come si sa, i falsi piaceri della vita. Mentre il carro viene trainato sulla strada dell’inferno da diavoli e dannati metà uomini e metà bestie, tutta una umanità peccaminosa si getta verso di esso cercando di arraffare più fieno possibile. È una violenta lotta tra Dio e Satana. Ne I giganti della montagna il carro di fieno [l’arte] diventa elemento positivo. Trainato dagli attori arriva anch’esso, come afferma il mago Crotone, ‘agli orli della vita’ in mezzo ad esseri insensibili, violenti, ciechi e brutali” (p. 26). In questo dramma Alessio sottolinea l’immagine allegorica del ponticello derivante dalle tele del Bosch (“si registra anch’qui la trasposizione di un particolare boschiano da cui Pirandello fu ovviamente influenzato,” ibid.). E conclude affermando che “quando Pirandello scriveva I giganti della montagna doveva pensare all’umanità farneticante ritratta da Bosch.” Pirandello incorporava insomma nelle sue opere “le lezioni di quei pittori che egli sentiva congeniali” (ibid.).

Alessio con acutizia tratta anche la critica d’arte di Pirandello, altro aspetto inedito. In occasione di varie mostre Pirandello scrisse undici articoli apparsi sul Giornale di Sicilia e sulle riviste Natura ed Arte, La Critica, Rassegna settimanale universale, tra il 1895 e il 1897, uno dei quali firmato con lo pseudonimo Giulian Dorpelli. Alessio esamina le idee estetiche che Pirandello rivela in questi articoli: sulla “sincerità” che deve essere alla base dell’arte e sulla “originalità” creativa che l’artista acquisisce attraverso il continuo rinnovamento; i modi di cui Pirandello si serve per esprimere giudizi, riserve e ammirazioni nei riguardi dei quadri, sculture, restauri; la preoccupazione di Pirandello davanti all’invasione delle arti figurative da parte delle “mode” del momento; l’insistente attenzione al colorismo e alla luminosità delle pitture. Sorprende la vasta conoscenza che Pirandello aveva dei pittori contemporanei.

Alessio non manca poi di esaminare l’opera pittorica dell’agrigentino in compagnia del pittore Trento Longaretto e del critico d’arte Giorgio Masciropa, da lui intervistati. Benché Pirandello operasse nell’ambito della tradizione pittorica ottocentesca e della “scuola romana” degli anni Venti e dell’espressionismo, egli cercava continuamente di rinnovarsi e di operare con poetiche nuove e diverse, influendo anche sulle opere giovanili del figlio pittore.

Il libro è corredato da una ventina di disegni e trentasette interessanti quadri a olio di Pirandello che Alessio ha rintracciato dopo lunghe e pazienti ricerche. Si tratta di ritratti di familiari ed amici, di paesaggi (spiagge, case, pinete, campagne) ritraenti vari luoghi in cui Pirandello trascorreva le vacanze estive.

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In this year’s February issue of the Atlantic, Barry Hoberman has written that in his opinion “a translation is a competent and conscientious at-
tempt to convey fully the meaning of the original text. That is, when a
translator takes a text in one language and converts it into another lan-
guage, he must try to capture every bit of meaning that he believes that
text had for the readers and hearers for whom it was intended.” (“Trans-
lating the Bible,” p. 55) Nothing of the original should be omitted, noth-
ing left out of the translation. In reading The Bones of Cuttlefish closely
with Montale’s original text at its side, it would appear that Antonino
Mazza has followed guidelines similar to those set forth by Hoberman.

In his introduction to the volume, Wladimir Krysinski, himself a trans-
lator of Montale into Polish, points out that “Mazza’s English Montale
sounds very Montalian.” “As Mazza has a keen ear for Montale’s
poetry,” Krysinski writes, “he hears the original in such a perfect, albeit
personal way, that his Montale maintains the presence of the poet in his
voice.” Especially apt examples of the translator’s concern to adhere as
closely as possible to his poet are the poems: “Lazying pale and thought-
ful at noon” which conveys the harsh, percussive sounds of the original
“Merriggiare pallido e assorto”: “Bring me the sunflower that I may trans-
plant it” which consciously avoids the rhyme scheme of “Portami il girasol.
...”; and “Ancient one, I am intoxicated by the voice,” which shuns
the casual rhymes scattered throughout Montale’s “Antico sono ubriacato
dalle voce.”

Mazza sometimes indulges in a longer sentence than the original as
may be observed in his translation of the first three lines, third stanza, of
“I limoni” which read:

Vedi, in questi silenzi in cui le cose
s’abbandonano e sembrano vicine
a tradire il loro ultimo segreto.

Mazza’s version uncharacteristically lengthens the three lines above in
the following:

See, in these silences in which things
abandon all restraint and seem on the verge
of betraying their most intimate secret.

Consider too the fourth stanza of “I limoni”:

Quando un giorno da un malchiuso portone
tra gli alberi di una corte
ci si mostrano i gialli dei limoni.

Mazza’s tendency to elaborate upon the original also manifests itself in
the lines:

When one day through the opening of a half-shut gate
among the trees of a court yard
the yellows of the lemon reveal themselves to us.
The four concluding lines of the same poem

   e il gelo del cuore si sfa,
   e in petto si *scrosciino*
le loro canzoni
le trombe d’oro della *solarità*.

become

   and the frost of the heart melts,
   and within our breasts *flash*
their songs
the golden trumpets of the *sun*.

The words *scrosciino* and *solarità* of the original lose Montale’s strong suggestion of sonority in Mazza’s rendering which opts for a variant interpretation of the metaphor.

Mazza is at his best when he is most literal and faithful to Montale. His translation of the third stanza of “Non chiederci la parola,” which is reproduced below, will illustrate:

Non domandarci la formula che mondi possa aprirti,
si qualche storta sillaba e secca come un ramo.
Codesto solo oggi possiamo dirti,
ciò che *non* siamo, ciò che *non* vogliamo.

Mazza’s intention here is clearly to convey the meaning of Montale’s lines with no attempt to reproduce the rhyme scheme:

Do not ask us for the formula which could open worlds for you,
yes, some twisted syllable and dry like a branch.
This alone nowadays can we tell you.
What we are *not*, what we do *not* want.

Some might prefer to translate *possà* with *may*, *oggi* with *today*. Examine, by way of contrast, Maurice English’s version of the same stanza where the translation — except for the last line — alters Montale’s tone as to be almost unrecognizable:

To summon back the old, enchanting days
no spell is hidden here.
Arid, twisted of brier,
a few difficult syllables wish only to say
what we are *not*, what we do *not* desire.

Montale’s last line has become so well-known, almost proverbial, that it is almost sacriligious to try to render it in any other but a literal translation. Maurice English transforms Montale’s “*secca come un ramo*” into “Arid, twisted of brier,” and uses the phrase as the title of the poem
which Montale had left without title. Maurice English deems it his function to interpret Montale freely, therefore, justified in taking great liberties with the text. Maurice English interprets, Mazza translates.

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With the publication of the first issue of *Italian Canadiana*, a new landmark has been reached in the ever-broadening field of Italian Canadian studies. Edited by Julius A. Molinaro, *Italian Canadiana* is the official journal of the Centre for Italian Canadian Studies, and it is co-sponsored by the Centro Canadesi Scuola e Cultura Italiana and the M. Elia Foundation. Its primary aim is the publication of research on the cultural and social aspects of the Italian community in Canada. The Centre for Italian Canadian Studies intends to hold an annual symposium and to collaborate with agencies such as the Associazione Italiana di Studi Canadesi in Rome and the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

This first issue includes seven papers read at the inaugural symposium of the Centre, held May 29, 1984 at the University of Toronto. If the quality of these articles is a foretaste of what is to come, then it is obvious that the field of Italian Canadian studies has found an important scholarly medium for itself. The articles are as follows: Julius A. Molinaro, “Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana: An Italian Contribution to Music in Ontario” (pp. 1-11); Gabriele Erasmi, “A Canadian in Italy at the End of the Enlightenment: Rossini’s *La cambiale di matrimonio*” (pp. 12-27); Joseph Pivato, “Documenting Italian-Canadian Writing: A Bibliography” (pp. 28-37); Maddalena Kuitunen, “L’italianistica e l’emigrazione italiana a Toronto (1853-1984)” (pp. 38-50); Alessandro Gebbia, “Canadian Studies in Italy: A Literary Approach” (pp. 51-66); and Luca Codignola, “Gli studi di storia canadese in Italia” (pp. 67-77).

The paper by Molinaro deals with an interesting personage in the area of music studies. Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana came to Toronto as an immigrant in the 1920s after a successful career as a tenor at La Scala in Milan and at the Metropolitan in New York. Molinaro traces Ferrari-Fontana’s tireless efforts to develop the field of opera in Canada. Without his efforts one gets the impression that the popularity now enjoyed by this musical art form in Canada would likely have been delayed. The theme of music is continued in Erasmi’s paper. This is an account of a fictional Italian Canadian character created by the eighteenth-century Piedmontese playwright Camillo Federici in his play *La cambiale di matrimonio*, which later became the libretto for Rossini’s well-known opera. The character in question was given the unlikely name of “Slook” — a successful Italian Canadian businessman who made his fortune in Canada. Erasmi’s character sketch makes for interesting reading. Pivato provides a critical bibliography of Italian Canadian writers, and as such it constitutes a starting