Una bellissima coppia discorde: il carteggio tra Cesare Pavese e Bianca Garufi (1945-1950). A cura di Mariarosa Masoero. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2011. Pp. 163. ISBN 978 88 222 6074 1. € 20.

Archival documents are the mosaic of history, and so, too, is this small collection of letters, the first published correspondence between Pavese and a woman. Yet it does not draw the wide lines of history writ large. There is no mention of post-bellum struggles in Italy in 1945, nor reference to rubble filled streets, destroyed or occupied buildings, Fascism or the reentry of former Fascists, nor of political battles of succession. It is proof that human relationships continue no matter what the surroundings. The only mention of war themes in the letters concerns the very personal circumstances of little work and lack of money (Bianca), simple logistic difficulties in sending letters and books from or to Rome, travel home (Pavese to Turin) to vote for the Costituente in April 1946, and a spontaneous commentary on Rossellini's film "Città aperta," when it comes out early in 1946. (Pavese: "[I] clandestino eroe è un merluzzo...possibile che non abbia mai un momento di allegria?... Mi agita proprio il valore espressivo — non quello documentario...." [39]). The dialogue between the two writers concerns their personal world, their craft, or the slightly larger one of Einaudi publishing and the intellectuals engaged in rebuilding contacts with the outside world. There are no rhetorical flourishes about keeping cultural endeavors alive. Although they all are of a similar leftist stuff, there is no talk of politics or survival of a common goal.

The detail of their lives (Bianca loses four kilos in a month at a health spa near Genoa; she asks Pavese to bring cigarettes when he comes to visit) or office disagreements (Bianca originally resigns her position at Einaudi because she thinks Natalia Ginzburg does not like her), allows or requires the reader to make the connections. The fabric, which reader and text create, can either be part of the larger picture of Italian intellectual and political history or simply the love story between an older (he is ten years older) employed (he is an important consultant for Einaudi and can distribute translations to young writers), confirmed intellectual and a 27-year-old, who is a Communist (she was involved in the Resistance movement in Rome and is a Party member), sexually liberated (married to a Sicilian man at age nineteen, separated from him, and lived with a comrade from the Resistance movement in Rome), Sicilian woman from an aristocratic family, who was working as a secretary and part-time translator for Einaudi in 1945. The story of the relationship stands on its own. It shows their original understanding of what "us" might mean, if they allowed themselves to be a couple; they talk about love and loving each other even if "l'amore sessuale" is impossible (18), and discuss chapters of the novel that they are writing together (their "romanzo bisessuato," entitled *Fuoco grande*, Einaudi, 1959, published nine years after Pavese's suicide).

The reader comes to know the two through the five-year exchange. It begins with a note from Letojanni (her family palazzo near Taormina) and continues with intensity during her stay at the Arnaldi spa. When she decides to move to Milan (Pavese is in Rome), the tone begins to change. They had agreed that both were free to do what they like (42) but were still living the blush of their intimacy in

Rome in the summer of 1945. As the separation becomes permanent, the lack of contact heightens their differences. Pavese is often harsh in his criticism of her and her inability to become a writer, and she begins to talk about his “solita lettera cinica arcigna desesperada e angolosa” (101). He repeatedly reproaches her for her rolling stone attitude toward life, and she attempts to keep the communication open in generic requests regarding his work, especially texts which involve her as muse (poems or the *Dialoghi con Leucò*); she often offers excuses about translations that she has contracted with Einaudi but can never finish. He alternates between anger when she treats his writing superficially (113) and affectionate address (“Carina Bianca”) when he pens a letter that begins with quotes from poems dedicated to her (108). She has repeated illnesses and crises, and does in fact continuously change goals and direction. In January 1949 she enrolls in medical school but only takes three exams (118-120). The previous year she was writing poems, studying German, and doing psychoanalysis with Ernst Bernhard. In 1951 she will get her degree in philosophy with a thesis on Jung. Psychoanalysis continues to interest her.

Parallel to the engaging story woven by the correspondence are the meticulously researched notes. Detail and precision confirm the editor’s training and her continued scholarly experience as professor of Italian at the University of Turin. Masoero’s careful assembly of letters (Pavese’s were chosen among mostly published ones with additional text where the comparison of first draft and final one differ), her extensive notes, as well as supplementary texts and images in the Appendix, anticipate the reader’s every possible query. It is the work of a masterful philologist, the craft that originally spawned the underlying web concept of hypertext. When Pavese reviles Fernanda Pivano for accusing him of blacklisting her (32) or less vehemently but still critically categorizes Natalia Ginzburg’s writing style as boring (69), the notes make connections with unembellished objectivity. The editor gives all relevant data but lets the texts speak for themselves. Although Bianca’s own words illustrate to what degree her love story with Pavese and his mentorship did or did not make her a writer, the reader is allowed to draw independent conclusions. The learned style and rigor are perfectly enfolded in the academic gravitas of a Leo S. Olschki edition.

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Primo Levi. *Se questo è un uomo*. Edizione commentata a cura di Alberto Cavaglion. Contributi di Daniela Muraca. Torino: Einaudi, 2012. Pp. XVI, 264. ISBN 9788806210557. € 20.

Established in 2008, the Centro Internazionale di Studi Primo Levi in Turin is today the main resource for Levi scholars worldwide. Among its many publications, the recent edition of *Se questo è un uomo* commented by Alberto Cavaglion stands out as a much awaited aid for an in-depth reconsideration of this seminal text.

Published by Einaudi, this edition of Levi’s testimony recuperates the second