

“Lavorare è vestire la terra”.

Summer memories in Cesare Pavese’s *Feria d’agosto*



VALENTINA MONATERI 
Università di Torino

Abstract: *Feria d’agosto* is a collection of short stories from 1946 by Italian author Cesare Pavese. This can be defined as a key publication in Pavese’s work: not only since it contains an inventory of strongly evocative pavesean themes, but also for the great relevance the author gives to the summertime and the idea of *feria*, which he will re-call again in the more mature triptych of short novels enclosed under the title *La bella estate* (1949). Indeed, the August *ferie* symbolize an important topic in the post-war Italian narrative and, especially, in Pavese’s portrayal of the Italian culture of the mid-40s (Alfano, De Medici, Tortora, 2020). The book is divided into three sections, whose titles are significant: “il mare”, “la città”, “la vigna”. The sea, the city and the vineyard are all central *loci* in Pavese’s writing, where narrative and mythical telling meet. In the first section, all the main characters are boys on the threshold of adolescence, which come from their status of innocence to the one of conscience. In the second section, the city is the place of the working days portrayed as the locus of cognitive experiences, where we can find recurring Pavese’s elements, from the summer deserted streets to the solitary men. While, in the third section, the vineyard represents a religious, mythical element in Pavese’s writings whose interpretation throughout his work is polysemic (Procaccini, 1985). The summertime, then, has a multifarious meaning in Pavese’s work and especially in *Feria d’agosto*, where the author tends to associate it with childhood, with a ritual passage from ignorance to wisdom, and ultimately, with the relationship modernity maintains with classical myths, thus working on a all-personal mythical method which the Italian literature, in the 40s, was inheriting from the English, French and American literatures (Fielder, 1954).

Keywords: Summertime, Italian post-war narratives, Classical reception studies, mythical method, Cesare Pavese.

Résumé : *Feria d'agosto* est un recueil de nouvelles de 1946 de l'auteur italien Cesare Pavese. Il s'agit d'une publication clé dans l'œuvre de Pavese : non seulement parce qu'elle contient un inventaire de thèmes pavesiens fortement évocateurs, mais aussi pour la grande importance que l'auteur accorde à l'idée de *feria*, thématique qu'il rappellera à nouveau dans le triptyque de romans courts réunis sous le titre *La bella estate* (1949). Les *ferie* d'août constituent un thème symbolique important dans le récit italien de l'après-guerre et, surtout, dans le portrait que dresse Pavese de la culture italienne du milieu des années 1940. Le recueil *Feria d'agosto* est divisé en trois sections, dont les titres sont révélateurs : « il mare », « la città », « la vigna ». La mer, la ville et la vigne sont autant de lieux centraux dans l'écriture de Pavese, où se rencontrent narration et récit mythique. Dans la première section, tous les personnages principaux sont des garçons au seuil de l'adolescence, qui passent de leur statut d'innocence à celui de conscience. Dans la deuxième section, la ville est le lieu des journées de travail, dépeintes comme le lieu des expériences cognitives, où l'on retrouve les motifs récurrents de Pavese, des rues désertes en été aux hommes solitaires. Dans la troisième section, le vignoble représente un élément religieux et mythique constant dans les écrits de Pavese dont l'interprétation tout au long de son œuvre est polysémique (Procaccini, 1985). L'été a donc une signification multiple dans l'œuvre de Pavese et surtout dans *Feria d'agosto*, où l'auteur tend à l'associer à l'enfance, au rapport que la modernité entretient avec les mythes classiques, élaborant ainsi une méthode mythique toute personnelle que la littérature italienne, dans les années 1940, hérite des littératures anglaise, française et américaine (Fielder, 1954).

Mots-clés : période estivale, contes italiens de l'après-guerre, études de réception classiques, méthode mythique, Cesare Pavese.

Introduction

*La grande collina-mammella dovrebbe essere
il corpo della dea, cui la notte di San Giovanni
si potrebbero accendere i falò di stoppie
e tributare culto.*

(*Lettere 1924-1944* n. 640, [22 giugno 1942], 1966).

Feria d'agosto is an Italian 1946 collection of short stories from the Piedmontese author Cesare Pavese. Pavese's writing started in 1941, but it was only a few weeks after the liberation of the city of Turin, Northern Italy, in 1945, that the author worked on the publication of *Feria*, which contains twenty-nine short stories and essays written during the war-years, from

1941 to 1944¹ (Van den Bossche, 2001: 247). The collection besides of presenting an inventory of strongly evocative motifs *pavesiani*, it even gives a great relevance to the image of *summertime* and the idea of *feria*, which the author had already sketched out in the novella *La spiaggia* (1942), and which he will re-call again in the later short novel *La bella estate* (1949), whose composition, however, dates back to the war years.

Feria d'agosto is a three-section collection of short narratives, whose titles are meaningful: *il mare, la città, la vigna*. The sea, the city and the vineyard are all central *loci* in Pavese's writing, where memory, desire, romantic landscapes and mythical telling meet. In the first section, all the main characters are boys on the threshold of adolescence, which pass from a status of innocence to the one of conscience. In the second section, the city is the place of the working days portrayed as the *locus* of cognitive experiences, where we can find recurring Pavese's elements, from summer deserted streets to solitary men. In the third section, the vineyard represents a religious, mythical element in Pavese's writings, whose reading throughout his work is polysemic: here Pavese presents an essayistic and a sort of lyrical interpretation of myths and symbols (See Mondo, 1961; Venturi, 1969; and Amoroso, [1960] 1968: 15–83; Procaccini, 1985: 214–229; Barberi Squarotti, 2000: 7–21; Van den Boscche, 2001: 213–260; Gioanola, 2002: v-xxxxii).

Thus, summertime holidays take on an allegorical and multifarious meaning in Pavese's work, and especially in *Feria d'agosto*, where the author tends to associate it with childhood, with a ritual passage from ignorance to wisdom, and ultimately, with the relationship modernity maintains with classical myths. Pavese was indeed elaborating an all-personal mythical method,² which the Italian literature of the 40s was inheriting from the English, French and American literatures (See Fielder, 1954; Venturi, 1969: 26–30; Bacchilega, 1986; for Pavese and the American literature, see Van den Bossche, 2001: 85–95; Fasano, 2008: 295–310). This article therefore aims to present, through the methods of comparative literatures, the representation of summertime in Cesare Pavese's early work, in an ultimate attempt to assess how the narration of *summertime* and *holiday poetics* influenced the author in his elaboration of the role of myths within modernity. As has been showed: “*Un esame della presenza del mito all'interno della poetica pavesiana non può non prendere le mosse da un'attenta considerazione delle attività di Pavese americanista*” (Van den Bossche, 2001: 85).³ Indeed, Cesare Pavese, from 1930

1. With the exceptions of *Vocazione* (1940) and *Primo amore* (1937).

2. With the term “mythical method” we refer precisely to the Eliotian idea of mixing realist elements, symbols and myths within modernist poetry. See: Eliot, 1923; and among others: Praz, 1967: 107; Donogue, 1997; Frye, 2000: 100; Nohrberg, 2012: 909.

3. “An examination of the presence of myth within Pavese's poetics must begin with a careful consideration of Pavese's Americanist activities.” [My trans.].

onwards, started his long career as a translator, a critic and a reader of the English and American culture and literature. And we are thus led to assess that Pavese's writing does not constitute a solitary literary example of the amplification of classical myths and symbolical meanings, but rather that his vision of myths as a *non-place* of memories, as the oxymoronic visions of existence, is quite typical of the Euro-American literatures of the late 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, bringing him closer to a sort of *modernist* aesthetic about which though critics are conflicted (Van den Bossche, 2001: 229; Riccobono-Thompson, 2003).

Cesare Pavese's life is in fact profoundly linked to his editing and translation activity, with a peculiar interest for Anglo-American cultures. He graduated from Turin University holding a dissertation on Walt Whitman's poetry in 1930 (Cf. Pavese [1930], Magrelli [ed. by], 2020). After graduation, he translated Sinclair Lewis's *Our Mr. Wrenn: The Romantic Adventures of a Gentle Man* for the publisher Bemporad. In January 1931, the Treves-Treccani-Tuminelli publishing house commissioned him to translate Melville's *Moby Dick*, which was then published in 1932 by a new editor in Turin: Carlo Frassinelli. Pavese then moved to essays on American writers, for the magazine "Cultura", with two essays on Lewis in 1930, and two on S. Anderson and E. L. Masters. In 1933 three essays on Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser and Walt Whitman came out in "Cultura". In 1934, Frassinelli made Pavese publish the translation of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In 1935 Pavese translated Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel* and *The Big Money*. In 1937 he translated Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, and, in 1938, for Einaudi, he translated Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Gertrude Stein's *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. In 1939, again for Einaudi, he translated Dickens's *David Copperfield* and in 1940 Melville's *Benito Cereno* and Stein's *Three Existences*.

In 1946, *Feria d'agosto* was published by Einaudi in the series 'Narratori contemporanei', at the end of Pavese's long editorial, essayistic and poetic production that included the relevant collection of poems *Lavorare stanca* from 1936 for the Florentine editor Alberto Carocci. *Feria d'agosto* was then followed by another collection of short dialogues *Dialoghi con Leucò* in 1947, the triptych of short novels enclosed under the title *La bella estate* in 1949, including *La bella estate* (1940), *Il diavolo sulle colline* (1948), *Tra donne sole* (1949), and then in 1950 followed the last novel *La luna e i falò*. In June of that year Pavese won the Italian Strega literary prize for *La bella estate* and in August, on the night of the 26th, he killed himself in the Roma hotel in Turin.

Cesare Pavese was clearly an attentive intellectual of inter-war and post-war Italy, an artist and an enquirer of modern cultures, whose particular interest in American literature made him a promoter of American

culture in post-war Italy and a key figure in the publishing activities of the famous Einaudi publishing house (See Ferretti, 2017). As Van den Bossche has shown, Cesare Pavese's positive appraisal of Melville's *Moby Dick* led him to express the view that *Moby Dick* is a peculiarly successful work because of its arousing in the reader of a sense of mystery, without rationalizing it or without allegorizing it: "*Moby Dick* [...] genera un senso di mistero senza razionalizzarlo del tutto o senza vivisezionarlo allegoricamente" (Van den Bossche, 2001: 92).⁴ Accordingly, in the line with those studies that give relevance to the interpretation of myths and symbols in Pavese's production,⁵ the present article aims at shedding a light on how mystery, myth, childhood and summer memories are enucleated in Pavese's view of fictional narrative in post-war Italy, including his social and political thought.

The first section of this article will deal with Pavese's metaphorization of Piedmontese summertime and summer vacations into something fictional, mythical, and symbolical in *Feria d'agosto*. In the second section, by opening the discussion to the sociology of leisure time, in which the influence of cinemas and films on popular audiences in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s is evaluated of great relevance, some considerations will be made about the relationship between Pavese's work and the art of cinema and how the addition of popular elements in his work can make us critics of today think of his work as a *modernist* one.

Of Myths and of Symbols: Infancy, nostalgia, and summer holidays



The flap added by Pavese to the first edition of *Feria* read:

Non sempre si scrivono romanzi. Si può costruire una realtà accostando e disponendo sforzi e scoperte che piacquero ognuno per sé, eppure siccome tendevano a liberare da una stessa ossessione, fanno avventura e risposta. Qui, come in tutte le avventure, si è trattato di fondere insieme due campi d'esistenza. E la risposta potrebbe essere questa: solamente l'uomo fatto sa essere ragazzo (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 205).⁶

4. "Moby Dick [...] generates a sense of mystery without rationalising it completely or vivisecting it allegorically" [My trans.]
5. Van den Bossche is a fundamental source for the study of myth in Pavese, as also: Guiducci, 1972; Jesi, 1968; Meynaud-Jeuland, 1968; Renna, 2017.
6. "One does not always write novels. One can construct reality by juxtaposing and arranging efforts and discoveries that appeal to each for themselves, and yet because they tend to liberate from the same obsession, they make adventure and response. Here, as in all adventures, it was a matter of fusing together two fields of existence. And the answer could be this: only the grown-up man knows how to be a boy" [My trans.].

Pavese wanted to tell adventures, and these adventures are the ones the young boys live during their troubled access to adulthood (Cf. Bàrberi Squarotti, 2000). Summer is the multifarious narrative feature that runs through all his writing in *Feria* and there are three fundamental elements that return in Pavese's telling of these vacational adventures: myth, private child symbolism and the countryside (Cf. Gioanola, 2002: vii; Gioanola, 2003: 13–15). Thus, childhood is associated with the countryside, both because of an actual biographical correspondence, and because the city, the place of working life, the world of maturity, is gradually associated in *Feria d'agosto* with a departure from an innocence that has been lost and is remembered with nostalgia. The first section of the collection titled *Il mare* (The sea) features the following stories as mainly summer-holidays-related narratives: *Fine d'agosto*, *Insonnia*, *L'eremita* and *Il mare*.

Rather obviously, August is the month of *ferie*, of holidays, of festivities; it is the month that, in the peasant world, falls between the first and second harvests: “*tra i primi e i secondi raccolti, quando in campagna non si fa più niente e la giornata dura ancora metà della notte*”⁷. Pavese was aware that recalling the peasant world of his childhood was an operation that required some innovative – *modern* – creative methodology. And in these terms, he gave to those summer memories a particular ecstatic significance of the passage from infancy to adulthood: a passage that he saw as hinging on myth (Bàrberi Squarotti, 2000). Mythical telling is pre-verbal and pre-logical and, in this sense, the August festival is seen by Pavese as an ancient Greek *epoché* (ἐποχή), that is, an ecstatic suspension of living, from which it results that the process of remembering is not a temporally recordable itinerary of memory, but a leap into another dimension, that of the symbolical (Gioanola, 2002: xix). For instances, in Husserl's phenomenology, *epoché* appears to be as a suspension of beliefs where rational biases are suspended to discover the originally consciousness of phenomena (See for a critic of Husserl's phenomenology in literary criticism: Haensler, Mendicino, Tobias, 2020). And this is the way Pavese tries to make the reader pass through this strong association between infancy, memories and life in the countryside: by making it mythical. Hence, adolescence at the threshold of maturity results in its representation as a blissful moment where time and space are all subjected to individual rationalization.

Within the section *Il mare*, *Fine d'agosto* is a very short story that immediately presents the three features *pavesiane* linked to summer nights: discovery/fear of sexuality, mysteries and quest of the self. Indeed, nighttime symbolizes a moment of rebellion for the protagonists of Pavese's stories: it is the most suitable time to start journeys into another dimension,

7. “Between the first and second harvests, when in the countryside nothing is done anymore and the day still lasts half the night” [My trans.].

a temporal sphere where oneiric and every-day memories are mixed as in a Freudian analysis (Cf. Isotti Rosowsky, 1989; Van den Bossche, 2001, 261; Gioanola, 2002: XIII). Accordingly, with some misogynist conclusions that try to mimic a still-beardless boy's mind, *Fine d'agosto* deals with the first-person narrative of a young adult who, together with his partner Clara, is surprised by a summer memory about the times he was a boy. This memory is all shrouded in a sense of nostalgia for lost innocence, for the mystery that hovers around sexuality. Since the gusts of the night wind always take the protagonist back to those moments, Clara patiently waits for him, in doing so irritating and exasperating the narrator. As Pavese wrote: "*C'è qualcosa nei miei ricordi d'infanzia che non tollera la tenerezza carnale di una donna – sia pure Clara*" (Pavese, [1946] (2017): 10; and Gioanola, 2002: 10).⁸ The narrator is, in fact, lost at looking in the wind gusts the memories of a pre-war summer, of a state of innocence sought here with nostalgia, which gets the better of the coming of age:

Quel turbine di vento notturno mi aveva, come succede, inaspettamente riportato sotto la pelle e le narici una gioia remota, uno di quei nudi ricordi segreti come il nostro corpo, che gli sono si direbbe connaturati fin dall'infanzia. La spiaggia dove sono nato si popolava nell'estate di bagnanti e cuoceva sotto il sole. Erano tre, quattro mesi di una vita sempre inaspettata e diversa, agitata, scabrosa, come un viaggio o un trasloco. Le casette e le viuzze formicolavano di ragazzi, di famiglie, di donne seminude al punto che non mi parevano donne e si chiamavano le bagnanti. I ragazzi invece avevano dei nomi come il mio. Facevo amicizia e li portavo in barca, o scappavo con loro nelle vigne. I ragazzi delle bagnanti volevano stare alla marina dal mattino alla sera: faticavo per condurli a giocare dietro i muriccioli, sui poggi, su per la montagna. Tra la montagna e il paese c'erano molte ville e giardini, e nei temporali di fine stagione le burrasche s'impregnavano di sentori vegetali e torridi che sapevano di fiori spiaccicati sui sassi (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 10).⁹

8. "There is something in my childhood memories that does not tolerate the carnal tenderness of a woman – even of Clara" [My trans.].
9. "That night wind whirlwind had, as it happens, unexpectedly brought back a remote joy under my skin and nostrils, one of those naked memories as secret as our bodies, which one might say have been inherent in them since childhood. The beach where I was born was populated in the summer with bathers and baked under the sun. It was three or four months of a life that was always unexpected and different, agitated, rough, like a journey or a move. The little houses and alleyways swarmed with children, families and half-naked women, to the point that they didn't look like women to me and were called *le bagnanti*. The boys, on the other hand, had names like mine. I made friends with them and took them out on boats or ran off with them to the vineyards. The boys of *le bagnanti* wanted to stay at the marina from morning to night: I struggled to get them to play behind the walls, on the hills, up the mountain. Between the mountain and the village there were many villas and gardens, and in the storms at the end of the season the gales were impregnated with vegetable and torrid scents that smelled of flowers crushed on the stones" [My trans.].

Here the author describes the summer of his childhood: three or four months of unexpected life; women in swimming costumes seen as “half-naked”; the streets tingled with people coming from everywhere around the region. And this is the memory of the end-of-August wind that, perceived again in the years of maturity, takes the author back in time: not as much as in a Proustian epiphany, but as in a profound rationalization of the end of a mythical time, which can again be made symbolic and metaphorical, only thanks to the narrative function.

On another level, *Insomnia* tells of a young adult who returns home every night, at dawn, in mid-August after “parties, talks and adventures” (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 21). The story is very short and anticipates a core narrative that will be more extensively developed in *L'eremita*, the next tale of this section. In fact, the protagonist, aware that his father did the same before him, renounces his work in the stable, he refuses his duties, and even if he is still scolded as a boy, he keeps coming home at dawn, certain that he wants to break the link with the family unit. He cannot sleep, since a sort of August insomnia seizes him: “*a smania di fnirla, di prendere un treno, di andare in città e fare una vita più da uomo, non mi lasciava dormire*” (Pavese, [1946] (2017): 23).¹⁰ The boy suffers from insomnia since, through his knowing of life, of the world through summer festivals, he understands that before bending to working time, to the September time of days dedicated to the harvests, there is a season of life and freedom which is the summer season of August.

L'eremita thus deals with a first-person narration told in the narrative voice of a family man. More elaborated than *Insomnia*, *L'eremita* has Nino as a protagonist. Nino is a young boy with no mother, who always goes with his father to bathe in the river and is always on the hunt for adventures. His father and his aunt try to keep him at home for the working and the studying, but Nino always goes up the hill to look for the hermit, Pietro, a young man who lives from day to day and who masters carpentry, seafaring and vineyards. He knows some exotic words that make Nino dream and has retreated to a hut on the hill. He doesn't want visitors, he doesn't want a wife. Pietro, living as a hermit, is thus the transitional figure helping Nino – who gets into trouble, with a dangerous swim in the river, with a feverish walk in the night-time – to become a man and Nino's father, indirectly, to become a boy again: “*Quella notte del ritorno l'ho nel cuore come l'ultima infanzia di Nino. I canti, la stanchezza, l'eccitazione sotto la luna me ne hanno fatto qualcosa di irreale e di triste. Voglio quasi bene a quel Pietro; si direbbe che il bambino fui io*” (Pavese, [1946]

10. “Something like a eager to get it over with, to take a train, to go to the city and live more like a man, did not let me sleep” [Mt trans.].

2017: 33).¹¹ The time of the *feria*, of non-working time, summer festivals and bonfires reminds the adult man of that state of strange ecstatic happiness preceding maturity and that bring the boy to get to know the world, to get to access adulthood.

Finally, *il mare* is the last short story of this section – which even gives the name to the section – and is particularly relevant to show how Pavese’s writing focuses on a fictional representation of the ritual passage from adolescence to conscience, thanks to his seek for myths. As Pavese wrote in his journal on April 1945 the 5th: “*Vivere in un ambiente è bello quando l’anima è altrove. In città quando si sogna la campagna, in campagna quando si sogna la città. Dappertutto quando si sogna il mare*” (Pavese, [1945] 1990: 299).¹² Here, the author presents the three polarities of *Feria d’agosto*: sea, city, countryside. In this tale, all that matters is the *elsewhere*, that elsewhere to which summer memories constantly return. As Pavese is known to have written in his journal, we always seek for some other place to go, for a *nowhere* that even many of his literary models from the Western literary tradition wrote on (e.g. Baudelaire, Melville, Leopardi) (Cf. Gioanola, 2002: x). In the story *Il mare* the protagonists are two boys, one of whom is called Gosto, in a reference to the month of August. During the scorching summer days, the two of them venture into the hills in search of the sea, which Gosto’s grandfather said is “behind the hills”. And thus the sea is properly mythicized by Pavese’s writing, since no sea really appears behind the Piedmont hills. As Gioanola has written, the two boys are not looking for real road information, they are looking for legends: *mythos*; for the journey they intend to undertake, they do not need maps, they need imagination. (Gioanola, 2002: XII).

Eventually, in the night, Gosto will give up finding the sea and take the road back to the hills. The other boy, alone, will be attracted by the lights and sounds of a party in the distance; he will meet the village musician, Candido, and after dancing with him will return home. The sea is then the place of nowhere, it is mythicized and allegorized as Pavese had declared to have learnt from Melville’s pages, where the sea is represented through a constant cognitive tension towards the unknown, but which will never find a solution: for the mystery remains a mystery in Melville. And thus it happens in Pavese’s short story *Il mare*, where the sea will never be reached and it will never be known, just as Melville’s White Whale disappears without being caught (Van den Bossche, 2001: 92).

11. “That night of the return journey is in my heart like Nino’s last childhood. The singing, the tiredness, the excitement under the moon made it something unreal and sad. I almost love that Pietro; you could say that the child was me” [My trans.].
12. “Living in an environment is good when the soul is elsewhere. In the city when you dream of the countryside, in the country when you dream of the city. Everywhere when one dreams of the sea” [My trans.].

La città, then, the next section of *Feria*, presents at its center a series of slightly more adult figures than those presented in *La campagna*. These are students and young workers who have moved from their families in the Piedmont countryside to the city of Turin to grow up as men, make a career and to enter an independent adulthood. The story, *La città*, for instances, presents a group of friends, led by “Gallo”, to whom the protagonist is attracted, with whom he experiences a series of nocturnal raids in the Turin city *entre-deux-guerres*, and from whom he learns how to drink, how to rent rooms and how to find women to spend the night with. Though he fails, in the end, to keep the only good-family girl that he likes.

The deserted streets, trodden at a great pace by the various protagonists of the following stories: *Vocazione*, *Le case*, *Risveglio* and *L'estate*, are the real protagonists of the second section of *Feria*. The streets of Turin are often represented as deserted, seen late at night, as when the protagonists return home from their nocturnal adventures, and seen during the summertime or during Sundays. Thus, the holiday time, disruptive at the eyes of the protagonists, domains the plots. As we can read in *Le case*:

Anche adesso la gente alla domenica va fuori città. Le vie si vuotano come un'officina. Io passo il pomeriggio camminandoci, e ce ne sono di quelle dove in mezz'ora non si vede un'anima. Sembra che tetti, marciapiedi e muri, e qualche volta i giardini, siano stati fatti soltanto per un uomo come me, che ci passa e ripassa e se li guarda venire incontro e allontanarsi, come succede delle colline e degli alberi in campagna. C'è sempre qualche via più vuota di un'altra. Alle volte mi fermo a guardarla bene, perché in quell'ora, in quel deserto, non mi pare di conoscerla. Basta che il sole, un po' di vento, il colore dell'aria siano cambiati, e non so più dove mi trovo. Non finiscono mai, queste vie. Non par vero che tute abbiano i loro inquilini e passanti, e che tutte se ne stiano così zitte e vuote. Più che quelle lunghe e alberate della periferia dove potrei respirare un po' d'aria buona, mi piace girare le piazze e le viuzze del centro, dove ci sono i palazzi, e che mi sembrano ancora più mie, perché proprio non si capisce come tutti se ne siano andati (Pavese, 2001: 130).¹³

13. “Even now people go out of town on Sundays. The streets empty out like a garage. I spend my afternoons walking along them, and there are some where you can't see a soul in half an hour. It seems as if the roofs, pavements and walls, and sometimes the gardens, were made just for a man like me, who walks past them and watches them come and go, like hills and trees in the countryside. There is always some street that is emptier than another. Sometimes I stop to take a good look at it, because at that hour, in that desert, I don't seem to know it. All it takes is the sun, a bit of wind, the colour of the air to change, and I no longer know where I am. These paths never end. It doesn't seem true that they all have their tenants and passers-by, and that they all remain so quiet and empty. Rather than the long, tree-lined streets of the suburbs, where I can breathe in some fresh air, I like to wander around the squares and alleys of the centre, where there are the buildings, and which seem to me even more my own, because it's hard to understand how everyone's gone” [My trans.].

And *L'estate*, too, presents one of the best representations of the empty city in the holiday time, the image of the whole population fleeing away when working days do not keep them in the city. The author depicts this brief falling in love by allegorizing it completely in the story of a single summer coming to an end, with the arrival of the first rains. He tells the love of one season: “*Stemmo insieme ancora molti giorni, fin che durò la stagione, ma entrambi sapevamo che tutto sarebbe finito entro l'autunno. Così fu infatti*” (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 108).¹⁴ The suspended time of the holiday is thus an opportunity to suspend life, just as the memories from childhood in the countryside offered to the adult the same opportunity to escape. The empty city and the lone man passing through it are the two main objects of the story: space and time overlap and lose their connotations of reality, existing only in narrative time: “*Tutto questo mi fu familiare, direi quotidiano se il succedersi di quei giorni non mi paresse tuttora illusorio, tanto che a volte l'intera stagione mi riesce a ripensarci una sola giornata che vissi in comune*” (Pavese, [1946], 2001: 106).¹⁵ Thus, the individual, who signifies the external world that surrounds him, becomes the only reason for the world's meaning: “*Ogni cosa, accadendo, si faceva ricordo, perché accadeva dentro di me prima che fuori. Era come se la lunga giornata l'andassi facendo io, e perciò niente, della stanza e della sera, mi era estraneo; nemmeno il corpo che accoglieva il mio, e la voce sommessa*” (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 107).¹⁶

The last section is entitled *La vigna* and is also the most chronologically homogeneous section (Cf. Muñiz Muñiz, 1992: 80–81; Ven den Bossche, 2001: 274). As Van den Bossche has indicated, with the third section we seem to be approaching an increasingly clear theoreticalization of the discourse: after the first and second sections, dominated respectively by an eventual narrative and a narrative divided between the *pathos* and the cognitive, the non-fictional writing of *La vigna* looms as the third and final stage in this progressive expansion of the cognitive dimension in the discursive texture of *Feria d'agosto* (Van den Bossche, 2001: 274). In this last section, Pavese enucleated some of his main considerations about myth. In *Del mito del simbolo e d'altro*, the first text of *La vigna*, Pavese's coordinates of the interpretation of myth and symbol are outlined. As he writes: “*Ora, da bambini il mondo s'impara a conoscerlo non – come parrebbe – con immediato e originario contatto alle cose, ma attraverso i segni*

14. “We stayed together many more days, as long as the season lasted, but we both knew that it would all be over by the autumn. And so it was” [My trans.].
15. “All this was familiar to me, I would say intimate, if the succession of those days did not still seem illusory to me, so much so that sometimes the whole season reminds me of a single day I lived in common” [My trans.].
16. “Everything, as it happened, became a memory, because it happened inside me before it happened outside. It was as if the long day was being done by me, and therefore nothing in the room or in the evening was foreign to me; not even the body that held mine, and that soft voice” [My trans.].

di queste: parole, vignette, racconti” (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 152).¹⁷ Words, cartoons, stories are the symbols of the experiences and adventures, physical and mental, properly of childhood, and it is thus that the mythical childish time is associated – as we have shown – with the time of the feast, of the life’s *feria*: “Cosi ognuno di noi possiede una mitologia personale [...]. A questo ‘temps retrouvé’ non manca del mito genuino nemmeno la ripetibilità, la facoltà cioè di reincarnarsi in ripetizioni, che appaiono e sono creazioni ex novo, così come la festa ricebra il mito e insieme lo instaura come se ogni volta fosse la prima” (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 152–153).¹⁸ Pavese interprets myth as something that is created and recreated, each time as if for the first time, in the ritual context of the festival, because only through ritualization can myth be established. And the vineyard itself is a symbol of the feast time, coincident with the grape harvest, the country life, and the peasant times. It is a symbol part of the personal mythology *pavesiana*: from something proper of the peasant landscape, it becomes something more. Thus, in Pavese’s writing, material things are metamorphized in mythical views (Gioanola, 2002: xvii).

Accordingly, *Nudismo* is the story which results to be more relevant for Pavese’s interpretation of the clash between nature and culture, between libertarian life and societal life, between working time and idleness or free time. In *Nudismo*, in fact, the protagonist seeks nudity as a natural human condition, a condition opposed to being dressed to go to work or to get into the world. The narrator always goes to the river to hide in the grass to bathe and then to dry himself naked in the sun. Here, the connection with nature is everything. The search for this moment of ecstasy is constant. He hears and sees the peasants working in the distance and finds himself thinking that country people, as long as they are boys, bathe naked at the river but, in adulthood, they don’t do it anymore. One day a young woman – called *the bride* – passes through the fields, she sees him and is not surprised. The narrator wonders why, but then understands that the peasant woman is also aware that what she saw was an idleness: a suspended time, far from the work of the land. Bathing for pleasure is an action which belongs to another temporal sphere from that of the peasant world. What the narrator eventually realizes is that both humanity and the countryside are never exposed to the world as totally natural, or, to say it better: totally “naked”. Indeed, culture necessarily clashes with nature, for the narrator discovers that there is not a piece of land that has not been built on: “*Lavorare è vestire la terra*” (Pavese, [1946] 2017: 178).¹⁹

17. “Now, as children, we learn about the world not - as it seems - through immediate and original contact with things, but through the signs of things: words, cartoons, stories, etc.” [My trans.].

18. “Thus, each of us possesses a personal mythology [...]. This ‘temps retrouvé’ does not lack even the repeatability of genuine myth, that is, the faculty to reincarnate in repetitions, which are creations ex novo, just as the festival recalls the myth and at the same time establishes it as if each time were the first.” [My trans.].

19. “To work is to dress the land.” [My trans.].

The land is dressed just as a man dresses himself by renouncing his own natural nakedness, as the narrator concludes: “*La campagna appare nuda ma non è. Dappertutto il sudore la copre di caligine riarsa. Mi chiedo se c’è un fosso, una costa, un pezzo solo di terra che mani non abbiano scavato e rifatto. Dappertutto è segnato di sguardi e parole umane*” (Pavese [1946] 2001: 178).²⁰ Again, here we see the myth of nudity, of the *uncontaminated* nature, which turns out to be impossible, except in transfigurations and in the arts.

Therefore, Pavese’s war years spent in the countryside led the author to an accumulation of creative methodologies that subsequently exploded in different poetic forms: thus were born the lyrics of *La terra e la morte* and the mythical dialogism of *Dialoghi con Leucò*. Though, the period he spent in Serralunga D’Alba and Casale Monferrato (in the *Langhe*, a hilly area in South-Piedmont) is recognized by Pavese himself as fundamental to the birth of the essays in *Feria*, from which the other two works will flourish. The theoretical elaboration we read in *La Feria* appears to be the first moment of a path that is not merely theoretical-aesthetic, but profoundly poetic: those reflections on childhood, memory and myth were not born as mere reflection nor as pure critical-aesthetic theory, but with them Pavese began to clarify for himself the foundations of a theory that would later allow for a more conscious and profound poetic creation, of which *La terra e la morte* and *I Dialoghi* represent two different elaborations (Renna, 2016: 17–18).

Given that, the stories of *Feria*, and the contemporary notes on Pavese’s journal, show how Pavese understood that the recovery of the irrational was by no means a retrograde operation and, certainly encouraged by his reading of Thomas Mann, Freud, and Béguin, he tried to shake off the rationalist and historicist qualms of his training, immersing himself in the most creative strand of contemporary poetry. A fact that was noted even at his contemporary time, giving a negative judgement on his *decadent* style, while today critics – such as Gioanola – see in those precise achievements Pavese’s originality (Cf. Moravia, 1963; Moravia, 1970; for a study on this debate: Gualtieri, 1980; and Gioanola, 2002: xxii; for Pavese’s writing on the journal and composing *Feria*, see Mondo, 1961: 68–70).

La feria is therefore a complex, articulated collection, which focuses on the making of a new poetic methodology, on the experimenting of a *modern* style and on the association between idleness and freedom, summer memories and self-making, myth and childhood. As Stefania Bernini

20. “The countryside appears naked but is not. Everywhere the sweat covers it with a parched caligin. I wonder if there is a ditch, a ridge, a single piece of land that hands have not dug and redone. Everywhere is marked by human looks and words.” [My trans.].

has pointed out, at the end of the Second World War, young people were brought to the forefront of the political agenda. (Bernini, 2007: 78–79; Bernini, 2020). Children became a subject in the societal and political world in the years of the European recovery after the War. Thus Pavese, while composing *Feria* during the war years, already anticipates a growing attention to the infancy, the adolescence, to the private becoming public, which will be typical of much post-war Western culture, both literary and political. Bernini pointed out that children “themselves became a crucial part of these transformations. While children looked at how their domestic and social landscape changed under their eyes, adults looked at wartime children as something new and largely unknown. This new way of seeing each other left a crucial mark in the postwar imagination” (Bernini, 2020: 64). And this crucial mark was indeed made evident – as Bernini showed – by the fact that all Western democracies from the post-war period onwards focused on protecting the rule of law for children. Pavese, already in the early 40s, during the war, associated childhood and mythology with a *modernist* artistic sensibility that focused on (sort of Freudian) self-excitation and on self-making, on the growth of the individual within the poetic horizon.

Again, as Gionola has indicated

Gli anni 1943 e 1944, nei quali si collocano gli ultimi racconti di FERIA d'agosto, sono tanto ricchi di fatti esteriori e di avvenimenti drammatici quanto poveri di produzione narrativa: è il tempo del primo soggiorno romano di Pavese, e del romitaggio sui colli del Monferrato dopo l'8 settembre. [...]; l'infanzia personale diventa l'infanzia del mondo, il tempo-luogo di quell'età di meravigliosa scoperta delle cose diventa lo scenario rappresentativo delle manifestazioni pre-razionali, in cui si nasconde lo stupore della 'prima volta'. Pavese pare intento a scoprire il segreto della formazione delle «immagini trascendentali» (Mestiere di vivere, 17-9-1943), sulle quali edificare la sua nuova poetica (Gionola, 2003: 23).²¹

Accordingly, up to this point, an attempt has been made in the analysis of some of Pavese's stories to illuminate the importance of the coincidence between childhood time and leisure time: as an ecstatic, spiritual growth, and as a symbolic and mythical moment. The suspension

21. “The years 1943 and 1944, in which the last stories of *Feria d'agosto* are set, are as rich in external facts and dramatic events as they are poor in narrative production: it is the time of Pavese's first stay in Rome, and of his hermitage around the hills of Monferrato after the 8th of September. [...]; the personal childhood becomes the childhood of the world, the time-place of that age of marvelous discovery of things becomes the representative scenario of sort of pre-rational manifestations, in which the wonder of understanding something for the 'first time' is hidden. Pavese seems intent on discovering the secret of the formation of some 'transcendental images' (*Mestiere di vivere*, 17-9-1943), on which he will build his new poetics” [My trans.].

from working time and the embrace of a more ingenuous life are the two thematical cores that move Pavese to write *Feria*, in an attempt to give a contemporary – *modern* – answer to an ancient mythical mechanism. During feasts, work does not exist. During feasts, in Pavese’s interpretation, ancient Greeks revived the *mythos*: they ritualized the story, institutionalizing it. And this is the *Feria*: an attempt – perhaps a failure in late modernity – to institutionalize the ritual and, in this way, to make the non-working days sacred and mythical.

On the one hand, the process of celebrating the myth always involves an institutionalization of that same celebration; and the epithets and the formulaic language, typical of classical poems, inasmuch as they are necessary to the ritual repetition of the celebration, they will result to be fundamental even in Pavese’s creative methodology (Cf. Van den Bossche, 2001: 158). Pavese’s poetical seek is always for ‘*la storia segreta*’, for the mystery, for what is hidden, and in *Feria d’agosto* this excavation into the mysterious coincides with the nostalgic memories of some childhood summer. Although for the mature city man, the countryside is inaccessible – like a deconsecrated city – the myth continues to speak in the poetic language (Jesi, 1968: 169). The *feria*, the holiday, the time suspended from the working days symbolize Pavese’s creative attempt to combat the existential nostalgia for the modern loss of the esoteric, the mysterious and the sacred (See Pavese [1946] 2001, 154–155).

Conclusion: Pavese between sociology of the arts, cinema, and modernist technique



Classical poems, Melville’s novels and Baudelaire’s poetry certainly play an important role in Pavese’s search for the mysterious (Van den Bossche, 2001: 112–113; Pertile, 197: 338–339; Isotti Rosowsky, 1989: 67–68). However, in the years of the composition of *Feria d’agosto* – the war years – Pavese’s anthropological and ethnological studies of myth had not yet been explored in depth. It was in the post-war years, at the end of the 40s, that his attention shifted to a reconnaissance of the analogies between contemporary manifestations of the sacred and those ancient collective manifestations (Van den Bossche, 2001: 295). In a comparatist perspective, then, it can be of some interest to analyze, beyond his admiration for other Western authors, which narrative mechanisms and narratological functions influenced, in those war years and immediately post-war years, as a reaction to the present’s trauma, Pavese’s *modern* idea of writing. And then some concluding remarks can be made about the relationship between Pavese’s writing and the art of cinema, since both this is an art form of great interest in twentieth century artistic experimentation,

and since this is a communicative medium that has attracted many studies in the sociology of leisure time (Cf. for studies on Pavese's works and cinema: Ferme, 2001: 14–40; Brogi, 2011: 295–314, Mannelli, 2021: 1–32. And for cinematic sociology studies: Jones, 1986; Jarvie, 2013).

Pavese was in fact seen by Italian critics of the 50s and 60s as a decadent, as an author dedicated to a formal sophistication and far from political and collective commitment. Alberto Moravia's criticism on this point is well known (Moravia, 1963; –, 1970; cf. also Gualtieri, 1980: 195–223). And yet, it is precisely *Feria d'agosto*, as the editorial recollection of Pavese's writings from the war years, published in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, with its combination of mythology, popular elements and metaphorization of reality, that makes us see Pavese today, to all intents and purposes, as a *modernist* (Cf. Comparini, 2018; Van den Bossche, 2018: 199–214). Indeed, Moravia – a great intellectual figure in the Roman and Italian cultural life of the Post-war – insisted in denigrating Pavese compared to his beloved Melville, who instead “*il mito l'aveva saputo creare nella pagina ed era morto nel suo letto*” (Moravia, 1970: 14).²² In this way, Moravia caustically suggested that the only myth Pavese had managed to create was the myth of his own suicide: “*Il mito di Pavese è invece quello dello scrittore che si uccide*” (Moravia, 1970: 14).²³ However, Pavese himself had another vision for Melville, and that was the idea that the American epic author had been able to create some ‘Greek’ writings (Pavese, 1968: 74–75). Melville had been able within modernity, for Pavese, to reconstruct the epic and the tragic of the antiquity. Thus, Pavese's *classical thought* and learning is associated to a modern *American thought*: an admiration for the American epic which had carried the ancient mystery in the modern fiction. And Pavese aspired to do the same. Far from being decadent, Cesare Pavese looked at the contemporary times, the war years and the post-war period, with the transfiguring eye of a *modernist*, who sees the tragical irony of making the myth happen in the modernity, though who also always tries to pursue and revive it.

The final address of this research is, then, what is there in Pavese's representation of *ferie* and of ‘holiday poetics’ that corresponds to the modernist slogan: *Make it New?* (Cf. Pound, 1934).²⁴ And one possible response is an inter-medium response. In a recent introduction to a monographic issue on Pavese, in fact, Tirinanzi de Medici, Alfano and Tortora pointed out that the perspective of myth in Pavese can be approached mainly from three main perspectives: the critical-analytical one, the philological-linguistic one and the comparative-trans-medial

22. “had been capable of create something mythical and had died in his bed” [My trans.].

23. “Pavese's myth, instead, is that one of the writer who kills himself”. [My trans.].

24. The slogan ‘Make it New’ is a notorious slogan by modernist author and thinker Ezra Pound who published a well-known collection of essays under this title in 1934. Cf. Pound, 1934; Bledsoe, 2016.

one (Tirinanzi De Medici, Alfano, Tortora, 2021: 3). The final answer of the present article is then precisely one that tries to assess how an innovative, modern, contemporary language, probably drawn by Pavese from his great interest in literature, in the arts and in Hollywood cinema, can help us see an even more obvious side of Pavese's writing closeness to a *modernist* technique. The 'holiday poetics' pursued in *Feria* symbolize Pavese's metaphorical – or Freudian – medium to find a new way for art in contemporary society during the war years: a new way of realism and of reading the tragic that has some aesthetical contact with the Italian neo-realist cinema. Suffice it to think of what he says in one Radio Interview from the 1950s, edited by Leone Piccioni, when asked who he considered the best contemporary narrator, he mentioned Thomas Mann and added “*tra gli italiani Vittorio de Sica*” (Mannelli, 2021: 11).²⁵

As Furio Jesi has pointed out, Thomas Mann is indeed one of the best reading choices in Pavese's works on myth, along with Vico, Nietzsche, Rilke, and then Jung and Heidegger. As a scholar of the reception of the German mythopoetics in the twentieth-century Italian (as well as European) culture, Furio Jesi has identified Pavese's reading of Thomas Mann as foundational to the construction of his “mythical method”, just as Gianni Venturi found interesting ‘Mannian suggestions’ in *La vigna* (Jesi, 1964: 109; see even Cazzola, 2015: 209; Venturi, 1969: 80–86). Jesi wrote that “*Da Thomas Mann e da Kerényi, Pavese ebbe una conferma perentoria, munita della duplice garanzia dell'arte e della ricerca scientifica, di quella devozione alla morte che egli doveva possedere in germe*”²⁶, thus indicating how much Pavese was intrested in digging into Mann's main thematical cores. That “devotion to death” is indeed something that from *Buddenbrooks* (1901) – through an extensive novelistic construction – to *Der Tod in Venedig* (1912) – through a short *novella* composition – testifies Mann's masterly ability to unite *death* and *aesthetics*. And precisely *Der Tod in Venedig* is a work that deeply connects the melancholic sense of summer, the “devotion to death” and the search for a lost childish sense of fulfillment. Nevertheless, Thomas Mann's aesthetics – which is so modernist that in a well-known article by Peter Egri it has been associated with Joyce's aesthetics – retains a deep connection with a *fin de siècle* taste that instead comes to be mediated in Pavese's fiction. Indeed, Pavese cultivated a taste for the medial and the cinematic that cannot be overlooked, especially in parallel with his research on myth (Cf. Egri, 1968, 100–101).

25. “Among the Italians Vittorio de Sica” [My trans.].

26. “From Thomas Mann and Kerényi Pavese had a peremptory confirmation, armed with the dual guarantee of art and scientific research, of that devotion to death that he must have possessed in premature form” [My trans.].

Pavese's positions on cinema will be contrasting throughout his whole intellectual career, but in the post-war years, just as he was an admirer of American literature, he even admired the major Hollywoodian productions (Mannelli, 2021: 12). As Massimo Mila demonstrated by publishing, immediately after Pavese's death, two of his unpublished writings on cinema from 1929: *I problemi critici del cinematografo* and *Di un nuovo tipo d'esteta (Il mio film d'eccezione)*, Pavese was first interested in critically analyzing the cinema, as a new *media* – as a new aesthetic – and then he arrived at take a stand “contro l'incipiente estetismo cinematografico” and at defending “*il cinema commerciale, senza pretese, inteso come fatto narrativo di epica popolare*” (Mila, 1958: 14).²⁷

The stories and memories recovered in *Feria* indeed date back to a time when the author was used to going to see “*i filmetti d'America*” (Pavese, 2002: 371).²⁸ The 1928 King Vidor's movie *The Crowd* is the reason which moves Pavese to the reading of Dos Passos, while American movies in general make him reason on the new relationship between art and contemporary society (Mannelli, 2021: 10). In his writing published posthumously, but composed in the first 30s, Pavese very often associated the viewing of those American movies – those uncommitted movies – with an admiration for the audiences that populated the blue-collar cinemas.

In 1923, the 15th of March, the 629 Royal Decree in Italy had extended the maximum working time of 8 hours per day or 48 hours per week to all categories; in the English world “there was little change in the 1920s and 1930s, and it was only after the Second World War that a general reduction from 48 to 44 hours took place”, while “annual holiday entitlement for manual workers was rare until 1919, but started to grow in the 1920s and 1930s” (Parker, [1976] 2022: 119–120). And this caused the well-known sociological phenomenon of the enormous growth of popular audiences in cinemas, looking for environments of nocturnal leisure time, as Parker pointed out “in 1946 there were 1,635m cinema attendances, compared with 163m in 1972” (Parker, [1976] 2002: 127; different in its intents and results, though always showing a sociological interest in the construction of national socialisms is the study of Götz, 2005). In the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, cinemas were the place dedicated to performative arts of leisure time and of vacation venue par excellence. With a sociological interest, Pavese realized that those who frequented those environments were workers in their free time: purely popular audiences whose interests were inevitably captured by American cinemas (See Pavese, 2002). As we can read in *Arcadia*:

27. “Against incipient cinematic aestheticism” [My trans.]; commercial, unpretentious cinema, understood as a narrative feature of popular epic” [My trans.].

28. “those American movies” [My trans.].

E allora [Paolo] entrava in qualche piccolo cinema e, abbandonandosi sul sedile, lasciava fissarsi gli occhi senza più pensare ed era quasi felice. Le pellicole d'incubo erano finite da tempo. Ora dominavano i film d'America. Giungevano nei cinematografi di barriera dopo lunghe proiezioni nei saloni di lusso. Ma Paolo preferiva vederle ora e non solo per economia. Gli piaceva mescolarsi a quel pubblico – ragazze senza cappello, operai – e di là levare il capo e sognare (Pavese, 2002: 289).²⁹


Those nightmarish movies were the French and Italian *engagé* movies which didn't call for popular audiences, which instead deeply fascinated Pavese and had a deep influence on his own idea of art and writing (Cf. Fabris, 2010: 215). Even in the tale *Ciau Masino* (1932), Masino is told to be getting his soul saved at the cinema, in those movie theaters of working-class neighborhoods: “*Masino si salvava al cinema. Questo è stato per la nostra giovinezza una gran manna*” (Pavese, 2002: 371). The cinematic story of *Ciau Masino* is a true exaltation of leisure, of vacation, and of the escape from the prosaic nature of the working life, since the time spent away from work can be time spent in art and in the culture of the self (See Jones, 1986). Thus, this is a narrative theme that Pavese had started in the 1930s and that then was more fully developed for the writing of *Feria d'agosto* in the war years.

Dos Passos's famous meeting with Eisenstein, as well as his *modernist* technique and creed, took him to develop what is known as his 'Art of Montage' in *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) and *U.S.A Trilogy* (1930–1936) (Cf. Spindler 1981; Foster 1986; Seed, 2009: 128–132; Pizer 2012). And if Pavese was indeed an aficionado of the American culture, analyzing those proses from the 30s – not published during his lifetime and collected under the title *Ciau Masino* – that presented a great deal of formal experimentation: multilingualism, overlapping of dialect, of prose and of poetry, it is easy to believe that he kept an eye in the 30s on the great set of modernist experimentations, *à-la* Dos Passos (Cf Mutterle, 1970, 562–580). However, in the war years, Pavese's linguistic and discursive editing gives way to a creative methodology of overlapping realistic narrative and mythical transfiguration, reality and metaphorization, which is typical, as has been shown, of *Feria d'agosto* short stories. A dialogue between literature and other arts and cinema, an interest for the expressive research, confirm Pavese's *modernist* vision. Attentive to the popular and the mythical and

29. “And then Paolo would have let himself to get into some small cinema and, laying on the seat, would have let his eyes gaze without thinking and so he was almost happy. The nightmarish movies were long gone. Now the films of America dominated. They arrived in those cinemas of *barriera* after their long screening in luxury lounges. But Paolo preferred to watch them now and not just for economical reason. He liked to mingle with that kind of audience – girls with no hats, workers – and from there he liked to raise his head and dream...” [My trans.].

to their encounter in contemporary art; a vision that in the war years made of *Feria d'agosto* Pavese's own artistic response to the political trauma. The modernists (e.g. Eliot, Pound, Joyce) were on the hunt for a salvation from the dissolution of the contemporary age, for an escape into a time away from the prosaic modern life, into the celebration, ritualization and transfiguration of the real. Pavese's conclusion is that his creative return to the summer memories, to the nostalgia for the country's life, to the adolescent figures, to the adventures and the vacations, in the exaltation of that time when one does not “*veste la terra*”, there is room for art and for myth.

Valentina Monateri is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literatures at the University of Turin and currently a visiting researcher at University College London. She has recently presented her research in several international conferences, such as the congress of the European Society of Comparative Literature, at the University of Turin, and the Joint Conference of the International Graphic Novel & Comics and the International Bande Dessinée Society, at the University of Cambridge, both in 2021.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7145-7313>

Bibliography

- AMORUSO, Vito, “Cecchi, Vittorini e Pavese e la letteratura americana”, *Studi americani*, 6, [1960], 1968, 15–83.
- BACCHILEGA, Cristina, “Cesare Pavese and America: The Myth of Translation and the Translation of Myth”, *Dispositio*, 7 (19-21), 1982, 77–83.
- BÀRBERI SQUAROTTI, Giorgio, “Il ragazzo e l'avventura: 'Feria d'agosto'”, *Esperienze letterarie*, 3-4, 2000.
- BERNINI, Stefania, *Family Life and Individual Welfare in Post-war Europe: Britain and Italy Compared*, London, Palgrave, 2007.
- , “War Children”, *Revue des sciences sociales*, 64, 2020, 62–73 (doi:10.4000/revss.5812).
- BLEDSON, Eric Matthew, “‘Make It New’”, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*, London, Taylor & Francis, 2016.
- BROGI, Daniela, “Tra letteratura e cinema. Pavese, Visconti e la ‘funzione Cain’”, *Allegoria*, no. 2, 2011, 295–314.
- CAZZOLA, Claudio, “Pavese classico nostro contemporaneo (Cinquant'anni dopo)”, *Italianistica: Rivista di letteratura italiana*, 44(3), 2015, 209–215.
- COMPARINI, Alberto (ed.), *Ovid's Metamorphoses in Twentieth-Century Italian Literature*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018.
- DONOGHUE, Denis, “Yeats, Eliot, and the Mythical Method”, *The Sewanee Review*, 105(2), 1997, 206–226.
- ELIOT, Thomas Stearns, “Ulysses, Order and Myth”, *The Dial*, 1923, in *Selected Essays*, London, Faber & Faber, 1999.
- EGRI, Peter, “The Function of Dreams and Visions in *A Portrait and Death in Venice*”, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 5(2), 1968, 86–102.
- FABRIS, Mariarosa, “Cesare Pavese: Dialoghi con il cinematografo”, *Revista de Italanística*, XIX-XX, 2010, 211–220.
- FASANO, Pino, “Il Mito Americano Di Cesare Pavese”, *Italica*, 85(2-3), 2008, 295–310.
- FERRETTI, Gian Carlo, *L'editore Cesare Pavese*, Torino, Einaudi, 2017.
- FERME, Valerio, “Il giovane Pavese e il cinema americano”, in Valerio C. Ferme, Claudine Bonnetin, Thomas Stauder, et al., «Sotto il gelo dell'acqua c'è l'erba». Omaggio a Cesare Pavese, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2001, 15–40.
- FIELDER, Leslie A., “Introducing Cesare Pavese”, *The Kenyon Review*, 16(4), 1954, 536–553.
- FOSTER, Gretchen M., “John Dos Passos' Use of Film Technique in *Manhattan Transfer* & the 42nd Parallel”, *Literature-film Quarterly*, 14, 1986.
- FRYE, Northrop, *Anatomy of Criticism* [1957], Princeton, Princeton UP, 2000.
- GIOANOLA, Elio, *Cesare Pavese, la realtà, l'altrove, il silenzio*, Milano, Jaca, 2003.
- , “Introduzione” [2002], in Cesare Pavese, *Feria d'agosto*, Torino, Einaudi, 2017.
- GÖTZ, Aly (English translation), *Hitler's Beneficiaries. Plunder, Racial War, And The Nazi Welfare State*, Frankfurt am Main, S. Fischer, 2005.
- GUIDUCCI, Armanda, *La distruzione dei miti. Saggio sulla poetica di Cesare Pavese*, Firenze, Valecchi, 1972.

- GUALTIERI, Angelo, "Cesare Pavese e la questione del decadentismo", *Revue des études italiennes*, 26(2-4), 1980, 195–223.
- HAENSLET, Philippe, P., MENDICINO, Kristina, TOBIAS, Rochelle, *Phenomenology to the Letter: Husserl and Literature*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020.
- ISOTTI ROSOSWSKY, Giuditta (Italian translation), *Pavese lettore di Freud. Interpretazione di un tragitto*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1989.
- JARVIE, I.C., *Towards a sociology of the cinema: a comparative essay on the structure and functioning of a major entertainment industry*, London, Routledge, 2013.
- JESI, Furio, *Cesare Pavese, il mito e la scienza del mito*, in F. Jesi (ed.), *Letteratura e mito*, Torino, Einaudi, [1964], 1968.
- JONES, Stephen G, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918–1939*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.
- MANNELLI, Lavini, "Pavese e Pasolini. Due mitologie a confronto", *Ti- contre. Teoria Testo Traduzione*, 15, 2021.
- MEYNAUD-JEULAND, Maryse, « Réflexions sur la notion de "mythe" dans l'œuvre de Cesare Pavese », *Revue des études italiennes*, XIV, 1968, 324–364.
- MILA, Massimo, "Due inediti di Pavese", *Cinema Nuovo*, 7(134), 1958.
- MONDO, Lorenzo, *Cesare Pavese*, Milano, Mursia, 1961.
- MORAVIA, Alberto, "Pavese decadente", in *L'uomo come fine e altri saggi*, Milano, Bompiani, 1963.
- , "Fu solo un decadente", *L'Espresso*, 1970.
- MUÑIZ MUÑIZ, Maria de las Nieves, *Introduzione a Pavese*, Bari, Laterza 1992
- MUTTERLE, Anco Marzio, "'Ciau Masino': dal plurilinguismo al monologo interiore", *Belfagor*, 15(5), 1970, 559–591.
- NOHRNBERG, James, "The Mythical Method in High Modernism", in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., Princeton, Princeton UP, 2012.
- PARKER, Stanley, *The Sociology of Leisure* [1976], London, Routledge, 2022.
- PAVESE, Cesare, *Lettere 1924-1944*, in Lorenzo Mondo and Italo Calvino (ed.), Torino, Einaudi, 1966.
- , *Il mestiere di vivere, nuova edizione condotta sull'autografo*, ed. Marziano Guglielminetti and Laura Nay, Torino, Einaudi, 1990, v–xxvi.
- , *Tutti i racconti*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002.
- , *Feria d'agosto* [1946], Torino, Einaudi, 2017.
- , *Interpretazione della poesia di Walt Whitman* [1936], ed. Valerio Magrelli, Milano, Mimesis, 2020.
- PERTILLE, Lino, "Pavese lettore di Baudelaire", *Revue de littérature comparée*, 44(3), 1970, 333–355.
- PIZER, Donald, "John Dos Passos in the 1920s: The Development of a Modernist Style", *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 45(4), 2012, 51–67.
- POUND, Ezra, *Make It New*, New Heaven (CT), Yale UP, 1935.
- PRAZ, Mario, *James Joyce Thomas Stearns Eliot. Due maestri dei moderni*, Torino, ERI, 1967.
- PROCACCINI, Alfonso, "On the failure of Understanding", *Italica*, 62(3), 1985, 214–229.
- RENNA, Salvatore, *Tra mito e Dio: Cesare Pavese lettore a Casale Monferrato*, Torino, Premio Centro Gianni Oberto, 2016.
- , "Cesare Pavese e la polemica classico-romantica sulla mitologia", *Critica letteraria*, 45(3), 2017, 527–555.
- RICCOBONO, Rossella, THOMPSON, Doug (eds.), *'Onde di questo mare'. Reconsidering Cesare Pavese*, London, Troubador, 2003.
- SEED, David, *Cinematic Functions: The Impact of the Cinema on the American Novel up to World War II*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2011.
- SPINDLER, Michael, "John Dos Passos and the Visual Arts", *Journal of American Studies*, 15(3), 1981, 391–405.
- TIRINANZI DE MEDICI, Carlo, ALFANO, Giancarlo, TORTORA, Massimiliano, "Introduzione a 'Cesare Pavese tra razionale e irrazionale. II'", *Ti-contre. Teoria Testo Traduzione*, 15, 2021, 1–5.
- VAN DEN BOSSCHE, Bart, "Nulla è veramente accaduto". *Strategie discorsive del mito nell'opera di Cesare Pavese*, Leuven, Leuven UP, 2001.
- VENTURI, Gianni, *Pavese*, Firenze, La nuova Italia, 1969.