all'interno del Comitato Direttivo dell'Approdo, Ungaretti cercó in "maniera fiduciosa e consapevole, negli strumenti comunicativi del proprio tempo, la chiave per recuperare alla poesia un ruolo attivo nella societá, sentendone fortemente minacciate le potenzialitá espressive nell'era del progresso tecnologico" (XLI).

Concludendo non si puó fare a meno di raccomandare caldamente ai lettori, interessati nella cultura del Novecento italiano, il presente volume per una documentazione autentica, dettagliata, intima e puntuale dell'opera e dell'attività letteraria di Giuseppe Ungaretti, uno dei più grandi poeti nel panorama lirico italiano e mondiale del ventesimo secolo e di quella del suo amico e poeta, Carlo Betocchi.

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Gabriella Remigi. Cesare Pavese e la letteratura americana: una «splendida monotonia». Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2012. Pp. xviii, 226. ISBN 978-88-222-61021. € 24.

It would be impossible to understand Cesare Pavese's view of the world without knowing how he read American literature. He was under its spell all his life, from the time of his early experience of *Leaves of Grass* in the *liceo* until his latter days, when he was reviewing F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*. And Pavese was also, of course, an assiduous translator, not only of Melville but of Sinclair Lewis and Gertrude Stein, of Dos Passos and Faulkner. All translators must try to retrace the original writer's creative journey, and for this reason the task is a kind of training. In this penetrating new study, which follows the entire arc of Pavese's career, Gabriella Remigi shows how his reading of American literature shaped his own art. Given that she is dealing with a writer who so often had to face the exasperating compromises of translation, it is appropriate that her analysis of Pavese's work—not only of his translations but also of his essays, his fiction, his poetry, his memoirs—should be grounded in concrete philological evidence.

Remigi begins with an examination of Pavese's reading of Whitman, Melville and Jack London. Pavese, whose tesi di laurea (1930) was a study of Whitman's poetry, was drawn to the American champion of free verse because the two writers shared a common sensibility. Whitman's celebration of the raw and primitive, of human beauty stripped of its centuries of civilizing varnish, offered Pavese an alternative to what he considered stifling European convention. Accompanying this attraction to the primitive was Pavese's fascination for the unconscious human urge to return to one's origins. For Whitman, the forces of nature were at work everywhere, in the country as well as in the city. His poetry allowed Pavese to see a certain atavism even in industrialized Turin. This atavism was perhaps also the quality that Pavese appreciated most in Moby Dick, which must have been his most ambitious translation. Remigi shows, however, that throughout Pavese's work, phrases suggestive of repetition—such as "ogni volta," "ogni notte," "già una volta," "la seconda volta," and so on—serve as markers that identify this atavistic dimension of his vision, this fascination with a cyclical, or mythical, and therefore

timeless, return.

The American Dream, as expressed in American literature, meant to Pavese the unhindered, unabashed pursuit of such a return. However, in the modern Americans—in Fitzgerald and Steinbeck, in Sherwood Anderson and Lee Masters, in Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, Dos Passos and Dreiser—Pavese also found, says Remigi, "l'altra faccia del sogno," that is, "il disincanto" (80). In these writers the country was in stark contrast with the city but, in the end, no purer; and the mythical return was thwarted, replaced all too often by a grim surrogate, the refuge of alcohol. It was Lee Masters, perhaps more so than anyone else, who gave Pavese a way of going beyond realism, a way of seeing destiny as an undeniable force working, always and inexorably, under the surface of things. Remigi's reading is particularly sensitive here. Poems in Pavese's Lavorare stanca bear telling echoes from Spoon River Anthology. "Do the boys and girls still go to Siever's / For cider after school, in late September?", for example, resonates in Pavese's "Una generazione": "Vanno ancora i ragazzi a giocare nei prati / dove giungono i corsi. E la notte è la stessa" (92). Here, again, are the markers of Pavese's atavistic vision. Repetition, then, which so characterizes a writer such as Gertrude Stein, was to Pavese much more than mere phonetic wordplay. It was "una figura," says Remigi, "dell'essere e dell'esistere, di una monotonia in cui ontologia individuale e ineluttabile destino coincidono" (144). Deliberate repetition also characterizes much of Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men. When Pavese translated this novel—Remigi dedicates a revealing, richly detailed analysis to this translation—he showed an acute awareness of the significance of this feature; he even added a few repetitions of his own. In this novel, says Remigi, and especially in the dialogue, repetitions are expressive of the "miraggio-utopia della fattoria coi conigli in cui l'idiozia che deforma la percezione della realtà del personaggio si bea" (184).

Remigi's frequent use of the word "monotonia," which also appears in her subtitle, is a deliberate echo of an observation made by Pavese in *Letteratura americana*. Every genuine writer, he said, is "splendidamente monotono," in that every page will bear the writer's stamp, lending a certain sameness to the most diverse material. This stamp – a recurring image or situation, a recurring turn of phrase – is an expression of the underlying meaning of the surfaces of the writer's world, in which all concrete objects have a natural symbolic value, capable of revealing the force and shape of human destiny. Towards the end of his life, Pavese would find this notion illuminated and confirmed in F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*. Guided by Matthiessen's sharp gaze, says Remigi, Pavese descended into the "tenebrosi abissi dell'anima puritana," a literary journey that awakened the darkest corners of his being: "la sensibilità vulnerabile e spigolosa, la costrizione volontaristica, il senso dello scacco dinanzi a un destino implacabile, l'anelito religioso – di una religiosità laica, s'intende, gravida d'assoluto e di trascendenza" (165-66).

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