instance, the dichotomy between New Historicism and New Formalism. It is in observations like this that the second great merit of this book resides, that is, to show how fundamental questions about literature can benefit from reflections on early modern poetics. Particularly interesting are those passages that address the history of the notion of literature's aesthetic autonomy and its place within human learning, a crucial aspect of the debates on the so-called crisis of the humanities today. Rather than offering yet another new argument or solution, the chapters more usefully provide nuanced and analytical discussions of how these issues were already address by early modern poetics with sophisticated critical tools — for instance, whether and how we should ask "ethical and political questions of our curricular texts," as Lazarus observes after having reconstructed the problems with Weinberg's reading of the *Poetics* as a text defending literature's aesthetic autonomy (54), or to what extend we should take into account the historical, social, and authorial data surrounding a literary work.

Regardless of what our answers to such issues are, these discussions of literature's place in our world — from Aristotle's *Poetics* to today's academic curricula — demonstrate the difficulty of simply grouping literature with other *studia humanitatis* and the need to pay attention to its specificity as an artistic and

imaginative discipline when we debate on and defend the place of the humanities within human learning.

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Eden K. McLean. *Mussolini's Children: Race and Elementary Education in Fascist Italy.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. Pp. xvii + 320. ISBN 9781496206428.

Studying conjointly the "state-mandated youth culture" (2) and the concepts of race and biopolitics to examine the spreading of Fascist racial theories, *Mussolini's Children* attempts to show how Italian Fascism used pedagogy to shape "new generations of a strengthened Italian race" (17). Drawing on textbooks, notebooks, and pedagogical journals, Eden K. McLean provides a comprehensive picture of the elementary education system of the regime and its evolution during the Duce's vicennial dictatorship, 1922 to 1940.

The originality and relevance of McLean's book for the study of Fascism and the shaping of the Italian racial identity rests in the argument that the fascist state used pedagogy and education as "its primary tools […] to establish and impart discourses of racial identity and biopower" (24). Although this is a fascinating perspective, at the end of the book the reader is left wondering whether elementary education indeed played such a prominent role in the shaping of Fascism's racial policies that culminated in the Racial Laws of 1938.

The first section, titled "Defining Fascist Power and Identity, 1922–29," describes the revamping of the Italian educational system by neoidealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile and pedagogist Giuseppe Lombardo Radice. The extent to which the pair introduced a pedagogy aiming to create "models of the Italian race who could fulfil the demands of the fascist state" (25), thus seconding its racial ideals, is debatable. Indeed, the statement that Gentile's language and pedagogical principles "would prove valuable frameworks within which Mussolini's racial project would develop and thrive" (25) would best be supported by analyzing the lively debate on language, education, and national identity that informed at least the first three years of the thirties.