nuova vita la nazione>> lo spinge a credere che la sua parola non resterà inascoltata" (xxxv).

Cafisse lists the works of Giordano Zocchi and the relevant books and articles of criticism.

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George Talbot. *Montale's "mestiere vile." The Elective Translations from English of the 1930s and 1940s*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995. Pp. 270.

This is the eleventh volume in the series Publications of the Foundation for Italian Studies University College, Dublin and "examines Montale's uncommissioned translations from English" (dust jacket). The contents include an Introduction (13-37), seven chapters entitled "Encounter with Modernism" (39-76), "Shakespeare: Tradition and Innovation" (77-93), "Emily Dickinson and the Antinomies" (95-111), "Hopkins and the Maturing of Clizia" (113-138), "Herman Melville: the Sacrifice of the Innocent" (139-156), "W.H. Auden and the *Auto da f*" (157-194), "Acts of Ambiguous Homage" (194-242), a Conclusion (243-253) and a Bibliography (255-264).

Talbot's premise is contained in the title where the phrase "mestiere vile" is the one used by Montale himself to characterize the nature of his profession as a translator. Talbot, however, argues that the disparaging term, disparaging particularly in light of contemporary theories of translation, pertains only to the commissioned pieces, rather than to those undertaken out of personal interest: the so-called elective translations. These, according to the working premise, exerted a formative influence on Montale's own writings by bringing him into intimate contact with masterpieces of Modernism. Most of the critic's opinions are based on the texts of *Quaderno di traduzioni* (1948) and *La vita della foresta* (*Green Mansions*), translated in the 1940s but published in 1987. In discussing the activities in this area, the author strives to define Montale's theory of translation, as it pertains to the poetic text, placing its evolution in the context of the translation models proposed by Benjamin and Jacobson: "the interplay between the equivalent effect principle and creative transposition or appropriation" (27).

In chapter one, Talbot is convincing in his attempt to see in Montale's very first translation of Eliot's "Song for Simeon" an "element of coherence, between translation and his own work [which] was to become a characteristic of Montale's procedure" (62) arguing that the infidelities of the Italian in relation to the original (at the metrical, lexical, and morphological level) can be explained in terms of the Ligurian poet's own cultural background. As Talbot demonstrates, Montale brings to bear in the act of verse translation, his personal "idelect" and linguistic forms already established in compositions such as "Arsenio" or "Casa sul mare." The critic is thorough in illustrating that, contrary to Meoli Toulmin's affirmation of Montale's fidelity to the original, "He [Montale] translated into his own idiom, both linguistic and thematic" (63). Through his translation, Montale not only imposed his own style on the pieces with which he

was working; he also was himself influenced in two ways: in appropriating certain phrases which reappear in his own poems and by rediscovering his own tradition: namely Dante and the *stilnovisti*: "It is no coincidence that Montale's early translations of Eliot correspond to this new realization of his poetics" (72).

Montale's handling of Shakespeare is the subject of the second chapter and his translation methodology is ascertained by means of a contrastive approach wherein his version of a Shakespearean sonnet is compared to that of Ungaretti. Talbot's conclusion is: "That internal patterning (...) demonstrates the degree to which Montale conceived of translation as an exercise of creative writing" (83) although the critic appears in the chapter to be ambivalent about whether Montale is more or less literal in the translation of the sonnet. Nevertheless, he does manage to argue that "the case of Shakespeare and his role in Montale's reconciliation with his own tradition indicates the importance of English in his poetic development" (90).

The next chapter considers the manner and implications of Montale's contact, via the vehicle of translation, with Dickinson's poetry. Most of the remarks pertain to Montale's efforts to translate Dickinson's "The Storm" ("Tempesta"). Talbot conducts a meticulous analysis of the rendering – an analysis which reveals a formidable command of the semantic and morphological resources available to both poets – painstakingly pointing where the translation matches perfectly the original and where it deviates for a variety of reasons. Such departures are usually ascribed to Montale's individual metaphysical or esthetic concerns. Talbot contends: "He had a distaste for creeds of certainty, and he could not resist the temptation to cast doubt even on Emily Dickinson's heretical certainties" (107): a bit of paradoxical thinking worthy of Montale himself.

Montale's translation of Herman Melville's ballad "Billy Budd in the Darbies" occupies chapter five. Talbot's main contention here is that "Montale's insistence on having the commission to translate *Billy Budd* suggests that he discerned some degree of affinity between the novel and his own poetry" (140). He goes on to illustrate the existence of "symbolic, thematic and metaphysical affinities" (140). Among these is the notion of the unpredictability of destiny which recurs in the poetry of Montale. Talbot does not manage to find, as he does in the preceding chapters, the presence of the Italian poet's "ideolect." He writes: "'Billy in catene' contains very few Montalian key words; in other words there is very little evidence of intertextual connections between 'Billy in catene' and Montale's own poems" (149). He does, however, argue in favor of a thematic continuity between the Melville ballad and two important protagonists: "Billy Budd is the intermediary figure who allows Montale to make the transition from Arsenio to Clizia" (150). In pursuing this line of reasoning, the critic concludes that Montale's act of translation is in actuality an act of interpretation and a consolidation of the interpreter's own esthetics.

In chapter six the processes involved in the rendering of W.H. Hudson's novel *Green Mansions* (1904) as *La vita della foresta* are examined. One of Talbot's key points in this case is that this translation was not commissioned but requested by Montale as a result of "Hudson's philosophy of nature and society, his imagery and his treatment of themes, which Montale appears to have found suggestive" (159). He further speculates that the "noble savage versus compromised civilization" motif "may have held a certain attraction for Montale during his period of intense metaphysical

development in the late 1930s and early 1940s" (163). In so arguing, Talbot does occasionally lose sight of the nature of translation in favour of a comparative study of the Hudson novel and some of Montale's poems identifying common threads and parallels. Much of Talbot's commentary centers on the differences between the Montale translation, on the one hand, and the versions of ghost writer Laura Rodacanachi and of translator Angelo Bianco (Camerino), on the other. Some of these differences relate to Talbot's theory that Montale was either influenced by the writers he translated or he found in their works aspects which resonated with his own ideas. It is difficult to refute Talbot's statement that "there is overwhelming evidence here to demonstrate that his translation of *Green Mansions* is an important intertextual context for 'Giorno e notte'" (182). The connection with *Auto da fé* is to be found in an "*auto da fé* being both an act of faith and a ritual of death by burning" (187) and as such it is an important Montalian motif noted in Hudson's novel.

In chapter seven, the critic considers the translations of a number of poets for whom Montale supposedly had a special affection or admiration. These include: Blake, Hardy, Joyce, Adams, and Thomas. The principal concern in this chapter, as in the entire volume, is to point out subtle departures from the literal translation and incursions into the creativity which constitutes for the author a rewriting of the original. Talbot opines that: "Montale reinterpreted in light of his own metaphysical development" (201). In the end, Talbot wonders about the implications of such a procedure and about the extent to which Montale appears to pay homage to writers who exhibited tendencies consonant with his own.

Having demonstrated throughout how Montale maintained certain personal stylistic features in translating English poetry, Talbot, in the Conclusion, identifies the specific techniques which permitted this paradoxical presence of the translator in the work translated. He writes: "The most original way in which Montale as a translator managed to express his own identity was his deliberate assimilation of aspects of his own work into the foreign texts, a process referred to above as intertextuality" (247). In the end, George Talbot proves to be an extremely competent translator/interpreter himself of the original English poetry (ie. the source language) but also of Montale's Italian versions. Although from time to time he indulges a bit too much in close readings at the expense of statements about Montale's theory of translation, overall Talbot has produced a volume which sheds light on many aspects of the poetics of Eugenio Montale and represents an indispensable contribution to Montale scholarship.

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M. Grazia Sumeli Weinberg. *Invito alla lettura di Dacia Maraini*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1993. Pp. 273.

Upon accepting this invitation into the literary ambience of Dacia Maraini we find that we have acknowledged the importance of this Italian feminist author in her multiplicity