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Italian Fascism and the Aesthetics of the 'Third Way'

In recent years, the work of Zeev Sternhell and other historians has underscored the appeal fascism held for interwar intellectuals as a 'spiritual revolution' that would establish a new 'moral order' in Europe. While scholars of fascism continue to debate whether this 'revolution' was conservative or radical in its aims, most agree on the centrality of the category of 'spirituality' to any definition of fascism as a 'third way' distinct from liberalism and Marxism.[1] Right-wing texts of the 1930s often presented the 'third way' as a comforting 'golden mean' between the two poles of liberal individualism and communist collectivism.[2] Yet communism and capitalism came together for many fascist intellectuals as systems which led, for different reasons, to social and economic levelling, 'standardization', and the suppression of identity. The notion of 'spirituality' could take on different meanings in different national contexts, but in general terms functioned as a container for qualities such as individuality, heroism, and creativity that were perceived as threatened by the 'materialistic' ethos of communist and capitalist societies.[3] For European intellectuals who embraced technological progress and yet had anxieties regarding the effects of Taylorist visions of efficiency and productivity on the individual, the search for a political and economic 'third way' formed part of a larger attempt to reconceptualize 'modernity' as a condition that would allow for the retention of specificity at both the personal and the national level.[4]

In Italy, fascist 'spirituality' received expression in the doctrine of the 'ethical state' which, unlike democratic and Marxist governments, would offer community and comradeship without crushing personal initiative and will.[5] Democratic and socialist societies, the Duce asserted, defined happiness in purely material terms and had produced populations which were 'well-fed and fat' but spiritually bereft. Fascism, on the other hand, was a 'moral revolution' which catered to the 'whole person'.[6] Of course, this focus on 'morality' distracted from fascist attempts to

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suppress individual conscience and liberty of thought. Moreover, the reconceptualization of well-being as a primarily spiritual condition was an obvious attempt to deflect discontent in the years of the Depression. Yet the fascist claim to represent a last defence of the moral, the transcendental, and the personal proved extremely persuasive to Italian intellectuals in the early 1930s. Many of them agreed with the blackshirt official Giuseppe Bottai that fascism was the only movement capable of finding a 'new political and spiritual equilibrium' to counter the twin threats of 'democratic levelling and communist annihilation'.[7]

In this article, I will examine how Italian intellectuals attempted to translate the ideology of the 'third way' into the cultural sphere in the early 1930s. The writers and critics I will discuss believed in fascism as a system that would create a modern mass society on the peninsula while preserving individual and national identity. Their desire to create a 'new' culture that would mirror the 'revolutionary' spirit of the régime led them to explore contemporary literary trends in America and Weimar Germany. I argue that these encounters gave rise to debates among Italians over the nature and boundaries of their own aesthetic. Fascist cultural production, these literati concluded, was to avoid both the 'evasiveness' of liberal arts and letters and the 'propagandistic' quality of communist culture. While it was to address the problems of the present, it was to 'transfigure' rather than 'photograph' reality in order to permit the expression of 'spirituality' — understood here as the presence of an individual creative and ethical sensibility — in the artistic work. I will follow the discussions among Italian intellectuals over the lineaments of a future aesthetic of the 'third way'. In the latter part of the article, I will focus on a little-known experimental novel by the fascist writer Enrico Emanuelli, *X-Ray of a Night* (1932), which argued for a new moral order and a new modernity that would be at once 'social' and 'spiritual'.

Fascism, the 'European Crisis' and the Ideology of the Third Way

While the attempt to fashion a doctrine that would correct the 'materialism' of both liberalism and socialism can be traced back to the *fin-de-siècle* period, the idea of a 'third' approach to the problems of modernization met its greatest fortune in Europe

after the first world war.[8] The increased political and economic instability of the 1920s and early 1930s seemed to confirm prophecies by Oswald Spengler and other social thinkers that the values and institutions which made up the 'European order' were in a state of irreversible decay. For many intellectuals, the economic crisis was merely a symptom of a larger malaise: the loss of a centre of cultural meaning due to rapid modernization. A new technologically driven society had appeared which had not only transformed labour and leisure practices, but, as Karl Jaspers observed with trepidation in 1931, was creating a new type of mentality that favoured 'not phrase-making, but knowledge; not ponderings about meaning, but dextrous action; not feelings, but objectivity. . . .'[9] While opinions differed on whether this change of episteme was a positive or negative event, writers of all political stamps concurred that they were living through an 'interregnum' in history between, in José Ortega y Gasset's words, 'that which was and that which is to be'.[10] The proliferation of doctrines such as 'neo-socialism', 'liberal-socialism', and 'social-fascism' in these years testifies how many intellectuals hoped, through the recasting of social and economic arrangements, to facilitate the creation of a new spiritual order as well.[11]

In fascist Italy, too, the idea of the 'end of Europe' created a climate conducive to cultural and ideological experimentation. A 1930 analysis of 'the crisis of the spirit' by the psychoanalyst Nicola Perrotti summed up his peers' state of mind as 'a general discontentment, a confused and widespread discouragement, and a vague desire for a new centre of gravity in our minds'.[12] Following Spengler's influential configuration of the past as a series of cycles, many Italian intellectuals characterized their present as an 'empty space' or 'zone of silence' between two phases of history.[13] As in France and Weimar Germany, the widespread malaise was interpreted as the result of a lag between the pace of mechanical and psychological change. According to the philosopher Adriano Tilgher,

> Modern man has created an absolutely new and original science, technology and economics, and has revolutionized the world as no previous generation had ever done. But — strange and terrible contrast — in his soul he has remained a good century behind. . . . This new world requires a new spirit.[14]

And as elsewhere on the continent, this 'new spirit' was equated with an anti-ideological and 'objective' mindset.[15] In Italy,

though, the presence of fascism and the support given the régime by the intellectual class influenced the way the crisis was presented and received. While in democracies such as France, left- and right-wing intellectuals utilized the notion of the decline of the liberal order as a tool with which to combat the government, in Italy the ideology of the crisis was appropriated by Mussolini and became an integral element of official doctrine.[16]

The Duce had advertized his 'third way' as an antidote to political and spiritual decline in Europe since the inception of his movement, but this 'salvationist' aspect of fascism took on increased importance in official propaganda in the years following the crash on Wall Street. 'Something's cracking', announced the Duce in one apocalyptic message of 1932. 'The entire web of institutions, customs and interests which make up Western civilization is at stake.' Those who failed to embrace the 'new dawn' of fascism, he warned, would 'disintegrate into endless misery, engulfed by a dark and unthinkable despair'.[17] Backed up by government officials whose own newspaper articles declaimed decline and decay in equally dramatic terms, Mussolini presented fascism as the only system able to lead Europe out of the 'interregnum' and back 'into history'.[18] This strategy proved so effective that many intellectuals began to envision the crisis as a positive event; as one declared, while other peoples had to fear the crisis, for Italians it was simply 'kindling for the fire of the new revolutionary consciousness'.[19]

The appeal of the 'third way' for many Italian intellectuals was thus connected to the conviction that it offered the only viable path of adjustment to the different social, economic, and psychological conditions of mass society. Among those writers and critics who took on the task of developing a fascist aesthetic, however, two specific claims proved especially persuasive. First, fascism not only represented itself as a 'modern' movement, but also claimed to constitute the political expression of the condition of 'modernity'. Like their counterparts in other countries, Italian intellectuals believed that the disjunctive and provisional character of contemporary life required the adoption of an 'elastic' mentality attuned to 'the concrete' rather than the abstract.[20] And fascism, they agreed with Mussolini, embraced and exalted this same sentiment; it was an 'anti-ideological' ideology which departed from fact rather than theory. Neither mired in the abstractions of the past, as was liberalism, nor caught up in

dehumanizing utopian fantasies of the future, as was socialism, the 'continuous revolution' took its imperatives entirely from the needs of the present.[21] Moreover, as a new ideology with respect to liberalism and socialism, the fascist 'third way' possessed what one supporter termed a 'secret weapon' in the fight against the crisis: its ability to absorb the best from history and transform it into something new. As the Duce boasted in his canonizing article on fascist ideology in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, his was the only movement 'flexible' enough to take old ideas and adapt them as circumstances demanded:

> From the ruins of liberal, socialist, and democratic doctrines, fascism takes those elements which still have some value. . . . It is perfectly logical that a new doctrine would utilize still-vital elements of other doctrines. No doctrine is born new and shining. Every doctrine is tied, if only historically, to other doctrines of the past and to those of the future.[22]

Mussolini thus presented fascism as a sort of modernistic bricolage which underwent continual re-assemblage and revision. Alone among political systems, he asserted, fascism would be able to 'keep up with the grand and mutable reality of life'.[23]

A second and equally important drawing-point for many Italian intellectuals was the manner in which the fascist régime proposed to redefine the category of modernity. Mussolini did not promise Italians a generic modernization of the peninsula, but rather the creation of a 'national' version of modernity that would permit the retention of spirituality and specificity.[24] This point was a crucial one for intellectuals whose dedication to the cause of technological development was matched only by their fear of what one termed the 'dangerous effects of excessive standardization'.[25] In the years of the Depression, Futurist-style exaltations of the beauty of speed and the exhilarating power of the machine seemed unreasoned and even romantic.[26] Instead, in militant reviews of the 'third way' such as *Quadrante*, Italian intellectuals combined support for the latest modernist designs of Walter Gropius and Adalberto Libera with accolades for the 'spiritual grandeur' of Rome. Among *Quadrante*'s contributors was the artist Gino Severini, one of the founding members of Futurism, who now devoted himself to the revival and propagation of the 'spiritually pure' and 'Italianate' art of the mosaic.[27]

The dangers of unchecked modernization were also broadcast in the cultural pages of the daily press by influential writers 'on

assignment' in Berlin, New York and Moscow. The writer Mario Soldati filed a report for *Quadrante* describing America as a 'Land of Plenty of barbarians' (*una cuccagna improvvisa di barbari*) who lived in an atmosphere of 'desolation, poverty and coarseness'. The country, he charged, was populated by a new type of mass-subject whose sense of taste and ability to discriminate had been replaced with a blind impulse to conform and consume at any cost. Soldati concluded that the violence and 'madness' that plagued the nation were products of the instinct-driven consciousness created by unregulated capitalism.[28] In a similar vein, the engineer Gaetano Ciocca authored a series of reportages on his two years in Stalinist Russia. The Bolshevik nation, he asserted, offered the 'Dantesque vision' of a people paying the price for foolishly attempting to 'renounce thousand-year old norms and habits and desires to destroy all vestiges of the past, upsetting good and evil, tempting fate and the very dictates of nature'. No Luddite, Ciocca was a strong supporter of economic and cultural modernization on the peninsula; but he called on Italians to learn from the Soviet experiments and think of 'the moral as well as the material' consequences of rapid industrialization.[29]

By providing a set of negative images that reinforced already existing fears regarding the dangers of mass society, this type of reportage aided Italian intellectuals to articulate a set of values and beliefs that would compose the culture of the 'third way'. Taken as a body of writings, these essays present both communism and capitalism as systems which destroyed morality and individuality for the sake of progress. As such, they helped to sustain the fiction that Mussolini's régime constituted a 'humane' and 'moral' alternative to the tyranny of the 'standard man'. These normative texts thus functioned as sites of differentiation which facilitated the definition of a collective cultural identity on the peninsula.

If fascist iconography of the early 1930s continued to represent the régime to the Italian people as a forward-looking 'revolution', in intellectual circles the debates over the development of a new aesthetic reveal a desire to arrive at a reconciliation between 'modernity' and what was often referred to as 'the national spirit'. Of course, each of the different factions within the fascist cultural field, from the supporters of *romanità* to the populists of the *Strapaese* movement, interpreted the 'third way' in its own

manner. In general terms, however, this reworking of the category of modernity involved the substitution of anxiety-provoking signifiers such as materialism, utilitarianism and anomie with 'spirituality', 'community', and other terms central to the fascist ethos. With this vision of modernity, which responded to fears and concerns that had been present in intellectual circles since the pre-war years, fascist intellectuals could claim to offer other countries not only a political model but a blueprint for a new type of civilization — contemporary and yet 'humane' — to counter the crisis. This sense of having been invested with a historic mission accounts for the distinctive tone — at once urgent, pompous, and naive — of many independent cultural journals which appeared in the years 1930–5. Summarizing the results of a survey on the future of Italian arts and letters, the student editors of the review *Saggiatore* intoned:

> Decadence of the democracies, insufference for all old ideologies, the creation of a new ethics . . . are by now common terms in the vocabulary of young intellectuals in all countries. But it is Italy's task to take these symptoms and themes and form from them a new culture.[30]

The 'Third Way' and the Development of a Fascist Literary Aesthetic

The desire to develop an aesthetic that would be easily readable as modern and yet still reflective of the specificity of the fascist 'spiritual revolution' stood at the centre of the lively cultural discussions of the early 1930s. A number of surveys taken in these years, along with dozens of individual articles, register a collective rejection of 'rhetoric', ornamental flourish, and other stylistic traits which now took on associations with the 'do-nothing' politics and mentality of the liberal era.[31] Instead, fascist intellectuals called for a new aesthetic of the 'concrete' that would mirror the pragmatic 'direct-action' politics of the régime.[32]

In matters of content as well, fascist intellectuals rejected liberal-era culture on the grounds that it was 'escapist' and 'solipsistic', and called for the treatment of 'social' themes that would explore and codify the relationship between the individual and the new mass society.[33] This focus on the 'social', which often found expression under the rubric of a 'return to man', was

perceived as a moral as well as aesthetic imperative by those searching for solutions to the crisis. If, as many believed, the reconstruction of the individual as a 'whole person' — a spiritual as well as social being — was a prerequisite for the development of a new civilization, then the task of fascist culture was to provide an underpinning for the 'moral revolution' by promulgating new values and codes of behaviour. According to the writer Eurialo De Michelis, this entailed a focus on the life of 'ethical man in continuous action and reaction to the ethical problems of his time'.[34]

In the field of literature, the impulse to depict the 'whole person' sparked a search for new modes of representation in the early 1930s. The literary fragment, which had been popular in the first decades of the century, was rejected by G.B. Angioletti and other writer-critics as a symbol of the limited horizons and facile mindset of the liberal era.[35] Instead, some called for a 'return to the novel' as a vehicle for the depiction of the 'fuller life experience' and 'multiple dimensions' experienced by those living in the 'dynamic' climate of the 'continuous revolution'.[36] In 1932, the young critic Mario Pannunzio observed that after decades of reductivist depictions by biologists, sociologists, and criminologists, the time was right in Italy for the depiction of man 'as a complete and whole figure, in conflict with his fellow creatures'.[37] Others confirmed this sentiment in a survey on the novel sponsored by Italo Balbo's daily *Corriere padano* later that year. The writer Corrado Alvaro claimed that only now, with the advent of 'the first national society in hundreds of years', Italian writers were able to develop the 'spirituality' necessary to depict 'man as a whole being'. He urged his peers to 'join in the reality that surrounds you' and produce novels that would reflect not only 'the complexity of modern life' but also 'our national temperament . . . and our special way of living the problems of modernity'.[38]

The intention of fascist intellectuals to inject a 'moral' or 'spiritual' dimension into ongoing modernist debates over the relationship of politics and aesthetics came through clearly in the debate over the novel. In an article in *Critica fascista*, Attilio Riccio contended that the sweeping gaze of the novel allowed authors to present life as something 'willed and constructed, as action rather than simple spectacle'. As such, it would facilitate the diffusion of a 'new ethical attitude', since the novel, unlike the

literary fragment, could become a vehicle for the writer to advance a new system of values and behavioural codes. The 'ethical' dimension of the fascist writer was also highlighted by *Saggiatore* editor Giorgio Granata, who concluded that just as politicians have diagnosed the crisis and have come up with 'political forms' adapted to new needs, so, too, Italian writers must now 'help each person to clarify things by describing in their works the doubts and issues which characterize the moral crisis'.[39]

If the quality of 'spirituality' was consistently placed at the centre in discussions of the character and function of a future literature of the 'third way', it also served as a defining element in the articulation of the aesthetics of this literature. The collective desire to document the fascist era led writers and critics to champion a 'return to realism' in the novel. Yet they were adamant that this realism avoid the 'materialism' and 'crude objectivity' of many realist doctrines of the past and the present which, as one charged, 'lost sight of the individual'.[40] In the context of these debates, 'the spiritual' stood for the presence of an individual creative sensibility in the literary work. The fascist writer was to 'transfigure' and 'interpret' reality rather than merely photograph it.[41] This preference for 'interpretation' stemmed from a larger ambivalence about the standardizing imperatives of mass culture. Indeed, in the same years that the leftist critic Walter Benjamin embraced the mass reproduction of images as a means of destroying the aura of uniqueness and mystery which had traditionally surrounded the creative work, many fascist intellectuals searched to preserve and valorize the personal and the trascendental in the aesthetic sphere. For example, most literati warned that the new Italian realism must not embrace the canon of impersonality which had marked the nineteenth-century Naturalist movement and which characterized certain currents of the German *Neue Sachlichkeit*. As Pannunzio asserted in an article in 1933, by making the writer into a 'mere reporter of events', the doctrine of impersonality deprived the literary work of an individual imprint and stripped the writer of an active role in the shaping of new values.[42] This 'spiritual' ethos was to be replicated at the level of the text as well, through the inclusion of psychologically complex characters whose actions were motivated by ethical or social concerns.

Literary Critics and the Construction of Cultural Identity

In the early 1930s, fascist intellectuals defined the parameters of their literary identity through a series of encounters with contemporary novelistic trends in America and Europe. Indeed, just as the ideology of the 'third way' developed through a continuous operation of differentiation from and recontextualization of elements of liberalism and Marxism, so, too, the delineation and definition of the cluster of signifiers — such as 'spirituality', and '*italianità*' — that stood at the centre of the aesthetic of the 'third way' proceeded through critical confrontations with the cultural production of other countries. Until the mid-1930s, such explorations were encouraged by fascist officials such as Giuseppe Bottai and Galeazzo Ciano, who believed that Italian intellectuals needed to be acquainted with the newest tendencies in culture if they were to develop a superior version of modernity. One cultural critic summed up this strategy in the fascist review *Saggiatore*, arguing that it was counter-productive for Italians to remain closed to the new. Modern culture, he contended, must be 'assimilated, rather than refuted; surpassed, rather than ignored'.[43]

Both American realist novels and those of the German *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement were closely studied in the early 1930s. The sense of a collective political endeavour tended to structure the reception of this literature, and accounts for the didactic–moralistic tone of many reviews which pointed out the 'unsuitability' of foreign realist codes of representation for the Italian climate. In their emphasis on prescription as well as description, these reviews may be seen as part of an ongoing negotiation between critics (most of whom were writers as well) over the lineaments of the new literature.

In the case of American realist novels, America's position within fascist discourse as an emblem of modernity accounted for the ambivalent reception given these works in the early 1930s.[44] Italian critics admired the 'frank' and 'concrete' prose of writers such as Sinclair Lewis and John Dos Passos, and praised their renderings of the dynamic rhythms of modern metropolitan life.[45] However, they tended to view these authors as overly influenced by a materialistic and mechanistic ethos which, they took pains to stress, was entirely foreign to the Italian national temperament. In a mostly complimentary review of Dos Passos' works, the

critic Ugo Ojetti wondered if Dos Passos 'is really just a perfect movie camera' which moves from scene to scene. Ojetti couched his review as an 'open letter' to the American writer, but published it in *Pegaso*, the cultural review he edited. Italian, rather than American, intellectuals were the intended recipients of Ojetti's message that Dos Passos' 'ruthless' prose was 'the opposite of what we Italians have written in the past, what we are writing now, and what we will ever write in the future'.[46] In a more blatantly political example, Valentino Piccoli, the editor of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, offered a 'review' of Lewis' *Babbit* which by the third paragraph had become a diatribe against rampant standardization in America. Piccoli blamed the triumph of what he calls the 'Babbit-man' on the ill-considered attempt to create an equal society by removing markers of social and racial distinction. The 'standard mentality', he asserted,

> . . . is like an enormous octopus whose tentacles extend over all of life, imprisoning the mind and the spirit, forcing ideas and attitudes to conform to one type, in the same way that the great mechanized factories produce the different pieces of an auto according to a uniform model.

Piccoli considered Lewis' book within this ideological context, utilizing the trope of production to describe the American's writing style. Rather than a writer who was able to transform reality into a holistic and personal vision, Piccoli contended, Lewis was a 'reporter of lived life' who constructed books by combining 'verbosities, minutiae, and detailed observations'.[47]

Similar fears regarding the eclipse of the 'spiritual' and the specific accounted for the largely negative reception Italian writers and critics gave the literature of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. As an experiment in realist poetics, and as a movement which took as its subject matter the social and economic conditions of the postwar period, the *Neue Sachlichkeit* held much interest for Italian literati in the early 1930s. The major texts of the movement, such as Alexander Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, were promptly translated into Italian and reviewed, as were reportage novels such as Robert Neumann's *Panoptikum: A Report on Five Marriages of Our Times*.[48] Most critics praised the spareness and essentiality of the German aesthetic, which, as the Germanist Bonaventura Tecchi conceded, could produce 'the most wondrous and modern poetic evocations'.[49] With few exceptions,

however, they used their reviews as occasions to emphasize the 'unacceptability' of an aesthetic that one dismissed as 'a crude and pitiless realism which views life unhindered by any ties to the individual'.[50] For example, the critic Enrico Rocca, in a 1930 review of Döblin's novel for *Pegaso*, was full of admiration for the German's integration of 'life' into the text through the use of street slang, newspaper cuttings, and tram maps. Yet he blasted Döblin's 'coldly brutal' and 'fanatic' realism, and labelled the book a 'history of things, an arrangement of things, a document'. Claiming that the novel had only enjoyed success in Germany due to the 'anti-sentimental and frigid' mentality of German youth, he warned Italians against 'imitating' both the style and the spirit of the book.[51]

The normative tone of these reviews comes through most clearly in a 1933 review of Leonard Frank's novel *Von drei Millionen Drei*, published in the militant literary review *Oggi*. After lambasting Frank for his 'photographic' art, his characters which 'lack all human interest', and his 'materialism', the critic Luigi De Crecchio reminded his fellow Italians that

> We do not advocate Naturalism understood either as crude realism or documentarism . . . it should be understood that this is not the art of *our time*. What matters to us is objectivity, that objectivity which permits an autonomous existence for its characters who have human qualities linked to the spirituality of the artist.[52]

Such critical strategies were designed to steer the fascist 'social' novel away from the biting criticism common to many works of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. On a broader level, though, the insistence on a 'spiritual' realism was the result of a collective vision of fascism as a 'moral' revolution which protected rather than obliterated individuality.

Towards a Fascist Modernism: Emanuelli's *X-Ray of a Night*

In the midst of these dialogues on the nature and content of fascist literature, a group of novels appeared which were greeted by critics and by the government as contributions to an emerging culture of the 'third way'. Written by young intellectuals whose journalistic efforts of these years reveal them to have been enthusiastic supporters of Mussolini's social 'revolution', these

novels aimed to clear the way for the creation of a new fascist 'spirituality' by 'exposing' how liberal-era materialism and immorality continued to exist ten years after the March on Rome. While in matters of content these texts advance an ideological agenda consistent with that of fascism, stylistically they show similarities with the works of contemporary avant-garde authors such as John Dos Passos and Alexander Döblin. As such, they allow some insight into the mediating effects exercised by fascist ideology on the elaboration of modernism in the interwar period.[53]

I will discuss one of these novels by the Ligurian writer and journalist, Enrico Emanuelli. Like Soldati, with whom he founded the publishing house 'La Libra' in the late 1920s, Emanuelli moved easily between reportage and literature. In the early 1930s, he journeyed to Spain, Libya, and Russia on assignment for newspapers such as *La Stampa* and *La Gazzetta del Popolo*. In 1932 he published an experimental novel called *X-Ray of a Night* (*Radiografia di una notte*), which chronicled six hours in the lives of a wealthy Milanese family. Like other works of this type which appeared at this time, it featured an alienated young protagonist — in this case Stefano — whom Emanuelli placed in the role of 'ethnographer' of bourgeois society. Stefano's 'distance' and special position in the narrative is established in the opening pages, as family members gather for dinner before going their separate ways for the night. The third-person narrative voice which begins the novel introduces Stefano as a 'simple and inattentive spectator' who notes the 'hostile silence' that marks his family's dinner, 'as if those seated together were really strangers to one another, or undeclared enemies'.[54] As the collective portrait unfolds, and the moral paralysis of each family member comes to light, Emanuelli continues to mark Stefano's difference, periodically returning to him as he makes the transformation from 'objective' critic to engaged agent of moral change that forms the thematic anchor of the novel.

Written in a matter-of-fact prose that at times comes close to reportage, *X-Ray of a Night* trains a clinically 'objective' light on the lifestyle and values of the Italian upper-middle class. Emanuelli rigorously avoids heroizing Stefano, depicting him as a spoiled youth who criticizes his family and its friends but is too lazy to get a job and change his surroundings. 'Working, earning a living, with a sweaty forehead, tired hands, just to survive',

Stefano muses, 'I'm really not interested.'[55] As in many novels of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, the Freudian-tinged theme of generational conflict predominates, and the brunt of Stefano's disdain is reserved for his father, a wealthy businessman. The father's ethics are summed up at the outset when he congratulates himself on maintaining a proper distance between work and pleasure by firing his secretaries before he seduces them. As the dinner ends, the father leaves his family to attend a 'meeting' with his favourite prostitute.

While Stefano's father stands out as the chief emblem of corruption and moral bankruptcy in the book, Emanuelli's realism demands that every character submit to the pitiless light of the 'x-ray'. Thus, although Stefano's mother Lucia is presented as living a life of 'horrible, degrading half-truths' due to her husband's affairs, she is 'exposed' as being as callous as the others. When in the course of the evening Lucia goes to visit her friend Ida and finds her too upset to engage in gossip, Emanuelli contrasts her outward expressions of sympathy with her inner annoyance and impatience. As she comforts Ida, she thinks, 'what a bore you are, if you make me wait much longer I'll lose my patience'.[56] Other sections of the narrative 'examine' Stefano's sister, Fausta, who moves in a world of social climbers and superficial and materialistic friends, and his wealthy friend Giacomo, whose obsession with money leads him to conceive of the world in purely quantitative terms, so that he sees six night-club dancers as 'twelve legs, twelve eyes, six mouths'.[57] With the introduction of each new character, the reader is offered a different perspective on what is presented as a vacuous if moneyed existence in which spirituality has no place. As Lucia observes, 'it would be too humiliating to ask for comfort and help from prayer, from faith'.[58]

As a work of social criticism, *X-Ray of a Night* resembles other novels written under the influence of fascist anti-bourgeois ideology in the early 1930s.[59] It is, however, the most experimental of these texts, utilizing a multi-perspectivist narrative position similar to that of Dos Passos and Döblin, whose influence on the book Emanuelli acknowledged in a postwar interview.[60] In Emanuelli's case, this representative strategy is used successfully to highlight the sense of alienation and estrangement of the characters, who, after the initial dinner gathering, are enclosed in isolated realities. Throughout the novel, he cuts back and forth

between their experiences, sometimes utilizing 'fade-outs' and other filmic techniques to make his transitions. As the polyphonic narrative follows the family's nocturnal peregrinations throughout the metropolis, the scope of the story expands in 'unexpected' ways when other characters, such as a drug addict, fleetingly cross the main protagonists' paths. Like Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer, X-Ray of a Night* modernistically poses the city as narrator, in that the gallery of secondary characters who account for the shifts in the narrative — the emancipated young woman who takes the tram alone, the traffic cop on the night shift, the couples in a nightclub — are subjects 'produced' by the life of the city and come across in the novel as part of the flux of urban experience.[61] Emanuelli presents Milan as a modern metropolis with a flourishing commercial culture and a distinct sphere of leisure that functions around the clock. Moreover, he highlights this commercialism by inserting 'documents' into the narrative — such as reproductions of radio programmes and an advertisement for an adding machine — which pertain to the modern mass society then under discussion in Italy. He also addresses the different subjectivity created by the city, making use of stream-of-consciousness narration to portray the disconnected and fragmented mentality of the modern urban dweller. In the passage below, as Stefano's father journeys to his 'meeting' with his mistress, he becomes a passive spectator whose thought-flow is given structure by the advertisements encountered at random from the window of the tram:

> They should know that the traffic is bad at this hour and they should at least add extra cars. This tram service is really poorly planned. Rinolina, cures and prevents colds. I never get colds. Shaving cream: Gibbs, the best. All types: tourism, sport, supersport with supercharged turbocompressor. We are in the age of super. Oh, what I wouldn't give for a little space, we're only at Piazza Cordusio, this journey is really long.[62]

If *X-Ray of a Night* can clearly be placed alongside contemporary realist works in other countries, this polemical novel must also be viewed in the context of the cultural and ideological climate of fascist Italy. More specifically, the text reveals a certain ambivalence toward modernity, and can be read as a critique of a perceived imbalance between the spiritual and the material in contemporary society. Emanuelli's characters not only have no direction in their lives, but also lack the fortitude to

break with situations that each one — with the exception of the father — realizes is morally bankrupt. Instead, throughout the novel they act as consumers — of sex, nightclubs, women's magazines, and radio programmes — and repeat advertizing slogans to themselves, as though they had become part of the flow of commodities that characterizes Emanuelli's Milan.[63] In this aspect, they resemble the iconic 'American' as presented in much 'travel writing' of the period. Indeed, in the reportage from New York cited above, the writer Soldati paints a picture of a people whose individuality has been annulled by the 'standardizing' pressures of consumer culture. The American buys certain foods, Soldati contended, 'not because he likes them, but because his own desire is vacant and the innumerable ads that his bored eyes encounter at every step of the way have created in him a pseudo-desire for those foods'.[64] Likewise, the characters of *X-Ray of a Night* are devoid of sentiment and volition. In Milan as in Manhattan, Emanuelli points out, authentic emotions have been sacrificed on the altar of commercialism.

As the book comes to a close, however, a counter-discourse is advanced in the name of a morality that argues for the presence of the spiritual in modern life. First, at the level of narrative strategy, Emanuelli intervenes to impose a teleology on the modernistic 'chaos' created by his polyphonic story, which by this point has taken the reader through dozens of shifts of scene and character. Throughout the novel, the author has frequently erupted into the narrative to remind the reader of the existence of a higher order ruled by 'inevitable laws' and an 'invisible hand' that 'guides all on unknown tracks towards an unknown destination'.[65] He now freezes the action altogether with a four-page *intermezzo* that underscores the didactic quality of the text. Making use of a complicitous first-person plural voice, Emanuelli briefly reviews the salient points of the story, maintaining that

> . . . the chronicle we have narrated is a true and exact account, and every detail has been essential for us to arrive at this point. . . . Now, though, we will abandon all of our characters, as their destiny has already been decided. Only two will remain, to carry out an act.[66]

Having added this gloss that recasts the story as a linear and 'purposeful' narrative, complete with *dénouement*, he closes his

intermezzo with an ethical question directed at the reader: 'Must everything really be reduced to those four instincts that we seek to conceal? To love, to hate, to steal, to kill.'[67] Making use of this omniscient voice to impose a narrative and moral order on his work, Emanuelli thus acts to contain and counter the anxiety-provoking 'randomness' implied by his radical multi-perspectivism.

The necessity of a harmonious integration of the spiritual and the material is also upheld at the level of plot-line as *X-Ray of a Night* comes to a close. Here Emanuelli avails himself of Stefano, who is by now experiencing the dawn of moral responsibility. As he and a friend speak about the problem of the 'indifference' of their generation to moral issues — a subject then under heated discussion in the fascist press — he realizes the extent of his own hypocrisy:

> I react [to the prevailing immorality], but until now I have reacted only in words, and perhaps I will have to pass to action . . . because Fausta would also like to react, and Giacomo, and my mother. But we all have our little comforts to defend, and people do not understand how much these defences cost.[68]

This speech marks the turning-point in Stefano's journey from spectator–critic to actor. Significantly, though, it also becomes an occasion for a recall to religion, as Stefano suddenly remembers Saint Matthew's adage that those who have not been judged may not judge others. Struck by this insight, he decides to become more compassionate and forgive his father. In the last scene of the book, however, he and his father have a violent quarrel, during the course of which the father pulls out a gun and ends up dead. Emanuelli is careful to stage the death of the father as an accident, parricide not being a popular topic with fascist censors. But the eleventh-hour spiritual awakening of Stefano serves to blunt any political edge of the book and gives *X-Ray of a Night* the air of a morality tale on the tragic consequences of unchecked instinct.

The experimental character of *X-Ray of a Night* and its obvious links with the literary project of the avant-garde made the book a touchstone for critical attitudes towards modernism. Conservative reviewers worried that the twenty-three-year-old Emanuelli, like some of his peers, was becoming overly influenced by foreign trends.[69] But the government-linked Italian Academy awarded

the novelist an 'encouragement prize' to continue his work,[70] and the book met with unabashed praise from the writer Elio Vittorini, who at that time was an enthusiastic militant in the cause of the fascist revolution. Calling it 'one of the most remarkable works of our time', Vittorini praised both the 'absolute modernity' of Emanuelli's polyphonic narrative and the anti-bourgeois 'moral resentment' that animated the book.[71] While Vittorini's judgment may appear a bit inflated, *X-Ray of a Night* is notable for its melding of avant-garde stylistics and moral parable and its use of the representative strategies of modernism to produce a critique of the excesses of modernity.

The relatively open cultural climate that supported the production of works such as *X-Ray of a Night* did not last long. While fascist officials continued to practise a policy of limited cultural pluralism until the fall of the régime, the Ethiopian War and the alliance with nazi Germany in 1936 put an end to much of the cultural and ideological experimentalism of the early 1930s. Censorship of literature and the press increased, and intellectuals were now discouraged from starting independent publications.[72] Economic autarchy coincided with attempts to restrict the flow of foreign culture into the peninsula.[73] The revolutionary rhetoric that had underwritten the ideology of the 'third way' was toned down, as were exaltations of the 'modernity' of fascism. In the late 1930s, the definition of an identity specific to the régime proceeded less through critiques of foreign dystopias to be avoided in the future than through the reworking of history and tradition. Now, the search for the 'spiritual' and the 'specific' sent intellectuals not to Russia but down the path of a mythologized Roman past or, alternatively, into the provinces, which fascist propaganda cast in the role of important repositories of the national spirit.

Emanuelli's literary itinerary over the 1930s mirrors this change in climate. After writing *X-Ray of a Night*, he produced a collection of stories (*Storie crudeli*, 1934) which show a clear influence of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The prose is spartan to an extreme, and comes close to that found in reportage novels. One of the stories, 'Story of a Letter', is clearly modelled on Karl Freund's 1926 film *Adventures of a Ten-Mark Note*. In 1935, he volunteered for the Ethiopian War and combined the duties of soldier with those of war correspondent for the daily *Il Lavoro*.[74] When he returned from combat, the sort of literary

experimentalism he had been pursuing was now out of place, and he became a full-time journalist for some years. In the last years of fascism, however, his assignments took him not to Barcelona or Baku but to Biella and other outposts of the Italian provinces.[75]

In this article, I have argued that the 'third way' may be viewed as one response to the perceived 'crisis of the West' which led intellectuals all over the continent to search for new ideological solutions in the interwar period. By presenting fascism as a forward-looking régime of *possibility* with a doctrine in constant evolution, Mussolini won the support of intellectuals like Emanuelli who hoped for a new economic and social as well as moral order. Yet the fascists argued that their revolution, unlike that of the Bolshevists, was 'spiritual' in nature and thus would be able to effect technological progress on the peninsula without harm to individual identity or national traditions. In the literary sphere, this sentiment found expression in the call for an aesthetic that would represent that mythical 'whole person' who stood at the centre of fascist ideology. Translated into cultural practice, this produced works which, like *X-Ray of a Night*, could be read as both social and spiritual, modernistic and moralistic. The negotiations over the ideological and aesthetic boundaries of the 'third way', then, may be seen as part of a larger attempt by fascist intellectuals to develop what one writer called 'a modernity of our own, an Italian modernity'.[76]

Notes

I would like to thank Mario Biagioli, Carl Ipsen, and Cynthia De Nardi for their comments on this article.

1. On this point, see Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left* (Berkeley 1986), and 'La terza via fascista o la ricerca di una cultura politica alternativa', *Storia contemporanea* (December 1991), 961–74; Robert Soucy, 'French Fascism and the Croix de Feu: A Dissenting Interpretation', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26, 1 (January 1991), 159–88; and Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio* (Bari 1993). Sternhell views fascism as a product of the revision of Marxist ideology, while Soucy sees it instead as a new variety of authoritarian conservatism. On the debate over Sternhell's work, see Robert Wohl, 'French Fascism, both Right and Left: Reflec-

tions on the Sternhell Controversy', *Journal of Modern History* (March 1991), 91–8.

2. See Massimo Bontempelli, 'Ufficio di Roma', *Quadrante* (May 1933); Giuseppe Bottai, *Il Centro Nazionale Corporativo* (Milan 1931), 23.

3. On this point, see Soucy, op. cit., 181–2.

4. The non-fascist 'personalist' movement in France of Emmanuel Mounier may be viewed as a response to these same anxieties. On his doctrine of 'personalism', see Jean-Louis Loubet Del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des années trente* (Paris 1969); Emmanuel Mounier, *Le personnalisme* (Paris 1947).

5. On the philosophy of Giovanni Gentile, see Sergio Romano, *Giovanni Gentile: la filosofia al potere* (Milan 1984); and Danilo Veneruso, *Gentile e il primato della tradizione culturale italiana* (Rome 1984). Gentile served as ghost-writer for the first half of Mussolini's article on fascist doctrine for the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. See Mussolini, 'La Dottrina del fascismo', *Enciclopedia italiana*, IX/847–51; also Alberto Mondadori, 'Collettivismo', *Camminare*, 1 April 1934; Bottai, 'Statismo corporativo', *Critica fascista*, 1 February 1933.

6. Mussolini, op. cit., 849, and his speech of 14 November 1933, in *Scritti e discorsi* (Rome 1934), VIII/257–73.

7. Bottai, 'Totalità, perennità, universalità della rivoluzione fascista', *Quadrante* (December 1933).

8. On the attempts to 'revise' Marxism and the rise of nationalist doctrines in the *fin-de-siècle* years, see Sternhell, op. cit., 32–89; David Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill 1979); Alan Douglas, *From Fascism to Libertarian Communism: Georges Valois against the Third Republic* (Berkeley 1992); Alexander De Grand, *The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism in Italy* (Lincoln 1978). On the cultural response to these concerns in Italy, see Walter Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, MA 1993).

9. Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin 1932), 49.

10. José Ortega y Gasset, *La rebelión de las masas* (Madrid 1966), 270; René Guénon, *La crise du monde moderne* (Paris 1932); Antonio Gramsci, *Passato e presente* (Rome 1971), 62–3; Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York 1936), 154. On the ideology of the crisis, Sternhell, op. cit., 213–65; Michela Nacci, *Tecnica e cultura della crisi, 1914–39* (Turin 1982); Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* (Cambridge 1984), 49–69.

11. See the ideological programmes of Drieu la Rochelle, *Socialisme fasciste* (Paris 1934); Carlo Rosselli, *Socialisme liberale* (Paris 1930); Henrik De Man, *Au-delà du marxisme* (Paris 1927), and *Nationalisme et socialisme* (Paris and Brussels 1932); Marcel Déat, *Perspectives socialistes* (Paris 1930). On the ideological fluidity of these years, see James D. Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe* (Cambridge 1981), 1–22.

12. Nicola Perroti, 'La crisi attuale dello spirito', *Saggiatore* (March–April 1930).

13. Camillo Pellizi, 'Sul manifesto realista', *Universale* (January 1933); Antonio Banfi, *La crisi* (Rome 1967). Banfi's book collects lectures he gave in 1933–4 at the University of Milan. See also many of the responses to a survey on the future of Italian culture sponsored by the review *Saggiatore* (August–October 1933). On the influence of crisis ideology in Italy, see Eugenio Garin, 'Gli italiani e la crisi europea', *Terzo programma* 3 (1962), 168–76; and M. Cottone, 'Recezione di Spengler in Italia', preface to Oswald Spengler, *Il tramonto*

dell'Occidente (Milan 1978).

14. Adriano Tilgher, 'Quesiti sulla nuova generazione', *Saggiatore* (May 1932).

15. Editorial note, *Saggiatore* (December 1932); Enzo Paci, 'Cenni per una nuova clima', *Orpheus* (February 1933).

16. For the fascist manipulation of the crisis, see Nacci, 'La crisi della civiltà: fascismo e cultura europea' in Ornella Faracovi (ed.), *Tendenze della filosofia nell'età del fascismo* (Livorno 1985), 41–72; Giuseppe Carlo Marino, *L'autarchia della cultura. Intellettuali e fascismo negli anni trenta* (Rome 1983), 19–56; Pier Giorgio Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo* (Bologna 1985), 131–5.

17. Mussolini, 'Decidersi!', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 12 January 1932. Compare the tone of this article with Mussolini's early writings: 'In campo da soli', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 29 October 1919, in *Scritti e discorsi* (Rome 1934), II/39–42; and 'Dopo due anni', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 23 March 1921, in ibid., 153.

18. Mussolini, 'Fra due civiltà', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 22 August 1933. Also Bottai, 'Impegni per l'anno decimo', *Critica fascista*, 21 (1931); Gherardo Casini, 'Esortazione di una letteratura', *Lavoro fascista*, 17 September 1932; Carlo Linati, 'Approssimazioni', *Ambrosiano*, 1 April 1931.

19. 'Gazzettino ufficiale', *Il Selvaggio*, 15 Novembre 1931; also Giorgio Granata, 'Valori positivi della crisi', *Critica fascista*, 15 November 1932.

20. See Massimo Cimino, 'Dal concetto di classe a quello di funzione', *Saggiatore* (December 1932); Enzo Paci, 'Appunti per la definizione di un atteggiamento', *Orpheus* (November 1933). For a discussion of the pluri-relational cognitive style that accompanied modernization, see Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space* (Cambridge, MA 1983), and Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York 1974).

21. See Giuseppe Melis, *Il pensiero di Mussolini e il significato del fascismo* (Milan 1930); Granata, 'Realismo', *Saggiatore* (November 1933); Luigi Chiarini, 'Per una nuova cultura', *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 7 November 1933.

22. Mussolini, 'La dottrina del fascismo', 850. On fascism's flexibility as a 'secret weapon', see Rino Longhitano, *Rivoluzione nazionale* (Catania 1932), 156.

23. Mussolini, cited in Riccardo Mariani, *Fascismo e città 'nuova'* (Milan 1976), 54.

24. See Mussolini, 'Discorso all'assemblea quinquennale del regime', 10 March 1929, in *Scritti e discorsi* (Rome 1934), VII/21. On the fascist revision of modernity, see Emilio Gentile, 'Impending Modernity: Fascism and the Ambivalent Image of the United States', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28, 1 (January 1993), 7–29.

25. Bernando Giovenale, 'Macchine e uomini nella crisi presente', *Quadrante* (December 1933).

26. The ideas of the Futurists, like those of the Florentine avant-gardists who wrote for *Leonardo* and *La Voce*, received almost no mention in the pages of the cultural journals I have quoted from in this article. For the need to go beyond Futurist aesthetics, see 'I giovani e la nuova cultura', *Orpheus* (December 1933); Corrado Cagli, 'Anticipi sulla scuola di Roma', *Quadrante* (October 1933).

27. Quote from Gino Severini, 'Lettere a *Quadrante*. Sul mosaico come espressione e come tecnica', *Quadrante* (June 1933); see also the letter by the ex-Futurist Carlo Carrà in the same issue.

28. Mario Soldati, '(Panorami): America', *Quadrante* (May 1933), reprinted in Soldati's *America primo amore* (Rome 1935). See also Emilio Cecchi, 'Tacciuno

Americano', *Occidente* (April–June 1934); and Renato Paresce, '(Panorami): L'altra America', *Quadrante* (May 1935). A similar message is found in Mussolini's speech of 14 November 1933, in *Scritti e discorsi*, VIII/257–73. On the significance of 'America' for Italian intellectuals during fascism, see Emilio Gentile, op. cit., and Michel Beynet, *L'image de l'Amérique dans la culture italienne de l'entre-deux-guerres*, 3 vols (Aix en Provence 1990).

29. Gaetano Ciocca, '(Panorami): Russia sovietica', *Quadrante* (June 1933). His essays are collected in *Giudizio sul bolscevismo* (Milan 1934). Ciocca spent from 1930 to 1932 in Russia supervising the construction of the first factory for the production of ball-bearings. His book went through four editions in five months. For other Italian views of Russia, see also the 1934 reportages of Corrado Alvaro which are reprinted in his book *I Maestri del diluvio* (Rome 1935); Pier Maria Bardi, *Un fascista nel paese dei soviet* (Rome 1933); and Ettore Lo Gatto, *URSS 1931* (Rome 1932). For Italian impressions of Stalinist Russia, see Luciano Zani, 'L'immagine dell'Urss nell'Italia degli anni trenta: i viaggiatori', *Storia contemporanea*, 21 (December 1990), 1197–225.

30. 'Introduzione', *Saggiatore* (August–October 1933).

31. Surveys include 'Quesiti sulla nuova generazione', *Saggiatore* (April 1932–January 1933); 'Inchiesta sulla nuova cultura', *Saggiatore* (August–October 1933); 'Opinioni sul romanzo', *Corriere padano* (1932), 'Inchiesta per un'arte del nostro tempo', *Italia vivente* (15 May–30 June 1933).

32. See, for example, Leo Longanesi, 'La crisi e l'estetica', *L'Italiano*, 11 (1932); Gianni Marescalchi, 'Il nostro pessimismo', *L'Orto* (February–March 1932).

33. Attilio Riccio, 'Dove andiamo?', *Oggi*, 22 July 1933; Mario Pannunzio, 'Necessità del romanzo', *Saggiatore* (June 1932); Bonaventura Tecchi, 'Opinioni sul romanzo', *Corriere padano*, 27 October 1932.

34. Eurialo De Michelis, 'Chiarimenti sul "contenutismo"', *Critica fascista*, 15 April 1933; for calls for a 'return to man', see Delio Cantimori, 'Chiarificazione di idee', *Vita nova* (July 1932); Granata, 'Nuova cultura', *Saggiatore* (December 1932).

35. Giovanni Titta Rosa, 'Narrarsi', *Italia letteraria*, 1 June 1930; G.B. Angioletti, 'La morale dell'arte', *Italia letteraria*, 4 January 1931.

36. Arnaldo Bocelli, 'Ritorno al romanzo', *Corriere padano*, 28 August 1930; Titta Rosa, 'Invito al romanzo', *Corriere padano*, 16 February 1931.

37. Pannunzio, op. cit.

38. Alvaro, 'Opinioni sul romanzo', *Corriere padano*, 3 September 1932; also Tecchi, op. cit.

39. Attilio Riccio, 'Arte e costruzione', *Critica fascista*, 15 April 1932; Granata, 'Aspetti del nuovo scrittore', ibid.

40. Titta Rosa, op. cit.; also Bocelli, op. cit. On literary realism in the 1930s and its links to postwar leftist neo-realism, see Alberto Asor Rosa, *Scrittori e popolo* (Rome 1965); and Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 'Fascism, Writing, and Memory: The Realist Aesthetic in Italy, 1930–50', *The Journal of Modern History*, 67 (September 1995), 627–65.

41. Titta Rosa, op. cit.; also Antonio Delfini, 'La vita', *Oggi*, 18 June 1933; Tecchi, 'Pensieri sul racconto', *Oggi*, 2 July 1933; Elio Talarico, 'Trasfigurazione nelle arti', *Oggi*, 11 June 1933.

42. Pannunzio, 'Precisazioni', *Oggi*, 8 October 1933.

43. Perrotti, 'Perche la letteratura italiana non è popolare in Europa', *Saggiatore* (November 1930). For Bottai's role in shaping cultural policy in these years, see Alexander De Grand, *Bottai e la cultura fascista* (Bari 1978); Genevieve Hoche, 'Une tentative de médiation culturelle sous le régime fasciste: G. Bottai et le groupe de "Critica fascista"' in *Aspects de la culture italienne sous le fascisme: actes du colloque de Florence, 14–15 décembre 1979* (Grenoble 1982), 7–28.

44. See Emilio Gentile, op. cit.

45. Bellelma Forzato-Spezia, 'Sinclair Lewis', *La Stirpe* (1930), quoted in Oreste Del Buono (ed.), *Eja Eja Alala!* (Milan 1971), 166–7; also Giacomo Lumbroso, review in *Lavoro fascista*, 1 February 1931.

46. Ugo Ojetti, 'Lettera a John Dos Passos sulla povera America', *Pegaso* (August 1932).

47. Valentino Piccoli, 'Babbit o l'uomo standard', *Critica fascista*, 1 December 1932.

48. Neumann's work, which often reads like a legal transcript, was published in 1933 by the militant editorial house *Edizioni d'Italia* in their 'Documents' collection. The blurb on the book jacket characterizes the book as a 'vivid document of social life in inflation-ridden Germany'.

49. Bonaventura Tecchi, op. cit.

50. Francesco Bruno, 'Realismo germanico', *Saggiatore* (July 1931).

51. Enrico Rocca, review of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in *Pegaso* (May 1930); see also his review of Erich Kästner's works *Fabian*, *Emilio*, and *Auskunft*, in *Pegaso*. (August 1932).

52. Luigi De Crecchio, review in *Oggi*, 16 July 1933; also Guglielmo Serafini, review of Jakob Wassermann's *Elzel Andergast* in *Saggiatore* (November 1932).

53. On the links between modernism and fascism in Italy, see Walter Adamson, op. cit., and 'Fascism and Culture', special issue of the *Stanford Italian Review*, 8 (1990). More general coverage may be found in Richard Golsan (ed.), *Fascism, Aesthetics and Culture* (Hanover, NH 1992).

54. Enrico Emanuelli, *Radiografia di una notte* (Milan 1932), 9.

55. Ibid., 96.

56. Ibid., 54.

57. Ibid., 43.

58. Ibid., 24.

59. See Umberto Barbaro, *Luce fredda* (Lanciano 1931); Armando Ghelardini, *Malessere* (Rome 1933); Eurialo De Michelis, *Adamo* (Vicenza 1931); Elio Talarico, *Tatuaggio* (Rome 1932).

60. See Anco Marzio Mutterle, *Emanuelli* (Florence 1968), 3. At the same time as Emanuelli was writing *X-Ray of a Night*, he was also engaged in a translation of the first novel by New Objectivity writer Jacob Wassermann, *Die Juden von Zirndorf*, for the Milan editorial house Corbaccio.

61. On this narrative strategy, see Klaus R. Scherpe's essay on Döblin's novel, 'The City as Narrator: The Modern Text in Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*', in Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick (eds), *Modernity and the Text* (New York 1989), 162–79.

62. Emanuelli, op. cit., 79.

63. The bewildering impact of consumer culture and the modern city on the individual is addressed more directly by Emanuelli in a story that served as a sketch for *X-Ray of a Night*. In 'Misteri di una mattinata', the young protagonist is

so distracted and disoriented by the bright glare of taxis and city windows that he continually loses his train of thought. See the story in *Il Lavoro* (12 March 1931), 3.

64. Soldati, op. cit.

65. Emanuelli, op. cit., 139.

66. Ibid., 223, 225.

67. Ibid., 226.

68. Ibid., 190. For the discussions on the apathy of young intellectuals, see Giuseppe Lombrassa, 'Indifferenza: male di moda', *Critica fascista*, 1 January 1930, and Romano Bilenchi, 'Indifferenza dei giovani', *Critica fascista*, 15 August 1933.

69. See the reviews by Pier Maria Pasinetti in *Il Ventuno*, 28 August 1932, and Luigi Tonelli in *Il Marzocco*, 25 September 1932; also Attilio Borgognoni's survey of Emanuelli's *oeuvre* in *Pan* (August 1934).

70. For notice of Emanuelli's award, see *Annuario della reale Accademia d'Italia 1932–33* (Rome 1933), 336.

71. Vittorini, 'Radiografia di una notte', *Il lavoro*, 31 August 1932; also Mario Bonfantini, 'Prose di romanzi 1932', *Rivista di sintesi letteraria* (January–March 1934).

72. See Philip Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e mass media* (Bari 1975), 119–37; Maurizio Cesari, *La censura nel periodo fascista* (Naples 1978), 51–78.

73. See Albertina Vittoria, *Le riviste del Duce* (Turin 1983), 85–131, on the changed cultural climate of the late 1930s.

74. For examples of his war reportage, see 'La nuova Asmara', *Il Lavoro*, 2 January 1936; and 'Scontri di pattuglie e cammelli disgraziati', *Il Lavoro*, 5 January 1936.

75. See Emanuelli, 'Un morto e un vivo in provincia', *L'Orto* (November 1937), and 'Per conoscere i Biellesi', *L'Orto*, (May 1939). Emanuelli began his next novel only in 1940. This work, which had none of the formal experimentalism of *X-Ray of a Night*, appeared in 1942 as *Una educazione sbagliata*.

76. Mino Maccari, 'Brevario', *Il Selvaggio*, 30 January 1927.

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