Recensioni


Ho lasciato volentieri per ultima la discussione di due saggi sulla traduzione. Nel primo (“Elsa Morante. Translator of Katherine Mansfield”), Nicoletta Di Ciolla McGowan si sofferma sul significato del contributo di Morante ad una traduzione antologica dei racconti e del Journal della scrittrice neozelandese, operazione che la studiosa ritiene ispirata da “artistic affinity, a shared ethics and aesthetics of literature, as well as an analogous sensibility” (46). Nel secondo (“House of Liars: The American Translation of Menzogna e sortilegio”), Marco Bardini svolge una disamina puntuale dei tagli effettuati nella traduzione in lingua inglese del primo romanzo morantiano, tagli che rendevano il lavoro “irriconoscibile” agli occhi dell’autrice (115). “[T]he traditional realm of philological analysis” che le curatrici dichiarano di voler abbandonare nell’introduzione (1) non è del tutto assente nel volume, e questo è un bene. Rigoroso nelle premesse e accurato nell’umile ma indispensabile lavoro di riscontro, Bardini può dimostrare come i tagli (che hanno ridotto la mole del romanzo di ben 140 pagine) abbiano sfociato in particolare i riferimenti metanarrativi e quelli relativi al codice religioso, melodrammatico e onirico. Non più “storia di una nevrosi” (per usare le parole di Morante), il romanzo così amputato può essere inserito “within the safety of respectable tradition, child of the great season of the late-nineteenth century, between naturalism and a degraded decadentism” (127), ma risulta privo delle sue componenti più vitali e moderne. Non posso che unire la mia voce a quelle di Lucamante e Wood, dunque, nell’auspicare la pubblicazione di nuove ed accurate traduzioni, indispensabili alla piena comprensione in area anglosassone di un’opera la cui vitalità e centralità nel panorama europeo è ulteriormente e pienamente attestata da questo pregevole volume.

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Although this volume was published ten years ago, its importance looms larger today than when it was fresh from the press. That is because in the second Republic powerful political interests aim at severing those ideals bonding democratic Italy to the “Resistenza”, that long struggle against Fascism in which Salvadori was, as the book shows, a major protagonist from beginning to end. The book is indeed a homage to Max Salvadori from the people of his region in the “Società Operaia di
Mutuo Soccorso G. Garibaldi” of Porto San Giorgio (Macerata, Italy). In his honour, the Società organized a one-day-study conference with the participation of renowned scholars and people of different political orientations who had known Max in 1992. The scientific contributions of those scholars and some other pertinent material form the content of this interesting volume that highlights the life of Max Salvadori as a man, as an anti-fascist, and as a fine historian and scholar.

The book is divided into five sections. The first section includes the contributions of the mentioned scholars (11-67), while several testimonials form the second section (69-91). The third one is a photographic essay illustrating the most important private and public moments of Max’s life (95-117), while some of his unpublished writings (among which there are forty letters to Riccardo Bauer) make up the fourth section (121-177). Salvadori’s long *curriculum vitae* closes this theoretical and solidly factual book (179-189).

Seen in its general presentation, the book offers a sketchy but comprehensive view of the adventurous and multi-dimensional life of Max Salvadori. As his first name suggests, he was born in England; thus, he held dual citizenship, British and Italian. Scion of a distinguished upper middle class Italian family, he was educated in Switzerland and Rome. Religiously, the Salvadoris belonged to the old “heretic” Waldensian Church.

In 1929, the restless, twenty-one year old Salvadori joined the underground movement *Giustizia e Libertà*, which was founded and led by the liberal-socialist Carlo Rosselli until his assassination by French right wing mercenaries in 1937. In 1932, the Fascist secret police, OVRA, arrested, jailed and then confined Salvadori to Ponza island. British involvement on his behalf gained him freedom; once freed he expatriated to Switzerland. From 1934 to ’37, we find Salvadori farming in Kenya. This experience was the basis of his first major book, *La colonisation européenne au Kenya* (Paris, 1938).

World War II called him to his duty. As a freedom fighter, Salvadori joined the British Army and participated in the allied landing in Salerno and Anzio in 1943. In 1945, he parachuted behind enemy lines where he became the Allies’ liaison officer with the Italian *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale* (CLN) in Milán. Soon after the war, he worked for UNESCO and NATO in Paris for a few years before returning to the USA where he taught history in Vermont first, and then at Smith College in Massachusetts.

Pondering on his long antifascist experience, he began from 1951 onwards to write and publish, practically, a book every year, and some years two and even three. His production included over a thousand essays and minor works. In 1979, *The Liberal Heresy* came out, a book that critics consider his mature work, a book of profound insights and wide humanistic horizons, ranking, according to the experts, up there with works by Guido De Ruggiero, Benedetto Croce, and others.

Two illuminating pages by Alfredo Luzi, coordinator of the volume and organizer of the conference, introduce the book. Arturo Colombo opens it with an overview of Salvadori as a man of intellect and a freedom fighter, fulfilling Mazzini’s maxim, “pensiero e azione.” Nicola Matteucci states that in *The Liberal Heresy* Salvadori shows liberalism as being a function of minorities, religious and/or politi-
cal. And the minorities’ struggle to survive and be masters of their own lives have prefigured what we’ve come to consider as the essential postulate of liberalism: political freedom, which entails freedom of worship, thought, and organization within the laws (23). Salvadori’s view of liberalism was not static but postulates an expanding horizon in which personal and collective democratic rights branch out into the multi-dimensional forms of justice: social, economic, ethical and so on.

Enzo Santarelli’s masterly paper, “Il giovane Salvadori nell’antifascismo e nell’anticolonialismo”, centers on Salvadori’s experience in Kenya. He reveals that Salvadori’s book, La colonization européeenne au Kenya, condenses his colonial experience in a negative view of fascist style colonialism. Living in Africa helped him to expand the basic concept of an early book, L’Unità del Mediterraneo (1931), in which Salvadori challenged the old stereotype held by Northern Europeans regarding the presumed race inferiority of the peoples of the Mediterranean lands. According to Santarelli, Salvadori’s experience in Kenya is essential “per comprendere fino in fondo” his antifascist commitment, his Anglo-Italian cultural roots, and his “aggirarsi irrequieto attraverso i continenti” (33).

Using Salvadori’s letters to Bauer as a basis for his contribution, Virginio Paolo Gastaldi traces the friendship and ideological consonance bonding Salvadori and the Milanese Riccardo Bauer. Both men lived as, one could say, Buddhist monks: “always sober with words, reserved […] in homage to the modesty of sentiments, a characteristic of other times, different life style and education” (40). In meeting Bauer for the first time, Salvadori expressed a very high opinion of the man and hope for the future of Italy. “It was enough to meet him — wrote Salvadori — to feel sure that a nation able to produce men like him was even able to get out of the conditions of decadence and corruption in which fascism was leading it” (39).

Salvadori as a master historian (able to detach himself from his own passions and to become an objective interpreter of those events in which he was one of the protagonists) is the subject of Michele Millozzi’s enquiry. Analyzing the book, La Resistenza nell’Anconetano e nel Piceno, Millozzi shows that Salvadori did not give preference to his political party (Partito d’Azione) but presented, in a balanced view, the several partisan formations that operated in the area, conveying the idea that the Resistenza was an antifascist “choral” action (62). Besides, he did not forget to highlight the background contribution and support that partisans received from the civilian population of the Ancona Province, “sulla quale il fascismo aveva fatto poca presa” (64).

In conclusion, the militant personality, the high ethical standard, and the intellectual honesty of the man honoured in the book emerge clearly in every page of this varied and interesting work. As well as Salvadori’s profile, from the book emerges also the portrait of a generation of antifascist men and women whose commitment and ethical and intellectual strength humble the reader. At the same time, it is implicit a praise to the “Società Operaia di Mutuo Soccorso G. Garibaldi” and the generations of men and women who manned it, among whom was Max Salvadori himself.

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