

## Reviews

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Francesca Turini Bufalini. *Rime spirituali sopra i Misteri del Santissimo Rosario, and Rime*. Ed. Paolo Bà. *Letteratura italiana antica*. VI (2005): 147–223, and XI (2010): 141–276, respectively.

Francesca Turini Bufalini (1553–1641) published two books during her lifetime: *Rime spirituali sopra i Misteri del Santissimo Rosario* (Roma: Gigliotti, 1595) and *Rime* (Città di Castello: Molinelli, 1627 and 1628). These books are extremely rare—only one copy of the 1627 edition is known, consisting of the first part of the much longer edition of 1628, which is always intended when referencing to the *Rime*. Turini Bufalini was respected for her poetic talent by her contemporaries, but only in the literary circles of Città di Castello (Umbria) and of Rome, where she spent eight years, from 1614 to 1622, as a lady-in-waiting to Lucrezia Tomacelli, wife of Constable Filippo Colonna, Duke of Paliano, and as tutor of their two daughters, Anna and Vittoria. After Lucrezia Tomacelli's death, in 1622, the poet returned home to Città di Castello.

Turini Bufalini's life was difficult from early childhood through old age, and she found solace in her literary creation. While she composed poems of various kinds, her autobiographical poetry stands out for its originality, because the themes she used were new in Italian literature. Yet she received little credit for her innovations. The first serious attempt to examine some of her poems came only in 1901 when Vittorio Corbucci published his 61-page booklet, *Una poetessa umbra Francesca Turina Bufalini* (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1901), which is the text of a lecture he gave twice, in 1900, to glorify the poet as a local heroine whose descendants were still living. While praising her emotional sensibility and fine description of nature, he did not place her work within its historical period nor did he compare it to that of other women poets. Many years passed before Igea Torrioli published her long article, "Francesca Turina Bufalini e la società colta tiferate nel sec. XVI," in the periodical, *L'alta valle del Tevere* (Vol. 8, special issue, 1940: 1–36), but Torrioli's contribution was overlooked due to the war years. Other critics, before and after Torrioli, made fleeting references to Francesca, mainly to her one poem quoted by Benedetto Croce. (For a detailed discussion of Turini Bufalini's literary fortune see pp. 31–38 of my "Introduction" to *Francesca Turini Bufalini: Autobiographical Poems: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. Natalia Costa-Zalessow, trans. Joan E. Borrelli, New York: Bordighera Press, 2009.)

In 1998, Giuseppe Milani and Paolo Bà published a monograph, *I Bufalini di San Giustino: origine e ascesa di una casata—Francesca Turina Bufalini, poetessa 1553–1641: una donna che ha dato lustro a una famiglia* (San Giustino: Tipografia "Tiber," 1998). Milani had access to the Bufalini archives at the Castello Bufalini in San Giustino and found new, precise historical facts about Francesca's complex family matters. Paolo Bà examined the poet's style and versification. In rapid sequence, Bà then published a series of articles, between 2001 and 2010, in the journal *Pagine altotiberine*, as well as the complete modern editions of Turini Bufalini's two books. Both of these editions appear in the prestigious international journal dedicated to texts and studies on Italian literature, *Letteratura italiana antica*, an annual publication available at several American university libraries, as well as for purchase on the Internet.

Due to the journal's structure, Bà's edition of *Rime spirituali* is accompanied by a short introduction (note that Bà used "Turina," the older form of the name). The text is without notes; however, there is an explanatory list of difficult words and an index of names used in the poems (221, and 222–223, respectively). Bà's article, "Il mondo di Francesca

Turina Bufalini e le sue *Rime spirituali*," subsequently published in the same journal (Vol. VIII, [2007]: 485–494), should be read together with her poems.

The religious subject of *Rime spirituali* reflects a genre greatly cultivated in the Baroque period. Amedeo Quondam lists 163 new titles published in the same genre for the decade 1590–1600 ("Note sulla tradizione della poesia spirituale e religiosa [parte prima]," in *Paradigmi e tradizioni*, ed. A. Quondam [vol. 16 of *Studi e testi italiani*] 2005, pp. 127–211). In her *Rime spirituali* (1595), Turina Bufalini glorifies the main events of the New Testament, from the Annunciation to the death of the Madonna, dividing the material as follows: "Primo Mistero del Santissimo Rosario detto Gaudioso" (155–173), consisting of 50 sonnets, linked together in a continuous narrative (a technique used in all of the three mysteries), and describing the events from the Annunciation through Palm Sunday; "Secondo Mistero del Santissimo Rosario detto Doloroso" (173–187), consisting of one opening madrigal followed by 37 sonnets that complete the story of Christ and end with Mary weeping at the foot of the cross, with her lament placed under a separate heading, "Pianto della Madonna" (187–191), because of its metrical structure in ottava rima; "Terzo ed Ultimo Mistero del Santissimo Rosario detto Glorioso," (191–206), consisting of one opening madrigal followed by 40 sonnets, narrating the occurrences, from Christ's resurrection to the death of the Madonna, and concluding with "Ottave della Gloria del Paradiso" (206–211), or Ascension of the Madonna and her coronation in heaven. At the very end of the 1595 work, Francesca added 24 personal poems under the subtitle "In morte de l'illustrissimo Signor Giulio Bufalini suo consorte" (211–220), inspired by the example of Vittoria Colonna, but with many thematic innovations.

Bà's edition of Turini (or Turrini, as Bà prefers here) Bufalini's *Rime*, which appeared five years later, in 2010, contains an eight-page introduction with a section expounding the variants of the text, that is, of the printed version of *Rime* (1628) as compared to the annotated example Bà used, preserved in the Bufalini Archives at the Castle of San Giustino, which contains handwritten corrections, most likely made by Francesca herself. The manuscript of *Rime* has not been found. The 328 poems of the collection are followed by an annotated index of names (274–276). Sonnets 1–72 praise the various members of the Colonna family. The best of these compositions are addressed to Lucrezia Tomacelli and are autobiographical and encomiastic at the same time, for the author sees her own life intertwined with that of the duchess, whose death brought to a close Turina Bufalini's refuge in the Colonna Palace in Rome, forcing her to return to Città di Castello. (My study of these poems is forthcoming in *Italica* [vol. 89]). Sonnets 73–107 are strictly laudatory, complimenting princes and cardinals of famous families such as the Barberini, Borghese, Ludovisi, Orsini, Montaldo, Aldobrandini, Capponi, etc., including three popes, Urban VIII as well as his two predecessors, Paul V, and Gregory XV, next to the rulers of Tuscany, Urbino and Philip III of Spain. But then, under the heading "Principio dello stato dell'autrice," we find Turina Bufalini's unique compositions, all truly autobiographical, beginning with sonnet 108, in which she narrates her life from birth through old age, when her thoughts increasingly turn to God. From poem 222 to 323, subtitled "Rime sacre varie," her themes become less autobiographical and increasingly religious—first a series of sonnets, then madrigals, followed by the long composition (26 ottave), "Santa Maria Maddalena al Sepolcro." The *Rime* conclude with five laudatory sonnets, 324–328, two for her grandsons (written years earlier), one for a baby girl born in 1628 to Anna Colonna and her husband Taddeo Barberini, and two for King Louis XIII, the last of which glorifies his victories over the Huguenots at La Rochelle, on October 24, 1628, a month before the publication of Turina Bufalini's book.

Bà's two editions offer an overall presentation of Turina Bufalini's work and an opportunity to compare her style and themes to those of her contemporaries. Moreover, Bà is currently editing her narrative poem, *Florio*, from a manuscript preserved in the Bufalini archives, in addition to publishing several of her poems he has discovered. Thanks to his efforts, a total picture of this original poet is finally emerging. In my 2009 edition of the bilingual *Autobiographical Poems* (141 selections), I focused on Turini

Bufalini's autobiographical compositions that are the first of their kind in the Western poetic canon. The translations by Joan E. Borrelli make the autobiographical poems available to readers of English (Borrelli's translations into English of three additional poems appear in a recent issue of the *Journal of Italian Translation*). To complete our access to the works of this remarkable poet, we eagerly await the appearance of Bà's forthcoming contributions.

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Rebecca Messbarger. *The Lady Anatomist. The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Rebecca Messbarger's beautifully written and richly illustrated work brings to life a corpus of knowledge at the intersection of cultural history, gender studies, sciences, and art that deserves a second chance after having long been forgotten. Based on sound and extensive archival research, the book focuses on the life and work of the eighteenth-century Italian (Bolognese) anatomist and anatomical wax modeler Anna Morandi Manzolini. Messbarger refers to Morandi's life-size wax self-portrait, now housed in the Museo di Palazzo Poggi at the Università di Bologna, as a "visual autobiography," a text which she masterfully uses to dissect, analyze, explain, and reconstruct her subject under our eyes. Thanks to new archival documents discovered by the author that testify Anna Morandi's extensive knowledge of and research in anatomy, we can re-assess the validity of Morandi's official biographies, which for over 250 years have tended to paint her merely as a "gifted dilettante, an anatomical improviser" (2). In this book, however, Messbarger not only revises the old biographical portraits of Morandi, but does so by entering in a productive conversation with the current theoretical discourses on the relationship of material culture and gender, laying the ground for further research on the topic of Italian women and science.

The first of the book's seven chapters describes the influence of "The Enlightenment Pope," Benedict XIV (1675–1758), on the Bolognese scientific scene, and on the institution of the Anatomy Museum in particular, which "would perform enduringly for an eclectic public the layered and morally poignant drama of human dissection, mortality, and God's holy handiwork in the smallest of the body's covert parts" (22). In 1746 Morandi's husband, Giovanni Manzolini, resigned from his post as chief assistant on the papal commission for the Anatomy Museum due to strong disagreements with the project director, and his rival in the art of anatomical wax modeling, Ercole Lelli. Manzolini opened in his home a competing wax-modeling studio and school of anatomy. His wife, a professionally trained artist and mother of two at the time, was thus catapulted into the Bolognese cultural scene, but destined to be relegated to the margins since her wax anatomies, in stark contrast to those of Ercole Lelli for the Museum, were "conceived explicitly as didactic tools for medical practitioners and connoisseurs of anatomical science [. . .] devoid of moral overtones" (22). Morandi's work was, nevertheless, the result of direct observations conducted with her husband during countless human dissections, and her approach to anatomical wax modeling as a systematic natural philosopher—relying on *esperienza*—posed an outright methodological challenge to the institutionalized representation and use of the anatomical wax models, exemplified by Lelli's moralizing and heroic *écorchés*.

The second chapter leads us through the ten years of Anna Morandi's anatomical practice with her husband and the salient features of that training. The couple's methodological approach "involved the isolation, study, and removal from the cadaver of discrete anatomical systems [. . .] for separate analysis and dissection. [. . .] In modeling, they systematically reconstructed or, more appropriately, artfully fabricated, often directly on the actual skeletal core *stratum super stratum* of living muscle, organs, nerves, arteries, veins, and other intricate structures, upward to the external vestment of

skin . . ." (54–55). The couple explored and studied all the parts and systems of the body, but focused on the reproductive and sensory organs in particular. They created models of the gravid uterus for Bologna's first school of obstetrics, receiving commissions by university professors, medical practitioners and collectors alike. The wax models of body parts (part of Morandi's extant wax work is magnificently reproduced in full color in the book) were usually conceived as a series and displayed affixed on wooden *tavole*, often octagonal in shape. The attempt to present these "unusual" objects tastefully was evident. In the case of the forearm series, the anatomical wax model was placed on a crimped cloth soaked in dark-colored wax which functioned as an elegant backdrop. By the 1750s, Manzolini and Morandi's home studio was an attraction for tourists on the Grand Tour: the household school and laboratory were not unusual at the time, but Anna Morandi's role as "practical anatomist" and face for the business was unique.

In chapter three, evidence of Morandi's anatomical studies in partnership with her husband, and of contemporary testimony of her professionalism, is juxtaposed to later depictions of her as "*improvisatrice*," self-taught in the anatomical science. Undoubtedly, the interest aroused by her work was inseparable from her being a woman in an exclusively male profession. Messbarger shows how Morandi was able to bank on this, despite at the same time being discriminated against because of her sex. Morandi was a celebrity before her husband's death. Bolognese civic leaders would call on her, as they had done with Laura Bassi, to represent the city with eminent foreign visitors. Interestingly, her biographers also point to her female gender as an aid in acquiring knowledge in such a field, thanks to the experience of childbirth. As Messbarger astutely points out, "unlike her male counterparts, she can look fearlessly on her interior, and she will not turn to stone" (95).

In chapter four Messbarger turns directly to Anna Morandi's wax self-portrait for clues on how to read the artist's perceived self-image. In the self-portrait, her hands are molded to hold scalpel and forceps and ready to dissect a brain contained in a wrapped skull. In stark contrast to this scientific action, her waxy persona is extremely feminine as underlined by the peach color of her elegant dress, the lace ruffles and the quantity of jewels it sports. Clearly, the artist intends to divert attention away from the "foul" aspects of her manual work to her role as an anatomical authority, an interesting turn since, normally, women in an illustrated anatomical lesson would appear at most as cadavers. Moreover, the author argues that the objects of Morandi's inquiry—the brain, the sense organs and reproductive system—"signify a provocative sphere of expertise at distinct odds with contemporary notions about women's inferior nature and restricted intellectual and moral purview" (107). For Anna Morandi, being a woman, and a widowed mother of two as of 1755, was no joking economic matter. The subsidy accorded to her by the city was meager and much inferior to her male counterparts', and the practical (and economic) difficulties in building up her practice after her husband's death led her to give up for adoption one of her children.

In chapter five and six Messbarger focuses on Morandi's *oeuvre* as embodied in her wax series and written observations on the sense organs (the eyes and hand in chapter five) and on the male reproductive system and genitalia (chapter six). In these two chapters Messbarger argues that the "Lady Anatomist's study of the sense and sex organs not only would deny the male-female opposition relentlessly ascribed to these realms of the body, but would allay the rivalry and conceive new alliances between theory and practice, perception and cognition, science and art, manual and mental labor, art and craft, life and death, male and female" (108). In Morandi's world, woman's position shifts from being the object of anatomical discovery (as exemplified by the wax anatomical Venus) to being full-fledged anatomist, the very agent of scientific discovery, where her eyes and her hands with equal skill probe the secrets of the male reproductive system and genitalia.

In 1769, after a serious illness and in a critical economic situation, Morandi moved into an apartment in Count Ranuzzi's palace (now Bologna's Palace of Justice) and sold to him her whole collection of wax models. There, surrounded by her models and

instruments, she was a main attraction for the many visitors and illustrious foreign guests. Ironically, in her pursuit of security and comfort, she came to occupy the position of her own artifacts, which could be purchased, exhibited, admired, and would ultimately be forgotten in a dusty museum corner.

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Paola Gambarota. *Irresistible Signs. The Genius of Language and Italian National Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

"What makes a German German, an Italian Italian?" (3). Paola Gambarota's illuminating and original study, which won the 2010 MLA Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian literary Studies, unearths multiple intellectual paths that offer open and fruitful answers to this thought provoking question. The cultural history of Europe and the existential and linguistic trajectory of the author are intertwined in an intriguing analysis of "the origin of narratives that bind one language to one nation" (5), spanning from Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* to Leopardi's *Zibaldone*. A scholar of German and Italian Studies with an impressive international academic background, Gambarota supports sophisticated philological analysis and philosophical discourse with rigorous scholarship in Italian, English, German, French, Spanish, and Latin. She locates "the ideological nucleus of linguistic nationalism" (5), the master narrative that ties language to nationhood, in the genius of language.

Therefore, Gambarota's book focuses on "the definitions of the genius of language that explain it as the quintessential manifestation of the genius of the nation or of national character and on the contributions of Italian writers to this myth in particular" (7). Drawing on modernist theories of nationalism (among others, Anderson 1991 and Hobsbawm 1990) and on recent debate on language and national identity (for example, Spivak 2006 and Appiah 2005), the author capitalizes on the "semiotic nature of national identity" (9). While deepening our historical and philosophical understanding of the progressive overlapping of language and nationhood that prevailed in the Risorgimento and under fascism, this study "stretches our ability to imagine the many possible relationships between language and nation" (9), thus shedding new light on the meaningfulness of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Italian unification as a dynamic process. A more multifaceted image of the Italian model of nationalism emerges from the selected case studies. Despite the heterogeneous nature of the texts analyzed through detailed and intriguing close readings—from *L'Ercolano: Dialogo di Benedetto Varchi dove si ragiona delle lingue e in particolare della Toscana e fiorentina* (1570) to Giacomo Leopardi's *Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degl'italiani* (1824)—the cohesiveness of the investigation relies on a shared "resistance" (20, 228) to the myths of ethnic or linguistic uniformity based upon a naturalistic, biological understanding of national identity and culture.

Chapter 1, "Scripts of Vernacular and Collective Characters in Early Modern Europe," provides a philosophical and historical context to the progressive merging of the genius of language and national character. In particular, it draws our attention to Benedetto Varchi's dialogue *Ercolano* (1570) on the advantages of the Florentine language, which "created a matrix for the rhetorical strategies linking language, people, and polity" (24), and on Juan Huarte's popular scientific tract, *Examen de ingenious para la ciencias* (1575), which "conferred scientific credibility to narratives that linked geographical areas and specific character traits" (24). According to Gambarota, these works, highly influential in France and England, represent the conflation of naturalist, Epicurean views of human diversity, "which emphasized natural rather than conventional causes of verbal and other forms of behavior" (22), and the rise of absolutist polities in XVI century Europe, such as Cosimo de Medici's Florence and Phillip II's Spain.

Following this fascinating historical and philosophical panning of representations of literary vernaculars connecting language and collective character in the XVI century, the author zooms in on two case studies in Chapter 2, "*Ut Lingua, Natio*: Dominique Bouhours's Genius of the Nation and Ludovico Antonio Muratori's Italian Republic of Letters." The concept of the *génie de la langue* surfaced for the first time in Amable de Bourzeys's speech to the *Académie française* in 1635, the year of its founding, "as the product of temperament (both 'of the region and of the people'), government, and social customs" (256). The Jesuit Dominique Bouhours, a member of the *Académie* and talented lexicographer, became "an emblem of French chauvinism" (59) when, half a century later, he expanded on the notion of the genius of language to declare "the superiority of the French language and culture over all other European civilizations" (59). In his highly successful and widely translated dialogues, and particularly "*La langue française*," Bouhours extended "the reach of the genius of the French nation across class and gender divides" (60), thus elevating "the entire population of the state to a sovereign agency" (61) in a clearly proto-nationalistic move.

As Gambarota convincingly argues, Muratori constructively participated in the French-Italian controversy through his evolving response to Bouhours's sharp critique of the Italian genius of language and national character, as epitomized by Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (69). Through an intriguing and contextualized analysis of Muratori's *Della perfetta poesia italiana* (1706) and *Rerum italicarum* (1723), Gambarota traces the shaping of "a polygenic nation . . . a more complex but also more truthful model of inclusiveness. . . the acute awareness that any construction of identity is a highly provisional and shaky affair" (98).

This awareness becomes even more "acute" in Chapter 3, devoted to "Giambattista Vico, the Vernacular, and the Foundations of Modern Italy." While Vico explicitly participated in the French-Italian controversy, he reversed Bouhours's pre-nationalistic claim about the national character shaping the French genius of language by using the term "*ingenium* in its narrow classical meaning of 'talent,' sharply distinguishing it from the term *genius*, of 'sacred nature'—the notion mystifyingly employed by Bouhours" (101). Through insightful discussions of Vico's prismatic interpretations of the Italian language and identity, from a polygenic explanation to a more homogeneous characterization that surfaces in the final revision of the *Scienza nuova* (1744), Gambarota contends that Vico's attempt to create a foundational myth for modern Italy in order to overcome cultural and political disintegration is imbued with the cognitive power of his *ingenium*, in which talent, memory and imagination constitute "the founding triad of invention" (101). For this reason, the author draws upon Mario Fubini's, Andrea Battistini's and, more recently, Stefania Sini's Vico scholarship (281) to highlight the significance of modification of rhetorical style in the *Scienza nuova* revisions, suggesting that Vico's accentuation of expressive and figurative elements "was also an attempt to mark and define Italianness in his own way" (143).

It is precisely this dynamic nature of Vico's foundational myth that introduces the theme of Chapter 4, "Translating Genius: Cesarotti, Ossian, and the Question of National Character." In her subtle analysis of Cesarotti's *Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue* (1785) in relationship with his lifelong endeavor translating and remaking James Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian* (1763, 1772, 1801), Gambarota demonstrates how Cesarotti came to "challenge the accepted view of the genius of language as a stable and untranslatable element that reflected the unique character of the nation, an insuperable barrier between national cultures" (146). Through his hands-on experience the internationally acclaimed translator "began to consider the idea of universality beyond its opposition to cultural relativism and perceived both universals and the nation as processes rather than a priori givens" (146).

Unsurprisingly enough, Cesarotti's "surprising perspicacity" (155) in anticipating not only contemporary Ossian scholarship but also "a view of an inclusive, polyphonic nation that was able to embrace cultural diversity" (20) encountered the hostility of the

patriotic supporters of the organic vision of the monolingual nation in pre-unification Italy.

In Chapter 5, "Towards Sameness: Leopardi's Critique of Character, and the End of the Nation," Leopardi's participation in the genius of language discussion emerges as the most productive and open-ended contribution to the contemporary debate about nationhood, language, and identity. Through her close reading of *Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degl'italiani* (1824) and numerous *Zibaldone* passages around 1821–1824, Gambarota underlines the implications of Leopardi's systematic replacement of *genius* with *carattere, indole, disposizione*. In particular, she argues that Leopardi redefined the notion of character, be of the individual, the language, or the nation, in terms of volatility and instability, "as a phenomenon that is developed through habit, not an essence that is given once and for all" (212). In this perspective, blood relations, "the familial image of the national community" (210) that was ingrained in the nationalistic rhetorical discourse, became irrelevant. Through his destabilizing thought style, Leopardi, "der paradoxe Praktiker" (a paradoxical pragmatist) in Walter Benjamin's pertinent definition, perceived and denounced "the rise of the modern nation as a movement towards sameness that was progressively suppressing real cultural diversity" (218). In his far-reaching views undermining the organic concept of the nation and the subsequent promotion of cultural uniformity, Leopardi anticipated contemporary theorists of the nation, such as Maurizio Viroli (1995) and Ernest Gellner (1983). Furthermore, Leopardi's suggestion that "only awareness of one's own traditions makes a people into a nation" foreshadows "today's view of national identity as the product of a self-image" (215), as articulated, for example, in Benedict Anderson's and, before him, Hans Kohn's seminal works (1991; 1944).

Paola Gambarota's extremely original, complex, thought provoking and elegantly written volume offers an invaluable contribution to the historical and philosophical understanding of the nationalistic discourse, which will appeal to scholars and graduate students of Italian Studies, Critical Theory, and Comparative Literature. The author has brilliantly met her aim, that is "defusing the narrative and rhetorical devices that have automatically linked one language to one culture and one state" (227) through the analysis of the genius of language as manifestation of national character. Furthermore, an perhaps even more remarkably, *Irresistible Signs* concludes with a compelling proposal that reaches out to other media, in addition to the literary language, in order to better comprehend, in today's multicultural and multilingual Italy, "how the Italian nation has been invoked and shaped through the succession and overlapping of the media" (233). Gambarota envisions a collective study in which scholars of literature, the visual arts, and music "would identify theoretical patterns relating different types of media to different models of the nation" (233), thus engendering "the awareness of the specific forms and limits of each particular medium" (233) or, in other words, "that friction between signs and 'lifeworld' that provides space for individual choice and for political action" (233). As nomadic human beings, we look forward to this shared endeavor, for "[o]ne does not learn languages to bolster identity . . . one ventures out to touch the other" (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, as quoted in Gambarota 227).

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Thomas Simpson. *Murder and Media in the New Rome. The Fadda Affair*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

This volume focuses on an episode of 19<sup>th</sup> century micro-history: The murder of army captain and war hero Giovanni Fadda, stabbed to death in Rome on October 6, 1878. As Simpson explains in the brief introduction that opens the volume, a number of people

were arrested, including Fadda's estranged Calabrese wife, Raffaella Saraceni, the circus acrobat Pietro Cardinali, who was believed to be Raffaella's lover, and a woman alternatively described as the acrobat's wife and/or sister. The trial that ensued gave a prominent role to female defendants and witnesses, turning the event into a theatrical spectacle and a prototype for the contemporary media trial. It captivated the attention of the entire nation, seizing the curiosity of the Roman populace, respectable ladies from the upper classes, famed painters and writers, including the poet Giosuè Carducci. Yet, it is Simpson's contention that the micro-historical event of the murder of Fadda constitutes not just a prototype for the broad appeal of today's media trial but was an episode that brought to light the social and political issues of the newly formed Italian state: the tension between North and South, the Southern Question, the spread of criminality, the migration of the rural population towards urban centers, and the debate concerning the participation in the democratic legal system of groups such as women, the illiterate, and the poor.

Simpson makes the case for the significance of the Fadda affair in the formation of the Italian nation through a series of ten chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter, "The Crime and Its Coverage," provides details about the crime, the arrests, and the investigation. It also discusses the new role of women whose court testimonies had become legally probative in 1877 even if they could not serve as lawyers or as members of the jury. Lastly, Simpson also includes some examples of newspapers' reports which added (and often invented) descriptive details to the story to further elicit the curiosity of an emerging readership.

The second chapter, "Journalism in Rome after National Unification," provides an interesting historical account of the flourishing of journalism in Italy when the capital moved to Rome in 1871. The newspapers of the time, which comprised both the lay press of the Liberal State as well as a variety of Catholic dailies, quickly became an important organ to promote the vision of various political factions and, initially at least, were not primarily structured around a business model but, rather, an ideological one. As a result, circulation was limited to groups that shared similar beliefs and values. It is against this background that Simpson presents the innovative work of Luigi Cesena, the editor of *Il Messaggero*, who widened circulation by exploiting the readers' appetite for human drama through a skillful use of mass produced illustrations. The model inaugurated by *Il Messaggero* proved to be an economic success and other newspapers followed, including *Il Bersagliere* and *La Libertà*. Simpson concludes his chapter by observing how the events of the Fadda murder were crucial not only to the Italian newspaper industry but also to the shaping of a national community that, despite the grave divisions that would plague the new state, would unite around a common interest.

Chapter three, "Chronology of a Circus Trial," provides a selection of journalists' reports of the Fadda trial from *Corriere della sera*, *La Capitale*, *La Libertà*, *Il Messaggero*, and *Epoca*. The selection, as Simpson explains in the brief introduction and as evidenced by the rhetoric of the anthologized excerpts, indicates how the reporting downplayed the legal aspects of the trial, favoring instead the description of female audiences which played a great role in the sensational, even scandalous appeal of the trial itself.

The fourth chapter, "The People, the Killer, and the Weeping Widow," focuses on the trial which took place on September 30, 1879, in the Palace of Justice in Rome. Simpson describes the composition of the jury, the testimony of the three defendants, the summations of the prosecution and the case made by Raffaella Saraceni's lawyer Enrico Pessina who, despite his oratory gifts, was unable to convince the jury of his client's innocence. Especially interesting is Simpson's discussion of the citizen jury system which had been introduced in 1848. Based upon the French model, it allowed for popular participation in the judicial process and was therefore met with some resistance. By 1874 a series of reforms sought to limit the juries to individuals with a proven level of education, such as teachers, authors, public functionaries, and so on. However, since these measures severely limited the numbers of available jurors, criteria became much more flexible and



included individuals who had paid a certain amount of taxes, such as merchants and tradesmen. Yet, the Fadda jury seemed to have been selected among the members of the Roman bourgeoisie and, according to Simpson's archival research, only included two taxpayers.

Chapter five, "In Corte d'Assise," focuses on the response to the trial on the part of painters, poets, and playwrights. It includes an examination of the painting *Corte d'Assise* (1882) by Francesco Netti and the poem "On the Fadda Trial" by Carducci. In it, Carducci criticized female spectators, comparing them to a bad, inferior copy of the Roman matrons in awe at the bloody spectacles staged in the Coliseum. The invectives of Carducci and of other, less known poets who also wrote on the trial, indicate to Simpson that the Fadda affair also foregrounded the divisive politics of gender in the newly formed nation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of a five-act play by Alfonso Zara published in 1881, after the court rejected the appeal for a retrial on the part of the Saraceni family.

Chapter six, "King and Quartermaster," goes back to the closing argument of Enrico Pessina's defense. The lawyer had evoked Fadda's heroism during the Battle of San Martino of 1859, a decisive battle in the war of Independence that had cost Fadda a severe wound to his leg and an atrophied testicle. Simpson discusses at length the importance of the battle in national mythology and links the figure of the heroic captain with that of King Vittorio Emanuele II who also fought in the battlefields of San Martino.

The seventh chapter, "To Liberate Italy from the Italians," provides an explanation for the tension between army and populace that was brought to light during the trial. Simpson begins by providing a historical overview of the creation of an Italian national army in 1861 and focuses on the army's major tasks after Unification: the suppression of popular revolts, the long war against *brigantaggio*, the practice of conscription and draft, and the passing of legislative measures, such as the infamous Pica Law, to impose martial order. Such tasks inevitably led to hostility and resistance towards the army on the part of the Southern populace and explain the enactment of tensions during the trial. Against such a divisive background, the marriage between Fadda, a career officer from the North, and Raffaella Saraceni, the daughter of a Calabrian landowner, also indicates how the Fadda-Saraceni marriage of 1871 might have had the symbolic value of an optimistic national future that was never to materialize, as evidenced by the couple's correspondence contained in the chapter that follows, "Poor Giovanni Fadda." Here Simpson presents a series of letters between Fadda and his younger wife that document not only the break-up between two individuals but also the incomprehension of the cultures of Northern and Southern Italy. The ninth and tenth chapters, respectively entitled "A New War Experiment" and "Characters," provide a discussion of the circus, whose performers played a significant role in the Fadda affair, not only in their roles as both defendants and witnesses but also as expressive of the social tensions of the new state. As Simpson notes, the circus glorified military conquests, including colonial advances, the domination of man over nature and the environment, and transformed aggression into the occasion for festivities and celebrations. While this rendered the circus a highly popular form of entertainment, circus performers suffered from marginalization. At a time when the state was struggling with the social issue of vagrancy, the traveling performers represented a threat to the stability sought by the state. As the nomadic ways of life of individuals such as the clown Carluccio and the equestrienne Antonietta Carozza were rendered public during the trial, the Fadda affair brought to life a reality that clashed with the official image of Italian men and women cultivated by the official rhetoric of the new nation. Antonietta, in particular, also emerged as a sexually dominating figure, an Amazon that did not reflect the ideal of female domesticity cultivated by the Liberal State.

The concluding chapter of Simpson's study provides some broad reflections on the way the individuals involved in the Fadda murder and trial were impacted by the chasms and tensions of complex social issues that would remain unresolved, thus testifying to a national unity beyond reach.

An engaging, well-researched book, *Murder and Media in the New Rome* will be of interest to scholars of 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy. While the inclusion of copious documentation of the Fadda's murder and trial, as well as the excerpts of the correspondence between Giovanni Fadda and Raffaella Saraceni, do not add much to the overall argument, Simpson makes a convincing case for the significance of the Fadda affair in the newly formed Italian nation.

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Paola Drigo. *Maria Zef*. A cura di Paola Azzolini e Patrizia Zambon. Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2011.

*Maria Zef* è il titolo più noto di Paola Drigo (Castelfranco Veneto 1876–Padova 1938). Scritto con tutta probabilità, in «tempi prolungati e non conseguenti,» negli ultimi anni di vita dell'autrice e pubblicato nel 1936 per i tipi di Treves, il romanzo viene ora riproposto dall'editore padovano Il Poligrafo, nella collana «soggetti rivelati,» in una criticamente pregevole edizione a doppia firma. Paola Azzolini, italianista specialista di Otto/Novecento, e Patrizia Zambon, docente di Letteratura italiana contemporanea presso l'Università degli Studi di Padova, hanno curato l'edizione del testo e ad esso hanno dedicato due introduzioni. Nella prima, *Il silenzio del bosco tagliato: lettura di «Maria Zef,»* Azzolini propone una lettura interessante, approfondita, avvincente del testo drighiano; in quella che segue, *Paola Drigo, le opere e i giorni*, Zambon traccia un puntuale profilo biobibliografico della Drigo ed al contempo ne approfondisce l'opera nel contesto della scrittura d'autrice così come nel quadro più generale della produzione letteraria nazionale tra Otto e Novecento.

E a Zambon—va detto—si deve il merito di aver riproposto un'autrice che, come altre dell'Otto e del Novecento (Zuccari/Neera, Serao ma anche Negri, Messina e altre), aveva sofferto del disinteresse della critica così come del pubblico. Per la verità il nome della Drigo non si è mai del tutto eclissato: svariate sono state le edizioni del romanzo qui recensito—*Maria Zef* all'epoca venne pubblicato anche in traduzione tedesca, ceca e croata; dopo l'edizione Treves si contano due edizioni Garzanti (1939 e 1982), una per la Biblioteca dell'Immagine (1998) e una per La Biblioteca del Messaggero Veneto (2003)—ed anzi v'è da registrare l'interesse che proprio questa sua pregevole opera ha suscitato in ambito statunitense (un saggio di Biasin in *The Flight of Ulysses: Studies in Memory of Emmanuel Hatzantonis*, un altro saggio di Pickering-lazzi in *Politics of the Visible: Writing Women, Culture, and Fascism*, un contributo esteso di Illiano nel suo volume *Invito al romanzo d'autrice '800–'900: da Luisa Saredo a Laudomia Bonanni*, un più recente saggio di Ultsch in «L'Anello che non tiene;» la traduzione all'inglese di Blossom Steinberg Kirschenbaum del 1989; ancora un brano nell'antologia *New Italian Women: A Collection of Short Fiction*, a cura di Martha King). Tuttavia Paola Drigo ha corso il rischio di esser identificata unicamente con il suo più noto personaggio; di lei si erano tralasciati gli altri testi, e in fondo anche il valore, il senso complessivo della sua opera. Hanno colmato questa lacuna svariate saggi, l'organizzazione di un convegno (*Paola Drigo. Settant'anni dopo*, Padova 17–18 ottobre 2007) e la riproposta di quei, trascurati, testi drighiani ad opera di Zambon, come il romanzo breve/racconto lungo *Fine d'anno* (Lanciano: Rocco Carabba, 2005), edito solo una volta nel medesimo '36 di *Maria Zef*, ugualmente da Treves, ed una selezione di novelle sotto il titolo *Racconti* (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2006).

La vicenda narrata in *Maria Zef*, come segnala il titolo stesso, è la storia di una ragazza, Maria, detta Mariute, il cui cognome, Zef, tradisce l'origine tutta montanara, di quelle cime tra Veneto e Friuli, tra la Carnia e il Cadore, in cui poveramente viveva con la sua piccola famiglia, la madre Catine, la sorellina Rosute, il “barbe,” ovvero lo zio, Zef. I quattro si sostentano della frugale economica che offre la montagna, lavorando,

durante l'inverno, semplici oggetti di legno che poi nella bella stagione vendono «in tutti i paesi lungo le rive del Livenza e del Piave.» Catine è probabilmente vedova del fratello del Barbe Zef, emigrato nelle lontane Americhe e di cui si son perse le tracce. Dal cognato ha subito violenza e ha contratto un'infermità che la porterà alla morte. Sorte simile a quella della madre il destino ha serbato a Mariute. La ragazza sembra comprendere ciò che ha vissuto Catine e sembra in un primo momento "accettare" il nulla che la vita le riserva, ma quando, anch'essa malata, intuisce che la sorellina presto potrebbe subire la medesima sorte, uccide lo zio decapitandolo con la scure.

Una storia marginale di genti ancor meno che «meccaniche» delle genti di manzoniana memoria. Una storia spaventosa nella sua semplicità e "normalità" che narra di quelle miserrime turbe che già il Verismo quasi un cinquantennio prima aveva reso degne di letteratura. Una materia che tanto un Dickens così come un Verga o uno Zola avrebbero trovato utile per la loro ispirazione. Tuttavia la costruzione letteraria drighiana, semplice, sobria e pacata, distaccata ma non "scientifica," partecipata ma non sentimentale o moralista, ne fa una cosa diversa. Drigo narra una vicenda precisa, circostanziata, con nomi di persone e di luoghi, senza tuttavia riferire un fatto di cronaca; non costruisce però neppure un *exemplum*, un tipo umano, un profilo psicologico, il resoconto d'una piaga sociale. Con compostezza, misura, sobrietà narra una storia individuale nella quale è avvertibile il dramma universale della violenza che si origina dalla marginalità e dall'abbruttimento del vivere di privazioni e negazioni.

Un percorso di lettura estremamente interessante, complesso ed articolato è quello offerto da Azzolini nella prima introduzione, che individua come simbolo l'immagine del bosco tagliato, quel bosco abbattuto e di cui rimanevano «i ceppi degli alberi, segati a poca altezza dal suolo, simili a enormi monconi di membra umane inchiodate alla terra,» che gli Zef dovevano attraversare per raggiungere il loro tugurio sulla costa della montagna. Il paesaggio si fa metafora dell'indicibile, è simbolo del tacitamento della verità, è il segno della devastazione provocata dalla miseria tanto materiale quanto spirituale ed esprime la realtà interiore dei personaggi che condividono un segreto non rivelabile neppure alla propria coscienza. Tutto il percorso di lettura proposto da Azzolini è un'interpretazione attraverso lo strumento, efficacissimo, del mito: una *Maria Zef* come una sorta di mito ctonio, in cui le forze brute e mostruose della natura umana si incarnano in volti, nomi, gesti, personaggi, gli istinti primordiali sovrastano le coscienze e il destino si compie ineluttabile. Ecco dunque che il rude, quasi primitivo Barbe Zef somiglia ad un muto dio Vulcano diviso tra la dura disciplina del suo faticoso lavoro e un'animalità brutale e semplice nella sua naturalità. Ecco Mariute, la vendicatrice, che come un'Erinni, come un Oreste al femminile, o ancora—e qui l'accostamento avviene con la storia biblica—come una novella Giuditta, vendica le offese e chiude il cerchio delle terribili vicende narrate. Pregevole è pure il parallelismo che Azzolini propone con la novella verghiana *La Lupa*: *Maria Zef* è una *Lupa* alla rovescia, non è la seduttrice, l'incantatrice, l'ammaliatrice, l'ennesima Circe che irretisce con le sue arti amatorie, quasi magico-diaboliche, l'eroe e lo trattiene dal compiere il suo destino, è invece la donna vista—e compresa—da uno sguardo di donna nella sua difficile e subalterna relazione con l'alterità che le può usurpare l'identità e la vita.

Diverso e complementare è l'approfondimento proposto da Zambon che, intrecciando il suo discorso critico con un puntuale resoconto biografico, focalizza la sua attenzione sulla rilevanza della scrittura drighiana riconoscendo in Paola Drigo un anello di congiunzione, in ambito veneto, ma con riferimento al contesto nazionale, tra il Fogazzaro e i più giovani Comisso, Piovene e Buzzati. Al contempo la scrittrice padovana, con le sue raccolte di racconti (*La fortuna*, 1913; *Codino*, 1918; *La signorina Anna*, 1932), viene collocata sull'autonoma linea di sviluppo e ricerca artistica rappresentata da grandi scrittrici a lei più o meno contemporanee, le quali solo apparentemente sembrano indugiare su forme antiquate rispetto alla sperimentaltà del "canone maschile," ma che in realtà esplorano consapevolmente altri modi di scrittura, altri percorsi indirizzati verso il riconoscimento di una propria personale tradizione, un proprio autonomo lin-

guaggio, come fecero Grazia Deledda, Matilde Serao, Ada Negri, Carola Prospero, Maria Messina.

Anche i romanzi drighiani *Fine d'anno* e appunto *Maria Zef* vengono collocati in una traiettoria peculiarmente d'autrice. Se il primo, pur nella sua specificità (vi si racconta la maturità e non la giovinezza di una donna), è ascrivibile ad una tipologia di romanzo d'autrice in bilico tra finzione ed autobiografia, tipologia marcata dalle opere della Aleramo (*Una donna*), della Negri (*Stella mattutina*), della Zuccari (*Una giovinezza del XIX secolo*), della Deledda (*Cosima*), della Cantoni (*Storia di Angiolo e Laura*) fino alle più a noi vicine Ginzburg, Manzini, Cialente, Romano, il secondo si qualifica come un passaggio fondamentale del romanzo realista, «romanzo oggettivo d'Otto/Novecento,» nella sua linea d'autrice capace di seguire «con un'intensità di sguardo che non ha paritaria realizzazione nella linea d'autore, questa volta le dinamiche e i significati della storia delle donne». Così *Maria Zef*, sulla linea tracciata nella generazione precedente da *Teresa* della Zuccari, *Suor Giovanna della Croce* della Serao, e poi *Canne al vento* della Deledda, e che proseguirà oltre fino alla vetta rappresentata dal capolavoro *La Storia* della Morante, diviene non un frutto isolato e incomprensibile, ma una voce fondamentale nel percorso di sviluppo del nostro Novecento letterario tanto d'autrice come d'autore.

La presente edizione di *Maria Zef* si potrebbe quasi dire che chiuda e coroni un percorso di riscoperta, rilettura e valorizzazione di una scrittrice italiana immeritatamente trascurata; al contempo ne segna finalmente l'inclusione nel canone letterario italiano novecentesco.

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Marco Codebò. *Narrating from the Archive. Novels, Records, and Bureaucrats in the Modern Age*. Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010.

Nel libro *Narrating from the Archive*, Marco Codebò analizza il rapporto tra romanzo e archivio, inteso sia come miniera di materiali narrativi che come garanzia di verosimiglianza storica. Nello studio si intersecano vari livelli di analisi: quello della storia e della critica letteraria, quelli della teoria della letteratura e dei media (*media theory*), quello della storia e naturalmente dell'archivistica.

Nei primi due capitoli ("The novel and the Archive: Prehistory" e "The Novel and the Archive: Legitimation and Challenge") l'autore fornisce una definizione di "Romanzo d'archivio" ("archival novel") offrendo una prima serie di esempi. Nei capitoli successivi fornisce una seconda serie di esempi volti a offrire una panoramica della narrativa archivistica moderna; ognuno è dedicato ad un'opera archivistica: *I promessi sposi* e *Storia della colonna infame* di Manzoni (III), *La Comédie humaine* di Balzac (IV), *Bouvard et Pécuchet* di Gustave Flaubert (V), *La Vie mode d'emploi* di George Perec (VI) e *Libra* di Don DeLillo (VII).

Nell'affrontare la questione del *genere romanzesco* l'autore fa riferimento alla nascita del romanzo inglese ("the rise of novel" secondo la definizione di Ian Watt del 1957) fatta risalire dai critici intorno alla metà del XVIII secolo, quando il romanzo si distingue come descrizione della realtà storica e di una vicenda individuale. Il romanzo rivendica la sua verosimiglianza storica sulla base di una "validazione" da parte di un'autorità che di tale verosimiglianza storica fosse garante. Secondo alcuni studiosi (come McKeon) tale garanzia era data unicamente dalle dichiarazioni degli stessi autori, che spesso nelle prime pagine delle loro opere rivendicavano la veridicità dei fatti narrati e il ruolo di testimoni diretti dei loro personaggi, in una sorta di processo di "autoconvalidazione." Codebò si distacca da questa visione, sostenendo invece che la garanzia di verosimiglianza fosse data da un confronto diretto e dichiarato con l'*archivio*.

L'autore supporta la sua teoria descrivendo il ruolo centrale dell'archivio nella cultura britannica post-rinascimentale; in questo periodo il genere del "resoconto" o del

“diario” gode di un’enorme fortuna, si pensi a quelli dei mercanti, dei viaggiatori, degli scienziati. Questo amore per il dato scritto, unita “fervore protestante e scientifico” per l’accurata raccolta di dati, dà origine ad una concezione di conoscenza come *analisi di dati* accuratamente registrati ed opportunamente archiviati. Per questo, secondo Codebò, si può parlare di “*Romanzo d’archivio*” o “*Narrativa d’archivio*” (“archival novel,” “archival fiction”), di romanzi cioè che traggono i loro materiali da precisi dati storici annotati da testimoni oculari “autorizzati,” tramandati e conservati dagli archivi; romanzi quindi fatti di materiali d’archivio ma anche ispirati agli archivi, che ne ricalcano cioè la struttura; romanzi che *sono*, essi stessi, archivi.

Questa tesi è corroborata da numerosi esempi e dall’approfondita analisi di alcuni opere assunte come modello del genere. Il capitolo terzo per esempio è dedicato all’edizione del 1840 di *Promessi sposi* e *Storia della colonna infame*. Codebò nota come fin dal frontespizio, l’autore dichiara al contempo la *storicità* (“storia milanese del secolo XVII”), l’*autenticità documentale*, *filologico-diplomatica* (“scoperta”) e la *finzione romanzesca* (“e rifatta da Alessandro Manzoni”). La giustapposizione, senza una netta cesura di *Romanzo* e *Storia*, cioè di due diversi approcci e generi, rappresenterebbe, secondo Codebò, la giustapposizione di due parti di un’unico e più ampio progetto di Manzoni: quello di fornire un unico grande *dossier* dei dati storici da lui raccolti sulla storia lombarda del XVII secolo. Un’unica grande opera in cui *storia* e *invenzione* convivono e collaborano; in cui i fatti storici diventano ispirazione della creazione artistica, che è per questo storia anch’essa; in cui la finzione non può superare i confini della verità storica, in cui cioè la *storia* traccia un *confine* per l’*invenzione*. Giustapponendo due lavori così diversi, con esiti opposti (il trionfo della giustizia nell’uno, dell’ingiustizia nell’altro), Manzoni non solo vuole fornire al lettore due diversi esempi di scrittura storica, ma anche vuole affrontare il problema delle implicazioni *etiche* del rapporto tra verità e invenzione. *Storia della colonna infame* vuole essere un esempio di come la raccolta di dati non confermati, non storicamente provati, possa dare luogo a gravissime prevaricazioni. In essa infatti i giudici, depositari del *potere* di registrare ed archiviare fatti, mescolano colpevolmente *invenzione* e *realtà*; da un lato dando credito a dichiarazioni la cui verità non è stata accertata dall’altro non accettando dati accertati; questo li porterà a *scrivere* e *archiviare* una confessione che è in realtà una *frode*, ma che, grazie all’autorevolezza dell’*archivio* viene creduta vera per oltre un secolo.

L’archivio quindi da un lato costituisce un limite alla spinta incontrollata dell’invenzione nei *Promessi Sposi*, dall’altra diventa causa primaria dell’ingiustizia alla base della *Storia della colonna infame*; in entrambi i casi questi esempi ribadiscono il ruolo centrale dell’archivio per la narrazione storica o storicamente verosimile.

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Risa Sodi and Millicent Marcus, ed. *New Reflections on Primo Levi. Before and After Auschwitz*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

Come ricordano all’inizio della loro prefazione Risa Sodi e Millicent Marcus, fino al 1990 il nome di Primo Levi nel mondo anglosassone era noto solo all’interno di una stretta cerchia di specialisti. In effetti nella *Library of Congress* esistono 69 volumi in inglese contenenti nel titolo “Primo Levi;” restringendo la ricerca ai soli titoli di critica letteraria, la prima monografia in inglese su Levi data al 1995 ed è a firma di Nicholas Patruno. Davanti a questo tardivo riconoscimento postumo da parte della critica anglosassone, il volume curato da Sodi e Marcus fa la sua parte, mettendo però insieme saggi di diverso valore.

Il volume si articola in quattro sezioni: la prima, *Politics, Nationalism and Collective Memory*, inquadra sotto un profilo storico l’attività intellettuale di Levi, partendo dal bel-

lissimo contributo di Stanislao Pugliese, "Primo Levi's Politics: *Giustizia e Libertà*, the *Partito d'Azione*, and 'Jewish' Anti-Fascism" (17-29) che punta il dito sulla rimozione ("erasure," 18) del pensiero politico dello scrittore da parte della critica letteraria statunitense. Pugliese suggerisce che il motivo di questa rimozione è dovuto alla "disturbing reality" messa a nudo da Levi riguardo alla illusoria morte degli istinti fascisti nella vita politica italiana ed europea. Può aver nociuto alla popolarità di Levi in Nord America anche la sua volontà di non essere incasellato nella categoria culturalmente onorata degli "scrittori dell'olocausto," per scegliere il meno privilegiato ruolo di "scrittore," destinato a portare testimonianza e a cercare una "ethical line of conduct and moral reasoning based on classical humanism [...] after Auschwitz" (21). L'illuminismo laico e ateo di Levi (si ricorderà la sua famosa frase "c'è Auschwitz, quindi non può esserci Dio") come una forma di disillusione, quasi un sub-elemento della riservatezza torinese. Visione da leggere in controluce rispetto alla forza della fede di Elie Wiesel, corroborato da un dialogo con Dio e la comunità religiosa durato sessant'anni dopo la Shoah.

Nancy Harrowitz firma il secondo saggio, intitolato "The Itinerary of an identity. Primo Levi's 'Parallel Nationalization'" (31-43). Lo studio analizza la presa di distanza dello scrittore rispetto all'ebraismo, inserendola nella cornice di una difesa della propria identità italiana, che Levi sentiva intimamente propria (32). Harrowitz parte dal concetto della parallela nazionalizzazione di Momigliano per giungere alle riflessioni di Gramsci circa la mancanza di un antisemitismo italiano e contesta le conclusioni dei due intellettuali dimostrando come "the path to emancipation [of the Italian Jews] was not the uncomplicated one that Momigliano suggests, and both Momigliano and Gramsci's analyses are simplistic and misleading" (38). In questo modo, l'autrice conclude che "Levi's understanding of Italian Jewish identity raises questions" (41) suggerendo che probabilmente lo scrittore peccò in generosità rispetto alla reale responsabilità storica degli italiani nei confronti dell'antisemitismo.

Robert S. C. Gordon firma con "Primo Levi and Holocaust Memory in Italy, 1958-1963" (45-59), un breve excursus su come fu onorata la memoria della Shoah da parte del mondo culturale italiano nel lustro preso in esame. Gordon conclude che in quegli anni "an eclectic mass of output and activity relating to the Holocaust emerged in Italy" (55) e all'interno di questo processo, lo studioso riconosce a Levi un ruolo primario.

La seconda parte del volume, "Unbearable Witness" è aperta dal contributo più originale, il saggio di Jonathan Druker "Trauma and Latency in Primo Levi's *The Resawakening*" (63-77) che dimostra come la struttura de *La Tregua* segua da vicino la teoria freudiana dei tre livelli del trauma (choc iniziale, periodo di latenza, ricordi traumatici ricorrenti). In quest'ottica, Druker sostiene che la struttura del racconto sia più importante del suo contenuto, poiché la testimonianza di Levi aiuta il lettore a comprendere come l'individuo traumatizzato non possa mai completamente uscire dal suo incubo e si senta obbligato, usando una descrizione di Freud, a ripetere il materiale represso anziché a ricordarlo.

Altro contributo interessante è quello a firma di Marina Beer, "Primo Levi and Italo Calvino. Two Parallel Literary Lives." L'autrice ripercorre la relazione speciale che unì i due grandi scrittori sia sotto il profilo professionale per i tipi della Einaudi, che sotto il profilo personale. In modo acuto, Beer fa notare come alla fine Calvino e Levi, nonostante la reciproca stima, abbiano seguito strade quasi opposte riguardo alla scrittura, allo stile e alla filosofia dell'intellettuale; Beer lo fa riassumendo, tra l'altro, le risposte che i due grandi dettero al celebre questionario "*Pourquoi écrivez-vous?*" pubblicato dal quotidiano francese *Libération* (110).

Nel contributo successivo, "*L'immagine di lui che ho conservato*. Communication and Memory in *Lilit* e altri racconti (*Moments of Reprieve*)" Elizabeth Scheiber offre un'analisi comparata dell'edizione originale e quella americana della raccolta *Lilit e altri racconti*, soffermandosi sui problemi conseguenti alla riduzione operata nell'edizione d'oltre oceano, dove lo stralciamento della prima sezione ha, secondo Scheiber, inficiato la ipertestualità presente nella raccolta italiana.

Lawrence Langer firma il saggio seguente, "The Survivor as Author. Primo Levi's Literary Vision of Auschwitz." Lo studioso si sofferma sulla spinta morale che conduce Levi a scrivere *Se questo è un uomo*, e in particolare ne analizza il celeberrimo capitolo 11, il Canto d'Ulisse, sostenendo che "a careful examination of Canto 26 suggests that Levi may have had something else in mind, not a tribute to the enduring value of cultural memory or the art of poetry but an invitation to *differentiate* [. . .] how literature may invade and transform reality" (140).

Saltando la "personal reflection" (151) di Nicholas Patruno che ripercorre la genesi e le conseguenze della pubblicazione della sua monografia su Levi (151-6), il saggio di Mirna Cicioni azzarda una lettura di *Se non ora quando* in chiave di moderno western, appoggiandosi a una lettura fornita da Levi stesso a commento del suo lavoro. Chiude l'antologia il contributo (171-94) di Ellen Nerenberg, intitolato "Mind the Gap. Performance and Semiosis in Primo Levi;" il "gap" di cui tratta Nerenberg è la distanza fra significato e significante, o fra intenzione e interpretazione, che emerge "at the heart of the discourse concerning the ethics of representing the Shoah" (178). La ricercatrice analizza in modo comparato le trasposizioni radiofoniche di *Se questo è un uomo* fatte per la Canadian Public Radio e per la Rai e poi due trasposizioni teatrali dello stesso testo messo in scena al Teatro Carignano di Torino nel 1966 e un adattamento di Sir Antony Sher portato a Londra e New York fra il 2004 e il 2005.

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