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Shakespeare's Fool: Praisers of Folly

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use of electric power, for example, or even in the consumption of sugar. Estimates of the current annual growth of the Philippine population range as high as 3.5%. How much knottier this makes the task of reducing poverty is better gauged by calling to mind that it is triple the U. S. rate (1.16%) and fully five times the rate in Western Europe (0.7%). Since the Philippine death rate has plenty of room for further decline—it is still at least 15/1000 per year—population will go on dragging heavily against the advance of per capita incomes.

The flora of the Philippines is, quite properly, the subject of many a part of this useful book; but only marine fauna comes in for explicit treatment—whence the epilogue of this review. From certain points of view the Philippines has been abundantly endowed by Almighty God: its fruits are celestial. Yet, here and there shadows do, indeed, darken the land: the islands are lapped by warm waters abounding in myriad forms of marine life, but not in the nutrients to support great schools of food fish. One sixth of the nation's area is grassland which, perversely, will not support herds—nor anything. Almost all its coal is soft, but one particular type of soft coal is missing—coking coal. Plentiful traces of petroleum have been uncovered, but no pools of the precious black mineral. Finally, the ratio of arable land to total surface is higher than the world's average, but tropical soils subject to steady, heavy rainfall are pitifully leached and eroded.

MICHAEL MCPHELIN

SHAKESPEARE'S FOOL

PRAISERS OF FOLLY. By Walter Kaiser. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963. xiii, 318 pp.

The title of this book—*Praisers of Folly*—is (as everyone will recognize) derived from Erasmus' well-known satire, *The Praise of Folly* (*Moriae Encomium*), a title which (as again everyone knows) was a play on words: for it was both an ironic praise of Folly as well as a veiled praise of More—the Saint Thomas More who was later to commit the supreme folly of throwing away life and fortune rather than betray his Conscience or his God.

The first set of essays in Mr. Kaiser's book are an analysis of the figure of Stultitia, the heroine of Erasmus' satire. The second set of essays are on Rabelais' Panurge; the third set are on Shakespeare's Falstaff. All these essays are written with both insight and erudition—the erudition never quite succeeding in

clouding the vision provided by the insights, although often threatening to do so.

The two best essays in the book are the Prologue and the Epilogue: the one concerning the figure of the Fool in literature, the other concerning the "last fool" of the Renaissance, Don Quixote. The author points out, quite rightly, that it was the Renaissance that brought the fool into the limelight of literature, although his antecedents go back to antiquity, and the word fool itself was a creation of the Middle Ages. The fool became a useful device in the hands of the dramatist or the satirist, for a fool was on the one hand an object of humor, and on the other he was clothed with impunity.

Mr. Kaiser's analysis of Falstaff, and particularly of his ancestry (being descended from the figure of Vice in the morality plays) is perceptive. So is his suggestion that Falstaff is the embodiment of the character of Nestor in one of Erasmus' colloquies. Nestor was a man, who, lacking the virtues or the reality of knight-hood, contrived to seem like a knight by aping his manners. Perceptive also is Mr. Kaiser's view of the fitness of Falstaff's end. Falstaff, like Erasmus's fool, is "a stultiloquent jester who overturns all the accepted values"; and like Rabelais' fool, he is the incorrigible rogue who serves as companion to the Prince; yet Falstaff is more than these: he is also, like the Vice of the medieval morality plays, the fool who plays the role of tempter. "Falstaff's ancestry, then, is made up of men who loitered in the taverns to tempt the youth of Christendom, and his fate is like theirs.... Since his prototype, the Vice, is inevitably a representative of the powers of damnation (he is usually, as Feste sang it, Satan's son), Falstaff himself is thereby automatically prevented from ever attaining or even aspiring to that Pauline folly which is the goal for Stultitia and the putative answer for Panurge. That is, insofar as he must play the tempter to Prince Hal, he cannot become the Fool in Christ; for Falstaff is, as Hal says, 'far in the devil's book.'" In short, Falstaff is "the devil in the likeness of a fat, old man."

All this is quite true: and therefore Prince Hal's rejection of Falstaff as soon as he himself became King is, not only politically wise, but also theologically proper. Yet, admitting all this, one is still tempted to say with Galileo: *e por si muove!* Granting all that Mr. Kaiser says that Falstaff is a fat old devil, one still must grapple with the fact that four centuries of theatre-goers have loved the fat, old rogue. There is much in Falstaff that defies categorization, and despite all the explanations of its propriety, Hal's final repudiation of his old friend—no matter how politically proper—still strikes the theatre-goer as the act of a cad. Can it be that (as Mr. Kaiser has failed to point out) Shakespeare, in creating Falstaff, has created a real man, and no real man is merely and simply a fool?

Be that as it may, this reviewer would heartily recommend a reading of Mr. Kaiser's Prologue, and especially of his Epilogue. "In the close of the Renaissance, the fool's laughing face takes on an aspect of tragedy and sadness, and the last of the great Renaissance fools is known to the world for his mournful countenance. At the very moment that we watch Shakespeare's fat old fool and all his company leave the tavern world of Eastcheap for the Fleet, in another country and from another prison Don Quixote de la Mancha is preparing to come onstage and enter another inn which he will call a castle." It is perhaps this tragic element in the fool that attracted the genius of Cervantes and Shakespeare.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

GUERRILLAS IN MINDANAO: 1942-1945

THEY FOUGHT ALONE. By John Keats. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1963. 425 pp.

In some respects John Keats has drawn the picture of Colonel Wendell Fertig true to life and has told the story of the resistance movement led by him in Mindanao, Philippines, from 1942 to 1945 with a certain measure of accuracy, humor and never flagging interest. Colonel Fertig played an important and honorable part in the recent history of Mindanao. His name is still on many lips. Now we have it in a book.

Colonel Fertig impressed everyone at first meeting. Keats says that he pronounced each name of people he met carefully, "and later remembered." And again he refers to Fertig's "frantic inventory of people and motives" and to how well Fertig could store "information away in his photographic memory to be evaluated at a later time." First impressions were confirmed as men saw more of him. He even improved with wearing. There was always an air of reserve about him, an unfailing courtesy and, one felt, competence to do the job he had assumed. I believe all who knew him in Mindanao were indignant at the shabby treatment he received from Gen. MacArthur in the matter of army rank. In 1942 he was a Lt. Col. In 1945 he had advanced only to colonel. His services merited the rank of General.

Col. Fertig did not start the guerrilla movement in Mindanao. Fertig had left Corregidor on the last navy flying boat to set out of the island fortress. It crashed on landing in Mindanao but Fertig was unhurt. In the book we first meet him wandering in the hills of Bukidnon and Lanao with Capt. Charles Hedges. Since the army had surrendered to the Japanese, his aim seems to have been survival until