

PhD in Italian Studies
Department of Languages and Cultures

‘It always started with Nanda’:
Fernanda Pivano and the Italian reception
of the Beat Generation

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DECLARATION

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Fernanda Pivano (1917-2009) contributed extensively to the diffusion of American literature in Italy. Starting with the publication of her translation of the *Spoon River Anthology* in 1943, Pivano gradually became a central figure in the mechanisms that shaped the cultural flows between the US and Italy following WWII. After translating major American authors such as Ernest Hemingway, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner and Sherwood Anderson, her cultural activity focussed on the study, the reception and the popularisation of American counterculture literature. Between the 1960s and the 1980s she translated, promoted and disseminated Beat Generation authors such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs. Despite the wide, mass-media popularity she obtained in Italy, Fernanda Pivano's intellectual authority is often questioned in academic and editorial milieus, and her professional legitimacy belittled. At the same time, academic research on her work as cultural mediator and on her contribution to the Italian literary field is scarce and patchy. This thesis is the first to offer a thick description of Fernanda Pivano's literary contribution by conducting a thorough investigation of her professional trajectory from the start of her career as a translator in the 1940s, to the publication of the two main Italian anthologies of Beat poetry, *Poesia degli ultimi americani* and *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, in the 1960s. The publication of the two anthologies marked the peak of Pivano's work as a cultural broker for Beat literature, after which her translation activity slowed down considerably. An in-depth analysis of previously unexplored archive materials and publishing correspondence concerning Pivano's literary activity brings to the surface the complex authorial and institutional interactions that shaped her habitus and affected the Italian reception of Beat literature. Her promotion of the prose and poetry of the Beat Generation was met with resistance and skepticism by the intellectuals who populated the Italian book market and literary field. In this regard, the history of the publication of Allen Ginsberg's anthology of poems *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (Mondadori, 1965) is symptomatic, and will be explored in detail in this work. In this thesis I show that the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* was the result of intricate power negotiations where the translator skillfully exploited the fruitful collaboration that she had established with the author and key figures in the American literary *milieu* to address matters of censorship and publication. Pivano's professional trajectory represents a fascinating case study of the complex nature of translators' positioning within the book market, and the strategies that translators deploy to negotiate their capital to pursue their ambitions and make themselves visible. This work contributes to the on-going micro-sociological and micro-historical assessment of

cultural transfer between the United States and Italy, focussing on a critical evaluation of the various factors shaping (female) translating agency in the post-war Italian publishing market, while also shedding light on a significant yet neglected aspect of the history of counterculture in 1960s Italy.

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COVID19 Impact Statement

The restrictions and disruptions connected to the COVID19 emergency prevented me from accessing the Milan-based archives (Fondo Fernanda Pivano and Fondazione Mondadori) a second time during the course of my PhD. A second opportunity to sift through archival documents in the light of the data unearthed during the previous research period conducted at the same archives (April 2018) and the subsequent archival research conducted in the United States, would have helped me further scrutinize and consolidate the information retrieved, double check the data obtained, and possibly identify new documentation that could shed further light on the subject of this PhD thesis.

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1. Introduction

Literary editors have traditionally worked in the background rather than the foreground. In the recent first issue (3 June 2021) of *Cose spiegate bene* [*Things explained well*], a hybrid literary publication inaugurated by the Italian daily newspaper *Il Post*, a brief article draws the attention to the often-neglected figure of the literary editor. The article states that editors are rarely remembered, for the reason that absolute mastery in their profession means to remain invisible. Consequently, editors who become well known, do so as writers or publishers.¹ The article lists several editors who operated in the Italian publishing market during the twentieth century and who were fundamental in bringing specific national literatures and individual authors into the broader public eye. Although it is true that, within the book market, some figures work mainly behind the scenes, it is also true that some actors seem to be more invisible than others. This is the case, for example, of women editors, whose history is partially – if ever – told. The article in *Cose spiegate bene* hints exactly at this imbalance by presenting first a list of the best-known editors that are ‘[n]aturalmente uomini e scrittori’,² and opposes to it a second, separate list where women editors make up a ‘[s]toria parallela dell’editing’,³ highlighting the ‘habitual invisibility or poor visibility of women in our society’ (Dresvina 2021: 3) showing how women’s undervalued labour ‘creates a gender gradient against which the women in publishing must strive’ (Lyons 2021: 58). The structural scheme through which women editors such as Natalia Ginzburg, Laura Grimaldi, Elvira Sellerio, Emilia Lodigiani and Grazia Cherchi are presented, compared to their male counterparts, reflects and perpetuates a gendered narrative of female subservience shaping and affecting the cultural flows of the Italian literary field. A second aspect that catches the eye is that all the cultural actors mentioned in the article – both men and women – had or currently have a structured position within the market, usually at the top of power hierarchies. They were or are either literary series directors or owners and founders of publishing houses.

A quick analysis of this overview seems to suggest that relevant cultural agency is only recognised and historicised when combined with at least one of the following specific socio-cultural factors: (a) gender [male], (b) status [writer] and (c) a structured professional role and

¹ ‘I più importanti editor italiani’, *Cose spiegate bene*, *A proposito di libri*, 2020, p. 135.

² ‘[N]aturally, men and writers’. Unless otherwise specified, all translations into Italian of quotations are mine.

³ ‘[P]arallel history of editing’.

position within the market. Cultural engagement alone is, in most cases, not enough to ensure professional legitimation and cultural recognition. It is in fact true that among the invisible actors operating in the market, there is a further sub-layer of agents (in the broader sense of acting individuals) that shape cultural flows and reception, but whose work – although crucial – is hardly recognised. These agents usually do not present or own any of the factors listed above, and their professional trajectory is characterised by a high degree of independence and/or unstable professional positioning within the field.

This is the case, for example, of translator and cultural mediator Fernanda Pivano (1917-2009), whose professional and cultural trajectory takes the spotlight in this work. Fernanda Pivano stands out as a crucial figure in the reception and dissemination of American literature and culture in Italy after World War II, one who paid particular attention to the popularisation of counter-cultural American literature during the Sixties and the Seventies. Primarily remembered as a translator, Pivano is in fact difficult to pigeonhole, as she held a number of different roles in publishing in the course of her career. Pivano's cultural action developed through a number of different channels and modalities: she not only translated some of the major works of American literature of the time, but she strove to promote and make visible new voices in the literary field, both through elite cultural channels and mainstream media. Her extensive scholarly production consists of around forty translations,⁴ – she translated French, British and American literature – over one-hundred essays, prefaces and afterwords, and around twenty volumes almost entirely dedicated to American literature.⁵ Her engagement with literary promotion and dissemination stretched for over sixty years, a period marked respectively by the first translation published in 1942 and the last one in 2007.⁶

The value of Pivano's professional and intellectual work is often questioned and dismissed although she contributed greatly to the development of the Italian literary and cultural field over fifty years of activity. This is true particularly within academic and professional literary environments, where the opinion on the quality of her engagement is divided.⁷ On the other hand, Fernanda Pivano's ability to disseminate and popularise American culture through a consistent

⁴ See Appendix A.

⁵ See Appendix B and C.

⁶ Jeanne Hersch's *L'illusion de la philosophie* (1936), published in Italy by Einaudi with the title *L'illusione della filosofia* (1942), and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), published by Einaudi with the title *Orgoglio e pregiudizio* (2007).

⁷ In my experience as a researcher and literary translator, Pivano's intellectual work and her role as a literary figure is often dismissed while interacting with scholars at academic conferences and with professionals of the publishing field. Although their criticism never resulted in officially published work, (and my requests for official interviews on the subject kindly declined), her translations are often attacked in newspaper publications such as: Amano 2011, Veneziani 2013, Pacifico 2019.

presence in mainstream and mass media makes her a particularly appreciated character in the eyes of the wider public. However, despite Pivano's extensive contribution to the arts and literature, academic research on her agency and cultural relevance seem to be lacking. With the exception of short sections and paragraphs dedicated to her in volumes focussed on the wider history of the literary reception of the *mito americano* in Italy,⁸ and a few theses and dissertations (such as Ribon 2016, Richards 2014, Tapparo 2000, then 2006 and Bazzoni 2000),⁹ very little serious scholarship has been produced to date. These works investigate Fernanda Pivano's central role in literary reception and popularisation either by chronologically mapping and analysing the major American works that she translated (as is the case of Bazzoni), or by assessing her cultural activity through the lens of her critical method, relying primarily on the analysis of archive materials such as post-hoc accounts and memoirs (as in Tapparo).¹⁰ The chapter dedicated to Pivano in Richards's thesis draws on the existing scholarship on translators' self-presentational discourse to offer a more detailed analysis of Pivano's translation practice in the light of the little available documentation where she comments on her approach to translation. Nevertheless, none of the abovementioned scholars uses a sociological framework to analyse Pivano's literary contribution over the decades. In this research, the combination of a micro-historical approach with a sociological perspective to investigate Pivano's cultural activity caters for an innovative and more comprehensive study of her crucial role as a cultural broker. In-depth archival research and the extensive use of previously unexplored correspondence collected both from Italian and American archives allows to identify the networks of collaboration that Pivano established in the publishing industries of both countries, providing original insight in the collaborative nature of her cultural activity. Other critical works there are on Pivano tend to focus on her Italian version of Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*, and in particular Pavese's interferences in Pivano's translation.¹¹ In terms of non-Italian scholarship, the main study remains American scholar Blossom Kirschenbaum's 1996 essay on Pivano's relationship with feminism, titled 'Fernanda Pivano: Italian *Americanista*, Reluctant Feminist'. If scholarly publications on Pivano are scarce, mass-media and popular coverage of her is, on the other hand, abundant. The considerable number of interviews, articles, documentaries, and television appearances testify to the wide popularity that Fernanda Pivano achieved in Italy.

⁸ Such as Dunnett 2015 (in particular Chap. 5, 'Mediating the Myth: The "Discovery" of American Literature by Italian Critics', pp. 369–482) and 2005; De Fusco 2011.

⁹ Ribon's thesis, available on the DSpace online archives of the University of Venice Ca' Foscari, cannot be accessed because it is 'closed accessed'.

¹⁰ Tapparo's thesis was turned into a book and published in 2006.

¹¹ Such as VanWagenen 2019 and Moscardi 2013.

Although her crucial role as a cultural broker is widely recognised, very little has been written about Pivano's translation praxis. She has been criticised because of mistakes of interpretation in her translations, while the translations themselves are often dismissed as merely 'interlinear' due to the closeness to the originals in terms of syntactical structure and style. Symptomatic of the scepticism towards Pivano's translations are the events surrounding the republication of works and novels initially translated by Pivano, for example Queneau's *Le Chiendent*, and Ginsberg's *Howl* and *Kaddish*. Zanon (2013) observes that in the introductory note to the 1992 Einaudi edition of Raymond Queneau's *Romanzi*, Magrini defends the choice of publishing a new translation of *Le Chiendent* (which Pivano had translated for the same publisher in 1948) in the following terms: '[q]uella della Pivano è una traduzione "ingenua", e ne serba il fascino, ma è appunto questo che la rende inadeguata a un'opera stracolma di artifici "sentimentali", di cui fa poco sentire la massa, quindi anche l'energia' (Queneau 1992: xxxix).¹² Similarly, Pivano's translations of Ginsberg's *Howl* and *Kaddish* were replaced in 1997 in the volume *Urlo e Kaddish* (Il Saggiatore) in a new translation by Luca Fontana. In this case, the publisher asked Pivano for permission to let Fontana edit and correct her original translations. Pivano withheld permission, leading to a clash between the translator and Luca Formenton, director of the publishing house. The reason for the new translation is revealed in the correspondence between Fontana and Formenton following Pivano's refusal: her work was considered inadequate and no match for the poem's greatness because of its adherence to the structure and syntax of the original, its lack of rhythm, and its lack of linguistic experimentation.¹³

On the other hand, mass-media and popular coverage about her is abundant: interviews, articles, documentaries, and TV-appearances testify to the wide popularity that Fernanda Pivano achieved in Italy. Arguably, Pivano was and still is the most recognisable and famous Italian translator. Therefore, the aim of this work is to provide the first assessment of Fernanda Pivano's central role in facilitating and advancing the process of cultural exchange between the United States and Italy in the second half of the Twentieth century. I will approach this task by exploring the factors that shaped her promotion of a specific image of America, one that embodied the ideas of liberation from Fascism, capitalism and conservatism both from a literary as well as from a socio-cultural perspective. I will map her network of connections both in the Italian publishing

¹² Cited in Zanon 2013: 385.

¹³ On this, see Ginsberg 1997. The correspondence regarding the publication of this volume is collected in the now out-of-print volume *Allen Ginsberg e il Saggiatore* (1997). The same correspondence is also included in Ginsberg 2011: 9-65.

industry and in her American circles to ascertain the depth of indebtedness and conflict and the impact that these had on her career.

Ever since the start of her career as a translator – marked by the publication of her Italian translation of Edgar Lee Masters’s *Spoon River Anthology* by Einaudi in 1943 – Fernanda Pivano demonstrated a keen interest in the innovative and disruptive features of American literature, both from a stylistic and a socio-political point of view.¹⁴ The familial, political, and social context in which she grew up played a crucial role in shaping her primary disposition towards foreign cultures and literatures, with particular attention paid to those realities that stood out as alternatives to Fascism – such as US literature during the years of the regime in Italy. When evaluating Fernanda Pivano’s professional trajectory across the Italian literary field from start to finish, it appears that elements of political resistance, protection of freedom and cultural development through cross-contamination and innovation – absorbed early on during her teenage years – shaped the direction of her cultural action. The combination of these aspects allowed her to become a pivotal figure in the process of gatekeeping, importation, and popularisation of counter-culture literature, non-conformist and innovative thinking and culture of dissent.

After translating and writing about some of the major realist and modernist American authors— such as Edgar Lee Masters, Ernest Hemingway, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner – during the Forties and Fifties, Fernanda Pivano engaged in a fierce cultural and editorial battle to bring to Italy the poets and the writers of the Beat Generation, most notably Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and Gregory Corso. Her independent, trailblazing cultural operation – one that allowed the Italian public to access innovative, counter-cultural literary expression – encountered widespread scepticism and resistance from the actors and intellectuals that populated the Italian literary environment and regulated the market. Notwithstanding the establishment’s unwillingness to accept and recognise any cultural, literary, or economic value associated with the new authors of the *San Francisco Renaissance*,¹⁵ Pivano skilfully deployed the various forms of capital at her disposal and her solid networks of collaboration (primarily with American authors and editors) to publish, broker and disseminate the prose and verse of the Beats.

¹⁴ *The Spoon River Anthology* was later on published, among others, by: Newton Compton in 1974 (translation by Latizia Ciotti Miller); CDE in 1990 (translation by Antonio Porta); BUR in 1968 (translation by Alberto Rossatti); Piemme in 1996 (translation by Luciano Pagliarunga); Demetra in 2001 (translation by Alessandro Quattrone); Corriere della Sera 2012 (translation by Angela Urbano); Il saggiatore in 2016 (edited by Pietro Montorfani and translation by Antonio Porta); Feltrinelli in 2018 (translation by Enrico Terrinoni); Rusconi in 2018 (translation by Luca Manini). The translations of 45 of the poems contained in *The Spoon River Anthology* were also found among the papers in the archives of Fondo Fenoglio, translated by Italian writer Beppe Fenoglio. On this, see Merlini 2014.

¹⁵ For further readings on the San Francisco Renaissance see also Allen 1960, Ellingham and Killian 1998, French 1991, Davidson 1989.

Her main achievement is the publication of the two volumes of Beat poetry published with Feltrinelli and Mondadori, respectively in 1964 and 1965: the anthology *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, edited by Pivano and translated by Pivano and Giulio Saponaro,¹⁶ and *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, a collection of poems by Allen Ginsberg which contains the famous compositions 'Howl' and 'Kaddish'. A close reading of Fernanda Pivano's wider professional trajectory shows that the dissemination of the literature of the Beat Generation in Italy stands out as the point of maturation of her activity as literary mediator. Her cultural engagement that started in the footsteps of the *americanisti* in the 1930s, roughly three decades later takes on the character of an autonomous, ambitious and independent operation of trailblazing literary research and mediation. Particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, Pivano invested the economic, social and cultural forms of capital that she had acquired to facilitate Beat works into Italy. Thanks to her vast exposure on popular and mainstream media such as journals, newspapers and TV shows where she advocated for the authors that she promoted, Fernanda Pivano skilfully created a personal image closely associated with the Beat Generation, taking on the role of Italian gatekeeper for American counterculture literature. Besides the two anthologies, Pivano played a crucial role in the process of publication and popularisation of several other fundamental Beat literary works, including Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* [*Sulla strada*, Mondadori 1959], and William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* [*Pasto nudo*, SugarCo 1964] and *Junkie* [*Scimmia sulla schiena*, Rizzoli 1962]. Although Pivano did not translate these titles, she played a crucial role in paving the way for their reception in Italy by submitting positive reader's reports to the publishers and writing articles and essays about their authors.

Thanks to the direct ties that Pivano had established in the US, she became a primary, trusted contact for many authors and actors of the American editorial scene. In the years following

¹⁶ Giulio Saponaro (1935-2011)* was a writer and translator whose work was endorsed by Pivano, and that collaborated to several projects directly connected to her, such as the anthology *Poesia degli ultimi americani* and the underground magazine *Pianeta Fresco*, directed by Pivano, Ginsberg and Sottsass. Saponaro translated primarily works by William Burroughs, with whom the Italian writer seemed to be very close. Pivano wrote to Ginsberg in 1963: 'You ask about the Italian young poets. If you mean on your line [...] sooner or later you will meet Giulio Saponaro, 28, who became his boyfriend after I introduced them to each other and through Fabrizio became boyfriend of Bill. He writes prose, but I cannot make him pull himself together and write more than five pages of any continuous meaning. I am after him because his experiences are sort of hip and he would make a writer out of the Establishment' (Pivano to Ginsberg, Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 07/07/1963).

*Information on Saponaro is scarce, although a series of newspaper articles from 2011 report on the death of a 76-year old polyglot translator for Mondadori, named Giulio Saponaro, born in 1935. This information seems to correspond to Pivano's annotation in her letter to Ginsberg, where she states that Saponaro was 28 in 1963. See https://www.lanazione.it/cronaca/2011/10/19/603142-trovato_morto_casa_dopo_sette_giorni.shtml and

<https://iltirreno.gelocal.it/versilia/cronaca/2011/10/19/news/trovato-morto-in-casa-da-alcuni-giorni-interprete-e-traduttore-della-mondadori-1.2751381>. Last accessed 07/02/2022.

her first trip to the US in 1956, Pivano's networking strategy ensured that the cultural flow of a specific segment of American literature converged into her hands, thus conferring extensive negotiating and cultural power in editorial matters to her, as well as the ability to influence and shape the Italian literary reception of foreign literature in those years. Furthermore, her close-knit personal and professional relationship with many American authors facilitated their physical presence in Italy and participations to public events often co-organised by Pivano; as a matter of fact, her house in Milan functioned as a hub for many writers who wished to come to Italy, either for personal reasons or because of events connected to the publication of their works (book launches, literary readings and festivals, etc.). Here, they could also benefit from the wide network of connections with Italian artists and intellectuals linked to Fernanda Pivano and her husband, the Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass Jr.

The editorial and institutional challenges that Pivano encountered while promoting and disseminating American counter-culture literature in Italy had a significant impact on the progress of her operation of cultural dissemination, causing setbacks and delays in the process of publication of many of the works of the authors of the Beat Generation. Nonetheless, Fernanda Pivano's ability to navigate the literary market and address its actors and intellectuals and, at the same time, engage with the general public through mainstream media (by writing articles for popular newspapers and magazines,¹⁷ or by taking part in TV and radio shows)¹⁸ allowed her to reach a broader segment of readers. Works such as Allen Ginsberg's *Jukebox all'idrogeno* and Jack Kerouac's *Sulla strada* became popular particularly among the younger generations whose interest can be gauged by their massive presence at book launches and readings arranged after the publication of Allen Ginsberg's poems in Italian, especially in Turin (5 March 1966) and Naples (12 February 1966).

The reception and increasing popularity of Beat literature produced tangible consequences from an artistic and social point of view. The publication of Allen Ginsberg's anthology *Jukebox all'idrogeno* in 1965 found fertile ground among the younger generations and functioned as a catalyst for the creation of social and cultural spaces of expression connected to the movements for gay rights, sexual liberation, and countercultural discourse. A prominent example is the foundation, in 1971, of the first Italian movement for homosexual liberation, F.U.O.R.I. (Fronte

¹⁷ See Appendix C.

¹⁸ A quick search in the virtual archives of Teche Rai shows very few results for the name Fernanda Pivano, in particular the interview with Jack Kerouac in 1966 for the TV program 'Fuori orario, cose mai viste', and an interview to Fernanda Pivano on Ernest Hemingway, aired 31 January 1994 during the program 'La biblioteca ideale'. Both can be found at the following link <https://www.teche.rai.it/?s=pivano> [last accessed 23/12/2021]. Further interviews and programs dedicated to Fernanda Pivano and that aired on the Italian national broadcasting RAI can be found through a quick YouTube search.

Unitario Omosessuali Rivoluzionari Italiani) by gay rights activist and bookshop owner Angelo Pezzana, and the subsequent publication, in 1972, of the magazine *Fuori!*, to which Fernanda Pivano and Allen Ginsberg initially contributed. Still further examples include the numerous Beat Generation-inspired publications in the form of journals, bulletins, and fanzines that appeared at the end of the 1960s such as *Mondo Beat*, (printed between 1966 and 1967 and started by activists connected to the larger European Beat and Provo movements such as Melchiorre Gerbino, Vittorio di Russo and Umberto Tiboni), the non-periodical publication *I Lunghi Piedi dell'Uomo* (an anthology of beat poetry started in 1968 with contributions by, among others, Poppi Ranchetti, Renzo Angolani, Ivana Malpede, Gianni Milano, Pierfranco Mercenaro) and *Urlo Beat* (later *Grido Beat* and then *Urlo e Grido Beat* printed in 1967).¹⁹ All these publications were directly or indirectly linked to Pivano's advocacy and situated themselves in the niche of underground and anti-establishment aesthetic production brilliantly occupied by *Pianeta fresco*, a psychedelic journal clearly inspired by the *San Francisco Oracle* and published in 1967 as a collaborative project between Fernanda Pivano, Allen Ginsberg and Ettore Sottsass.

In order to shed light on Fernanda Pivano central role as a literary mediator, I will analyse her cultural engagement in the reception and dissemination of the literature of the Beat Generation in Italy, paying particular attention to the history of the publication of Allen Ginsberg's anthology *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, which contains the poet's iconic poem 'Howl'. The main aim of this project is to investigate the relevance of Pivano's role as a translator in the mechanisms of literary diffusion and cultural exchange between Italy and the United States during the 1950s and the 1960s. By providing a thick description of her trajectory across the literary field, this research aims to shed light on the complex set of authorial and institutional interactions and power struggles that dramatically shaped Pivano's agency and influenced her professional choices during her career as a translator and, more broadly, as a cultural mediator. Through the study of Fernanda Pivano's cultural action this work's objective is to contribute a case-study highlighting the significance of mechanisms of professional and intellectual legitimation of female translatorial agency in the reception and promotion of a specific segment of foreign literature. To this end, this study relies heavily on the exploitation of extensive archive materials concerning Pivano's cultural agency and engagement in promoting and disseminating the literature of the Beat Generation in Italy, with particular attention paid to the correspondence exchanged with American

¹⁹ For further readings on Italian counter-cultural, underground publications see, among others, Guarnaccia 1996, 1988 and Ceri and De Pascale 1993. See also the section dedicated to magazines and journals within the project 'Alle due sponde della cortina di ferro: le culture del dissenso e la definizione dell'identità europea tra Italia, Francia e URSS (1956-1991)', University of Florence, available at the following link: <https://www.culturedeldissenso.com>. (Last accessed 15/11/2021).

authors (such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs and Gregory Corso), and Italian and American publishers (primarily Mondadori and City Lights Books), and editors, literary agents and intellectuals operating in the two countries.²⁰ The analysis of previously unexplored archival evidence will be used to complement and contrast the existing publications linked to Fernanda Pivano's work as a translator and cultural broker of American counter-culture literature, such as personal accounts and diaries, memoirs, books, essays and articles published in newspapers, magazines and journals, interviews and public lectures. The investigation of archive materials connected to Pivano's cultural activity, combined with the study of the existing literature on the subject, illuminates the individual, micro-level interactions that shaped the mechanisms of dissemination, marketing and popularisation of Beat literature in Italy, and the quality of its reception.

Through the analysis of the collected data, I will investigate the role of the translator in the mechanisms that shaped a niche-but-relevant portion of the cultural flow between Italy and the United States, with particular attention paid to the observation of the following aspects:

- a) What are the mechanisms and the interactions – at the microscopic level – through which the translator accumulates and administers symbolic capital and defines her professional trajectory?
- b) How is the cultural power of the translator and her authority recognised (or questioned/curtailed/undermined) through (de)legitimation in power struggles with editors and publishing houses?
- c) How does the translator's identity and self-perception within the field affect intra- and extra-textual translating and linguistic choices?
- d) What is the impact of the tight collaboration between author and translator and how can this shape editorial mechanisms and the quality of literary reception and dissemination?

To address these research questions regarding Fernanda Pivano's translatorial agency the collected data will be read through the lenses of a microsociology and a microhistory of translation. The two theoretical frameworks take into account the historical and sociological elements influencing an individual's disposition towards translation and cultural dissemination, shaping their agency and trajectory within a field. The combination of these two methodologies

²⁰ Archival research was carried out at Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori in Milan, Fondo Fernanda Pivano in Milan, Special Collections and University Archives at Stanford University in California, and Bancroft Library Archives at the University of California, Berkeley. In the archival documents that have been quoted in this thesis, I have reproduced the authors' English and Italian exactly as they appear in the original sources, including the errors of grammar, syntax, and typography.

will allow me to carry out a study of translatorial agency establishing a subject-grounded category which revolves around the translator as an individual, paving the way for the investigation on the degree of influence that socio-cultural restraints exert on translator's practice. Both theoretical frameworks draw on the theories developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his studies on power structures and norms organised through three key concepts: habitus, field and capital.²¹

Recent developments in the fields of translation and publishing have fruitfully implemented these concepts to allow more articulated readings of translation agency, while, at the same time, moving away from the deterministic framework underlying Bourdieu's theorisation. Building on and developing Bourdieu's theorisation, researchers such as Simeoni (1998), Gouanvic (2005), Meylaerts (2008), Sela-Sheffy (2014, 2008), and Blakesley (2019) have implemented those notions to perform studies of translation agency which take into consideration the broader socio-political frame in which translators act. As argued by Blakesley in the volume *A Sociological Approach to Poetry Translation* (2019):

The sociology of translation [...] has shown itself an approach capable of opening new perspectives on several related fields: the question of literary influence; the role of translation in creating new literary genres; the function of translation for poets; and the circulation of what Pierre Bourdieu termed 'symbolic capital' (Blakesley 2019: 3).

All the elements listed by Blakesley concur in the process of the autonomisation of the literary field, which happens through the establishment of internal and independent logics of practice and is the crucial result of the many power struggles that take place within the field, as also argued by Gouanvic:

Facts of publication (contracts, trials for indecency, existence of special series) point to the autonomization of the French literary field. They are indicators essentially of power struggles that took place in the literary field at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. The fact that the fields were becoming autonomous was evident above all in the extent to which they became the site for struggles for exclusive appropriation of authors and their works, whether translated or original, in the form of a monopoly for the acquisition of maximum symbolic capital (Gouanvic 2005: 157).

²¹ On cultural sociology and on the concepts of field, habitus and capital see, among others, Bourdieu 2008, 1990a and 1990b; Baldini 2015 and 2008; Blakesley 2018; Ginzburg 1993; Goffman 1956; Meylaerts 2008; Sela-Sheffy 2008.

The facts of publication Gouanvic refers to are strictly related to the logics of practice through which individual agents – such as translators – acquire and administer their symbolic capital.

The logics of practice are therefore strongly linked to individual agency: they shape and are shaped by the choices of the cultural actors active in the field, and – in our case – by the agency of the translator. The strength of the micro-sociological approach applied to translation studies resides precisely in its capacity of providing insights in different, related fields, through the study of elements that pertain both to the macro and micro-level of analysis. It allows the translator and their agency to be centre-stage. While Bourdieu's sociological approach caters for an investigation of the wider social context in which cultural dissemination takes place, the micro-sociological approach 'focuses on micro-level *inter-actions*, from the perspective of the *playing individual*'²² (Sela-Sheffy 2014: 49), shifting the focus on the agent's identity. This approach is indebted to the studies of Ervin Goffman (1956) and the notion of *identity work* which refers to 'the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities' (Snow and Anderson 1987: 1348), and that caters for an investigation of how individuals 'negotiate their "being who they are" in their ordinary life [...] in different, institutionalized and less institutionalized social settings, including occupations, organizations or social movements' (Sela-Sheffy 2014: 49).²³ In translation studies, a subject-grounded research approach may help identify a correlation between the translator's professional choices (both intra- and extra-textual) and their *self-perception*, which is strictly linked to the acquisition and administration of symbolic capital through interaction with other parties and agents within the field.

The focus on translators' interactions and choices on a microscopic level is supported by the construction of a micro-history of translation. In the article 'Using primary sources to produce a microhistory of translation and translators: theoretical and methodological concerns' (2014), Jeremy Munday, drawing on studies by Levi (1991) and Ginzburg (1976, 1993), applies the micro-historical methodology to translation studies in order to 'better understand how the detailed analysis of the everyday experience of individuals can shed light on the bigger picture of the history of translation in specific socio-historical and cultural contexts' (Munday 2014: 65). From a methodological perspective, the micro-historical approach relies on the collection and investigation of data such as post-hoc accounts and interviews (that Munday defines as overtly mediated testimonies) and archives, personal papers and manuscripts (defined less overtly mediated testimonies) (see Munday 2014: 68). Considering the nature of the materials listed above

²² Emphasis in the original.

²³ For further studies on identity works see Bernard 2012, Foley 2005, Kreiner et al. 2006, Kuhn 2006, Padavic 2005, Reger et al. 2008, Snow and McAdam 2000, Stryker et al. 2000, Watson 2008, Wieland 2010.

(and drawing on the 2006 study by Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon), Munday notes that the microhistorical approach puts in the spotlight ‘those whose voices are generally unheard, but uses very small-scale qualitative analysis in order to understand the day-to-day experience and choices of those people’ (Munday 2014: 67). The relevance of the construction of a micro-history resides in the opportunity to make scholars ‘sensitive to the nuances of power and to the changes of voice in documents [...] it allows scholars to uncover disjunctures between what those who created documents thought was necessary to record and what the scholar wants to know’ (Muir 1994: 621). In translation studies, investigating the microhistorical aspect of translators’ agency helps shed light on the ‘specific interactions between a translator and other individuals, groups, institutions and power structures’ (Munday 2014: 77), and on ‘the exchange and operation of beliefs and the motivation of behaviour’ (Munday 2014: 77), that allow to link a case-study to a broader socio-historical context. More importantly, a micro-historical approach that focuses on the ‘little facts’ (Szijártó 2002: 210) allows to challenge and undermine ‘dominant historical discourses of text production’ (Munday 2014: 77). Micro-history’s potential to undermine the ‘dominant historical discourses of text production’ appears to be particularly interesting in a case study such as that of Fernanda Pivano. It allows us to assess her trajectory taking into consideration those elements that challenge the dominant structures within the field of book production in Italy, such as female translating agency in the appropriation and promotion of a specific, non-canonical, literature (Beat prose and poetry). The combination of the micro-sociological and micro-historical approaches helps bring into a sharper focus Pivano’s trajectory as a translator and the events and factors that shaped her disposition and professional habitus.

A thorough study of both overtly mediated and less overtly mediated materials through cultural sociology and network theory applied to the study of publishing history and translation illuminates the crucial role that the collaborative aspect played in Fernanda Pivano’s operation of cultural mediation and literary diffusion.²⁴ Her ability in establishing close-knit networks of collaboration with key actors within the American literary field greatly influenced the mechanisms of movement, acquisition and accumulation of social capital, subsequently affecting specific dynamics of literary reception and the quality of the final product, but also re-shaping the relationship between the translator and the editor, undermining the traditional power of subservience of the former to the latter. This becomes evident while analysing the history of the publication of the anthology *Jukebox all'idrogeno* and the correspondence surrounding the events that preceded its publication in Italy. As can be observed, the successful relationship of

²⁴ On network theory and network theory applied to publishing see Granovetter 1990, Lin 1999, Borgatti and Halgin 2011, La Penna 2018.

collaboration established by Pivano and Ginsberg was permeated by *trust*. With its intrinsic and instrumental value, trust ‘vastly increases our opportunities for cooperating with others and for benefiting from that cooperation’ (McLeod, 2021), thus facilitating the process of legitimization of the translator’s choices and decisions through a shift in symbolic capital from the author to the translator. The tight relationship between Fernanda Pivano and Allen Ginsberg and the continuous collaboration between translator and author had an effect on the linguistic choices made during the translation, but it also provided Pivano with the instruments to challenge the publisher’s decisions regarding publication and censorship of the texts. The use of genetic criticism to investigate the translation’s *avant-textes* helps to ‘unveil the role of authors, publishers, copy-editors, censors and other figures involved in the translation’ as well as to ‘elucidate a crucial aspect of the literary translation process, namely the relationship between translator and author’ (Bollettieri and Zanotti 2017: 265-66).²⁵ The investigation of the collaboration between Pivano and Ginsberg illuminates how the dynamics of author-translator trust and the renegotiation of authorship and authority between author and translator affected the intrinsic power mechanisms within the hierarchically arranged literary field, shaping the publishing history of Allen Ginsberg in Italy.²⁶

A translator-centred approach (Hu 2004) contributes to the ongoing discussion within the field of *Translator Studies*,²⁷ with a growing interest in the analysis and extensive use of translators’ autobiographical testimonies, documents and publications (diaries, correspondence, conference papers, public talks, books, essays and articles), allowing for a shift in focus from the textual plan to the plan of the individual. Expanding on Holmes’s classic mapping of translation studies, that includes ‘four big branches: textual, cultural, cognitive and sociological’ (Chesterman 2009: 19), the subfield of *translator studies* deals primarily with the cultural, cognitive and sociological aspects of translating agency,²⁸ steering research in translation studies away from the three traditional models of conceptualisation (comparative, process, causal)²⁹ and

²⁵ Bollettieri and Zanotti include in the category of *avant-textes* drafts, notes, manuscripts, diaries, marginalia, letters, and documentary material found in translators’ and publishers’ archives (p. 265).

²⁶ On genetic criticism applied to translation studies see also Serge 2000, Bush 2006, Cordingley and Montini 2015, Karpinski 2015, Munday 2013.

²⁷ As seen in the works by Chesterman 2009, 2017; Baibikov 2011, Vorderobermeier 2014; Karpinski 2015; Judith 2017; Kaindl, Kolb and Schlager 2021 and others.

²⁸ ‘The cultural branch deals with values, ethics, ideologies, traditions, history, examining the roles and influences of translators and interpreters through history, as agents of cultural evolution. The cognitive branch deals with mental processes, decision-making, the impact of emotions, attitudes to norms, personality, etc. The sociological branch deals with translators’/interpreters’ observable behaviour as individuals or groups or institutions, their social networks, status and working processes, their relations with other groups and with relevant technology, and so on’ (Chesterman 2009: 20).

²⁹ On this see Chesterman 2009: 20 and Chesterman 2000.

pointing towards the ‘agent model’ focussing ‘primarily and explicitly on the agents involved in translation, for instance on their activities or attitudes, their interaction with their social and technical environment, or their history and influence (Chesterman 2009: 20).

From the point of view of the agent, Fernanda Pivano’s professional translation history represents an interesting case study given her *multipositionality*, which links the translators’ broader habitus to their ‘multiple lives [...] and to their plural and variable socialisation in a variety of social and cultural contexts’ (Meylaerts 2013: 109). Building upon Meylaerts’s theorising, and with the support of material evidence that sheds light on her interactions with the American and Italian authorial and institutional environments, I aim at assessing Fernanda Pivano’s positioning within the book market and further problematise of her role as a *diffused translator*. By this I mean that her cultural activity and professional practice did not remain limited to the tasks and activities of the translator, but they stretched across several professional profiles within the book industry, such as literary scout, literary agent, acquisition editor and independent mediator. Pivano’s multifaceted professional development fuelled clashes and struggles for power with those agents within the Italian literary field whose role and subsequent decision-making prerogatives felt threatened by the translator’s ambition. As observed by Schlager (2021) in her study on writer, translator and sociologist Harriet Martineau, multipositionality is not limited to professional practice, because agents are embedded in ‘a complicated web of different and often contradicting attitudes, uniting (alleged) opposites [...] and becoming a plural actor on many levels’ (Schlager 2021: 203). This is true also for Pivano if we consider her role of financially independent, upper-middle class, woman translator, who operated across a male-dominated market, and engaged with counter-culture literary production of a group of poets and writers who were primarily men, who often displayed a problematic ‘reactionary feminine–masculine gender disparity at odds with the movement’s open, improvisational poetics and colloquial hipster style’ (Johnson 2017: 162). The plurality of Pivano’s professional practice is a direct consequence of the encounter between the structural oppositions of the mainstream field of literary and cultural production and Pivano’s translatorial ambition, goals and *telos*.³⁰ Representing an ‘ultimate (professional) goal’ providing ‘the answer to the question of what motivates translators to work in that field or to translate a given text beyond the reason of earning a living’ (Schlager 2021: 204), the concept of *telos* is particularly evident in Pivano’s endeavour to translate and see published Allen Ginsberg’s poems in *Jukebox all’idrogeno*, notwithstanding the professional, financial and social difficulties encountered while interacting with Italian editors and intellectuals.

³⁰ On the concept of *telos* see Chesterman and Baker 2008 and Chesterman 2009.

Considering the concepts of ambition, goals and *telos*, the aim of this study is to identify the crucial clusters of actions and decisions which defined Fernanda Pivano's positioning within the book market, and the choices that she made both within the text (linguistic choices, approaches to translation), and outside the text (decision-making process, professional choices, network formation, choice of particular authors and texts to translate, modes of dissemination, modalities of engagement with the public), and how her cultural activity finally impacted the Italian literary market and cultural production.

In the following chapters, I aim to chronologically map Pivano's career as a cultural broker, highlighting the macro- and micro-level interactions that shaped her professional trajectory and her habitus, influencing choices and modes of practice in her operation of translation and cultural dissemination. Fernanda Pivano's activity of cultural dissemination of American literature is linked to three key moments that strongly defined her professional career, and that will be mapped in detail in this work:

- 1) the publication of the translation of the *Spoon River Anthology* in 1943, that marked the start of her career as a translator.
- 2) The close professional and personal relationship established with American writer and Nobel prize winner Ernest Hemingway, that started in 1948 and lasted until Hemingway's death;
- 3) Fernanda Pivano's discovery of American counter-culture literature during her trip to the United States in 1956, and the subsequent operation of dissemination and popularisation of the work of the authors connected to the Beat Generation during the 1960s.

The aim of chapters two and three is to map Fernanda Pivano's professional trajectory from the start of her career as a translator to the discovery of American counter-culture literature in 1956. In chapter two, which covers the years spanning from 1917 to 1945, I will investigate the years of formation of the translator, looking closely at the events and mechanisms that led Fernanda Pivano to take up the career as a translator, paying particular attention to the mechanisms of acquisition and accumulation of cultural capital related to the relationship with, and the mentorship of, Italian intellectual Cesare Pavese. Moreover, I will highlight the central role that education and familial background, combined with the then current socio-political context, played in shaping Fernanda Pivano's interest in American literature. The aim of this chapter is to assess and identify the channels and negotiations of capital underlying the translator's entrance in the

literary field, leading up to the publication of the translation of the *Spoon River Anthology* in 1943 and the beginning of Pivano's relationship of collaboration with the publisher Mondadori.

Chapter three will analyse the dynamics and the power struggles shaping Fernanda Pivano's collaboration with the publishing house Mondadori against the backdrop of her relationship with American writer Ernest Hemingway. Between 1946 and 1955 several of Fernanda Pivano's translations of American literature came out for Mondadori, for whom Pivano worked as a collaborator. Notwithstanding Pivano's central role as a reliable translator of many of the most important American authors of those years (Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner), the correspondence exchanged with the publisher's directors sheds light on the difficulties she encountered while trying to obtain secure employment and, at the same time, see her intellectual work recognises and legitimated. During the 1950s, the close professional and personal relationship established with Nobel prize winner American author Ernest Hemingway is crucial in Pivano's acquisition and negotiation of symbolic capital as translator and cultural broker.

Chapter four will focus on Fernanda Pivano's 1956 trip to the United States and her discovery of the Beat Generation. During her visit to the United States, Fernanda Pivano was able to establish new or reinforce already existing social ties with key figures of the American literary panorama. Fernanda Pivano's ability to build an extensive network of friends and collaborators in the United States proved to be a key factor in her ability to access fundamental knowledge about new, American counterculture literature, and subsequently promote, translate and disseminate the prose and poetry of Beat authors such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso, and others, allowing her to retain control and exert power over the cultural flows between the two countries.

In chapter five, I will scrutinise Fernanda Pivano's engagement with the literature of the Beat Generation, paying particular attention to the work she conducted for the translation of the poems of Allen Ginsberg. Her activity of cultural dissemination of the Beat authors gave momentum to her trajectory across the field, consolidating her positioning and supporting her in the construction of her specific identity as a cultural mediator for American counter-culture literature in Italy. Thanks to the publication of the two main Italian anthologies of Beat poetry (*Jukebox all'idrogeno*, 1965, and *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, 1964),³¹ to her militant

³¹ *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, 1965, Mondadori, contains the translation of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, *Kaddish* and other poems by the same author.

Poesia degli ultimi americani, 1964, Feltrinelli, is a collection of poems by different Beat authors translated by Fernanda Pivano and Giulio Saponaro: Ray Bremser, Gregory Corso, Robert Creeley, Diane Di Prima, Edward Dorn, Robert Duncan, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, LeRoi Jones, Bob Kaufman, Robert Kelly, Jack Kerouac, Kenneth Koch, Philip Lamantia, Denis Levertov, Ron Loewinsohn, Michael McClure, Norman Mailer, Frank

journalism that popularised the new literary movement, and to the close-knit relationship she established with prominent figures of the American literary panorama, Pivano managed to establish herself as the gatekeeper of American counter-culture literature in Italy, becoming a central gear in the mechanism of cultural dissemination for this specific portion of literature. Central, in this chapter, will be the study of the correspondence exchanged with the American poet surrounding the translation and publication of the poems contained in the anthology *Jukebox all'idrogeno*.

O'Hara, Charles Olson, Joel Oppenheimer, Peter Orlovski, Ed Sanders, Gary Snyder, Lols Sorrells, Lewis Welch, Philip Whalen, John Wieners, Jonathan Williams, Taylor Mead, John Harriman.

2. Learning the craft: the translation of the *Spoon River Anthology* and the mentorship of Cesare Pavese (1937 – 1946)

In order to identify how and why someone becomes a translator, and how a translator begins to accumulate those habitus-based resources that will be fundamental in shaping their professional practice and trajectory, it is crucial to look at their years of formation: in particular to their family background and the education they received. As argued by Sela-Sheffy (2014), the formation of habitus for translators is influenced by a variety of factors: disposition and inclination towards the work of translation starts – often – from a very early stage. In her study on status, identity and self-presentational discourse connected to translation, Sela-Sheffy provides evidence that translators refer to the family background and accessibility to foreign languages early on as primary inputs towards becoming translators: ‘Their [the translators’] discourse reveals the mobilization of various habitus-based resources, including personality traits (e.g., many translators talk about ambition, individualism, creativity, a sense of self-improvement, etc.) or background cultural baggage (e.g., they often describe their educated family, early age acquisition of foreign languages, or cosmopolitan experience)’ (Sela-Sheffy 2014: 52). As I will highlight in this chapter, the elements shaping Fernanda Pivano’s familial background and the education she received seem to resonate with Sela-Sheffy’s studies on translators’ identity work. The wealthy, cosmopolitan environment she grew up in, combined with the international education she received, favoured contact with foreign literatures and languages, in particular French and English.

Furthermore, a crucial element that shaped Fernanda Pivano’s early trajectory as a translator was the relationship with Cesare Pavese. Fundamental during Pivano’s years of formation was the cultural work of literary dissemination carried out by Italian *americanisti* such as Elio Vittorini and Cesare Pavese. With the latter, Pivano established a first, fundamental social tie that allowed her to accrue social capital and enter the Italian literary field. As we shall see in this chapter, the mentorship of the Italian intellectual provided Pivano with the opportunity to acquire central habitus-based resources which modelled her activity of cultural mediation and, at the same time, her ‘sense for the game’, which Pierre Boudieu defines as the ‘miraculous encounter between the *habitus* and a field’ (1990: 66).

Thanks to Pavese, in 1937, Pivano discovered American literature and, in particular, Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*. Six years later, the publication of Pivano's Italian translation of the anthology by the Turin-based publishing house Einaudi marked the start of her career as a translator. Pivano's literary debut was certainly facilitated by the close relationship of mentorship and collaboration established with Cesare Pavese, who functioned as a catalyst for Pivano's cultural activity, projecting onto her the symbolic and cultural capital linked to his own intellectual position.

2.1 Early years: the construction of the habitus

Fernanda Pivano was born in Genoa on the 18th of July 1917 to an upper-middle-class family. Her father, Riccardo Pivano, was a wealthy business broker and director of the Istituto Italiano di Credito Marittimo, as well as being highly educated, with a profound interest in literature and music. Her mother, Mary Smallwood, was the daughter of Francis Smallwood, a Scott, who was honorary consul of Siam and among the founders of the Berlitz School. Contact with the English language was present not only at home, but also at school. Fernanda received a rigorous, conservative and international education. She studied at the Swiss school together with children of foreign – particular British – businesspeople who had moved to Genoa for work. The school's official language was French, but pupils were taught English and German as well, and were not allowed to speak Italian. Fernanda's fascination with books was evident already as a young child. In her diary, published in two volumes by Bompiani in 2008, she wrote: 'Io passavo da una sgridata all'altra, perché portavo sempre con me un libro e cercavo di nascondermi dietro un certo ciuffo di caprifoglio per leggere in pace' (Pivano 2008: 13).³² Describing her grandfather's house, she recounts of books written in different languages and printed in all directions (Pivano 2008: 5). The strict education that she received played a big role in creating a disposition towards music and literature: 'La sera, secondo la mia schedule inflessibile, andavo a dormire alle 10, dopo aver ascoltato un'ora i dischi di musica classica o lirica [...] e l'interrogatorio alla fine, su chi aveva cantato o chi aveva diretto' (Pivano 2008: 7).³³ Riccardo Pivano used to pick from his library, which boasted over ten thousand volumes, a book for his daughter to read every Saturday. During

³² '[In school] I was constantly scolded because I always carried a book with me and tried to hide behind a bush of honeysuckle to read undisturbed'.

³³ 'In the evening, according to my rigid schedule, I went to bed at 10 pm, after listening for an hour to records of classical music or opera [...] and being interrogated, at the end, on who the singer or the director was'.

her teenage years, Fernanda read authors like Fëdor Dostoevskij, Lev Tolstoj, Anton Čechov, Gustave Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant, Thomas Mann, Alfred Döblin, Lajos Zilahy, and Ferenc Körmendi.

The international schooling and the high-educated, cosmopolitan family background are elements that evidently facilitated, already at an early stage in Pivano's life, the accumulation of some of those habitus-based resources that coalesced to shape her professional profile as a translator, as Sela-Sheffy points out in her investigation on translators' identity talks. In Pivano's diary, we can find clear evidence of the elements that brought her closer to America and American culture already at a young age. For example, she notes that she read *America Amara* by Emilio Cecchi (published in 1939), and that her father received the antifascist magazine *La Cultura*, a fundamental cultural publication started by Ruggero Bonghi in 1882 and suppressed by the fascist regime in 1936, and which at the time was directed by Ferdinando Neri.³⁴ Under the guidance of Cesare de Lollis (1921-1928), *La Cultura* functioned as a platform for the dissemination of articles and essays by young intellectuals strongly fascinated by European and American culture, such as Domenico Petrinì, Leone Ginzburg, Arrigo Cajumi and Cesare Pavese.

In 1929 she enrolled at Liceo Classico d'Azeglio in Turin, a school which marked one of the most important encounters shaping her social trajectory: for a few months, Fernanda Pivano had the 'straordinario privilegio'³⁵ (Pivano 2008: 32) of attending Cesare Pavese's lessons in Italian and Latin and continued to do so until the writer was sent into internal exile by the Fascists. Fernanda Pivano and Pavese developed a friendship that continued when Pavese came back from confinement in 1936: they exchanged a considerable number of letters. Subsequently, Pavese closely collaborated with Pivano, mentoring her with her very first translations and publications. In 1937, after she had started a degree in literature at the University of Turin, Pivano received from Pavese books by Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, Walt Whitman and Edgar Lee Masters, an event which marked the very start of her career as a translator: 'Io ho letto disciplinatamente Walt Whitman; ma di Sherwood Anderson e di Edgar Lee Masters, come tutti gli adolescenti di questo mondo, mi sono innamorata, e mi sono messa a tradurre *Spoon River* di nascosto, con una paura terribile che qualcuno se ne accorgesse e mi prendesse in giro' (Pivano

³⁴ For further readings on *La Cultura* see Barnett 1974; Pautasso 1991; Sasso 1992.

³⁵ 'Extraordinary privilege'.

2008: 52).³⁶ Fernanda Pivano's translation, *L'antologia di Spoon River*, was published by Einaudi in 1943.

Pivano's account of how she started translating Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology* reveals a spontaneous drive towards the act of translating and might be read as a sign of the vocational nature of her disposition towards the profession. It is interesting to note that in Sela-Sheffy's research, the vocational aspect of translation is often associated with top literary translators' rhetoric around self-perception, as opposed to translation intended purely as a simple job from the economic perspective: 'This rhetoric is dominated by the tendency to glorify their trade as a vocation rather than just as a means of earning a living' (Sela-Sheffy 2010: 136). Moreover, a further trait shared with the top literary translators interviewed by Sela-Sheffy, is the 'non-rational' character associated with Pivano's first attempt at translating:

Although all of these translators are well educated, usually college and university graduates, and often with exposure to foreign languages from an early age, they tend to present their becoming translators not as a rational decision, fitting their education and social status, but rather as determined by their inborn inclination and compelling drive from childhood' (Sela-Sheffy 2010: 137).

Similar elements can be, in fact, identified in Pivano's biography and in the self-presentational discourse of the translator.

2.2 The fascination for American literature: in the footsteps of the *americanisti*

The reasons why the *Spoon River Anthology* proved to be so appealing to the young Fernanda Pivano arguably reflect the socio-cultural inputs she had been exposed to during her high school and university years. Her cultural reference points were shaped by her relationship with Cesare Pavese, access to key works by Italian *americanisti* and to antifascist literary publications (such as *La Cultura*), and the general widespread interest in and popularisation of American literature reflected in the publications and book series produced by several Italian publishing houses. Her

³⁶ 'I read carefully Walt Whitman, but just like any other youth in the World, I fell in love with Sherwood Anderson and Edgar Lee Masters. I secretly started translating *Spoon River*, in a terrible fear that someone might find out and make fun of me'.

engagement with American literature built on and expanded the work of the above mentioned *americanisti*, in particular Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini, and Emilio Cecchi, whose literary and intellectual work traced clear connections between anti-Fascism and American modern literature. It is precisely this correlation that shaped Fernanda Pivano's cultural action: 'In her writings, Pivano accords a uniquely anti-Fascist significance to American literature' (Dunnett 2015, p. 63) which she considered as 'un'espressione di antifascismo' (Rubeo, 1987, p. 103).

As she claimed during her talk at the conference on literary translation organised in New York in 1970 by PEN American Centre, her literary research responded to a personal need to find and promote a literature that presented an alternative to the mannerisms which characterised Italian prose and poetry under Fascism, and to the pompous academic approach to literature:

I had spent years looking for a connection between fiction and reality, between a book and its reality, between an author and his reality, all of which had very little to do with French or American or Italian or whatsoever literary "naturalism" and which only concerned my eagerness to find, if not a blueprint, at least a tentative way out of our Italian attitude towards literature as an abstract tournament where the "Queen of Beauty" could be reached only by giving up any connection with so-called "vulgarity" and so on; yes, like the old British Victorian days, except that not being vulgar at that time for Italian Establishment meant being a Fascist (Pivano 1971: 330).

In the America promoted by Pavese and Vittorini, Pivano recognised the antithesis of fascist culture ['l'antitesi, proprio, alla cultura ufficiale fascista' (Pivano, 1966, p. 154)], probably also as a result of her exposure to a fundamental publication such as *La Cultura* that featured articles that '[I]n quel clima di "autarchia culturale" mi avevano aiutato a respingere il "principio di italianità" e a rivolgermi alla "plutocrazia decadente" e alla "democrazia giudaico-massonica", quali venivano definite le civiltà anglosassoni' (Pivano 2008: 38).³⁷ The rejection of fascist ideas and the search for principles which antagonized those propagandised by the regime found fertile ground in literature coming from outside Italy, and in particular from the United States, that Pivano could access thanks to the work of the Italian *americanisti*, such as Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini and Emilio Cecchi.

These elements of anti-fascism associated to American literature can be also identified in a note to the 2005 republication of her translation of the *Spoon River Anthology*, where Fernanda

³⁷ '[I]n that climate of "cultural autarchy" had helped me reject the "principle of italianness" and turn towards the "decadent plutocracy" and "judeo-masonic democracy" as the Anglo-Saxon society was defined'.

Pivano wrote: 'E un giorno questi sogni li avevo trovati tutti insieme in un libretto magico come un talismano che mi aveva portato Cesare Pavese [...] e mi aveva detto che c'erano altre realtà nel mondo, oltre a quelle naziste' (Pivano 2005: 5-6).³⁸ The dreams Fernanda writes about are dreams that depicted a world which was not suffering the tragedy of totalitarian regimes and wars, dreams that the 'little book' she received from Pavese managed to awaken, in a way radically different than she experienced with Italian literature, which was filled with 'eroici elmetti e mitra e paranoici guerrafondai' (Pivano 2005: 5).³⁹ In her diary, Pivano states that her fascination for that work was stirred not only by its content, but also by the way in which Lee Masters presented the disillusionment of *modern man* trapped in a new, industrial and capitalistic world. What made Edgar Lee Masters's epitaphs so valuable to Pivano is the fact that they depict the mediocre man rather than the *Übermensch* so largely publicized by fascist ideologies, while introducing at the same time the idiosyncrasies that the industrial revolution had produced in the life of the modern man.

In 1940, Fernanda Pivano graduated from the conservatory in Turin where she studied piano. One year later, in 1941, she obtained her university degree with a thesis on *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, even though her first thesis proposal was on Walt Whitman. Her proposal was refused by her thesis advisor, professor Federico Olivero, who considered it 'argomento troppo scabroso' for a young woman (Pivano, 2004, p. 28).⁴⁰ This first degree was followed by a second in philosophy, earned in 1943, with a thesis written under the supervision of the prominent philosopher Nicola Abbagnano, for whom Pivano worked as an assistant during her years as a postgraduate student. Fernanda Pivano's first proposal to write a thesis on the great American poet Walt Whitman demonstrates that, together with the sentiment of political resistance, her fascination for American literature was fuelled by an interest in the innovative linguistic and stylistic features that characterised some of the literature coming from the United States. Pivano spotted the innovative potential of cross-contamination through reception and dissemination of new literary forms imported from across the Atlantic, something which could promote a clash with established traditional cultural values, both in terms of expressive forms but also through a re-shaping of the publishing field and a shift in the canon. During a talk that she gave in Turin in 1946, she claimed:⁴¹ '[...] gli alberi si devono potare, se non si vuole che muoiano; e a volte

³⁸ 'And one day, I had found all those dreams in a small book, as magic as a talisman, that Cesare Pavese had given to me [...] and it told me that there were other realities in the World, other than the Nazi ones'.

³⁹ 'Heroic helmets and submachine guns and paranoid warmongers'.

⁴⁰ 'The topic is too scandalous for a nice lady like you'.

⁴¹ In this specific talk (held in Turin in 1946 for the cultural association 'Pro Cultura Femminile'), Pivano refers to reviews on the translations of *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway and *Many Marriages* by Sherwood Anderson

perché non muoiano bisogna addirittura fare degli innesti, e mescolare nuova linfa, forte, esuberante, a quella che sia diventata fiacca, magari di troppa nobiltà' (Pivano 1997: 338).⁴²

Pivano's position is similar to Pavese's and Vittorini's critical understanding of the importance of introducing a new literary language that would serve the purpose of shaking off the linguistic conservatism and mannerism that had burdened the Italian novel, as she took issue with a '[...] smania generale di opporre un' Europa colta a un' America barbara' (Pivano 1997: 338).⁴³ Her interest in new and disruptive literary forms would peak with the encounter with the Beat Generation, resulting in an operation of cultural dissemination of little known and controversial writers, such as Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs, primarily through mainstream media and bigger publishing firms.

2.3 The mentorship of Cesare Pavese: the legitimization of the emerging translator

Together with her mother, in 1943, Fernanda Pivano fled from Turin because of the bombardments of the war. They moved to Mondovì, a small town south of Turin. Her father's financial activity had collapsed, and the family was facing economic distress. During this period, Fernanda Pivano had an extensive correspondence with Pavese and kept translating.⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, Pavese exerted great influence on her, encouraging her to translate, as can be seen in the fact that many of his letters to Pivano ended with line: 'Cara Fernanda, traduca, traduca, traduca'.⁴⁵ Pavese's influence on Pivano's initial trajectory had considerable weight and represents a crucial interaction that informed Pivano's habitus and what Sela-Sheffy (2014) calls 'knowledge related to the job' of translation. Pavese acted both as a critical contact that introduced her to the broader anti-fascist network of Italian intellectuals and publishers revolving around Einaudi, and as a legitimising figure within the same network, transferring part of his symbolic

that appeared in the magazine *Lettere. Rassegna critica di edizioni* (1946) and to an interview to Giorgio De Chirico, which appeared in a 'magazine which is considered one of the most respectable in Italy' ['una rivista che passa per una delle più serie d'Italia' (Pivano 1997: 337)]. At this stage, I was not able to identify the magazine Pivano refers to.

⁴² 'Trees need to be pruned if we one does not want them to die. And, sometimes, to keep them alive grafting was necessary, adding new, strong, and exuberant sap to the old one, now weak because of too much nobility [...]'.
⁴³ '[...] general trend [that] opposes a cultured Europe to a primitive America'.

⁴⁴ Correspondence partly published in Pavese 1966a and Pavese 1966b.

⁴⁵ 'Dear Fernanda, translate, translate, translate'

capital to Pivano's agency by endorsing her work. Furthermore, under Pavese's urging, she completed a translation and annotations to a book (probably *La Religieuse*, 1796) by French philosopher and writer Denis Diderot, to be published by Einaudi. In a letter sent on the 6th of December 1942, Pavese wrote:

[L]a esorto a Diderot e al '700: con calma ed energia, non c'è fretta: prima che stampiamo libri qui nella nuova sede ci vorranno mesi'.⁴⁶

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano
06 December 1942
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milano

Unfortunately, the manuscript of her translation was lost by one of Einaudi's employees, who forgot it on a train (Pivano 2008: 62-63).

Pivano's first translation was published in 1943. *The Anthology of Spoon River* came out for Einaudi as soon as the censorship authorised it. The book was published with the Italian title changed into *L'antologia di S. River*, probably to trick the censorship into thinking that it referred to a saint. Cesare Pavese announced the good news to Fernanda through a letter dated 7th of January 1943:

Cara Fernanda, l'inverosimile è avvenuto. Hanno autorizzato Lee Masters. Siccome non ho ancora notizie del dattiloscritto, la prego di recuperare il suo, a Torino, e spedirmelo raccomandata espresso. Credo che da oggi le limitazioni per le spedizioni di manoscritti e stampe siano abrogate [...] vorrei averlo presto poiché [...] temo di essere chiamato sotto le armi ai primi di febbraio, e vorrei che il libro fosse pronto per allora.⁴⁷

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano
07 January 1943
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milano

⁴⁶ 'I suggest you consider Diderot and the 18th Century: take your time and put all your energy into this, there is no rush: it will take months before we will be able to print books here at our new headquarters'.

Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 06/12/1942.

⁴⁷ 'Dear Fernanda, something incredible has happened. Lee Masters has been authorised for publication. Since I don't know anything about the typewritten document, I need to ask you to collect yours in Turin and send it to me by priority registered post. I think that, as of today, limitations on shipping of manuscripts and prints have been lifted [...] I would like to have it as soon as possible because [...] I am afraid I will be called to arms at the beginning of February, and I would like to have the volume be ready by then'.

Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 07/01/1943.

The translation had to go through an editing phase led by Pavese, who was also worried that the authorisation for publication might be revoked by the censorship.⁴⁸ In the meantime, Pivano was still working on the translation of the volume by Diderot. After receiving the manuscript of the translation with the annotations, Pavese had the following comments on Pivano's work:

Cara Fernanda, ho ricevuto Diderot e la commovente lettera che l'accompagna. Dico commovente perché per la prima volta ci si sente il desiderio di uscire dall'ignoranza e di fare qualcosa di grande nel mondo della cultura. Le note al Did. sono veramente eroiche e le ho passate con religione a Muscetta che lunedì mi riferirà sulla questione ma ha già capito che sono sacre [...].⁴⁹

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano
03 April 1943
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

The correspondence exchanged between Pivano and Pavese shows that the Italian intellectual used the cultural capital he owned and his positioning within the Italian literary field to endorse and promote Pivano's work. Through the feedback provided to the young translator, he seemed to be legitimising the quality of her work and her progress as an independent actor within the literary field (as shown in the excerpt above). At the same time, his positive remarks were often followed by advice and suggestions on how to improve her translating skills or how to build a stronger professional profile, as exemplified in the following letter, where the positive feedback regarding the translation of the *Spoon River Anthology*, comes together with the encouragement to further her study of the English language:

[Q]ui Spoon River piace a tutti, tanto che io ne farò una recensione su un nuovo giornale letterario [...] Fern studi l'inglese, lo studi, lo studi altrimenti non troverà l'impiego'.⁵⁰

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano
22 April 1943
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

⁴⁸ 'Per S.R. farò tutto io qui, ma non si illuda troppo presto perché vorranno vedere le bozze e potranno ritornare sulla decisione' ('I will take care of S.R. but do not get your hopes up, they will want to see the drafts and they might change their mind'). (Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano, 11th January 1943, Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan)

⁴⁹ 'Dear Fernanda, I have received the Diderot and the moving letter attached. I say moving because for the first time I can feel the desire to come out of the ignorance and achieve something big in the cultural world. The notes to the Did. are seriously heroic and I have passed them religiously on to Muscetta, who will give me his feedback on Monday morning, but he has already understood that they are sacred [...]'.
Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 03/04/1943.

⁵⁰ '[H]ere everybody likes *Spoon River*, to the point that I will write a review that will be published in a new literary magazine [...] Fernanda, study the English language, study it, study it otherwise you'll never find a job'. 'Fern' is the nickname with which Pavese called Pivano. Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 22/04/1943

Pavese relayed also positive feedback coming from reviews published in magazines and journals and from relevant people on the literary scene. As an example, in a letter sent on the 18th of May 1943,⁵¹ Pavese wrote, referring to the first – and apparently good – review of the *Anthology* in a newspaper:

Cara Fernanda, ci sarà ben altro sui giornali. Gigli ha rotto il ghiaccio e adesso gli altri oseranno parlare. Io [...] mai gli avrei chiesto di recensirci. È andata così, ed è andata bene. [...] Pensi che il giudice più tremendo e autorevole che abbia la Casa, ha detto che Spoon R. è sinora il più bel volume dell'Universale.⁵²

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano
18 (May) 1943
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

In the excerpt above, Pavese seems keen to tell Pivano that the first positive review that appeared in a newspaper was good and completely spontaneous (in other words, not connected to his interference),⁵³ and that a prominent intellectual such as (arguably) Giulio Einaudi, described here as the most 'tremendo e autorevole' judge of the publishing house, had endorsed the translation as the finest volume collected in the series *Biblioteca Universale*.

The book series was created in 1941, during a meeting which saw together intellectuals and literary critics such as Giulio Einaudi, Leone Ginzburg, Cesare Pavese, Carlo Muscetta and Mario Alicata. Between 1942 and 1943, 41 volumes came out in this series, collecting both Italian and foreign authors. The objective of *Biblioteca Universale* was to make available to the wider public great classics from the past, but also new literary phenomena from within and beyond national borders (see Mangoni 1999: 108). In a second letter, dated May 25th 1943, Pavese informs Pivano of Americanist Emilio Cecchi's opinion on her translation of the *Spoon River Anthology*: 'sono stato da Cecchi e ha lodato molto la traduzione di *Spoon River*: è quindi certo che questo

⁵¹ Exact month is not specified on the letter, but given the document's collocation in the archive folder, it was probably sent in May 1943.

⁵² 'Dear Fernanda, many more things will appear on newspapers. Gigli was only the first one and now also others will dare to talk. I [...] would have never asked him to review us. It went like this, and it went well. [...] Think that the most authoritative and scary judge of the publishing house [Einaudi] has said that Spoon R. is the finest volume in the Universale [series]'. Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 28/(05)/1943.

⁵³ I was unable to find further details about the first review of *Spoon River* mentioned by Pavese. During those years, Lorenzo Gigli, wrote for the newspaper *La gazzetta del popolo* and the fortnightly periodical *Primato*. The 1943 issues of *Primato* are available online through Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma at <http://digitale.bnc.roma.sbn.it/tecadigitale/riviste/CFI0362171>, but do not include articles by Gigli on the translation of the *Spoon River Anthology*. Therefore, the first review Pavese mentions in the letter to Pivano was probably published in *La gazzetta del popolo*. For this newspaper, Gigli edited the 'terza pagina' (the cultural section) and the literary insert 'Diorama letterario'.

libro la renderà celebre' (25/05/1943, Pavese, 1966a p. 702).⁵⁴ Pavese's support and words of appreciation were undoubtedly of enormous importance to Fernanda Pivano, and arguably functioned as a precious legitimation of her cultural activity, coming from one of the most authoritative voices in the Italian intellectual milieu of the time. At the same time, it seems that Pavese saw a certain room for improvement in Pivano's English skills. Although this was a role that most editors would have performed, it may be that Pavese worked to edit and improve her translations with a dose of extra care, given the fondness he had for the young translator. In a letter sent on 3 April 1943, he wrote:

Certo che sono contento di lei, e più contento sarò se adesso si metterà a leggere e imparerà a fondo l'inglese [...]' ⁵⁵

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano

03 April 1943

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

In February 1943, Pavese had prepared the contract for the translation of *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, published in the US in 1929 by Scribner: 'Ho fatto il contratto per *Addio alle armi*; spero che martedì Einaudi lo firmi, e allora partirà' (Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano, February 1943, Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan).⁵⁶ Pivano's and Pavese's plan to translate and publish this particular novel by Hemingway was very ambitious since the works of the American author were highly unpopular in the eyes of the Fascist regime, primarily because of the author's 'open anti-Fascism and negative depictions of the Italian army in *A Farewell to Arms*' (Bonsaver 2007: 227). Until that moment, no novel by Ernest Hemingway had received permission for publication by the Fascist Ministry of Popular Culture, and the works of the American author that had appeared in translation were limited to short stories that appeared scattered in periodicals and never as an entire volume. Hemingway's short stories had appeared in publications such as *L'ambrosiano* and *L'italiano*, and three of them were published in Elio Vittorini's *Americana*, with two of them personally translated by Vittorini himself. It is interesting to note that Vittorini, in the translation of the short story 'The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio' (from 1933, translated into Italian as 'Monaca e messicani, la radio' ['Nun and Mexicans, the

⁵⁴ 'I saw Cecchi who praised strongly the translation of *Spoon River*: I have no doubt that this book will make you famous'.

⁵⁵ 'Of course I am happy about your work, but I will be even happier if you will read and learn English thoroughly'. Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 3/4/1943

⁵⁶ 'I have prepared the contract for *Addio alle armi*; I hope that Einaudi will sign it by Tuesday, then we will start'.

Radio', initially published as 'Give Us a Prescription, Doctor']'), decided to omit a sentence which described Italian and German nationalism as opium of the people: 'Vittorini was by then experienced enough to know what could and could not pass through the censors' net' (Bonsaver 2007: 228).⁵⁷

For these reasons, when the SS found the contract for the translation in the old Einaudi headquarters in 1945, and misread Pivano's signature, decided initially to arrest her brother, Franco, who was still living in Turin. At that time, Fernanda was a teaching assistant at the university, and she travelled every morning from Mondovì to teach pedagogy in Turin. One day, she was told that her brother had been taken away by the Nazi police. Pivano ran to the SS headquarters and managed to talk to an interpreter who explained that Franco Pivano was being held because his name was found on the contract for the translation of Hemingway's book. She showed the officers her badge as a translator – which she had received from the publisher Utet – and took responsibility for the contract. Her brother was set free and Pivano questioned for the whole day:

Avevo adottato la tecnica carbonara di negare tutto; di non conoscere nessuno, di non avere idea di dove fosse finita la casa editrice che pareva svanita nel nulla, di chiedere come potevano credere che una ragazzina come me fosse una nemica della patria gloriosa. La crisi era arrivata quando l'interprete aveva cercato di farmi sostituire alla parola *Übersetzerin* (traduttrice) quella che in quel momento mi avrebbe portata in un campo di concentramento, *Verlager* (editore) [...]. Mi avevano lasciata andare in semi-libertà, avvertendomi che sarei stata sempre scortata da un loro incaricato dovunque andassi e che ogni notte l'appartamento di Mondovì dove ero sfollata con la mia famiglia sarebbe stato perquisito (Pivano 2008: 64-65).⁵⁸

This close encounter with the SS officers had horrible consequences for Pivano. She was kept under special surveillance for a long time, her apartment searched in the middle of the night by SS and fascist officers who dragged her to their headquarters, questioned her and locked her up in a cell, threatening to sexually and physically abuse her (Pivano 2008: 64-68). *A Farewell to Arms* was eventually published in 1949 by Mondadori with the title *Addio alle armi* and was

⁵⁷ The omitted sentence is: 'And now economics is the opium of the people; along with patriotism the opium of the people in Italy and Germany' (Hemingway 1961: 53).

⁵⁸ 'I had adopted the *Carbonari* technique of denying everything; I said that I didn't know anybody, that I had no idea about where the publisher was, since it seemed it had vanished. I asked how they could even think that a young girl like me could be an enemy of the glorious country. Things got complicated when the interpreter tried to make me substitute to the word *Übersetzerin* (translator) the word that would have sent me to a concentration camp, *Verlager* (editor) [...]. They let me go in partial freedom, and they warned me that from that moment I would have been followed by one of their officers and that the apartment in Mondovì, where I had fled with my family, would be searched every night'.

preceded by the publication of *Death in the Afternoon*, published by Einaudi in 1947, with the title *Morte nel pomeriggio*, also translated by Pivano.

Pivano's translations of Hemingway's novels would mark one of the most important steps in her career on many levels. First of all, her trajectory as a cultural broker benefitted enormously from the translation of novels which had accumulated a high degree of symbolic capital in their source literary field. Translators, in fact, inherit the symbolic capital that is accrued by a work of art in its source system, and they consequently submit the text to the logics of reception, recognition and appreciation of the target system. Secondly, the close friendship which developed between Pivano and Hemingway secured Pivano the status as Hemingway's official translator, with the writer expressly requesting the publisher to have her translate his own works, ensuring that the translations were not tasked to other translators.⁵⁹

After Pavese, a second, important figure in informing Fernanda Pivano's career as a translator was her mother, Mary Smallwood. Together, they worked on the translation of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) when they moved to Casale Monferrato in 1945, a small town in Piedmont, where Pivano had started teaching in a high school towards the end of the war. They found a place to live in a hotel which was partly occupied by Nazi officers, and they barricaded themselves inside their small room. They both sat at the typewriter translating *The Last of the Mohicans*: 'patetico sogno di un eroe senza macchia e senza paura' (Pivano 2008: 69).⁶⁰ Pivano's relationship with Pavese was still very close: in fact, in the same year, the writer visited both Pivano and her mother at the hotel, trying carefully not to be seen by the Nazis. Pivano recounts in her diary that he read through a page of the translation, nodded, and then gave her a lesson about James Fenimore Cooper (Pivano 2008: 69). The fact that Pavese had been acting as mentor for Fernanda Pivano becomes extremely clear in a letter that he sent to her in February 1946, after he finally received the foreword to the volume by Diderot:

Il cordone ombelicale è veramente tagliato. La prefazione è bella e "ha stile" – il giudizio non è soltanto mio. Il maestro non ha più niente da fare. Come semplice revisore attende il ms. col testo per dare l'ultima occhiata. Poi, buona fortuna nei mari della vita.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See correspondence between Hemingway and Mondadori: May 15th 1952 and June 3rd 1952 in Fondazione Arnaldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnaldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Ernest Hemingway.

⁶⁰ 'We put a table against the door and on the table two chairs. We sat on the floor with the typewriter on the bed and we started translating *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper, pathetic dream of a fearless hero'.

⁶¹ 'The umbilical cord has been cut off. The foreword is beautiful and it is 'stylish' – I am not the only one saying that. The master has nothing else to do. As a simple editor he will wait for the manuscript with the text to take one last look. After that, good luck in the seas of life'.

Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 02/02/1946.

Cesare Pavese a Fernanda Pivano
02 February 1946
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milano

In the letter, Pavese acknowledged the maturity reached by Pivano in her work – not necessarily as a translator, but as a cultural disseminator – and states that he is not the only one to think so. It is interesting to note that, from this moment on, he defines himself as ‘semplice revisore’, hinting to a heavier contribution to Pivano’s works in the past. A few months later, he would confirm his thoughts on Pivano’s intellectual and professional growth in another letter, sent in August of the same year, where he commented on a piece written by Pivano on Hemingway’s *Death in the Afternoon*:

Se può farle dell’altro piacere, sappia che mi piace molto quello che ha scritto su *Death in the Afternoon* e in genere credo che stia facendosi quella cosa bizzarra che è “uno stile”. Insomma, sul punto della sua formazione non mi ero sbagliato. Che vuol dire, lavori. E non si ficchi in testa, come un tempo, che queste cose gliele dica per fini inconfessabili. Lei sa come la penso ora e che non ho niente da guadagnarci.⁶²

Cesare Pavese to Fernanda Pivano
28 August 1946
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

The two letters depict a close-knit professional and personal relationship between the two. Of course, Pavese’s influence on Pivano’s initial trajectory had a considerable weight, as he acted both as a fundamental contact that introduced her to the wider network of Italian intellectuals and publishers, with whom later on Fernanda Pivano would interact, but also as a legitimating figure within the same network, transferring part of his symbolic capital to the agency of Fernanda Pivano by endorsing her work. The human and professional closeness between Pivano and Pavese lasted until the very end of Pavese’s life, when he took his own life in Turin, in 1950. Pivano acknowledged the relevance of Pavese’s presence in her life countless times during her career, and links the death of the Italian intellectual with the ‘end of the most important chapter of her life’: ‘Cinque anni dopo, l’ultima volta che l’ho visto, che gli ho parlato, mi avrebbe fatto, camminando in via Cernaia a Torino, una lezione su Gertrude Stein; ma non sono riuscita a

⁶² ‘I hope you will be pleased to hear that I appreciate what you wrote about *Death in the Afternoon* and, in general, I believe that you are acquiring that odd thing which is called “a style”. I wasn’t wrong about your formation. This means: work. And don’t believe, like you did in the past, that I am telling you these things because of some unspeakable aims. You know now what I think and that I have nothing to gain from this’.

Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, Pavese Originali 28/08/1946.

ricordarla: di quell'incontro mi sono rimaste soltanto la disperazione, l'angoscia, la palpabile realtà della fine del capitolo più importante della mia vita'⁶³ (Pivano 2008: 69).

The centrality of the social tie established with Cesare Pavese in shaping Fernanda Pivano's initial professional trajectory can be better understood if analysed through the lens of a network theory of social capital. According to Borgatti and Halgin's (2011) definition, a network 'consists of a set of actors or nodes along with a set of ties of a specified type (such as friendship) that link them. The ties interconnect through shared end points to form paths that indirectly link nodes that are not directly tied' (Borgatti and Halgin 2011: 1169). From this perspective, Pavese's mentorship represented a crucial gateway to set up further social ties with established publishers and intellectuals within the Italian book market. The creation of social ties within a network, results in the acquisition, shift and accumulation of social capital. The notion of social capital (used by numerous researchers in the field of organizational sociology) can be explained through Lin's (1999) formulation: social capital is an 'investment in social relations with expected returns' (Lin 1999: 30). Networks and social ties offer a series of embedded social resources that can be accessed by the agents who are part of such networks, and that can subsequently 'gain access to embedded resources to enhance expected returns of instrumental or expressive actions' (Lin 1999: 39). As observed by La Penna (2018), investigating the embeddedness of an individual within a global network of relations, is useful to identify how they 'develop their decision-making processes in a social, cultural and economic context' (La Penna 2018: 129), thus shaping their professional trajectory and habitus. In the case of the social tie with Cesare Pavese, Pivano's returns were primarily instrumental actions, that is the accumulation of resources not previously owned by the individual, and which are mainly of the financial, social and political kind.⁶⁴ In the light of these considerations on network theory and social capital, it is easy to observe how the social tie with Cesare Pavese benefitted Pivano in several ways, particularly from the social and financial point of view. Firstly, as demonstrated by the events connected to Pivano's interest in and then decision to translate the *Spoon River Anthology*, the sustained contact with Pavese allowed her to access information of the utmost cultural quality mediated by Pavese's intellectual status. Secondly, working as editor for Einaudi, Pavese was able to facilitate her contracts of collaboration with the publishing house. Lastly, the position of mentee of one of Italy's most eminent intellectuals, and the symbolic and

⁶³ 'Five years later, the last time I saw him, the last time I talked to him, he gave me a lecture on Gertrude Stein while walking in Via Cernaia, in Turin. I could never remember that lecture. The only things I can remember from that meeting, are only the desperation, the anguish, the palpable reality of the end of the most important chapter of my life'

⁶⁴ Expressive actions – which refer to the conservation of already owned resources – can be physical and mental health, and life satisfaction. See Lin 1999: 40.

cultural capital associated to him, ensured the recognition of the legitimacy of Fernanda Pivano's cultural engagement and of her outputs. Moreover, thanks to Pavese's mentorship, Pivano was able to earn fundamental knowledge connected to literature and literary research, but also learn practical skills in terms of translation strategies and approaches.

3. After *Spoon River*: Ernest Hemingway and the collaboration with Mondadori (1945 – 1955)

3.1 The Mondadori literary circle: *salotto letterario*

After publishing the translation of Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*, between 1945 and 1950 Pivano published fourteen translations from French and English. Nine of these were well-known works by American authors,⁶⁵ including Ernest Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* (published by Einaudi in 1947). After *L'illusion philosophique* (1936) by the existentialist Swiss philosopher Jeanne Hersch, published by Einaudi with the title *L'illusione della filosofia* in 1942, Pivano translated, between 1945 and 1950:

- 1945 Dickens C., *Barnaby Rudge* (Frassinelli), [*Barnaby Rudge*, 1841].
 Locke J., *Pensieri sull'educazione* (Paravia), [*Thoughts about Education*, 1693].
- 1946 Cooper J.F., *L'ultimo dei Mohicani* (UTET), [*The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826].
- 1947 Anderson S., *Storia di me e dei miei racconti* (Einaudi), [*A Story Teller's Story*, 1924].
 Hemingway E., *Morte nel pomeriggio* (Einaudi) [*Death in the Afternoon*, 1932].
- 1948 Goudge E., *Il delfino verde: il segreto di un amore disperato* (Bompiani), [*Green Dolphin Country*, 1944].
 Queneau R., *Il pantano* (Einaudi), [*Le Chiendent*, 1933].
- 1949 Fitzgerald F.S., *Tenera è la notte* (Einaudi), [*Tender is the night*, 1934].
 Wright R., *I figli dello zio Tom* (Einaudi), [*Uncle Tom's Children*, 1938].
 Hemingway E., *Addio alle Armi* (Mondadori), [*A Farewell to Arms*, 1929].
 Eisenhower D., *Crociata in Europa* (Mondadori), [*Crusade in Europe*, 1948].
- 1950 Fitzgerald F.S., *Il grande Gatsby* (Mondadori), [*The Great Gatsby*, 1922].
 Demby W., *Festa a Beetlecreek* (Mondadori), [*Beetlecreek*, 1950].

In addition to these, Pivano translated a number of works which were never published: Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Richard Wright's essay

⁶⁵ *L'ultimo dei Mohicani* by James Fenimore Cooper (UTET, 1946) [*The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826], *Storia di me e dei miei racconti* by Sherwood Anderson (Einaudi, 1947) [*A Story Teller's Story*, 1924], *Morte nel pomeriggio* by Ernest Hemingway (Einaudi, 1947) [*Death in the Afternoon*, 1932], *Addio alle armi* by Ernest Hemingway (Mondadori 1949) [*A Farewell to Arms*, 1929], *Tenera è la notte* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald (Einaudi, 1949) [*Tender is the Night*, 1934], *I figli dello zio Tom* by Richard Wright (Mondadori, 1949) [*Uncle Tom's Children*, 1938], *Crociata in Europa* by Dwight Eisenhower (Mondadori, 1949) [*Crusade in Europe*, 1948], *Il grande Gatsby* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald (Mondadori, 1950) [*The Great Gatsby*, 1922], *Festa a Beetlecreek* by William Demby (Mondadori, 1950) [*Beetlecreek*, 1950].

on black American history *Twelve Million Black Voices*, Gabriel Marcel's *Être et Avoir* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (a translation which would later be published, in 2007, by Einaudi). During this period, alongside her activity as a translator, Pivano also started a zealous operation disseminating and popularising American culture, writing articles about American authors in a newspaper such as *Sempre Avanti*, a temporary edition of *Avanti!* (1896-1993), a publication connected to the Partito Socialista of Giuseppe Saragat. Pivano claims that the first article that she wrote was about William Saroyan (translated into Italian in 1940 by Elio Vittorini) for the journal *L'intesa* in 1946:⁶⁶ 'La rivista *L'intesa* mi aveva chiesto di parlare dell'americanismo di William Saroyan, che Elio Vittorini aveva fatto entrare nel cuore a molti di noi durante la guerra [...] William Saroyan era, [...], diventato di moda, specialmente presso i giovani, e molti miei coetanei mi chiedevano notizie' (Pivano 2008: 76-77).⁶⁷

As the list above demonstrates, Pivano's first translations for the Milan-based publisher Mondadori - *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway and Dwight Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* - came out in 1949. The relationship with the publisher started in 1947, when Pivano managed to set foot in the exclusive Italian literary circle of Alberto Mondadori, his *salotto letterario*: 'Alberto Mondadori aveva cominciato (la prima volta credo sia stata il 24 maggio 1947) a invitarmi ai suoi incontri letterari settimanali in casa sua' (Pivano 2008: 118).⁶⁸ Pivano's first contact with Mondadori happened because of her role as translator of Edgar Lee Masters and of her interest in and work on Gertrude Stein.⁶⁹ As she reports in the foreword to her translation of Gertrude Stein's *Everybody's autobiography*, published in Italy by Laura Lepetit's publishing house La Tartaruga in 1976 with the title *Autobiografia di tutti*:

Poi Federico Veneziani ci accompagnò da Alberto Mondadori che ogni tanto in quel dopoguerra faceva nella sua casa lussuosa serate a soggetto facendo parlare su un tema un amico e poi facendo discutere gli altri; e subito sul pianoforte a coda che nessuno suonava vidi una copia dell'*Autobiografia di tutti*, come ritrovare una amica imprevista, che subito mi liberò dal disagio di ritrovarmi fra tanti letterati ignoti ed ignari. Non ricordo di cosa si parlasse quella sera; prima

⁶⁶ Corroborating evidence of this is not extant: the article is not reported in the appendix of the volume *Diari* and I was unable to access the publication.

⁶⁷ 'The journal *L'intesa* asked me to write about the Americanism of Saroyan, an author that Elio Vittorini had made dear to many people during the war [...] William Saroyan, [...], had become trendy, especially among the youth, and many people of my age asked me about him'.

⁶⁸ 'Alberto Mondadori had started – the first time I think was on 24 May 1947 – to invite me to the weekly literary meetings held at his house'.

⁶⁹ 'Poi lessi Gertrude Stein [...]: passai mesi e mesi a raccogliere dati e notizie, e continuai a riscrivere questo pezzo; che andava continuamente aggiornato, perché alla morte di Gertrude Stein incominciò il diluvio delle sue opere postume. Nel '46 Alice Toklas mi diede perfino una bibliografia della Stein' (Pivano 1961: 177).

della fine si parlò dell'*Antologia di Spoon River* per la quale più o meno ero lì (Pivano in Stein 2021: 17).⁷⁰

Subsequently, Pivano was asked by Alberto Mondadori to translate Gertrude Stein's *Everybody's Autobiography* and prepare a preface to the translation: 'Alberto mi chiese di ritornare per parlare di Gertrude Stein [...] e [...] di tradurre quel libro e di usare quel che avevo detto come prefazione italiana' (Pivano in Stein 2021: 17-8).⁷¹ Although Mondadori never published Pivano's translation of *Everybody's Autobiography* (which was eventually published by La Tartaruga in 1976), the task of translating Stein's work appears to be the first job commissioned to her by the Milan-based publisher, in the wake of the fortune obtained by her translation of the *Spoon River Anthology*, as also observed by Laura Lepetit:

Caro lettore, cara lettrice, quello che hai per le mani è un libro prezioso, pieno di emozioni. La prima emozione è stata quella di una giovanissima Fernanda Pivano che, all'inizio della sua brillante e lunga carriera, vide *Everybody's Autobiography* in casa di Alberto Mondadori e se ne innamorò subito. Mondadori le chiese poi di tradurlo, dopo il successo dell'*Antologia di Spoon River* tradotta appunto da Fernanda (Lepetit in Stein 2021: 10).⁷²

It is apparent that the cultural and symbolic capital accrued by her translation of Edgar Lee Masters's anthology and the popularity it obtained, were fundamental in securing Pivano the opportunity to create new contacts with intellectuals and other key figures in the Italian literary field. In a continuous process of accumulation and transformation of capital, the derived social capital facilitated the establishment of a long (and complex) relationship of collaboration with Italy's biggest publishing house. During the literary meetings held at Alberto Mondadori's house, Pivano had the opportunity to come into contact with important figures in the literary landscape, such as literary directors, editors and intellectuals like Remo Cantoni, Elio Vittorini (already editor at Einaudi) and Vittorio Sereni.

⁷⁰ 'Federico Veneziani brought us to Alberto Mondadori's luxurious house where he, after the war, used to organise theme-nights where a friend was asked to talk about a specific theme, later discussed by the others. Immediately, I spotted on the piano that nobody was playing a copy of *L'autobiografia di tutti*. It was as if seeing an unexpected friend, something which freed me from the embarrassment of being among so many unknown and unknowing intellectuals. I do not remember what was the theme that time but, before the end of the evening, we talked about the *Antologia di Spoon River* which was sort of the reason I was there'.

⁷¹ 'Alberto asked me to come back to talk about Gertrude Stein [...] and [...] to translate that book and to use what I had said as a preface to the Italian version'.

⁷² 'Dear reader, the book you are holding in your hands is a book full of emotions. The first one, is the one of a young Fernanda Pivano whom, at the start of her long and successful career, saw *Everybody's Autobiography* in Alberto Mondadori's house and immediately fell in love with it. Mondadori asked her to translate the book, after the success of the *Antologia di Spoon River*, translated by Fernanda'.

3.2 The encounter with Ernest Hemingway

Besides creating new, important contacts, Pivano was establishing herself as an expert in American literature. In this role, she frequently took up the task of advocating in favour of American authors who were harshly criticized by the contemporary conservative-catholic establishment. Amongst this establishment, American literature was often defined as barbaric and seen as culturally less valid when compared to the literature which was rooted in Europe. In 1946, the monthly publication *Lettere. Rassegna critica di edizioni* (Milan, Edizioni San Paolo) offered a critical review of a series of authors, including Sherwood Anderson, Mario Soldati, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Elio Vittorini and Ernest Hemingway. Pivano reports that the review of *The Sun also Rises* by Hemingway stated: ‘Una donnetta che vaga in avventure zingaresche tra una frotta di Americani e di Inglesi sfaccendati, tornati a godere l’Europa che avevano conosciuto durante la Guerra mondiale 1915-18. Narrazione scipita, stilisticamente orrenda: ma, si dice, in Italia non era ancora stata tradotta per ragioni politiche: e questo oggi è sufficiente passaporto per tante brutture. Escluso’.⁷³ The same criticism was made of Sherwood Anderson’s *Many Marriages* (originally published in 1922 by B.W. Huebsch, and then in Italian by Mondadori in 1945 with the title *Molti matrimoni*).⁷⁴

In her role as advocate, Fernanda Pivano engaged in militant journalism, publishing several articles that took issue with the dismissive attitude of Catholic-inspired publications towards American authors such as Hemingway and Anderson. Contrary to those who dismissed Hemingway as an ‘enfant du siècle’ and a ‘débauché’ artist (Pivano 2008: 82), Pivano stressed Hemingway’s development as a writer, underlining his connections with European – in particular Spanish – culture and addressing the social matters raised in his books. In the article ‘Ancora una volta Hemingway’ (published in *Sempre Avanti!* on 20 October 1946), for example, she wrote the following:

[L]a prosa di Ernest Hemingway non ha soltanto lo scintillio impressionista [...] si potrebbe dire che Ernest Hemingway rappresenta il passaggio da Pierre Renoir a Paul Cézanne; nel senso che Pierre Renoir dà una somma di sensazioni mentre Paul Cézanne cerca “quella” sensazione. [...] Forse è quello che dà alla prosa di Hemingway quel senso di faticosa ricerca che si rivela

⁷³ *Lettere. Rassegna critica di edizioni*, 1.1 (1946), p. 9. Also, with a few inconsistencies, in Pivano 2008: 78. ‘A woman that wanders around in vagabond-like adventures among flocks of lazy Brits and Americans who had come back to enjoy the Europe that they had known during the First World War 1915-1918. Insipid narration, stylistically horrible: but, it is said, never translated into Italian for political reasons: this is, today, often the passport for many ugly things. Rejected’.

⁷⁴ *Lettere*. p. 10.

in una forma descrittiva da un lato e dall'altro fluttuante di leggerezza (now in Pivano 2008: 80).⁷⁵

Pivano argued that the reception and understanding of Hemingway in Italy went through two phases. Initially, the avant-garde cultural elite praised him before his works could go through Fascist censorship, but after Hemingway was published, the same cultural elite was dismissing him and his authorship, which they deemed outdated and unacceptable.⁷⁶ Emblematic of this phenomenon is the fact that Hemingway became central in the dispute on the relationship between culture and politics, and on the authors' autonomy, that arose between Elio Vittorini and exponents of the PCI, among which its leader Palmiro Togliatti. The dispute, that took place on the pages of *Il Politecnico* between 1946 and 1947, shows how, as a result of the new, post-war geopolitical situation, the PCI rejected Hemingway as a revolutionary author because of the reactionary, bourgeois and individualistic features of his American literature, as opposed to the new culture coming from the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ As also observed by Fernandez in 1969, the controversy connected to Hemingway revolved around two main aspects: '[s]i deve condannare Hemingway per via delle sue idee politiche o lo si deve recuperare perché la sua arte è rivoluzionaria? È da considerarsi come uno scrittore decadente o, al contrario, come un autore d'avanguardia?' (Fernandez 1969: 97).⁷⁸ Pivano engaged in a debate around Hemingway's literature that unravelled in a series of articles published in *L'Unità* and *Sempre Avanti!* [the articles that appeared in *L'Unità*, with the titles 'Fernanda è bizzosa (ma sa l'inglese)' (03 November 1946, Piedmontese edition) and 'Hors de la ligne' (14 November 1946), were anonymous].⁷⁹ The debate generated by these articles took the form of a problematically gendered narrative with the publication of the piece 'Fernanda è bizzosa (ma sa l'inglese)', in which Pivano

⁷⁵ 'Ernest Hemingway's prose not only has that impressionist sparkle [...] one could argue that Hemingway represents the shift from Pierre Renoir to Paul Cézanne, in the sense that Pierre Renoir sums sensations up while Paul Cézanne searches for 'that particular' sensation [...] Maybe it is precisely this that gives Hemingway's prose that feeling of laborious research which results, on the one hand, in a descriptive form and, on the other, in fluctuating lightness'.

⁷⁶ 'Ma la storia di Ernest Hemingway in Italia è strana. Prima di scavalcare il fascismo in nome di quella che allora si chiamava democrazia e adesso si chiama, pare, "feroce e disinvolto capitalismo", tutta l'avanguardia italiana inneggiava a Hemingway: nove volte su dieci senza averlo letto. La stessa avanguardia, incoraggiata adesso dalle quattro o cinque traduzioni tagliuzzate o per motivi propagandistici (o disciplina di partito che sia) o per mediocrità autentica, se la prende con Hemingway e dichiara che è ora di finirla e così via' (Pivano 2008: 82).

⁷⁷ On this see: Alicata 1946; Togliatti 1946, Vittorini 1946, 1947. See also Antonelli 2015: 238-247.

⁷⁸ '[I]s Hemingway to be condemned because of his political ideas or does he need to be salvaged because his art is revolutionary? Is he to be considered a decadent writer or, on the contrary, an avant-garde writer?'

⁷⁹ The articles are: 'Questo è Hemingway' [This is Hemingway] appeared in *L'Unità*, October 24th 1946, anonymous; 'Hemingway e l'avanguardia' [This is Hemingway], appeared in *Sempre Avanti!*, October 27th 1946, by Fernanda Pivano; 'Ad un antifemminista' [To an Antifeminist], appeared in *Sempre Avanti!*, November 10th 1946; 'Fernanda è bizzosa (ma sa l'inglese)' [Fernanda is sulky (but knows English)] and 'Hors de la ligne', in *L'Unità*, November 3rd and November 14th 1946, both anonymous. Except for 'Ad un antifemminista', these articles are now collected in Pivano 2008: 79-86.

– addressed by her first name throughout the whole article – was advised not to venture beyond her field of competence (literature) by talking about politics: ‘Soltanto fa pena che una donna colta si abbandoni ai luoghi comuni di tanti politicanti da strapazzo’ (Pivano 2008: 86).⁸⁰ Her translations and promotion of Hemingway, combined with the close professional and personal relationship that she subsequently established with the 1945 Nobel Prize laureate for literature, represent a further step in the process of Pivano’s accumulation of symbolic capital.

Fernanda Pivano’s encounter with Ernest Hemingway, on 10 October 1948 in Cortina d’Ampezzo, was a fundamental event in her life as a translator. Upon hearing the story of the translation of *A Farewell to Arms*, that resulted in Pivano being interrogated by SS officers, Hemingway invited her to meet him in Cortina. They immediately established an excellent relationship, which would last until the end of Hemingway’s life: ‘Era cominciata così, quel 10 ottobre 1948, un’amicizia che è durata fino alla sua morte e per me durerà fino alla mia’ (Pivano 2008: 199).⁸¹ Pivano’s translation of *A Farewell to Arms* was greatly appreciated. It was also endorsed by Arnoldo Mondadori who, in a letter dated 9 December 1948, wrote:

[H]o ricevuto e letto attentamente le prime 75 pagine di Addio alle Armi e qualche osservazione te l’ha già portato Ettore. Inutile farti i complimenti per la parte riuscita al 100%. Ed è certamente la maggior parte - poiché le tue qualità non hanno bisogno di ulteriori approvazioni. Piuttosto, poiché hai fatto uno sforzo assolutamente fuori dal comune nel tradurre un simile libro in un mese, ritengo ti sia utile, e utile a Hemingway, ed a me, farti le osservazioni che man mano ho appuntato [...].⁸²

Alberto Mondadori to Fernanda Pivano
09 December 1948
Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milano

In 1949, Hemingway wrote to Mondadori with the request to tell Pivano that he had decided to nominate her a juror in the Hemingway prize, alongside the most important writers and intellectuals of the time: Dino Buzzati, Remo Cantoni, Giacomo De Benedetti, Alberto Mondadori, Eugenio Montale and Elio Vittorini. This prize was to be awarded annually, for five years, to the best Italian novel. The letter that Mondadori sent to Pivano stated the following:

⁸⁰ ‘It is a pity to see an educated woman humiliate herself by talking about the clichés used by many petty politicians’.

⁸¹ ‘On the 10th of October 1948 had started a friendship which would last until his death and until mine, for me’.

⁸² ‘I have received and carefully read the first 75 pages of *Addio alle armi* and I am sure you received feedback from Ettore. There’s no need to compliment you for this part, which you translated 100% successfully. And it is certainly the biggest part – because your quality as a translator doesn’t need further praise. Also, since you accomplished such an impressive endeavor translating a book like this in a month, I believe it will be useful to share to you, to Hemingway and to me, to share the notes that I wrote down’.

Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Fernanda Pivano, 09/12/1948.

Gentile Signorina, sono molto lieto di invitarla a far parte, secondo l'espresso desiderio di Ernest Hemingway, della giuria del premio Hemingway. [...]. La giuria, scelta personalmente da Hemingway, consiste dei seguenti nomi: Dino Buzzati, Remo Cantoni, Giacomo De Benedetti, Alberto Mondadori, Eugenio Montale, Fernanda Pivano, Elio Vittorini.⁸³

Arnoldo Mondadori to Fernanda Pivano,
17 January 1949
Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milano

Moreover, Hemingway explicitly asked Mondadori to allocate the translations of his upcoming novels to Pivano. This trust was amply demonstrated in a letter Hemingway sent to his Italian publisher on 15 May 1952, where he discusses the translation of *The Old Man and the Sea*, as well as in subsequent letters – held in the Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori Archive – where the American author helps Pivano with the translation of some passages from his novel. Both Hemingway's decision to invite Pivano to the panel for the Hemingway Prize and the letter from Mondadori congratulating her on her translation represent important endorsements coming from key figures in the Italian and international literary environment, which function as vehicles demonstrating the symbolic capital accumulated by Pivano.

3.3 The 1950s: Pavese's death and the new American literature

The year 1950 marked the publication of Pivano's translation of her all-time favourite American novel: Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925, Charles Scribner's Sons) published in Italian with the title *Il grande Gatsby* by Mondadori.⁸⁴ But 1950 was also the year of Cesare Pavese's death, an event which signaled the end of one of the most important phases of Fernanda Pivano's personal and professional life. Contact between them had become increasingly rare to the point that she once reported having met Pavese in Turin by chance, in August 1950. As she recounts in her diary, it was the day when Pavese gave her one last lecture on Gertrude Stein while

⁸³ 'Dear Miss, I am pleased to invite you to be part of the jury for the Hemingway Prize, according to Ernest Hemingway's wish. [...]. The jury, nominated by Hemingway himself, consists in the following names: Dino Buzzati, Remo Cantoni, Giacomo de Benedetti, Alberto Mondadori, Eugenio Montale, Fernanda Pivano and Elio Vittorini'. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Fernanda Pivano, 17/01/1949.

⁸⁴ A previous Italian version was published in 1936 by Mondadori with the title *Gatsby il magnifico*, translated by Cesare Giardini.

walking through the streets of Turin. Pivano admits that she never remembered much of what Pavese said, since she was too upset by the conditions in which she found her *maestro*:

Ma a segnare in 1950 sopra ogni cosa era stata per me la morte di Pavese [...] avevo incontrato per caso il 20 agosto di quel 1950 al bar Norman [...] seduto solo, in un angolo, col viso più disperato di quanto gli avessi mai visto. Mi ero avvicinata, mi aveva salutata senza alzarsi, con molta ironia. Gli avevo detto orgogliosa che era uscita la mia traduzione di *Il grande Gatsby* e, con umiltà che avevo scritto un saggio su Gertrude Stein e, [...] lui mi aveva fatto una lezione sulla Stein, ma ero troppo turbata per ricordarla (Pivano 2008: 242).⁸⁵

The 1950s were a key decade for Pivano's career as a cultural broker, and in particular for her cultural contacts with US counter-culture literature. In addition to her steady work of translation and literary dissemination through numerous articles for newspapers, essays and prefaces to translated volumes, Fernanda Pivano embarked on her first trip to the US in 1956, a crucial event that shaped her professional trajectory. During the trip, Pivano was able to expand her network of acquaintances with some of the key characters of the intellectual elite of the US literary scene. Moreover, her first trip to the US also marked her first encounter with the Beat generation. This encounter became the core of her cultural action in the dissemination of American counter-culture literature as a whole, and resulted in the publication of the two main anthologies translated and edited by Pivano on the Beat generation. The first of these, *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (1965, Mondadori), contained Ginsberg's 'Howl' and 'Kaddish'. The second, *Poesia degli utimi americani* (1964, Feltrinelli), was an anthology of Beat poetry by different authors, translated by Fernanda Pivano and Giulio Saponaro. Even though the dissemination of the works of the Beat poets in Italy happened through two of the most important Italian publishing houses (Mondadori and Feltrinelli), a closer look at the intricate dynamics and interactions that shaped the transatlantic journey of American Beat poetry from the US to Italy, may lead to a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon.

The creation of a bridge between the Beats and Italy was not a linear process: Fernanda Pivano had to deal with numerous resistant forces that made it difficult to bring to Italy the prose and the poems of Kerouac, Ginsberg, Corso, Burroughs, Ferlinghetti, Snyder. These oppositions

⁸⁵ 'But the thing that more than anything else marked the year 1950 was Pavese's death [...] I had met [him] by chance on the 20th of August of 1950 at a bar called Norman [...] sitting alone, in a corner. He looked more desperate than I had ever seen him. I went up to him and he said hi without even standing up, very ironically. I told him proudly that my translation of *The Great Gatsby* was out and, very humbly, that I had written an essay on Gertrude Stein and [...] he had given me a lecture on Stein, but I was too upset to remember that now'.

and obstacles turned her engagement into a struggle, inscribed in a complex picture of authorial and institutional interactions.

Between 1951 and 1965, Pivano translated over ten volumes of prose and poetry:

- 1951 Faulkner W., *Non si fruga nella polvere* (Mondadori, translation and foreword) [*Intruder in the Dust*, 1948].
 Thornton W., *Idi di marzo* (Mondadori) [*Idis of March*, 1948].
 Wright R., *Cinque Uomini* (Mondadori, a collection of novellas published in magazines)
 Fitzgerald F.S., *Di qua dal paradiso* (Mondadori, translation and foreword) [*This Side of Paradise*, 1920]
- 1952 Hemingway E., *Il Vecchio e il mare* (Mondadori) [*The Old Man and the Sea*, 1952]
- 1953 Poe, E.A., *Tutti i racconti e le poesie* (Casini)
- 1954 Fitzgerald F.S., *Belli e dannati* (Mondadori) [*The Beautiful and the Damned*, 1922]
- 1955 Faulkner W., *Requiem per una monaca*, (Mondadori) [*Requiem for a Nun* 1951]
- 1959 Faulkner W., *La pallida Zilphia Gant* (Bompiani) [*Miss Zilphia Gant* 1932]
- 1963 Faulkner W., *La famiglia Stevens* (Mondadori, translated with Monicelli G. and Vivante E.)
- 1965 Ginsberg A., *Jukebox all'ideogeno* (Mondadori) [*Howl and Other Poems* and *Kaddish and Other Poems*, 1956 and 1961].
 Hemingway E., *Di là dal fiume e tra gli alberi* (Mondadori) [*Across the River and into the Trees*, 1950].

As the list of publications above shows, Pivano's activity as a translator happened mainly through the publishing house Mondadori with the exception of the translation of the book by Edgar Allan Poe (published by Casini in 1953) and William Faulkner (published by Bompiani in 1959). Merging this data with the data provided in the table for the 1945-1950 period, the total number of volumes translated by Pivano between 1942 and 1965 amounts to a total of 27 (including Hersch's *L'illusion de a philosophie* and Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology* translated in 1942 and 1943), 14 of which were published by Mondadori. It is interesting to note also the frequency of publication, (high between 1949 and 1955), experiences a slowing down between 1956 and 1965. Mondadori published three translations in 1949, two in 1950, four in 1951, one in: 1952, 1954, 1955, 1959, 1963 and 1965 (after 1965 Mondadori would only publish two more translations by Pivano: *Mantra del re di Maggio* 1973 [*Reality Sandwiches* 1963, and *Planet News* 1968] and *La caduta dell'America* 1981 [*The Fall of America* 1972] both by Allen Ginsberg). It is also worth noting that the slowing down process that started in 1956 coincided with Pivano's trip to the US which would be a crucial factor in the negotiation and administration of her own symbolic capital.

The frequency of the publications with Mondadori shows that, in the first half of the 1950s, Pivano had become a reliable translator to whom the publisher tasked many translations of books

by established authors. The material evidence unearthed through archival research provides elements that shed light on the complex nature of the interaction which involved Pivano and the publisher. If, on the one hand, Pivano had become a significantly prolific translator/collaborator for the publisher, on the other hand, this did not correspond to a normalisation of her economic situation with the very same publishing house, nor did it lead to a more stable type of employment. By contrast, material evidence shows that she never received a formal offer of employment, that her wage was fluctuating, and that her professional career was threatened.

In 1951, two translations by Pivano came out for Mondadori, William Faulkner's *Non si fruga nella polvere* [*Intruder in the Dust*, 1948], and Thornton Wilder's *Idi di marzo* [*Idis of March*, 1948]. Furthermore, she was invited in Rome to *La casa della cultura*, to talk at a conference about Francis Scott Fitzgerald, who was considered the main writer of the American post-war period, and was also seen as the character who had contributed the most to the creation of the image of American myth and the American way of life (Pivano 2008: 248). Pivano was also still busy translating Hemingway's works, with the American author explicitly requesting Mondadori to have her as his translator. The relationship between the Italian translator and Hemingway was not affected by the patronising tone that Mondadori used to talk about Pivano in a letter that he sent to Hemingway in 1951:

I would like to tell you that I charged Nanda to start the translation of your last novel, so to be ready in line with the contractually stated terms [...] by the way, and strictly confidential, please don't believe too much, word for word, to what Nanda may presently tell you: she got rather angry with me since I refused a book of hers, dealing with the Negroes: but I did it since the volume does not fit in any of our Series. Excuse me for this perhaps too confidential particular and consider it "off record".⁸⁶

Alberto Mondadori to Ernest Hemingway
08 February 1951
Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan

In this letter there is no sign of the appreciation that Mondadori claimed to have for Pivano and her work in the 1948 letter where he discusses her translation of *A Farewell to Arms*. Rather unprofessionally, Mondadori hypothesises that the translator would criticise him or the publishing house because of a dispute over a book that Fernanda Pivano was writing on black American literature, and that Mondadori had refused. But Hemingway still wanted Pivano to translate his works and, in a couple of letters that he sent to the publishing house one year later, he would ask

⁸⁶ Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Ernest Hemingway, 08/02/1951.

Mondadori to have Pivano translate his new books, and he would also send notes and clarifications to help her with her translation. In 1952, after *The Old Man and the Sea* was published in the US by Scribner, Hemingway wrote to Alberto Mondadori: '[...] I would like you to have Fernanda Pivano translate it',⁸⁷ and in June of the same year: '[...] to save time and help Fernanda translate I append a list of the terms she might need in translating'.⁸⁸ In the same year, Pivano wrote an essay in which she presented *The Old Man and the Sea*, the book by Hemingway which was about to be published in the US, and of which translators in Europe were the only ones to have received the drafts. The novel was published both in the US and in Italy in 1952.

During this period, Fernanda Pivano was also charged by the curator Edouard Roditi to direct the Italian edition of the quarterly journal of American arts and letters, *Perspectives USA*, which in Italy came out with the title *Prospettive* (title changed into *Prospetti* from issue number 2), directed by American poet and writer James Laughlin (founder of the New Directions publishing house). The periodical was funded by the Ford Foundation and sixteen issues were published between 1952 and 1956. It occupied a central position in the so-called American cultural cold war, and in the consolidation of modernist literature. It was 'led by a group interested in promoting "critical narratives" on British literature' (Sullam 2016: 174), and published 'literary rebels in their waning years' (Healey 2008: 194), including such writers as William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, William Faulkner, Wallace Stevens, Thornton Wilder, E. E. Cummings, Kenneth Rexroth, Ezra Pound. However, they also published literary critics 'who helped to establish and explicate emerging modernist canons' (*ibid.*), including Malcolm Cowley. *Perspectives USA* 'drew upon modernist paradigms of cultural elites and mobilized modernist texts in an attempt to counteract European preconceptions about the shallowness of American cultural life' (*ibid.*). Pivano met James Laughlin in 1953 in Verona and they visited Valdonega typography, where they discussed layout, design and technicalities of the journal. Due to an unspecified *querelle* with Roditi, Pivano lost the editorial role, which was given to Elizabeth Mann Borgese, and she never directed the journal: '[Laughlin] non parlava mai di Roditi, come se non fosse successo niente: era il suo stile e io d'altra parte non volevo screditare il Vecchio amico raccontando come erano andate le cose; non cercai mai di rivendicare l'incarico che avevo perduto con dolore e che era stato affidato a Elizabeth Mann Borgese' (Pivano 1995: 35).⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Fondazione Arnaldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnaldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Ernest Hemingway, 15/05/1951, letter from Ernest Hemingway to Alberto Mondadori.

⁸⁸ Fondazione Arnaldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnaldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Ernest Hemingway, 03/06/1952, letter from Ernest Hemingway to Alberto Mondadori.

⁸⁹ '[Laughlin] never talked about Roditi, as if nothing had ever happened: that was his style and I, on the other hand, never tried to claim back the task that I had painfully lost, and that was assigned to Elizabeth Mann Borgese'.

One year later, her new translation of *Belli e dannati* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald came out for Mondadori [*The Beautiful and the Damned*, 1922]. In 1954 Pivano had started collaborating with the weekly publication *Tutti*. Here, Pivano published articles and reviews on American literature, but also – for the first time – about Italian authors. In 1954 she published pieces on: Dino Buzzati, ‘Il crollo della Baliverna (Dino Buzzati)’, (*Tutti* 10, 16 June 1954), one on Italo Calvino ‘Calvino contro la retorica’ (*Tutti* 34, 12 November 1954), James Jones ‘Signori della gavetta (Da qui all’eternità)’ (*Tutti* 36, 5 December 1954) and one piece with the title ‘Letteratura della Resistenza’ (*Tutti* 6, 9 May 1954). A further crucial factor shaping Pivano’s trajectory within the literary market is the Nobel prize for literature awarded to Ernest Hemingway in 1954: the amount of symbolic capital gained by the American author and his works was passed on to the translator and her translations. Ernest Hemingway was the second Nobel laureate translated by Pivano: the first one was William Faulkner, who was awarded the prize in 1949 (and whose work Pivano translated for the first time in 1950).

In a letter sent to Pivano by Alberto Mondadori on the 28 May 1954, Pivano was informed that her translation of Fitzgerald’s *Opera Omnia* was taken from her because of time constraints:

[S]o che ti hanno interrogata per la traduzione dell’*Omnia* di Fitzgerald, e che, a conti fatti tu non puoi permetterla che per Natale. Io, invece, devo assolutamente accelerare i tempi, quindi il libro per Natale deve essere stampato. Mi spiace dunque di dover affidare la traduzione ad altri. non avertene a male, ma ognuno ha le proprie necessità, tanto per te lavoro ce n’è sempre!⁹⁰

Alberto Mondadori to Fernanda Pivano

28 May 1954

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori - Milan

From the data collected it is not possible to precisely identify who had questioned Pivano, but Mondadori decided to take the job away from her because the publisher wished for the book to be ready to be sold by Christmas time. The incident of Fitzgerald’s *Opera Omnia* (together with the *Omnia* of Hemingway and Faulkner) was one of the many elements which marked a decisive clash between Fernanda Pivano and the Mondadori publisher, a clash which ultimately pushed Pivano to file a lawsuit against the Milan based publisher in 1967, after her collaboration agreement was not renewed by one of Mondadori’s main editors, Vittorio Sereni.

⁹⁰ ‘[I] know that you have been questioned for the translation of Fitzgerald’s *Omnia*, and that, all things considered, you will not be able to complete it before Christmas. I absolutely have to speed things up and the book needs to be published by Christmas. I am sorry but I have to assign the translation to someone else. Do not take it badly but we all have our necessities. Also, there will always be work for you!’.

Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Fernanda Pivano, 28/05/1954.

4. 1956: the literary pilgrimage to the United States

Fernanda Pivano's 1956 trip to the United States and Cuba represented a crucial event which shaped her professional trajectory. She took advantage of this opportunity to establish new, or nurture already existing social ties with writers, literary critics, editors and agents within the American literary panorama, and used the social capital deriving from these connections to overturn the dynamics of subservience that, as a translator and collaborator at Mondadori, she had to endure. The testimonies about her cultural activity during the second half of the 1950s and the editorial correspondence relating to the same years show an increasingly problematic professional relationship with the publishing house, both from the economic point of view, but also with regards to the legitimization of her intellectual work.

We can observe that, during those years, Fernanda Pivano was struggling to obtain a more structured position within the book market. Despite the many, successful translations of prestigious American writers that she had penned between 1945 and 1955, including such giants as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, her position within the publisher had remained that of a collaborator, with a contract renewed on a yearly basis, and with a wage that suffered cuts and fluctuations. Moreover, the letters exchanged with the publisher illuminate Pivano's desire to better her professional positioning within the field by obtaining the qualification to teach in higher education institutions. It can be also argued that a university position would have automatically increased the cultural capital associated with Pivano and, subsequently, her operation of cultural dissemination and advocacy. However, Pivano's attempt to obtain the qualification through the publication of a volume of essays on black American literature was hindered by Mondadori editor Remo Cantoni, who deemed Pivano's name unworthy to be included in the collection he was directing. The problematic relationship of collaboration with Mondadori would reach its end in 1961, when Pivano was warned that her contract would not be renewed by editor Vittorio Sereni.

As a consequence of this troublesome situation, in the second half of the 1950s, Pivano's professional trajectory seems to have been characterised by a growing need for independence, and by an attempt to become a central character in the dynamics of cultural dissemination of American counterculture literature in Italy. Thanks to the cultural networks she established during her trip to the United States, Pivano could rely on direct links with some of the key figures of the American

literary panorama and stay on top of the new publications and literary phenomena blossoming in the country.

This was the case, for example, of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, published in 1957 in the US, which Pivano received from Matthew and Hannah Josephson and then proceeded to pitch to Mondadori. The Italian version of the novel was eventually published in 1959 with the title *Sulla strada*. Similarly, her connection with Gregory Corso allowed her to get in touch with William Burroughs, and mediated the publication of the Italian versions of *Naked Lunch* (1959 Olympia Press, 1962 Grove Press) and *Junkie* (1953, ACE Books), published respectively by SugarCo in 1964 as *Pasto nudo*, and by Rizzoli in 1962 as *La scimmia sulla schiena*. A second, pivotal link that Pivano established in the United States, again through Gregory Corso, was the one with Lawrence Ferlinghetti at City Lights Books, the cultural hub and headquarters for the San Francisco Renaissance and of the Beat Generation. In 1961, while working on the anthologies of Beat poetry to be published by Mondadori and Feltrinelli, Pivano wrote her first letters to the director of the San Francisco-based publishing house and bookstore, presenting herself as the main Italian cultural broker for the Beat Generation, and asking to be kept in the loop about their most recent publications and activities. Her collaborative relationship with the people at City Lights allowed Pivano to operate as the primary, and often the pivotal, intermediary in the mechanisms of cultural exchange between Italy and the United States.

The social capital accrued through these social ties allowed her to access crucial information and, at the same time, to see her social credential as a cultural broker recognised within the American Beat literary circles. This conferred on her a stronger negotiating power in the publishing battles she was carrying out in Italy to fulfill her ambitious project of disseminating American counterculture literature. Fernanda Pivano's attempt to establish herself as an independent figure within the publishing market culminated in the creation of East 128, an independent publishing house founded together with her husband, architect and designer Ettore Sottsass Jr, which hosted the publication of the works of many Beat authors.

4.1 The renegotiation of self: Pivano as an independent agent in the literary field

As stated, Pivano's first trip to the US and Cuba in 1956, which started on 6 March and ended on 24 May, was crucial to her career. During the trip, Pivano visited the locations in Illinois and Virginia (where Lee Masters was born) that featured in the *Spoon River Anthology*, as well as

New York, Washington, Havana, Puerto Rico, New Orleans, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, among others. She had the opportunity to become acquainted, and sometimes reacquainted, with the main personalities of the American literary scene, including Hannah and Matthew Josephson, Malcolm Cowley, John Dos Passos, Norman Mailer and William Carlos Williams. Pivano was able to travel to the US thanks to the *Leaders' Grant*, which she had received from the American cultural attaché Frank M. Snowden Jr., professor at Howard University and a leading scholar of black history in antiquity. In her diary, Pivano reports that Snowden's decision to award her the grant, which consisted of the sum of ten dollars per day and the payment of travel expenses, was probably motivated by his appreciation of her essay collection on the history of black people, *Lo zio Tom è morto* [*Uncle Tom is Dead*] (Pivano 2008: 425). The volume was initially rejected by Remo Cantoni, editor at Mondadori, on the grounds that Pivano's name was not worth including in the essay series that he was editing, alongside with names of authors who were far more important, as reported by Pivano in her diary: 'Nella mia collana di saggi ci sono autori troppo importanti per poterli mettere vicino a te' (Pivano 2008: 171).⁹¹ *Lo zio Tom è morto* would be published only sixty-five years later, in 2015 by Bompiani.⁹² The volume shows Pivano's ability to produce a comprehensive account of American black history (from the slave trade up until the modern era in the first part, and of Afro-American literature and culture in the second part), which was of extremely good documentary value for the time it was completed:

Quando una sessantina di anni fa Fernanda Pivano scrisse questo libro poi rimasto nel cassetto, con scarso credito per l'editoria italiana dell'epoca, [...] le tensioni razziali erano ancora molto flagranti [...]. Nella chiarezza e nella completezza delle informazioni e delle valutazioni qui abbiamo la migliore introduzione possibile agli avvenimenti del mezzo secolo successivo compresi quelli ancora in fase di svolgimento adesso. È un antefatto che copre tutto l'arco dell'evoluzione della presenza forzata degli africani nel Nordamerica, e sotto ogni aspetto, compresa la nascita e gli sviluppi di una cultura assai originale, particolarmente nella musica; ed è raccontato con ricchezza di dati, agilità e chiarezza (Pivano 2015: *preface*).⁹³

⁹¹ 'In my essay series there are authors who are far too important to be associated with you'.

⁹² So far, I have not been able to find further evidence that confirms Pivano's claim of being awarded the Leaders' Grant because of her volume of essays: since the volume was not published in Italy, it remains difficult to understand how Frank Snowden could have read it. Moreover, I was not able to find further evidence to confirm Cantoni's motivation to reject the volume, other than in Pivano's diary.

⁹³ 'When Fernanda Pivano wrote this book roughly sixty years ago, it remained in a drawer, due to the shortsightedness of the Italian editorial industry of the time [...] racial tensions were still flagrant [...]. In its clarity and completeness of information and evaluations, the volume represents the best possible of the introductions to the events that defined the subsequent fifty years, included those that are still relevant today. It is a backstory which covers the whole timeframe of the evolution of the history of the forced presence of Africans in North America, under all aspects. It comprehends the birth and the development of a deeply original culture, particularly for its music. The story is told with a richness of data, lightness in writing and clarity [...].'

Moreover, in the preface to the volume, Masolino D'Amico praises the objectivity with which Pivano, 'our beloved *americanista*' (Pivano 2015: preface), managed to present and discuss such a complex historical matter, relying on sources and factual data rather than passionate accounts, adding to her untiring work to make the history and culture of the New World accessible to Italian readers in all its aspects:

Questa obiettività – non ho detto distacco! – è particolarmente opportuna davanti a una materia rovente come questa [...]. Materia che ha spesso alimentato pamphlet vibranti di indignazione, ma piuttosto che aggiungerne un altro alla lista, la nostra rimpianta *americanista*, come sempre indefessa nel suo sforzo di raccontarci e farci capire il Nuovo Mondo in ogni sua manifestazione, ha preferito lasciar parlare i fatti (Pivano 2015: preface).⁹⁴

Remo Cantoni's rejection of Pivano's work is symptomatic of the complex professional relationship between the translator and the publishing house Mondadori, a relationship that deteriorated towards the end of the 1950s. The constant difficulties that Fernanda Pivano experienced during her cultural action can be identified not only in the resistance she encountered in her intellectual role, but also in the professional relationship and economic conditions under which she was collaborating with the publisher Mondadori. In a letter sent in 1968 to Erich Linder, in fact, Pivano tells the agent that the wage paid by the publishing house for her collaborations was fluctuating, causing evident distress in relation with her self-perception as a professional. Her salary was raised to L. 200.000 a year in 1958 to make up for a job offer – refused by Pivano to keep working for Mondadori – from the newspaper *Il Giorno* which would have paid her L. 120.000 a year. The sum was abruptly lowered to L. 100.000 in 1959, with further L. 100.000 as an upfront payment for her editorial work on the three *omnia* on Faulkner, Hemingway and Fitzgerald that were being discussed within the publisher.⁹⁵ A further letter that Pivano sent to the President of Mondadori in 1959 illuminates the troublesome professional relationship between her and the publisher, and Pivano's willingness to stand her ground and define her role and value within the literary field and the publisher itself:

⁹⁴ 'This objectivity – I did not say detachment! – is particularly appropriate when writing about a delicate subject like this one [...]. A subject that has often been described in pamphlets filled with resentment. But, rather than adding one to the list, our beloved *americanista*, as always untiring in her work to recount and explain the *New World* in all its manifestations, preferred to let the data speak'.

⁹⁵ Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Agenzia letteraria internazionale – Erich Linder, Serie annuale 1968, B.55, fasc. 34, Fernanda Pivano.

Gentile Presidente, La ringrazio della sua lettera del 17 marzo con cui mi rinnova l'incarico di collaborazione "per consulenza" alla Sua Casa. [...] spero tuttavia che Lei troverà modo di riportare il mio compenso alla cifra dell'anno scorso [...] magari affidandomi [...] l'incarico di compilare un notiziario per i Suoi periodici. Le confermo che vista la sua buona volontà nel sistemare il mio problema, ho declinato l'invito di collaborazione stabile che mi era stato fatto da un altro editore. Resto ora in attesa dei contratti per le *Omnia*. A proposito [...] considero inaccettabile la proposta di chiedere a Hemingway di detrarre dai suoi diritti di autore una percentuale con cui pagare in qualsiasi misura il mio lavoro. Come già le scrissi allora, preferirei rinunciare a tale lavoro piuttosto che subire l'umiliazione di vedermelo retribuito da uno scrittore che mi ha onorato con tante prove della sua fiducia.⁹⁶

Fernanda Pivano to Arnoldo Mondadori

24 March 1959

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milano

Pivano's contract as a 'consultant' had been renewed by the publisher, but her wage had been cut: she asks the president to find a way to bring it back to the sum of the previous year, suggesting she be assigned the task of editing a bulletin for Mondadori's periodicals. Moreover, from Pivano's words, it surfaces that she had been promised a resolution to the wage problem, and she had therefore refused a permanent contract offered by another publisher.

A second, important matter which profoundly damaged the professional relationship between Fernanda Pivano and Mondadori was the handling of the project of the publication of the *omnia* of Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. From the letter, it looks as if Mondadori had suggested that Pivano's payment for her editorial work on the Italian publication of Hemingway's *omnia* should be paid by deducting the money from the royalties which belonged to the American writer. Obviously opposed to this suggestion, Fernanda Pivano states clearly that she would rather reject the job than suffer the humiliation of asking Hemingway to deduct the money from his royalties. Mondadori's proposal of paying Pivano through Hemingway's royalties illuminates the

⁹⁶ 'Dear President, thank you very much for your letter [...] with which you renewed my contract as consultancy collaborator at Mondadori [...] I hope, however, that you will find a way to bring my wage back to the sum of last year [...] maybe by giving me [...] the task of editing the bulletin for your periodicals. Since your good will in sorting out my problem, I confirm that I have refused the invitation for a permanent collaboration with another editor. Now, I will wait for the contracts for the *Omnia*. By the way [...] I consider unacceptable the proposal of asking Hemingway to deduct from his royalties a percentage with which pay me for my work to any extent. As I already wrote to you, I would rather reject the job than suffer the humiliation of having it paid by a writer who has honored me with his trust on so many occasions.'

Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Arnoldo Mondadori*, fasc. Fernanda Pivano, 24/03/1959.

unstable professional relationship between them, highlighting mechanisms of delegitimation of Pivano's professional worth and positioning within the field.

As a consequence of these mechanisms, the correspondence exchanged with the publisher illuminates Pivano attempts to re-negotiate her role within Mondadori. A letter sent to Alberto Mondadori in 1956, prior to her trip to the United States, shows several examples of how Pivano was trying to negotiate, maintain and advance her social and professional position within the field. First of all, she tried to establish herself as a valuable asset for the publisher, putting forward her social capital (her ability to establish cultural networks in the US) and the benefit Mondadori might get from them. Secondly, the same potential social capital is used as a reason for Mondadori to keep paying her a wage for her collaborations, thereby maintaining their economic agreement. Lastly, Pivano enquired about the likelihood that her volume of essays on black history would be published by Mondadori, she claiming that she needed the publication in order to obtain the habilitation to teach at university. More generally, in the letter Pivano attempted to establish herself as a useful connection that might help bridge the cultural flow between the US and Italy:

[...] dovevo parlarti di due cose: il mio viaggio in America e il mio volume di saggi. Per il viaggio si tratta di questo: a febbraio andrò a fare un giro negli Stati Uniti, e sarei lieta di poterti essere utile laggiù in qualche modo. Questo ti dico per l'amicizia che ti porto e anche perché avrei bisogno di fare qualcosa per continuare a prendere lo stipendio che mi dai ogni mese per le mie collaborazioni. Tu sai il genere di conoscenze che ho in America, e puoi immaginare quelle che farò laggiù. Per il volume di saggi si tratta di una cosa di cui parlammo con Cantoni mesi fa. [...] ho bisogno di una risposta sicura e cortesemente rapida, che mi dica o di no, senza preoccupazioni, in modo da permettermi di pubblicare il libro presso un altro editore, o di sì, ma allora con la certezza di quando il libro uscirebbe. Caro Alberto, di una cosa ti prego con tutto il cuore: non ti peritare a dirmi di no, ma non farmi morire il libro come hai fatto con la storia dei negri. Questa volta c'è di mezzo la libera docenza e devo essere sicura di quello che faccio.⁹⁷

Fernanda Pivano to Alberto Mondadori

⁹⁷ [...] I need to talk to you about two things: my trip to the US and my volume of essays. About the trip: in February I will travel to the U.S and I would be glad to be of help while there if possible. I am telling you this because of our friendship and also because I would need to do something to keep earning the wage that you give me every month for my collaborations. You are aware of the kind of connections that I have in America and you can image those I will be establishing there. About the volume of essays, it is something that we talked about with Cantoni months ago. [...] I would need a clear and quick answer from you, that will either tell me 'no', without any worries, so that I can publish the book with another publisher, or 'yes', but certain of the date when the volume would be published. Dear Alberto, there is one thing I ask you from the bottom of my heart: don't worry of saying no, but don't let my book die as you did with the one on black history. This time it is about the habilitation to teach and I have to be sure of what I am doing.'.

Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori*, fasc. Fernanda Pivano, 16/01/1956.

The letter shows clear signs of Pivano's willingness to establish herself as an emancipated cultural actor. In fact, she makes it abundantly clear that she already has certain 'kinds of connections', that she will make more, and that the publisher might benefit from her activity as cultural ambassador and her networking ability. Pivano is negotiating: the social capital that she would acquire through her connections might turn into symbolic capital if Mondadori decided to pay for her services, thus legitimating her role. Moreover, a second step in Pivano's social trajectory is represented by her desire to obtain the '*libera docenza*', the qualification to teach at university, which would have contributed to legitimating her agency as a translator and cultural actor in the eyes of her peers.

The question of legitimacy in the practice of translation stands out as a key element in the study of a microsociology of translation which takes into account matters of identity and positioning of the individual within the field. Validating a translator as a *competent translator*, deeming the texts they produce *good translations*, has always had very blurred contours, making it difficult to identify a framework of practices and skills through which to evaluate the translator. Legitimation of translation practice happens, therefore, by taking into consideration factors that do not belong to the effective skills and/or training in translation studies, but which are often superimposed on the individual according to his or her position within the field which is related to the restricted field of literature. Consequently, good translators are often considered to be those who are primarily academics and/or writers, as part of a relationship which sees a correlation between status, perceived quality and acceptance of translation practices. This correlation between individual status and legitimisation of translation practices not only affects the symbolic capital imposed on the translation within the field-system, but it also affects the strategies used by the translator while working on a text.

One of the main issues that affected Fernanda Pivano's trajectory and the reception of her cultural action within the field is precisely the fact that she did not belong to any of the categories which would legitimate her role and her agency within a system that sees a direct correlation between *status* and *competence*: she was not officially an academic, nor a literary critic, nor a 'recognised intellectual'. For these reasons, I believe that it is possible to argue that Fernanda Pivano's career choices were motivated by her will to define her position within the field and, subsequently, legitimise her cultural activity. By establishing direct connections with writers and editors in the United States she aimed to act as a gatekeeper of the cultural flow between Italy and

the United States, and to become a pivotal figure in the cultural exchange. At the same time, by entering the academic world, Pivano probably sought to increment her symbolic capital, submitting herself to the logics of status and power within the field (on top of obvious reasons of economic stability).

4.2 The power of social ties: the discovery of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs

Judging from the letter sent to Alberto Mondadori on 16 January 1956, the potential associated with the acquisition of social capital through the construction of networks of collaboration was undoubtedly evident to Fernanda Pivano. She was aware that the trip to the United States represented the perfect occasion to establish new, crucial connections with key literary figures of the American cultural world. Many of the actors she encountered during her travels would play a central role in informing her activity of dissemination of American literature in Italy in the years to come. Among the most immediate returns from the institution of social ties in strategic locations, Lin (1999) identifies: 1) an easier access to information which otherwise would be unavailable or difficult to access; 2) an increased influence on those actors who sit in positions with high decisional power with regards to aspects such as hiring, promotion and job tasking; and 3) an increased recognition of the social credentials of the individual.

From this point of view, Fernanda Pivano's trip to the United States appeared extremely fruitful. Her trailblazing and innovative operation of cultural dissemination was highly indebted to the social ties she managed to establish, allowing her to be up to date with the most recent publications in the American literary panorama. As an example, Pivano's early proposal of translating Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' to Mondadori can be traced back to her visit to Puerto Rico, where she heard Ginsburg's name for the first time. . Here, Pivano attended a party in honour of William Carlos Williams, who held a lecture on the new American literature (Pivano 2008: 451). It was in this setting that Fernanda Pivano heard from the first time the name of Allen Ginsberg: 'Dopo la conferenza quando ero andata a salutarlo mi aveva parlato di Allen Ginsberg [...] era la prima volta che sentivo questo nome' (Pivano 2008: 451).⁹⁸ During this encounter, William Carlos Williams did not tell Pivano much about the Beat Generation, he only mentioned that he was writing the preface to a poem called *Howl*, by a young poet from Paterson: 'Così il vecchio medico

⁹⁸ 'After the conference, when I went to say 'hi' he told me about Allen Ginsberg [...] it was the first time I heard that name.'

mi parlò dell'introduzione che stava facendo al libro di un poeta della sua Paterson, simpatico, timido e geniale, che aveva scritto un lungo poema e lo aveva chiamato Howl, un ritratto apocalittico della sua generazione' (Pivano 2003: 7-8).⁹⁹ The new information accessed thanks to the encounter with William Carlos Williams allowed Pivano, in 1957, to recognise the name of Allen Ginsberg on the cover of the 1957 issue of the journal *Evergreen Review* (n.2, March 1957), entitled 'San Francisco Scene' in a bookshop in Paris: 'Poi 1957 a Parigi, libreria La Hune [...] vetrina con le "novità" americane e una copertina azzurra coi grattacieli notturni di San Francisco [...] ed ecco lo 'Howl' di Ginsberg incompleto [...] e mi ricordai di William Carlos Williams e del suo compaesano "simpatico, timido e geniale"' (Pivano 2003: 9).¹⁰⁰ Besides 'Howl' the 1957 issue of the *Evergreen Review* contained texts by Jack Kerouac, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Josephine Miles and Gary Snyder, among others. Pivano started immediately her work on 'Howl' and on the Beat Generation and, already at the beginning of 1960, she submitted a proposal for the publication of the Italian translation of 'Howl' to Mondadori. But the story of the publication of 'Howl' in Italy is long and complex, affected by power struggles and editorial battles that saw Pivano's ambition clash with the uncertainties of the editors at Mondadori, and that will be analysed in detail in chapter 5.

4.2.1 Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' sparks new interest for American literature

The discovery of Allen Ginsberg's poetry marked a renewal of Fernanda Pivano's interest in American literature, at a time when the *American myth* had started to wither in the eyes of the Italian *americanisti*. After the war, the strong interference of the US with the Italian political, economic and everyday life had transformed the United States from an ideal, a dreamland known through literature, films and music, into a physical reality, with American soldiers occupying Italian land and the 'American way of life' spreading widely. Understandably, the sudden closeness with the previously opposed and ostracized cultural phenomenon affected its reception,

⁹⁹ 'And just like that the old doctor told me about the introduction he was writing to the book by a poet from Paterson, a friendly, shy and clever poet who had written a long poem titled Howl, which was an apocalyptic portrait of his generation'.

¹⁰⁰ 'And then, 1957 in Paris, bookshop La Hune [...] window with the America's 'latest' books and a light blue cover with a picture of the skyscrapers of San Francisco at night [...] and there it was, the abridged version of Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' [...] and I remembered of William Carlos Williams and of his fellow countryman "friendly, shy and clever"'.

depriving it of its revolutionary value, and creating a complex mechanism of incorporation and digestion across the different social strata.¹⁰¹ Cesare Pavese argued that, in the postwar period, the *American myth* had exhausted its mission of anti-Fascist resistance:

Ora, il tempo è mutato e ogni cosa si può dirla, anzi è più o meno stata detta. E succede che passano gli anni e dall'America ci vengono più libri che una volta, ma noi oggi li apriamo e chiudiamo senza nessuna agitazione. [...] A esser sinceri insomma ci pare che la cultura americana abbia perduto magistero, quel suo ingenuo e sagace furore che la metteva all'avanguardia del nostro mondo intellettuale. Né si può non notare che ciò coincide con la fine, o sospensione, della sua lotta antifascista (Pavese 1951: 173).

Similarly, in *Diario in pubblico* (originally published in 1957) Vittorini reconsidered his previous fascination with American literature, blaming the lack of literary development of authors such as William Saroyan, Erskine Caldwell, John Fante and Richard Wright: '[L]a letteratura americana può dirsi ferma, [...] ai valori raggiunti con Hemingway e Faulkner' (Vittorini 1976: 168).¹⁰² In the light of the new role that the US had taken on the economic and political international scene, Pivano claimed that along with the 'postwar flooding rivers of Coca-Cola and economic imperialism [...] America had become a physical reality with not so much to be dreamt about' (Pivano 1971: 327). Fernanda Pivano struggled to identify the socio-cultural potential that for many years she had associated with her activity of translation of American literature: '[A]fter our champions of clandestinity were accepted by the Establishment - I kept translating for a while simply because this had become my profession' (Pivano 1971: 327). The perceived lack of purpose that followed her engagement in the dissemination of the new American novel during the Forties and Fifties, was shook by the verses of Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl'. Reading the poem injected new sap into Fernanda Pivano's activity as cultural broker of US literature:

It was more or less at that time that Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" blew my mind out when I read it in that *Evergreen Review* special issue on the San Francisco Scene. Ok, maybe I have been all wrong again, but in his attitude during those McCarthy days, I rediscovered some of the emotions which I had shared at his age with some Italian writers while looking for that unclear something that might turn a brainwashed consciousness into a living one (Pivano 1971: 330).

¹⁰¹ See Cavallo 1985: 751-52.

¹⁰² '[W]e can say that American literature never moved past the values it reached with Hemingway and Faulkner'.

Pivano's interest in the poetry of Allen Ginsberg shared much of the same enthusiasm that pushed her to read, translate, and write about American authors at the start of her career, and make those authors available to Italian readers: '[I] unexpectedly happened to be involved with the Italian public consciousness again, much as twenty years earlier I had happened to be involved with it while dealing with our myth of the fabled American democracy and literature' (Pivano 1971: 331).

She immediately associated the Beat Generation with antifascism: '[S]ono nati come un movimento di antifascismo [...] una reazione al neofascismo di McCarthy degli anni '50'.¹⁰³ To Pivano, Beat literature appeared to be 'necessary' and 'purifying' (Pivano 2003: 14), and she could not believe that, particularly in the case of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso and William Burroughs, '[...] qualcuno non dividesse con me l'esperienza di quel viaggio 1956 in America, [...] l'impatto di quella cultura [...] aveva reso evidente la necessità di altre energie per combattere tipi di alienazione e condizionamenti che cominciavano a delinearsi, a definirsi, a precisarsi in maniera nuova e sempre più pesante' (Pivano 2003: 14).¹⁰⁴ Moreover, one of the most urgent aspects of that new literature that Pivano felt she had to make available to and share with the Italian public, was the concept of freedom, and in particular the ideas of gay liberation. In an excerpt from an interview in a documentary about the 1960s, in fact, talking about her engagement in her activity as cultural broker for American literature, Pivano claims that 'La mia base politica e intellettuale era l'antifascismo, un antifascismo che per me era diventato poi anarchia e che era la difesa della libertà a tutti i livelli. E quella dell'omosessualità ho capito che era la prima libertà da proporre agli uomini, se lo volevano, se lo desideravano'.¹⁰⁵ Her agency and the cultural outputs she produced (primarily in the forms of translations and journal publications) were central in fueling liberation and artistic movements which flourished in Italy during the 1960s and the 1970s. This is noticeable when observing the large production of magazines, zines and ephemera that mushroomed during those years and that were directly or indirectly connected to Pivano's action of cultural dissemination. In particular, her collaboration with the magazine *Fuori!* (or *F.U.O.R.I.*), printed publication of the first movement for

¹⁰³ 'They were born as an antifascist movement [...] as a reaction to McCarthy's neo-fascism of the 1950s'. Excerpt from an interview contained in the episode on Fernanda Pivano of the TV programme *Italiani*. RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 2019. Available at <https://www.raiplay.it/programmi/fernandapivano-italiani>. Last accessed 20/02/2021.

¹⁰⁴ '[...] someone would not share with me the experience of my trip to the US in 1956 [...] the impact of that culture [...] making evident the need for new energies to fight types of alienation and conditioning that had started to appear and define themselves, more precisely, in a new and heavier way'.

¹⁰⁵ 'My political and intellectual foundation is antifascism, antifascism that, for me, had turned into anarchy, which was the protection of freedom at all levels. And that of homosexuality was the first kind of freedom that had to be offered to people, if they wanted it, if they wished'. The interview, by Bozzo G. and Marchetti A., is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBHJkwrBFOE>. Last accessed 11/07/2020.

homosexual liberation in Italy, published in 1972 and directed by Angelo Pezzana (who also owned the Hellas bookshop in Turin, the first bookshop in Italy to host a reading of 'Howl' after the publication of *Jukekbox all'idrogeno*).

The innovative potential of the language and the themes encapsulated in the verses of 'Howl' were perceived as a form of disruptive cultural expression that, according to Pivano, 'showed [...] a way out of the intellectual sclerotization that was stifling Italy during the sixties' (Pivano 1971: 331). Similarly, Pier Paolo Pasolini praised Ginsberg's revolutionary language that was 'afforded to him by a society devoid of class consciousness' (Bondavalli 2015: 140). In a 1967 letter to the American poet, Pasolini wrote:

Perché tu, che ti rivolti contro i padri borghesi assassini, lo fai restando dentro il loro stesso mondo...classista (sì, in Italia ci esprimiamo così), e quindi sei costretto a inventare di nuovo e completamente giorno per giorno, parola per parola, il tuo linguaggio rivoluzionario. Tutti gli uomini della tua America sono costretti, per esprimersi, ad essere degli inventori di parole! Noi qui invece (anche quelli che hanno adesso sedici anni) abbiamo già il nostro linguaggio rivoluzionario bell'e pronto, con dentro la sua morale. [...] E anch'io come vedi. Non riesco a mescolare la prosa con la poesia (come fai tu!) e non riesco a dimenticarmi MAI e naturalmente neanche in questo momento che ho dei doveri linguistici.¹⁰⁶

The linguistic and stylistic peculiarities of Ginsberg's poetry, which featured 'a language which was born from reality rather than from scholarly learning' (Pivano 1971: 331), proved to be challenging for a translation into Italian: 'So there I was again in front of a book of poems, with another unseizable Moby Dick luring me from those long, urging lines, and, when the first shock was over, the technical problems started' (Pivano 1971: 331). In the essay 'Notes Written when Finally Recording "Howl"' (2003),¹⁰⁷ Ginsberg observed that, in 1955, his verses were 'adapted from prose seeds, journals, scratchings, arranged by phrasing or breath groups into little short-line patterns according to ideas of measure of American speech I'd picked up from William Carlos Williams's imagist preoccupations' (Ginsberg 2003: 1075), William Carlos Williams's short-line prosodic structure was then combined with what Ginsberg defined 'Hebraic-Melvillean bardic breath' (Ginsberg 2003: 1075).¹⁰⁸ As a result of this combination, Ginsberg's poetry 'bombards the reader with a series of images meant to convey the drug-like emotional state of the "best minds

¹⁰⁶ Pasolini letter can be found in Bondavalli 2015: 140-1)

¹⁰⁷ Originally appeared in *Evergreen Review* 3.10 (1959).

¹⁰⁸ On the influence of Herman Melville on the writers of the Beat Generation see Dunphy 2009. On Ginsberg (and Beat) aesthetic see also Weinreich 2017.

of my generation”” (Mortenson 2017: 80), while trying to ‘recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose’ (Ginsberg 1956: 16). The problems associated with the translation were primarily connected to the transposition in Italian of the poem’s rhythm, which was a crucial aspect of Beat poetry, being influenced by bebop jazz music and blues. This rhythm is achieved through the use of short monosyllabic words, sequences of nouns used as adjectives, repetition, reiteration, and alliteration, in a rolling juxtaposition of images articulated in the space of one, long-breath lines. Subsequently, a further challenge in the translation of Ginsberg’s poetry was represented by the poet’s use of slang, and in particular of gay coded language, and numerous references to substance abuse.

In 1961, a fortuitous encounter with Allen Ginsberg in Paris marked the beginning of a mutually fruitful professional and human relationship, the core of a network which greatly affected the cultural dissemination of American counterculture in Italy. The tight collaboration between Ginsberg and Pivano on the translation and the editing of the texts to be included in the two anthologies *Jukebox all'idrogeno* and *Poesia degli ultimi americani* is a prime example of how the synergetic work between an author and their translator can inform the power dynamics within the hierarchically organised literary market. Pivano and Ginsberg got involved in a tormented editorial battle with the editors at Mondadori regarding the censorship of some words and passages of Ginsberg’s poems. The cooperation and the re-negotiation of the concept of authorship between the author and the translator gave Pivano leverage in editorial decisions, allowing them to limit the cuts and changes suggested by the Mondadori editors, thus preserving – although partially – the linguistic integrity of the poems in their translations, to the detriment of marketing needs and strategies.

4.2.2 The publication of ‘Howl’ and its reception in the United States

The story behind the publication of Allen Ginsberg’s ‘Howl’ in the United States is strictly linked to the revolutionary poetry reading held at the Six Gallery, in San Francisco, on Friday, 07 October 1955. Among the six poets that read their works on stage there was Allen Ginsberg who, at the time, had published very little and who was mostly known for a letter sent to poet William Carlos Williams that was included in Williams’s long poem *Paterson* (Raskin 2004: 2). Alongside Allen Ginsberg, on stage there were other poets who would later become leading figures within the literary movement of the Beat Generation: Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, Gary Snyder

and Philip Whalen. Poet Kenneth Rexroth functioned as master of ceremony. The Six Gallery reading can be considered the first public event linked to the Beat Generation, and a milestone in the development of the *San Francisco Renaissance*, a hub of avant-garde cross-cultural poetic activity based in San Francisco during the Forties and Fifties. This *San Francisco Renaissance* was founded by Kenneth Rexroth, and as well as poetry, included also visual and performing arts.¹⁰⁹ The *Six Gallery Reading* marked the beginning of the *San Francisco Poetry Renaissance*: '[T]he poetry renaissance was born on the evening of the first reading of the first part of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*' (French 1991: 1). The importance of the event is multi-layered since it represented a reaction to the whole spectrum of political, social and artistic motives which were relevant in American society after World War II, such as the nuclear bomb, the Korean War, Cold War and McCarthyism:

The Six Gallery reading was a direct and deliberate response to the culture of the bomb and to American power and wealth. To understand the cultural and political significance of the reading, it might be helpful to look at the United States in the era after World War II, an era that profoundly shaped Ginsberg and the Beat writers. [...]. In the aftermath of the war, citizens began to realize that the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki not only had ended the war but also had ushered in a new and frightening era. [...] As Americans became more aware of the dark side of the postwar era, and the dark side of humanity, too, the mood in America shifted and writers reflected it (Raskin 2004: 3-4).

Even though the United States had fought totalitarian regimes over in Europe, many writers felt that they did not belong to their own country any longer, a country which was getting totalitarian as well. Quoting from an essay by Tennessee Williams entitled 'The Art of Being a True Non-Conformist' (1948), Raskin states that American society was shaped by a reactionary set of prefabricated ideas and cages artists were trapped into:

American culture turned increasingly commercial, and writers turned increasingly to conformity: After an extensive visit to the United States, the British author Stephen

¹⁰⁹ For further readings on the San Francisco Renaissance see Ellingham Lewis, Kevin Killian, *Poet Be Like God: Jack Spicer and the San Francisco Renaissance* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998); French, Warren G. "The San Francisco Poetry Renaissance 1955-1960" (Twayne, 1991) Davidson, Michael, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Spender wrote in 1949 that authors like Henry Miller and Kenneth Rexroth were the 'last remnants of a race of independent writers'. At the same time, Spender noted, American writers were often isolated and, unlike European writers, deprived of a sustaining cultural community (Raskin 2004: 4-5).

The innovative potential of the poetry of the young Beat authors resided in its '[D]eep hunger for individual recognition, a desire to speak frankly and honestly about things that mattered, and, finally, a need for passionate personal involvement' (Cook 1971: 9-10). The poetry of the Beat Generation emerged as a reaction to the oppressive and conformist environment of 1950s US : 'It was a time during which most of the adult population was trapped in an intricate edifice of social conformity built of fear, suppressed hostility, and the simple desire to get along' (Cook 1971: 10), where access to economic wealth had plunged the population into the intellectual numbness of a new, broader middle class:

[M]any adult Americans experienced personal prosperity and some degree of affluence for the first time in their lives; the middle class was expanded in that decade by many millions [...] and once comfortably established, they embraced the values and symbols of middle-class life with all the fervor of religious converts (Cook 1971: 10).

Within this social framework, the Beat Generation was perceived as a threat by the Establishment because they 'questioned the conservative, corporate, and suburban values that were then so widely and publicly extolled. [...] they challenged them, and were soon widely publicized as rebels against the system' (Cook 1971: 10). Operating in a climate of open hostility ,where Beat authors were struggling to see their work published (for example, Jack Kerouac suffered numerous rejections of *On the road* between 1950 and 1956), or having to use pseudonyms to publish works considered taboo (such as William Burrough, whose *Junkie* was published by ACE Books in 1953 under the name of William Lee). Through the poetic happening at the Six Gallery, Beat 'Poetry came out of the closet [...], and off the printed page' (Raskin 2004: 6). As Lawrence Ferlinghetti wrote in the short essay titled 'Howl at the Frontiers', which introduces Bill Morgan's and Nancy Peters's *Howl on Trial. The Battle for Free Expression* (2006): 'The "Howl" that was heard around the world wasn't seized in San Francisco in 1956 just because it was judged obscure by cops, but because it attacked the bare roots of our dominant culture, the very Moloch heart of our consumer society' (Ferlinghetti in Morgan and Peters 2006: xi). *Howl* was the expression of a common feeling of disconnection that the many Americans felt from "American life", it

represented the scream of the individual which was being chewed up and spit out by the ‘society-machinery’ which regulated – or tried to regulate – every aspect of their lives: ‘It took until the mid-1950s for this postwar ferment and the visions of new generations to coalesce in a new cultural synthesis. And it happened in San Francisco, then still the last frontier in so many ways, with its “island mentality” that could be defined as a pioneer attitude of being “out there” on your own without reliance on government’ (*id.*: xi), consecrating ‘Howl’ as a ‘catalyst in a paradigm shift in American poetry and consciousness’ (*id.*: xii). Moreover, the Six Gallery reading functioned as a bridge between East coast poets (e.g. Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Lawrence Ferlinghetti)¹¹⁰ and West coast poets (e.g. Philip Whalen, Philip Lamantia, Gary Snyder), making it not only a local phenomenon, but an important cultural milestone across the country, one that culminated in the publication of *Howl* and its trial: ‘The *Howl* trial in 1957 was the confluence of two underground streams that had originated fifteen years earlier at opposite ends of the continent’ (French 1991: 6).

The day after the reading, Ginsberg received a telegram from Lawrence Ferlinghetti who owned the independent publishing house and bookshop City Lights Booksellers and Publisher which read: ‘I greet you at the beginning of a great career. When do I get the manuscript?’ (Raskin 2004: 19) echoing the famous words that Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote to Walt Whitman in 1855 after the publication of *Leaves of Grass*, which were of course familiar to Ginsberg: ‘I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere’.¹¹¹ Later on, Ferlinghetti would write about the telegram saying: ‘That night I went home and sent Ginsberg a Western Union telegram (imitating what I thought Emerson had written Whitman upon first reading *Leaves of Grass*) [...] When City Lights published *Howl and Other Poems* in 1956, the holy unholy voice of the title poem reverberated around the world among poets and intellectuals, in countries free and enslaved, from New York to Amsterdam to Paris to Prague to Belgrade to Calcutta to Kyoto’ (Ferlinghetti 2006: xii).

From a stylistic point of view, one of the main features of *Howl* is the poem’s highly performative nature. Allen Ginsberg was in the process of writing a poem which was near Kerouac’s style when he was first asked to arrange a poetry reading program: ‘I enclose first draft scribble notes of a poem I was writing, nearer in your style than anything. [...] An art gallery here asked me to arrange poetry reading program this fall’ (Morgan, 2008: 117-18, August 1955, letter

¹¹⁰ Even though they did not read their poems, both Kerouac and Ferlinghetti were present at the reading. Also Neal Cassady was at the Gallery for the event.

¹¹¹ Extract is quoted in Raskin 2004: 19.

to Jack Kerouac). *Howl*'s genesis is therefore strictly linked to the idea of performing the poem on stage for an audience, as demonstrated in a letter sent to friend John Allen Ryan in September 1955:

Hendrix asked me if I wanted to organize a poetry reading at the Six, and I didn't several months ago, not knowing of any poetry around worth hearing, but changed my fucking mind, [...] the program being Rexroth as introducer McClure reading new poems [...], Lamantia putting in an appearance to read John Hoffman's work [...], myself to read a long poem the first scraps of which I sent to Kerouac, you might look at it if you see him again. I don't have a copy or I'd send you a piece [...] and a bearded interesting Berkeley cat name of Snyder, I met him yesterday [...] (Morgan, 2008: 122-23).

The performative aspect of *Howl* represents a key feature of Beat poetry: in fact, the style in which the Beat poets intended to write their poems was strictly linked to the idea of musicality, in particular of blues. In the first letter in which Ginsberg mentions that he is writing a poem which will later become *Howl* - a letter sent to his brother Eugene Brooks on 16 August 1955 - Ginsberg wrote: '[I] am over the hump on a collection of last 4 years work and writing in a new style now, long prose poem strophes sort of surrealist' (Morgan 2008: 120), this new style resembled 'Kerouac's rhythmic style of prose' (*ibid.*) continues Ginsberg. This new rhythmic prose allowed the poet to write in a register which can be identified as sub-standard and conversational, giving him the opportunity to vary and challenge linguistic and metric structures:

I have been looking at early blues forms and think I will apply this form of elliptical semisurrealist imagery to rhymed blues type lyrics. Nobody but Auden's written literary blues forms, his are more like English ballads, not purified Americana. Blues forms also provide a real varied syncopated metre, with many internal variants and changes of form in midstream like conversational thought. Most of my time is actually occupied with this type thought and activity, writing a lot and therefore beginning to change style [...] (Morgan 2008: 121, August 1955, letter to Eugene Brooks).

It seems quite clear that Ginsberg had a rather precise idea of what kind of effect he wanted to convey through his poetics: 'a midstream like conversational thought' with 'internal variants and changes'. It is with these motives in mind that Ginsberg wrote the poem that would later become the manifesto of the Beat movement as a whole and of a new generation of Americans, at the same

time drawing a line of separation between him and the established poets with whom he was often associated and their style, like T.S. Eliot and Walt Whitman.

The fame that *Howl* achieved as a literary work is also due to the vicissitudes that the poem went through because of censorship in the US at the time of its publication. Together with Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg decided to have the poem printed in the UK because of economic reasons and then have it shipped to the US. Both Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti were aware that there were risks for the book to be subject to investigation at the customs, as Ginsberg wrote to his brother in December 1955:

By the way I have a problem. Legal – my own book is due, the mss. is due, before I leave here, to be printed in England for economy's sake, costs only \$150 there for 500 copies of 40 pages booklet (comprising single poem, *Howl for Carl Solomon*, Lou¹¹² saw it) – however City Lights, the people here publishing for me, are afraid it will be held up in customs for obscenity, since I use cunts, cocks, balls, assholes, snatches and fucks and comes liberally scattered around in the prosody – the question being, do you know anything about the customs law appeals, etc. in case there is trouble, or [...] are they likely if they notice it to forthwith burn the books without notice for appeal.

Allen Ginsberg to Eugene Brooks
26 December 1955
(Morgan 2008: 124)

In fact 520 copies of the book were pulled and confiscated by collector of customs Chester MacPhee at the *Embarcadero* in San Francisco. MacPhee's decision to confiscate the poem generated a debate that involved not only journalists and literary critics, but also members of the public, creating a clash between those who praised the work of the collector of customs, and those who condemned his decision as falling outside of his duties and capability of judgment. The reason that MacPhee provided for seizing the book was that: 'The words and the sense of the writing is obscene. You wouldn't want your children to come across it' (Morgan 2006: 103).¹¹³ The fact that a collector of customs would advocate the right to seize a work of literature is without any doubt significant from the broader perspective of freedom of speech and its mechanisms when encountering the public in the social and cultural American framework in the 50s, in relation to literature. In her short essay "Milestones of Literary Censorship", contained in *Howl on Trial* (2006), Nancy J. Peters provides a brief and clear overview over the mechanisms of censorship in the US, from which the trial of *Howl* emerges as a turning point in censorship history:

¹¹² Louis Ginsberg, Ginsberg's father.

¹¹³ The quotation appears in an article published on March 28, 1957 in *San Francisco Chronicle*, with the title "Iron Curtain on the Embarcadero", by Abe Mellinkoff, collected in Morgan B. and Peters N.J., eds., 2006, *Howl on trial, The battle for Free Expression*, City Lights Books, San Francisco, p. 103.

During the century prior to the *Howl* decision in 1957,¹¹⁴ freedom of expression in America, with few exceptions, did not extend to any writing that contained overtly sexual references. Not matter how beautifully written or ethical its viewpoint, if a work of literature employed frank sexual language or depicted sexual acts, it was considered obscene and banned in the US (Morgan and Peters 2006: 5).

The concept of *obscenity* though has always carried a certain degree of disagreement: what is considered obscene? Where lies the line between decent and indecent? Peters states that the law on obscenity in America is a ‘patchwork of court decisions, made up of old British common law, federal, state and local laws, as well as US Customs and US Postal Service regulations’ (Morgan 2006: 5). In such a complex picture, every decision made in court was the result of contingent and at times contradictory considerations even though the matter on obscenity was, for a long time, defined on the base of the ‘Hicklin Rule’, a case heard in London in 1868, that took in consideration the likelihood for the material to ‘deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influence’ (Morgan 2006: 7), quite eloquently referring in particular to children and women. Peters argues that US law incorporated much of British law and that the ‘Hicklin Rule’ - which allowed the decision to ban a work of art to be made also on the basis of a single passage extrapolated from the text and analysed out of context – was used in a number of cases, also during the ‘*Howl*’ one. In the specific case of ‘*Howl*’, the literary merit of the work, which was advocated in court as the reason why the ban on the book had to be considered inappropriate, was the result of the application of the ‘Roth standard’ (Roth v. United States):

Book dealer Samuel Roth had been prosecuted in New York for distributing such magazines as *American Aphrodite* and *Photo*. The US Supreme Court upheld his conviction, but created an important new standard. Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. concluded that obscenity was not protected by the First Amendment but that literature was. The test of obscenity now became “whether to the average person, applying contemporary standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest (Morgan 2006: 11).

The fact that the judge Clayton W. Horn decided to apply the ‘Roth standard’ to literature set a precedent in case of obscenity in literature: in this way ACLU could defend ‘*Howl*’s literary

¹¹⁴ Here Peters refers to the court decision made by Judge Clayton W. Horn on 03 October 1957 that dismissed all charges pressed against Shigeyoshi Murao - who had sold a copy of the book to an undercover police officer - and City Lights Books. The judge’s decision ruled ‘*Howl*’ as not obscene.

value against the accusation of being prurient: the decision on *Howl* represented a dent in the mechanism, something which led to a number of decisions which lifted restrictions on several works of art – among which Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* in 1961 and William S. Burroughs *Naked Lunch* in 1966. The decision by Judge Horn took in consideration the redeeming social value of the poem, when he stated: 'I conclude the book *Howl and Other Poems* does have some redeeming importance, and I find the book is not obscene. The defendant is found not guilty' (Morgan 2006: 199).¹¹⁵

The reception of *Howl and Other Poems* in American magazines and newspapers appeared to be split between those who saw in *Howl* and in the Beat Movement the beginning of a new poetic and literary current which would dishevel the established poetic tradition with its disruptive power, its reliance on the forms of improvisation and be-bop rhythms, and those who dismissed it as a nonsense which lacked decorum. Although two things that are common to all articles and reviews are the fact that – independently from the opinion on the poem itself – every reviewer or critic recognized Ginsberg's potential as a poet, and the fact that the poem is always framed in the context of the poetic canon of the tradition that inspired Ginsberg.

The first review of *Howl* was written by Gregory Corso in September 1956.¹¹⁶ There are two things that immediately catch the eye of the reader in this short piece. Firstly, Corso stresses the importance of Ginsberg's vocal performance as complementary to the enjoyment of the poem ['Howl is a poem to be read aloud, but only by the Howler...any other Howler would screw it up, this for those who are unable to hear Ginsberg read his 'Howl' will have to settle for its visuality' (Morgan 2006: 47)]. As Tyler Hoffman points out in *American Poetry in Performance. From Walt Whitman to Hip Hop* (2013): 'As Corso insists, if one cannot hear Ginsberg read the poem, that person must fall back on the visual field of the poem on the page, bringing to hit his own hipness, which may allow him to hear what is going on' (Hoffman 2013: 139). Hoffman's comment leads to the second thing that stands out in Corso's review: I am referring to his commentary about the audience that should receive 'Howl'. Corso is very clear when he says that one must be 'hip enough to visualize it' and that: 'if you are a drag, go read [Richard] Wilbur or something. But for the hipsters, the angels, the Rimbauds, etc. etc., I, and all the Universe, recommend Howl' (Morgan 2006: 47). The poem is directed to a narrow circle of model readers, to use Eco's definition, who will be able to receive the text in its entirety thanks to the social and cultural reference system they belong to. Here, Corso's objective is to define 'Howl' as an artwork

¹¹⁵ Quoted from the decision by Judge C.W. Horn on 3 October 1957.

¹¹⁶ It seems difficult to trace back where this review was actually published.

that represents a clash with the established literary tradition, much more than indicating the poem as a product directed to a specific sub-group. This consideration is also challenged by Selby (1996), who observes how the book format of *Howl and Other Poems* reveals that the work was intended for a larger, younger audience to which Ginsberg was to be presented as the popular poet-hero: 'As Number 4 in the City Lights Pocket Poets series, it is designed to fit into the back pocket of a pair of jeans. It is to be seen as the poetry of a mass, youth audience, and Ginsberg its spokesman' (Selby 1996: 64). In this sense, in the following 'technical notes', Corso inscribes the poem in the literary tradition 'Howl' blossomed in, (Lorca, Apollinaire, Whitman, Eliot), thus legitimizing its poetical value, and at the same time indicating its nature as new and groundbreaking: 'Style: romantic, after a long dry classical necessary spell of Eliot, Pound, Williams. Tradition, Christopher Smart, Lorca, Apollinaire, Crane, Whitman. [...] Line: Long, a development out of short-line W.C. Williams practice to accommodate sudden bursts of exclamatory energy' (Morgan 2006: 47). The keyword in this passage is the word 'necessary' referred to the 'classical spell' of poetry 'Howl' detaches itself from, although remaining in its lineage as exemplified by the repetition of the name of W.C. Williams both in the 'style' part and the description of 'Howl's prosody.

On 2 September 1956, an article published in the *New York Times* with the title 'West Coast Rhythms'¹¹⁷ by Richard Eberhart (lecturer and critic) describes the poetic *milieu* of the American West Coast as the 'liveliest spot in the country in poetry today' (Eberhart 1956: 7) where, thanks to the activity of Ruth Witt-Diamant and Kenneth Rexroth - together with the interest shown by universities and colleges – poetry was engaging a larger number of people coming from different age, social and cultural groups. In this context, Eberhart defines 'Howl' as the 'most remarkable poem of the young group' and Ginsberg as a poet who developed a *brave new medium*: 'This poem has created a furor of praise or abuse whenever read or heard. It is a powerful work, cutting through to dynamic meaning. Ginsberg thinks he is going forward by going back to the methods of Whitman' (*id.*: 18). Again, it is possible to appreciate a critical comment that embeds 'Howl' in a pre-existent established classic poetic strand. Eberhart continues by stressing the destructive violence of the poem and its Biblical dimension: 'It is Biblical in its repetitive grammatical build-up. It is a howl against everything in our mechanistic civilization which kills the spirit, assuming that the louder you shout the more likely you are to

¹¹⁷ The article can be accessed online at <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbXxwb2VtdGhhdGNhYm5nZWRhbnZWRhbWVya4OjRlM2MzYTA5MTExNWY5MDA>. Last visited 14 March 2018.

be heard' (*id*). Eberhart highlights the function of the poetics of *Howl*, and its social aspect as it creates an anti-establishment narrative: 'It lays bare the nerves of suffering and spiritual struggle. Its positive force and energy come from a redemptive quality of love, although it destructively catalogues evils of our time from physical deprivation to madness' (*id*). Ginsberg, *Howl* and its critique take up the biggest part of the article, meanwhile a number of other poets – mostly those who read at the Six Gallery – get a few lines each.

In the article 'A Howl of Protest in San Francisco', that appeared in *The New Republic* on 16 September 1957,¹¹⁸ Norman Podhoretz moves from the same consideration of the Beats' social narrative through their poetic engagement, but he remains somewhat critical about both the literary quality of the poets of the San Francisco Renaissance and their supposed *avant-gardism*. The first part of Podhoretz's article describes with a rather critic tone the ferment which animated San Francisco's poetic scene:

During the past few months, the godfather of the San Francisco Renaissance, Kenneth Rexroth, has been swashbuckling his way through the paperback periodicals with a series of lively, if intellectually irresponsible essays on the young poets, novelists, and painters of what he calls the "Beat Generation" (as distinguished from its more respectable contemporaries, the "Silent Generation") (Podhoretz 1957: 20).

Podhoretz puts the Beat Generation in contrast with the previous generation of authors, claiming that the group newly formed in San Francisco considers the Silent Generation 'academic and square'. The periodicals to which the author of the article refers to are *World Writing 11*, *New Directions 16* and *Evergreen Review 2*, and they might represent a sign of the increasing impact of Beat poetry with the wider public and in the mainstream media. Podhoretz claims in fact that the first two periodicals contained mostly poems from the Silent Generation (and some traces of the San Francisco Renaissance), meanwhile the latter goes 'the whole hog, gives over its entire contents to the Renaissance' (*id*). Podhoretz is not impressed by the Beat poets: 'It turns out on close inspection that the San Francisco group is composed of two or three good writers, a half dozen mediocre talents, and several worthless fellow-travellers' (*id.*). This group of poets shared a common rebellious attitude towards mainstream American culture, a rebellion that was built around jazz music, consumption of drugs, homosexuality and vagabondism:

¹¹⁸ *The New Republic*, September 1957, Vol.137, Issue 13, p.20. The article can be accessed online at <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxwb2VtdGhhbGNoYW5nZWZhbnVyaWNhfGd4OmUIYmQzMWZmZTAxYjI2Yg>, Last visited 14/03/2018.

most of them like using bop-language, and though they are all highly sophisticated, they fancy themselves to be in close touch with the primitive and the rugged. They talk endlessly about love; they are fond of Christian imagery [...] Occasionally the rebelliousness in these poems and stories can descend to the level of puerile sniveling and self-righteous braggadocio (Podhoretz 1957: 20).

It is interesting to notice how Podhoretz describes as the ‘worst offender’ Michael Rumaker, a writer who came in touch with the Beats after hitchhiking to San Francisco from Philadelphia. In his long story ‘The Desert’, according to the critic, operates ‘the fantastic notion that homosexuality can be dressed up in a religious image or two and then offered without further ado as an adequate protest against the vulgarity and cruelty of American life’ (idem). In Podhoretz’s article, the shallow and negligent criticism of Rumaker’s work is contrasted to Ginsberg’s ‘remarkable’ poem ‘Howl’, in which the poet offers a more true and personal criticism of American society: ‘his assault of America is a personal cry that rings true, because his hysteria is tempered with humor, and because the dope-addicts, perverts, and maniacs he celebrates are not finally glamorized’ (idem).

In the *Partisan Review* (Spring 1957) *Howl and Other Poems* gets roundly criticised by critic John Hollander.¹¹⁹ Hollander starts his review as follows: ‘It is only fair to Allen Ginsberg...to remark on the utter lack of decorum of any kind in his dreadful little volume’ (Hyde 1984: 161). Hollander criticizes the poem’s celebration of irregular lives of the figures which animates Ginsberg’s world, and also the poem’s pretentious ‘hopped-up tone’ which serves to poeticize the nonsensical truth of the poet’s ‘disturbed pantheon’. Ginsberg’s poems, notes Hollander, must have been born in the course of a number of frequent ‘*festspiel*’ that happened on the West Coast, where the poet and his fellow writers read their works to groups of ‘writhing and adoring youths’ (Hyde 1984: 161). Although Hollander is critical of ‘Howl’, he understands the potential of Ginsberg’s writing and of the movement as a whole. In fact he explains that there are two main reasons why he wasted so much time on a ‘very short and very tiresome’ book like *Howl and Other Poems*: the first one is that the Beat poets were receiving a lot of attention by that portion of audience that disliked the ‘Poetry of Suburbia’, as it was defined by Gregory Horace in

¹¹⁹ Hollander’s review appears in Hyde 1984, p. 161. The original article appeared in the *Partisan Review*, Spring 1957, Vol. 24 n. 2, pp. 296-303 with the title ‘Poetry Chronicle’ by John Hollander, and is accessible at <http://archives.bu.edu/collections/partisan-review>. Last visited March 16th 2018.

an article that appeared in the *Partisan Review* one year earlier, in 1956.¹²⁰ With the term ‘suburban poetry’ Horace refers to that poetry which had become popular during the 1950s and that incarnated the *Zeitgeist* of American bourgeois, glossy, magazine-like culture. It is interesting to note that among the works that he reviewed as ‘suburban’ there is a collection of poems by Richard Wilbur (*Things of the World*), the same poet that Corso mentions in opposition to Ginsberg in his review of *Howl*. Hollander predicts that those who were not satisfied with this suburban wave of poetry would have turned to the ‘subterranean’:

[...] Mr. Ginsberg and his circle are being given a certain amount of touting by those who disapprove of what Horace Gregory [...] christened “The Poetry of Suburbia” [...] I shouldn’t be a bit surprised if *Howl* and its eventual progeny were accorded some milder version of the celebration Colin Wilson has received in England. [...] If it suddenly appeared that there were no possible worlds between suburbia and subterranean, I expect most of us would go underground (Hyde 1984: 161).

Hollander recognizes the captivating features of the subterranean Beat poetry, understanding that that would talk to a public which was not interested in mainstream bourgeois poetry. Although the review is highly dismissive of *Howl*, the reviewer cannot look away from the fact that Ginsberg has ‘a real talent and a marvellous ear. It shows up in some of the funniest and most grotesque lines of “Howl”’ (Hyde 1984: 161), and that there is a good poet behind the ‘modish façade of a frantic and *talentlos* avant-garde’ (Hyde 1984:161).

A second important factor in the reception of *Howl* and in the construction of its fame is the fact that the interest of the media was polarized by the confiscation of the poem and its subsequent trial. Articles appeared in several newspapers attacking or defending the decision of customs collector MacPhee of seizing the book. Also the wider public engaged in the debate with letters to newspapers which discussed the importance of protecting the US and its citizens from such horrendous literature, and those who cherished the right of freedom of expression. In an article that appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* six days after the confiscation of the collection of poems, on 28 March 1957, journalist Abe Mellinkoff harshly criticizes MacPhee’s conduct, arguing that if a ‘literary iron curtain is to be erected along the Embarcadero, let’s put

¹²⁰ The article appeared in the *Partisan Review*, Fall 1956, vol. 23 n. 4, pp. 545-52 with the title “The Poetry of Suburbia, (6 Reviews)”, by Horace Gregory, and is accessible at <http://archives.bu.edu/collections/partisan-review>. Last visited March 16th 2018.

some professors of literature down there to patrol it' (Morgan 2006: 103),¹²¹ since the collector of customs has no knowledge of modern poetry, 'What I mean [is that] he is ignorant on the subject' (Morgan 2006: 103) and also it's not his duty to protect anybody's children. Two months later, in May 1957, in the column 'Between the Lines' of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, William Hogan gives room to a statement in which Lawrence Ferlinghetti defends *Howl and Other Poems*.¹²² Ferlinghetti's statement opens with a sarcastic thank you note to Chester MacPhee: 'The San Francisco Collector of Customs deserves a word of thanks for seizing Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* and thereby rendering it famous. Perhaps we could have a medal made. It would have taken years for critics to accomplish what the good collector did in a day, merely by calling the book obscene' (Morgan 2006: 107). Ferlinghetti then continues by stressing the literary value of the poem, arguing that *Howl* is the most significant long poem written in the US after the second World War, and that it represents an 'archetypal configuration of the mass culture which produced it' (Morgan 2006: 107).

4.2.3 Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*

The publication of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* in Italy is linked to Pivano's social ties with authors and intermediators based in the United States. Kerouac's *On the Road* was among the first volumes of the Beat Generation published in Italy. Also in this case, Pivano's trailblazing operation of mediation is indebted to her social ties to Matthew Josephson and Hannah Geffen. Pivano had initially met the Josephsons in Paris, where they had moved during the 1920s to join the American intellectuals that Gertrude Stein had called the 'Lost Generation'.¹²³ Matthew Josephson was a writer, economist and literary editor. He co-directed the US literary magazine *Broom* (1921-1924) and *transition* (1927-1938).¹²⁴ *Broom* was produced in Europe and was considered the journal that opened the path towards American literary internationalism. *Broom* was also an inspiration for the production of a second fundamental international literary journal in the history of US literature, *secession* (small 's'). Hannah Geffen, writer, historian and director

¹²¹ 'Iron Curtain on the Embarcadero', by Abe Mellinkoff, in *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 March 1957, collected in Morgan B. and Peters N.J., 2006.

¹²² 'This World: Between the Lines', by William Hogan, 19 May 1957, in *San Francisco Chronicle*, collected in Morgan B. and Peters N.J. (2006), pp. 107-9.

¹²³ 'Per raggiungere [...] il gruppo di espatriati americani che Gertrude Stein avrebbe definito "La Generazione Perduta"' (Pivano 2008: 426).

¹²⁴ On these magazines see, among others, Nicholls 2015; Brooker and Thacker 2015; Thacker 2015.

of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was a feminist activist and author of *The Golden Threads* (1949), dedicated to the women working in the textile industry in Massachusetts between 1822 and 1850, and of the volume *Jeanette Ranking, First Lady in Congress: A Biography* (1947). In 1945, Hannah Geffen published, together with Malcolm Cowley, a volume dedicated to French surrealist poet Louis Aragon, titled *Aragon: Poet of the French Resistance*.¹²⁵ Pivano's social tie with the Josephsons became stronger during her 1956 trip to the United States and through them she had the opportunity to come in contact with other important figures in the American intellectual milieu, among whom: Edmund Wilson,¹²⁶ Arthur Miller and Norman Mailer. She also met John Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson's son, Ernest Hemingway and the Puerto Rican governor Luís Muñoz.

More importantly, in 1957 Pivano received a copy of *On the Road* from Hannah Josephson only a few days after its publication by Viking Press.¹²⁷ Pivano's reader's report on *On the Road* was submitted to Mondadori on 16 September 1957, just a few weeks after its publication in the United States, championed by Malcolm Cowley at Viking Press after six years of rejections: Kerouac had finished his novel already in 1951 but since it had received several rejections. In her report, after a brief summary of the plot, Pivano offers a critical reading of the novel, pointing out strengths and weaknesses. She writes that, even though the book is not a masterpiece and it is evidently flawed in its structure – in which two different travel accounts are held together by a very weak link through the main characters – it has something 'strange', something which might make *On the Road* the book of the new generation, something which was never seen in any other book before:

Il libro non è forse un capolavoro ed è pieno di difetti. Per esempio il racconto della vita di Sal Paradise è troppo lungo se il protagonista è Dean e spesso pare che Dean sia solo un pretesto, un legame per unire due racconti distinti, entrambi di viaggio. Eppure c'è qualcosa di strano: forse è davvero il libro della nuova generazione, ma certo c'è qualcosa che non si è ancora visto in altri libri nuovi. Il senso della vanità, dello scombinamento, della sconnessione di questa nuova generazione alla James Dean: sporchi, poveri, avidi di emozioni, ignari di leggi morali e

¹²⁵ Hannah Josephson, *The Golden Threads*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York 1949; Hannah Josephson, *Jeanette Ranking, First Lady in Congress: A biography*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis 1974; Hannah Josephson e Malcolm Cowley, a cura di, *Aragon, Poet of the French Resistance*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York 1945.

¹²⁶ Edmund Wilson was a writer for the New Yorker, who had praised Pivano's introduction to a volume by James Branch Cabell)

¹²⁷ 'Fu lei a mandarmi *On the Road* e molti altri libri che mi aiutarono a capire il trasformarsi della consapevolezza letteraria d'America' (Pivano 2003: 12).

così via. Può darsi che questo scrittore trentacinquenne diventi proprio il simbolo della nuova generazione (Pivano 2008: 564-565).¹²⁸

Pivano's report was dismissed and the book rejected by the editorial director at Mondadori: in her diary, Pivano claims that she decided to bypass the editor's decision and directly approached Arnoldo Mondadori at a party. She told the president that she had a book that had the potential to be 'very profitable' for the publisher (Pivano 2008: 565) and, after Mondadori wrote down the name of Kerouac on a small notepad, the book would be published two years later, in 1959 with the title *Sulla Strada*, translated by Magda de Cristofaro with an introduction by Fernanda Pivano. *On the Road* was published in the *Medusa* collection (and all the copies of the first edition sold quite quickly): in the meantime, Pivano was actively trying to engage with the wider public, sending articles to newspapers and holding talks about the Beats in various settings. In 1958, the director of *La Stampa* rejected Pivano's article about Kerouac's novel arguing that that was not relevant for the readers of the newspaper (Pivano 2008: 637).

The first, direct contact with Jack Kerouac took place in April 1960. At that time Fernanda Pivano was working to publish one issue of the literary magazine *Caffè*, directed by Giambattista Vicari, dedicated entirely to the poetry of the Beat Generation. Pivano claims that – after collecting materials for over a year – the publication was dismissed by the director of the magazine: 'Nel gennaio 1960, [...] avevo già proposto da mesi a Giambattista Vicari di fare un Numero Unico del suo *Caffè* dedicato ai poeti cosiddetti beat. Vicari non lo fece mai, scoraggiato dai consigli degli amici e dalle difficoltà organizzative' (Pivano 2003: 16).¹²⁹ On this occasion, Pivano wrote to Jack Kerouac to ask which poems she could include in the issue of the magazine, thus sowing the seeds of a future tight relationship with the American writer:

Cher Mademoiselle ---- I can read about 80% in Italian so send any articles you want --- Poems for you to select for Il Caffè can be selected as you wish from MEXICO CITY BLUES [...] SUBTERRANEANS or DHARMA BUMS [...] I read your articles in SUCCESSO and EPOCA, very

¹²⁸ The book is maybe not a masterpiece and is full of flaws. For example, the story of Sal Paradise's life is too long if Dean is the protagonist, and very often one has the impression that Dean is just an excuse, a link that keeps together two distinct stories [...] But there is something odd about it: maybe it really is the book of the new generation, and it is evident that the novel has something that cannot be found in other new books. The sense of vanity, of confusion, of disconnection of the new generation *à la* James Dean [...] I believe that this writer [...] might become the symbol of the new generation."

¹²⁹ 'In January 1960, [...] I had suggested to Giambattista Vicari to publish a Numero Unico of his *Caffè* dedicated to the so-called beat poets. Vicari would never publish it, discouraged by friends' advice and difficulties in organising it'. The letter is dated 20 April 1960.

good [...] someday I would like to play your piano on the terrace [...] But I'll come to Milano someday and see you (Pivano 2003: 17).¹³⁰

The correspondence between Pivano and Kerouac became more frequent during the following years. Kerouac visited Milan in 1966 for the launch of the novel *Big Sur* published by Mondadori and was interviewed by Fernanda Pivano for the Italian national broadcaster RAI.

4.2.4 William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*

Notwithstanding the editorial skepticism towards the publication of Beat authors, from the end of the 1950s Pivano worked tirelessly to make the new American literature available to the Italian public. In 1960 she invited Gregory Corso to Italy to have his pictures taken for an article on the poet that she was writing for the journal *Successo*. The contact with Gregory Corso appears to be the first direct tie with a writer of the Beat Generation. The social connection with the poet allowed for Pivano's name to circulate in the *milieu* of the Beat Generation as demonstrated in two letters that Pivano received from William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac in 1960. In March 1960, Pivano submitted to Mondadori the reader's report for Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* and in April of the same year she received a package from the writer which included his novel and the request to personally translate it into Italian, in the light of the positive things he had heard about her from Gregory Corso: 'Dear Doctor Pivano, [...] I thank you for your efforts on my behalf and your interest in my work [...] I hope that you will consider translating the book as Gregory has spoken highly of your abilities as a translator' (Pivano 2003: 17). Burroughs's communication with Pivano is testament to the mechanism of mobilization of social capital through the creation of strategic ties, and subsequently of the increased consideration of Pivano's social credentials within the circle of American Beat writers. As observed by Lin, "putting in a word" carries a certain weight in the decision-making process regarding an individual' (Lin 1999: 31). Thanks to the positive feedback relayed by Gregory Corso, writer William Burroughs recognised Pivano as the go-to person for matters of cultural dissemination in Italy and decided to put in her hands the task of translating and disseminating his work in Italy. Similarly, also Jack Kerouac had truly heard about Pivano through her connection with Gregory Corso.

¹³⁰ Of the two articles Jack Kerouac refers to, the one that appeared in *Epoca* was published on 06 December 1959 with the title 'L'america si allarma per a Beat Generation' meanwhile I was not able to find further details about the article published in *Successo*. On this, see section 4.2.2 on William Burroughs, and Pivano 2003: 21.

Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* was published in 1958 by Grove Press in the US and by Olympia Press in Europe. In the reader's report on *Naked Lunch* (28th March 1960), although acknowledging the issues connected to the inaccessible language and its translation (issues which can be resolved, according to Pivano) and the controversial sexual descriptions (which might make some readers' 'nose[s] turn up'), Pivano advocates for the need to translate the book since it was of too high historical and literary value to 'let it go to another publisher'. It is interesting to note that Pivano states that the interest for the content of *Naked Lunch* was drawing so much attention as to be comparable to the clamour generated by the Joyce's *Ulysses*:

[...] Quest'opera sta suscitando in America da parecchi mesi un vero e proprio frastuono tra i critici di punta; tutto clandestino, naturalmente. È considerato il quadro più allucinante che sia mai stato scritto di un certo aspetto della società moderna e suscita contenutisticamente un interesse pari soltanto a quello suscitato a suo tempo da Ulisse. Giudizio editoriale: Se lo stile è di stampo europeo, il linguaggio è così crudamente Beat che è praticamente impossibile capirlo senza un glossario o senza conoscere questo slang. Non riesco a immaginare chi potrebbe tradurlo; ma questi sono problemi che si possono sempre risolvere. Il libro è molto importante dal punto di vista storico ed è sicuramente molto interessante dal punto di vista letterario; ma non fa nessuna concessione al lettore medio, che dovrà accontentarsi di rubacchiare qua e là qualche descrizione di omosessuali adolescenti all'opera. Sia chiaro che queste descrizioni [...] sono molto "audaci" e [...] possono far torcere il nasino alle signorine che si sono virtuosamente appassionate a Nabokof. Tuttavia mi pare che il libro sia troppo importante, almeno da un punto di vista storico, per regalarlo a qualche altro editore.¹³¹

Fernanda Pivano, reader's report on *Naked Lunch*

28 March 1960

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori – Milan

Pivano's report was a response to the reader's reports filed by Bruno Maffi (23rd March 1960) and Bruno Tasso (25th March 1960) who both vehemently rejected the novel, claiming that the uproar

¹³¹ 'Lately, this work has been causing a racket among the most important critics in the US; everything is clandestine, obviously. The volume is considered the most shocking portrayal of a certain aspect of modern society that has ever been written. For its content, it draws an interest which is equal only to the one drawn by Ulysses. Editorial opinion: even though European in style, the language is so crudely Beat that it is basically impossible to understand it without a glossary or without knowing such slang. I cannot imagine who could translate it; but these are problems that can always be solved. The book is very important from the historical point of view and it is undoubtedly very interesting from the literary point of view; it doesn't give much to the average reader that, at best, will have to make do with stealing some description of adolescent homosexuals in action. These descriptions are [...] very "daring" and [...] they turn up the noses of the ladies who virtuously got passionate about Nabokov. However, I believe that the novel is too important, at least from the historical point of view, to leave it in the hands of another publisher.' Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero AB*, b. 11, fasc. 130, (William Burroughs), Fernanda Pivano, 28/03/1960.

caused by the *Naked Lunch* was only due to the advertisement campaign which had been built around the book, rather than its contents, which the two collaborators found ‘repulsive’ and ‘boring’.¹³²

On the same day of Pivano’s report, also Elio Vittorini, editor for Mondadori, submitted his own views on Burroughs’s masterpiece: after expressing his doubts regarding the literary value of the novel for the wider public, Vittorini claimed that the novelty of the work had nothing to do with Joyce’s *Ulysses* (thus referring directly to Pivano’s commentary), but rather that it was evidently inspired by the poetry of Lautreaumont and by surrealist automatic writing. Nonetheless, Vittorini recognised the critical historic value of *Naked Lunch* as a document which depicted American Beat literature and neo-decadentism, encompassing all the ‘modern phenomenological ideas about existence’. Even though Elio Vittorini does not provide a final comment on the volume in this specific reader’s report, it appears that Mondadori eventually bought the rights of the book and the publication process put on hold until 1962, when Vittorini filed a second, final and negative report:

Ora che ho potuto leggere il libro nella sua integrità preciso che il suo valore sul piano artistico si limita a una certa (e vaga) innocenza di tipo rimbaudiano nei riguardi delle cose scabrose. [...] Inoltre i due anni trascorsi dal marzo 1960, portando gli interessi della gente in altre direzioni, hanno tolto al libro ogni importanza di caso letterario sicché più niente sussiste delle ragioni per le quali (a parte la paura di lasciarlo cadere in mano alla concorrenza) lo abbiamo preso. Consiglierei quindi di girarlo ad altro editore che ami le grane coi tribunali come mezzo pubblicitario.¹³³

Elio Vittorini, reader’s report on *Naked Lunch*

16 February 1962

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milano

Vittorini’s final rejection of *Naked Lunch* was, in this second reader’s report, motivated by a lack of artistic value attributed to the novel and also by the fact that, after two years from its publication

¹³² The reader’s reports by Maffi and Tasso are both contained in the folder *Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Segreteria editoriale estero - AB, b. 11, fasc. 130 (William Burroughs)*.

¹³³ ‘Now that I had the opportunity to read the novel in its entirety, I confirm that its artistic value is limited to a kind of (vague) innocence of the Rimbaud type regarding the obscene. [...] Moreover, the two years that have passed from March 1960 have brought the interest to the public towards other directions, depriving the book of any importance as a literary case, voiding in this way the reasons why we bought it in the first place (except our fear of leaving the novel in the hands of our competitors). I would therefore suggest we turn the book to another editor, one that might want to be involved in a legal case and use it as a means for publicity.’ Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero AB, b. 11, fasc. 130, (William Burroughs), Elio Vittorini, 16/02/1962.*

in the US and Europe, the interest of the public had turned elsewhere, depriving *Naked Lunch* of its *literary case* factor. Vittorini's final judgment was to leave the book to another publishing house that might capitalize on the publicity which would come from a trial for publishing a novel that might be considered obscene and investigated by the censor. In a letter to Odette Hummel, William Burroughs's agent, Arnoldo Mondadori suggested that *Naked Lunch* should be pitched for publication to another publisher, SugarCo. In the letter, sent on 12 April 1962, Arnoldo Mondadori cleverly motivated this decision claiming that, because of the high number of projects they were working on, the publisher Mondadori would not be able to have *Naked Lunch* published by the deadline proposed by the agent and his author. Moreover, he added the doubts concerning the censorship that might have been imposed on the novel because of its content. For these reasons, Mondadori suggested letting the rights of the book to a 'good publisher' that Mondadori had a 'good relationship with'. SugarCo published the novel in 1964, with the title *Pasto nudo*, in an Italian translation by Claudio Gorlier and Donatella Manganotti, with a preface by Oreste del Buono.¹³⁴ It is worth noting that, as can be seen from a letter sent by Pivano to Elio Crovi in 1965,¹³⁵ Fernanda Pivano had initially suggested to Mondadori she could translate the novel, as hoped by Burroughs himself. Mondadori preferred asking Gorlier, even though the translator had clearly stated that he probably was not the best fit for the job (although he accepted anyway).

4.3 Malcolm Cowley and the socio-biographical method

During the last days of her American tour, Fernanda Pivano met, among others: Francis Scott Fitzgerald's daughter, Frances Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound and Malcolm Cowley, who Pivano defined 'il critico letterario più illuminato del suo tempo' (Pivano 1995: 29).¹³⁶ A writer, historian, academic, literary critic and collaborator for Viking Press, Malcolm Cowley (1898 –

¹³⁴ '[...] dato il peso dei nostri impegni editoriali non abbiamo però assolutamente alcuna possibilità di fare uscire il volume in tempo. Ci rendiamo benissimo conto sia delle sue esigenze che di quelle dell'autore perché il libro esca il più presto possibile, e non desideriamo affatto ostacolare questo più che legittimo desiderio. D'altro canto, avevamo già qualche perplessità data la scabrosità del testo: come certamente le è noto, la nostra autorità giudiziaria è stata recentemente molto attiva nel colpire le pubblicazioni che avessero comunque un carattere diciamo...non del tutto ortodosso. [...] una buona casa editrice milanese con la quale noi siamo in ottimi rapporti - sarebbe disposta a uscire anche subito. Saremmo quindi noi i primi che per favorire l'autore, suggeriremmo la cessione del contratto per *Naked Lunch* alla casa SUGAR.' Arnoldo Mondadori to Odette Hummel, 12th April 1962, Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan.

¹³⁵ Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero* - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg).

¹³⁶ 'The most enlightened literary critic of the time'.

1989) centred his cultural activity on the discovery and promotion of new and unknown writers who were regularly dismissed by major publishers. He had published the biographies of Hemingway and Faulkner in the renowned Portable series, together with Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* in 1957 (which had until then been rejected by other publishers).¹³⁷ During her trip in the United States, Pivano had the opportunity to closely observe Cowley's approach to literary diffusion, which mirrored in many ways her own professional strategy:

[...] parlava al suo pubblico con l'entusiasmo della scoperta. Era dunque uno scopritore, lo studioso che aveva formato la letteratura americana che conosciamo; [...] diffondeva scrittori sconosciuti in conferenze e seminari [...]. Erano usciti i suoi libri sempre polemici ma chiarificatori [...] avevo avuto il privilegio di [...] ascoltarlo per ore parlare del suo modo di far uscire un autore dal contesto dei suoi libri e riferirlo al contesto della sua società e della sua vita, del suo modo di lasciarsi definire sprezzantemente 'divulgativo' pur di far conoscere a tutti uno scrittore magari difficile (Pivano 2008: 490-494).¹³⁸

Cowley's approach represented a model and an inspiration for Pivano who admired the critic's ability of 'rendere gli autori da lui presentati vivi come personaggi e connessi pagina per pagina alle storie da loro narrate' (Pivano 1961: 411).¹³⁹

In an unpublished interview with Vanessa Chizzini (1996), Pivano was adamant about the effect of his praxis and pragmatism in shaping her own method of cultural dissemination, which she defined as 'metodo socio-biografico' [the socio-biographical method]:

La base delle mie proposte è in Malcolm Cowley. Malcolm Cowley ha inventato la letteratura americana perché prima di lui c'erano solo degli scrittori che scrivevano dei saggi e li poi pubblicavano sulle riviste inglesi. L'autocronia l'ha fatta Malcolm Cowley. Io l'ho seguito e ho cercato di fare nel mio piccolo questi ritratti socio-biografici degli autori e mi hanno detto 'ah, tu fai soltanto la biografia degli autori!' Malcolm Cowley ha proprio inventato questo modo di procedere. [...] E poi dopo di lui in America hanno scoperto il pragmatismo, hanno scoperto le forme che potevano assumere letterariamente questi problemi. Ecco, questa è stata una grossa chiave di volta per l'America, e per me non è stata tanto una chiave di volta quanto la

¹³⁷ On Malcolm Cowley see also, among others: Cowley 2014, 1974; Faulkner 1990; Poland and Bak 1994; Simpson 1976.

¹³⁸ '[Malcolm Cowley] talked to his public with the enthusiasm of the discovery. He was a discoverer, the scholar that shaped American literature as we know it; [...] he talked about unknown writers at conferences and seminars [...]. His books were always controversial but clarifying [...] I had the privilege of [...] listening to him talk for hours about the way he extracted an author from the context of their own books and placing them in the context of the society or of their life, I heard him talk about the way he did not mind being described, contemptuously, as 'popular' as long as he could make an unknown author known to the masses'.

¹³⁹ 'Make the authors that he presented alive as characters, linked page after page to the stories they told'.

razionalizzazione di quello che pensavo. È una cosa che non ho inventato io, però l'ho portata avanti senza rendermene conto mentre in America le davano una forma (Chizzini 1996).¹⁴⁰

The similarities that Pivano highlights in the excerpt above between Cowley's and her own method illuminate the self-perceived, innovative nature of her cultural activity. She not only sought to popularise and promote new and unknown authors, but was also doing so by experimenting with an unorthodox approach to literary diffusion. According to Pivano, the aim of literary criticism was to "spiegare gli autori, e invece secondo le nostre prassi la critica li esamina, li esamina esteticamente: questa era la critica crociana" (Chizzini 1996).¹⁴¹ Therefore, personal contact with the authors she translated and promoted and the autobiographical elements were crucial factors in understanding why they had written what they had written, thus allowing Pivano to shed light on the fundamental connection between author and artwork.

This becomes particularly apparent in Pivano's personal accounts and reflections on her encounters with the American authors. About Hemingway she claimed that '[L]istening to him telling [a] story at the dining-table was more useful to understanding his writing than reading thousands of words of criticism on his technique of writing' (Pivano 1971: 329). Similarly, the key to understanding Faulkner's writing is sarcasm, something which she only understood after talking to the author: 'Nelle due ore che parlai con Faulkner capii senza incertezze, come se non avessi mai letto i suoi libri, che la chiave per aprirli è quella del sarcasmo e mi chiesi come avessi fatto a non rendermene conto prima' (Pivano 1995: 174).¹⁴² This connection with the authors is perfectly exemplified in an anecdote that Pivano told about Hemingway explaining his decision to give permission to Malcolm Cowley to write his autobiography, since Cowley had sat on the ambulance with Hemingway during the war. In the interview with Chizzini, Pivano clarifies:

La biografia di Malcolm Cowley su Hemingway me l'ha data Hemingway a Cortina e mi ha detto 'questo è l'unico...' [...] e [...] mi ha spiegato: 'sì, io gliel'ho lasciata fare perché lui è stato

¹⁴⁰ The interview is available at <http://www.parol.it/articles/chizzini.htm>. 'My proposals are inspired by Malcolm Cowley. Malcolm Cowley invented American literature because before him there were only writers who wrote essays that were then published in English journals. He created the autochthony. I followed his lead and I tried, in my own small way, to make socio-biographic portraits of the authors and I was told: 'You only write the biographies of the authors!'. Malcolm Cowley invented this approach. [...] And after him, in the United States, pragmatism was discovered together with the forms that these problems might take from a literary point of view. This was a keystone for the United States: to me this was not much of a keystone, but more the realisation of what I already thought. It is not something that I invented, but I promoted it without realizing it, while in America it was being defined more clearly'.

¹⁴¹ 'I believe that literary criticism should explain the authors, meanwhile we are used to analysing them aesthetically: this was the *Crocean* criticism'.

¹⁴² 'During the two hours I spent talking to Faulkner I understood, without any doubts and as if I had never read any of his books, that the key to open them was sarcasm. I asked myself how could I not understand that earlier'.

con me sulle ambulanze e mi conosceva'. Era necessario per Hemingway non che lui conoscesse quello che aveva scritto, ma che conoscesse perché lo aveva scritto, e questo per me era molto affascinante, perché da noi non usava proprio, uno non solo non se lo chiedeva, ma sotto l'influenza francese addirittura diceva che non aveva importanza perché l'avesse scritto, importavano solo le pagine prese così, pagine da cui è nato in America il postmodernismo (Chizzini 1996).¹⁴³

But the novel socio-biographical approach did not entirely convince fellow translators, critics and intellectuals populating the Italian publishing and literary field. This appears to have been quite clear to Pivano, who stated that the 'spericolato metodo critico' that she learned from Cowley 'mi ha attirato tanta ostilità dai letterati italiani' (Pivano 2017: 61).¹⁴⁴ Exemplary of the skepticism towards Pivano's critical approach is Sergio Perosa's comment on the importance of the author-translator relationship in Pivano's professional trajectory:

Insisto su questo aspetto del rapporto autore-traduttore da lei [Pivano] voluto e cercato, perché mi suscita qualche perplessità, anche se lo trovo interessante e affascinante [...]. Personalmente preferisco non conoscere i poeti o gli scrittori che traduco, per non venirne influenzato, sviato o condizionato – o deluso. [...] sospetto molto del rapporto di collaborazione con l'autore, che ha idee sue, magari non collimanti con quelle del traduttore, il quale deve invece, tutto a proprio rischio e pericolo, mantenere una sua indipendenza linguistica, di scelta e di giudizio (Perosa 2013: 363).¹⁴⁵

Pivano's closeness to the authors she wished to promote was something that was often frowned upon by other literary actors, and that resulted in the interruption of her role as a collaborator both at Mondadori in 1961 and then at Rizzoli in 1962, where her ambition was seen as a desire to 'protect her friends', namely Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ 'I received Malcolm Cowley's biography on Hemingway from Hemingway himself in Cortina. He told me: 'this is the only one...' [...] and [...] then explained: 'yes, I gave him permission because he had sat with me in the ambulance, and he knew me'. For Hemingway it was not necessary that Cowley knew what he had written, but rather why he had written it, and this was very fascinating to me because we were not used to that. Not only we did not wonder about that but, under the French influence, we were told that it did not matter why he had written it, the only thing that mattered were the pages by themselves, pages from which postmodernism was born in the US'.

¹⁴⁴ '[T]he reckless critical method' and 'brought me so much hostility from Italian intellectuals'.

¹⁴⁵ 'I insist on this aspect of the author-translator relationship that she [Pivano] searched for, because it makes me uncertain, although I find it interesting and fascinating [...]. Personally, I prefer not to meet the poets or the writers I translate so as not to be influenced or led astray – or even disappointed. [...] I am very suspicious of the relationship of collaboration with the author because they have their own ideas, that maybe do not correspond to those of the translator whom, on the other hand, need to maintain their independence when it comes to linguistic choices and decisions, at their own risk'.

¹⁴⁶ On this see chapter 5.3 and 5.4.

While not entirely denying that there is the risk that a close connection with an author might reduce the ability of the cultural mediator to assess objectively the author's work, Pivano was convinced that, as a cultural mediator, it is possible to maintain a certain clarity of mind in one's own judgement:

Questo pericolo c'è. Questo pericolo c'è ed è il pericolo che io ho con autori che ho adorato come Hemingway, che ho adorato come Kerouac, che ho adorato come adesso McInerney, che ho trovato degli scrittori grandissimi. C'è il pericolo che la mia ammirazione, diciamo così, possa sfociare poi in un giudizio parziale, però vale correre il rischio, alla peggio si fa un giudizio troppo positivo, ma è difficile che io faccia un giudizio positivo se il libro proprio non vale, perché, per esempio, io dico che *Riscatto*, che è il secondo libro di McInerney, è un libro molto debole, e dico che *Avere e non avere* è un libro totalmente fallito di Hemingway. Perché è fallito? Perché lui con questa letteratura proletaria che lo incalzava da tutte le parti ha cercato di fare un romanzo proletario, ma lui non poteva farlo, era totalmente fuori dalla sua vena, come poteva fare un romanzo proletario Hemingway? [...] Sicché resta sempre, mi pare, quel tanto di lucidità, di giudizio che serve come una specie di controprova in fondo, perché ci si rimbalda quando si vede che si è capaci di fare un giudizio negativo, viene il coraggio di andare avanti, così non credo sia un grosso pericolo. È un pericolo, ma fino a quando si è capaci di fare il contro-transfert, come dicono gli analisti, fino a quando si è capaci di prendere l'anti-veleno, l'antidoto, vale la pena correrlo e l'antidoto c'è sempre finché si vuole, il brutto è quando non si vuole più (Chizzini 1996).¹⁴⁷

Pivano's commentary seems to suggest that the close connection with a particular author enables the cultural mediator to spot, with little doubt, those works that do not suit the author's socio-biographic portrait, those works that do not correspond to their identity and are therefore weak or not worthy of a positive evaluation. Among the rejections of the works by Beat authors, a particularly egregious one was Jack Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues*, that Pivano filed for Mondadori on the 29 January 1960. Despite the recognised literary value of the volume, in her reader's report

¹⁴⁷ 'This risk is there. This risk is there and it is the risk that I took with authors that I loved such as Hemingway, that I loved such as Kerouac, that I loved such as now McInerney, who I found to be amazing writers. There is the risk that my fascination, let's call it that way, might result in a biased evaluation. But it is worth taking that chance because in the worst-case scenario one ends up with an evaluation which is too positive, but it is hard that I come up with a positive evaluation if the book is not good enough. For example, I say that *Ransom*, which is McInerney's second book, is a very weak book. And I also say that *To have and have not* is a total failure by Hemingway. Why is it a failure? Because Hemingway, under the pressure of writing proletarian literature, decided to write a proletarian novel. But he could not do it, it was completely unsuited for him. How could Hemingway write a proletarian novel? [...] I think that there is always a bit of clarity left, that ability to judge which is needed as a form of verification after all. Seeing that you are still able to give a negative evaluation gives you self-confidence, it gives you the courage to carry on, therefore I think the danger is not very big. It exists, but as long as we are able to carry out a countertransference as an analyst would say, as long as we are willing to take the "anti-poison", the antidote, it is worth taking that risk. The antidote is always there as long as one wants to take it. The problem arises when one does not want to'.

Pivano had to ‘reluctantly’ advise against the publication of the volume: ‘[...] il libro è molto importante nella storia della letteratura moderna ma non so proprio come si potrebbe tradurre in italiano a causa del groviglio di riferimenti a canzoni o poesie o detti memorabili popolarissimi in America a che non susciterebbero alcuna eco fra noi. A malincuore devo consigliare di rinunciare’.¹⁴⁸ The importance that Pivano associated with the socio-biographical approach to literary dissemination is reflected in the ample introductions and forewords that she penned for numerous works of American literature. Together with the substantial apparatuses of footnotes supporting her translations (often reporting explanations and clarifications elaborated in collaboration and in conversation with the authors),¹⁴⁹ the translator’s addenda represent precious critical contributions that promote the understanding of the literary product. As specified by Pivano:

Le mie introduzioni avevano il desiderio di far entrare il lettore dentro il tessuto del libro, spiegandogli come il libro è nato. Quando facevo queste cose, c’era in voga il *nouveau roman* che diceva che non bisognava dire né l’età dell’autore, né l’ambiente del libro, né la trama del libro, che queste cose non contavano. Naturalmente per me era come mettermi, non so, delle formiche rosse sotto le unghie, una cosa terribile! (Chizzini 1996).¹⁵⁰

As it happened for Malcolm Cowley, in conversation with Italian intellectuals and literary editors, Pivano’s essays on American literature and her introductions to the authors she promoted have been often defined as ‘purely informative’. Although it might be true that these texts do not provide a scholarly criticism of the works at hand, Pivano’s essays and her introductions to authors such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and Ernest Hemingway provide the reader with all the information they need to embark in the hermeneutic operation of reading and understanding the author’s work, being able to contextualise and anchor the prose or poetry at hand to a specific socio-historical moment. As Pivano claims in *Viaggio Americano* (2017), she purposefully attempted to imitate Malcolm Cowley and appropriate his approach to literary dissemination: ‘Ho tentato di imitare il suo metodo, ma mi è mancato il genio che lui invece aveva’ (Pivano 2017:

¹⁴⁸ ‘[T]he volume is very important in the history of modern literature, but I honestly don’t know how it could be translated into Italian, because of the maze of references to famous songs or poems or popular American sayings which would not ring any bell for an Italian reader. Begrudgingly I have to advise against publication.’ Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero - giudizi di lettura*, b. 109 (Jack Kerouac), Fernanda Pivano, 29/01/1960.

¹⁴⁹ More on this in chapt. 5.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Through my introductions, I wished to bring the reader inside the fabric of the book, explaining how that book was born. When I did that, it was the time when the *nouveau roman* was popular, and we were told that we should not talk about the age of the author, the environment of the book, not even its plot. We were told that those things did not matter. Of course, to me that was like putting, I do not know, fire ants under my nails. It was terrible!’.

64).¹⁵¹ This practice reflects Franssen and Kuipers (2013) consideration that mimicry of other actors within the same field represents a strategy often employed to reduce the uncertainty connected to cultural production: ‘An important strategy for reducing uncertainty, [...], is the imitation of organizational practices and routines. Actors in the same organizational field look to others for confirmation and inspiration’ (Franssen and Kuipers 2013: 51). Furthermore, Pivano observes that Cowley ‘Fino all’ultimo è stato consulente letterario della Viking Press (non ha mai voluto diventare direttore per essere libero di fare scelte indipendenti)’ (Pivano 2017: 61).¹⁵² Cowley’s freedom in his professional engagement is the result of the interplay of the different forms of capital at his disposal, and his ability to embody different professional roles within the same field, as observed by Kirbach (2016): ‘He occupied a unique position in the circles of twentieth-century literary, political, and academic life. A perpetual interloper whose home was everywhere and nowhere, Cowley embodies an insider-outsider dialectic’ (49). Similarly, the evolution of Pivano’s professional career after the 1956 pilgrimage to the United States appears to be characterized by a progressive search for independence in her activity of cultural dissemination, a strategy that allowed her to position herself at the intersection of different roles within the book market. While this aspect might be considered as a further similarity between the professional *habitus* of Cowley and that of Pivano, a fundamental difference needs to be highlighted. Malcolm Cowley chose to remain a free agent within the American literary field by drawing on the recognition of his intellectual legitimacy that derived from the cultural capital associated to his prismatic position of literary critic and academic:

Circumventing the knot of institutional authority embodied in the full-time professor, Cowley found a way of reconciling his cosmopolitan ideal within the changing eddies of twentieth-century literary production. Cowley’s itinerancy — his seemingly effortless movement between universities and the publishing industry, between writers individual and collective — played a crucial role in institutionalizing modernism. (Kirbach 2016: 50)

On the other hand, Fernanda Pivano’s search for independence appears to be a reaction to the lack of intellectual legitimation and recognition which she suffered within the Italian publishing field. The change of direction in her professional trajectory was fuelled by the hindrances encountered while attempting (and failing) to secure a more structured position within the book market and

¹⁵¹ ‘I tried to copy his method but I lacked his genius’.

¹⁵² ‘He was a literary consultant for Viking Press until the end [of his life] (he never wanted to become director because he wanted to be free to make independent choices)’.

her ambition to increase the legitimacy of her cultural agency through the acquisition of a scholarly position (which she never achieved).

4.4 The promotion of American counterculture literature

After returning from the United States, Pivano's professional activity focussed predominantly on projects that would favour the reception of some of the main writers of the Beat Generation. 1957 was the year that marked the start of Pivano's zealous work for the dissemination of Beat literature in Italy. In this sense, her cultural action was multi-layered, and Pivano acted on numerous levels in order to pave the way for the reception, the understanding and the diffusion of the literature produced by the new literary movement. Pivano wrote articles, prefaces and held conferences to help the Italian wider public, and the cultural elite, familiarise with the main features of the Beat movement and its authors. Moreover, she contributed to their dissemination by acting as a reader and consultant for the translation of several Beat authors. Her ability to build fruitful professional and personal relationships with many Beat writers, allowed her to become their preferred and trusted gateway to Italy, increasing at the same time the symbolic power that she owned and that she could subsequently administer in order to steer the mechanisms of the cultural exchange between the United States and Italy. An example of the close-knit relationship the Fernanda Pivano established with the Beat writers is the fact that, from 1957 onwards, Pivano's house in Milan would become a sort of hub where many American Beat writers stayed during their visits to Italy. The authors' visits gave Pivano the opportunity to introduce them to the Italian *salotti letterari* and make them known and hopefully accepted by those key intellectual figures that populated the Italian literary market.

From the end of the 1950s until the end of the 1980s, Fernanda Pivano's literary engagement revolved primarily around the study, the reception and the diffusion of the cultural outputs directly linked to the Beat Generation movement, and she became the Italian gatekeeper of a specific, new, and disruptive portion of American literature and culture. The discovery of Allen Ginsberg's poetry opened up a new path in her research on American literature, significantly shaping the mechanisms of cultural reception within the Italian market. During those years, her cultural action aimed at understanding and popularising works by many young Beat authors, such as Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Robert Creeley, Diane Di

Prima, Bob Kaufman, Robert Kelly, Jack Kerouac, Kenneth Koch, Philip Lamantia, Denis Levertov, Michael McClure, Norman Mailer, Frank O'Hara, Peter Orlovsky, Ed Sanders, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen. Among the most critical outputs connected to her agency, there is the publication of the Italian translations of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957 Viking Press; *Sulla strada*, 1959 Mondadori), William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* (1959 Olympia Press, 1962 Grove Press; *Pasto nudo*, 1964 SugarCo) and *Junkie* (1953 ACE Books; 1962 *La scimmia sulla schiena*, Rizzoli) and the two anthologies of Beat poetry *Poesia degli ultimi americani* (1964 Feltrinelli) and *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (1965 Mondadori).

In 1959, Pivano penned a long article on Jack Kerouac which appeared in Enzo Biagi's *Epoca*,¹⁵³ and also a review on Kerouac's volume of poems *Mexico City Blues*, published with the title 'I ritornelli di Kerouac' in the first number of the literary journal *L'Europa letteraria* (1960)¹⁵⁴ (Pivano 2008: 648-649). In a 15-page long article that appeared on the philosophy journal *Aut Aut* directed by Enzo Paci,¹⁵⁵ Pivano presented the Beat Generation, providing the public with the necessary historical and social coordinates to understand the Beat movement. According to Pivano, the battle that young American writers were fighting was not an aesthetic one – because modern art had been by then widely accepted – their battle was, rather, moral:

I giovani americani d'oggi, 1958, invece non hanno battaglie da combattere, in sede estetica. La battaglia dell'arte moderna ha ormai vinto su tutti i fronti: coloro che non accettano [...] Jackson Pollock o Ernest Hemingway e gli altri eroi della rivoluzione moderna in America sono una tale minoranza che non mette più conto prenderli in considerazione. [...] I giovani [...] si sono ripiegati su se stessi e hanno descritto il loro dramma: che non è tanto estetico, quanto morale (Pivano 1959, now in Pivano 2008: 624).¹⁵⁶

She frames the literary experience of these young writers as a reaction to the prevailing depersonalization of the individual, caused by life in an industrialised, mass society. In this operation of problematization of the self in relation to modern society, Pivano recognized in the authors of the Beat Generation the potential to bring literature forward:

¹⁵³ 'L'America si allarma per la Beat Generation', *Epoca*, 10.479 (6 December 1959), 72-77.

¹⁵⁴ 'I ritornelli di Kerouac', *L'Europa letteraria*, 1 (January 1960), 165-68.

¹⁵⁵ 'La Beat Generation', *Aut Aut*, 49 (January 1959), 1-15.

¹⁵⁶ 'I giovani americani d'oggi, 1958, invece non hanno battaglie da combattere, in sede estetica. La battaglia dell'arte moderna ha ormai vinto su tutti i fronti: coloro che non accettano [...] Jackson Pollock o Ernest Hemingway e gli altri eroi della rivoluzione moderna in America sono una tale minoranza che non mette più conto prenderli in considerazione. [...] I giovani [...] si sono ripiegati su se stessi e hanno descritto il loro dramma: che non è tanto estetico, quanto morale. (Pivano 2008: 624).

Ricerca di mezzi espressivi primordiali, ricerca di intensità di linguaggio, ricerca di valori morali originari: tutte le strade per questi giovani scrittori, per questi giovani poeti, riconducono a uno stesso problema di ripiegamento su se stessi per liberarsi dalle pressioni del modo contemporaneo. Per questo si può credere nel loro avvenire. I filistei della nuova generazione [...] saranno i critici della generazione nostra; e sarà poco male se la nuova generazione scriverà una pagina nella storia della letteratura (Pivano 1959, now in Pivano 2008: 637).¹⁵⁷

The conferences that Fernanda Pivano held on the Beat generation at the US embassies in Rome and Milan seemed to draw the attention of the press. She reported that her work was received with skepticism and irony, saying:

facce interdetto, vecchio parapsicologo unico tra il pubblico ad accettare, a voler comunicare, a venirmi a parlare [...], tra le risate generali [...] barone universitario presente a fare ironie [...] pubblico silenzioso e ostile, Establishment silenzioso e ostile, amici (presto ex-amici) silenziosi e ostili, quanti silenzi, quanta ostilità da allora' (Pivano 2003: 13).¹⁵⁸

Nonetheless, the articles that appeared in various newspapers seemed to be mainly positive. Some examples can be found in the folders held in her archives. Most articles seem to agree on the relevance of the theme presented by Pivano, highlighting the need for a clarification regarding the socio-cultural aspects connected to the phenomenon of the Beat Generation, who were often simply associated with criminality, drugs addiction and debauchery. Moreover, a further distinction that many journalists and critics deemed necessary was between the authors of the Beat Generation and those who belonged to the Lost Generation.

Franco Simongini penned an article that was published in the newspaper *La Giustizia* on the 13 November 1959 with the title 'Beat-generation'. Simongini wrote:

Nella serie incontri americani [...] Fernanda Pivano ha parlato ieri sera, al teatro dell'Ambasciata americana [...] su di un tema molto interessante e di attualità, i Beatnicks, e cioè gli esponenti della cosiddetta 'beat-generation' statunitense, il gruppo di S. Francesco, i giovani letterati che hanno come

¹⁵⁷ 'The research for expressive means, for the intensity of the language, for original moral values: all paths in front of these new writers, these young poets, lead to the same problem of isolation to set oneself free from the pressures of the contemporary world. For this reason, we can believe in their future. The Philistines of this new generation [...] will be the critics from our generation. And no harm will be done if the new generation will write a page in the history of literature'.

¹⁵⁸ 'Shocked faces, among the public only one, old, parapsychologist was willing to accept and communicate, came to talk to me [...] among general laughter [...] a university baron being ironic [...] the public was silent and hostile, the establishment was silent and hostile, friends (soon to be former friends) silent and hostile, so many silences, so much hostility ever since'.

caposcuola il poeta Allen Ginsberg e il romanziere Jack Kerouac. [...] la Pivano, giustamente, fa notare come questi giovani beat idolatrino Baudelaire e Rimbaud e agli altri poeti maledetti, e soprattutto il loro tentativo di esplorare i problemi metafisici in una totale noncuranza della realtà quotidiana; e cercano quindi lo *sregolamento di tutti i sensi*, ingerendo, a gran quantità, droga, alcool e musica jazz (fredda). Un fenomeno questo, che può giudicarsi in senso negativo o positivo, e che non va quindi relegato solamente alla storia del costume ma è entrato a far parte della cultura americana, la quale, come tutte le culture del mondo (ha affermato giustamente la Pivano) non è stata fatta dai figli di mamma e dalle signorine per bene, ma da giovani ribelli che aggrappandosi al futuro, invece che al passato, hanno aperto la via ai vari periodi della storia. E la letteratura americana è una delle poche che non si compiace d'indugiare sugli allori del passato. Vada quindi tutta la nostra attenzione e comprensione a questi giovani sbandati, che in qualche modo cercano, coraggiosamente, d'innovare lo stantio conformistico, ipocrita costume letterario contemporaneo (Simongini 1959).

Similarly, Mario Guidotti, for the column 'Il gridario delle lettere. Scrittori, libri, fatti' of the newspaper *Il Quotidiano*, wrote a short article titled 'La "Beat Generation" secondo F. Pivano'. Guidotti wrote that: 'Si sente molto parlare da qualche tempo, e in modo spesso contraddittorio, della "Beat Generation" come fatto di costume prima ancora che come fenomeno letterario. A chiarire le idee sull'argomento è venuta quanto mai opportuna la conversazione dedicata ai "Beatniks"' (Guidotti, 13 November 1959). On the 18 November 1959, the article 'Chi sono i "beatniks"' penned by journalist Igor Man appeared in *Il Tempo*. Man identified the ambiguous nature of the topic of the conference: 'L'ambiente era [...] niente affatto *Beat*, la nota saggista ha affrontato con slancio e spregiudicatezza un argomento che per la sua stessa natura si presta a facili equivoci [...] come [...] risulta da molte delle domande rivolte alla conferenziera' (Man, 1959) and recognised the difficulty of talking to 'everybody' about a phenomenon such as the Beat Generation:

Non è agevole d'altronde parlare "a tutti" di certi argomenti. E bene ha fatto la Pivano a centrare l'aspetto sociale del fenomeno della Beat Generation chiarendo come "i ragazzi che si lasciano vivere alla ricerca di se stessi", nulla abbiano da spartire con i giovani delinquenti coi quali, in buon o mala fede, sbrigativamente, si tende spesso ad identificarli' (Man 1959).

A few weeks later, on the 7 December 1959, *Il Tempo* published a more negative article penned by the acronym R.G. with the title 'Una favola per "beatniks"', accompanied by a photograph of Jack Kerouac. In the article, the author reports a fictional story, 'la più deprimente storiella che l'umana fantasia ha forse mai partorito' (R.G. 1959), that he identified as the making of a certain 'beatnick' author of whom he or she does not remember the name. In the conclusive

passage, R.G. states that the terrifying nature of the story represents a worrying attitude towards life which can be associated to the Beat Generation: 'Fernanda Pivano, appassionata cultrice delle moderne cose letterarie americane, ha scritto di recente che gli Stati Uniti sono in allarme per la "beat-generation"; la favola [...] sembra giustificare abbondantemente siffatte preoccupazioni' (R.G. 1959). It is interesting to note that a few the articles praised Pivano's introduction to Jack Kerouac's *Sulla strada*, testified to the wide diffusion of the novel and to the educational function of Pivano's texts, with the translator often referred to as 'una delle più qualificate saggiste italiane del dopoguerra' (Guidotti 1959). A review of Marisa Bulgheroni's volume *Il nuovo romanzo americano 1945-1959* (1960) appeared in the newspaper *Espresso Mese*. The article praised Bulgheroni's criticism of literary phenomena such as the 'beatniks' and Jack Kerouac, that the critic dismissed purely as a trend of the moment that in Italy received 'una curiosità non si sa se circoscritta al costume o ai risultati in sé assai modesti' (G.S., October 1960).¹⁵⁹

In Italy, Fernanda Pivano's engagement in disseminating the new literature coming from the US was producing evident results, allowing Italian readers to access the works of the Beats. Moreover, it is worth noting that Pivano's cultural action in promoting the works of Kerouac and Burroughs represents pioneering work of literary dissemination in Europe. Italy was among the first countries in Europe to publish translations of *On The Road* and *Naked Lunch*, notwithstanding the setbacks caused by the uncertainties and resistance shown by the editors and collaborators at Mondadori. As discussed above, Pivano had already submitted a reader's report for *On The Road* in 1957. The volume was eventually published in 1959, after Pivano decided to appeal against a rejection on behalf of the editorial team at Mondadori by taking the matter up with Arnoldo Mondadori directly. The volume was also published in 1959 in Germany (*Unterwegs*, Rowolth) and Spain (*En el camino*, Losada), and in 1960 in France (*Sur la route*, Gallimard). *Naked Lunch*'s reader's report was filed in 1960, and Vittorini's final decision to reject the novel was taken only two years later, when the rights for the translation of the volume passed to SugarCo that published it in 1964. Despite the delays, Italy was the second country in Europe to bring out *Naked Lunch*. Burroughs's work was in fact published in Germany in 1962

¹⁵⁹ A similar consideration can be found in Bulgheroni's preface to her Italian translation of Seymour Krim's critical anthology *The Beats* (1960) published in Italy by Lerici in 1962 with the title *I Beats*: 'La vicenda dei *beats* è una vicenda tipicamente americana: solo l'America ha di queste esplosioni, violente e rapide come epidemie, solo una società di massa come quella americana ha il potere di trasformare un fenomeno di costume in una sorta di moderna leggenda, per poi consumarla e distruggerla con la stessa fulmineità; [...] i *beats* hanno perduto lentamente il loro scatto, la loro coesione, che era di caso e d'istinto più che id volontà; [...] Come la loro vicenda, anche le loro radici, e i loro miti portano il segno dell'americanismo. A tal punto che, analizzata alla luce del passato, la loro apparente novità si riduce a poco: alla spasmodica lezione di libertà formale – che, trasposta dal linguaggio musicale a quello poetico, rischia di diventare intemperanza, appresa dal jazz' (Bulgheroni 1962: 11-12).

(*Naked Lunch*, Limes Verlag), and it was published in France and Spain respectively in 1964 and 1989 (*Le festin nu*, Gallimard and *El almuerzo desnudo*, Editorial Anagrama). The evidence provided shows that Fernanda Pivano's agency as a broker for Beat literature was extremely timely and, without the hindrance exerted by the editors and collaborators within the publishing house, her cultural action could plausibly have made the Italian literary market the leading European market for the cultural exchange in the reception of counterculture American literature.

5. The history of the publication of *Poesia degli ultimi americani* (1964) and *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (1965)

Archive data suggest that Fernanda Pivano had started working on the translation of Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' after she read it partially published in the 1957 issue of the *Evergreen Review*. On 2 January 1960, in fact, she submitted a proposal for the publication of 'Howl's translation to editor Vittorio Sereni. Pivano suggested publishing the volume in the series "Biblioteca delle Silerchie", which Alberto Mondadori had started in 1958 with Il Saggiatore (founded the same year). In the letter, she wrote:

Caro Sereni, facendo seguito al nostro colloquio ti segnalo, come molto importante per il movimento della Beat Generation, la poesia Howl di Allen Ginsberg. La puoi trovare in visione sulla rivista "Evergreen Review" Vol. I, N°2. Credo però che sarebbe troppo breve per un Silerchia: a meno che non venisse accompagnata da una lunga prefazione. Questa poesia è considerata il manifesto del movimento; senza entrare in merito al suo valore poetico (Pivano 2003: 14).¹⁶⁰

And a few days later, on the 13 January 1960, she also wrote to Alberto Mondadori. In this letter, Fernanda Pivano claims that she had already completed a draft of the translation and also prepared the notes to it:

Caro Alberto, giorni fa parlando con Sereni dell'eventualità di pubblicare la poesia Howl di Allen Ginsberg (il "manifesto" della Beat Generation) in una Silerchia gli dissi che mi sembrava troppo corta. Ripensandoci mi pare che pubblicandole col testo a fronte, una prefazione e le note indispensabili diventerebbe invece un volumetto normale. So che sulla poesia ha un'opzione Feltrinelli. Se decidi di pubblicarla tu, sarei lieta di darti la traduzione e le note che ho dovuto fare nel corso dei miei studi sulla Beat Generation e che sono già pronti. Dovrei prepararti solo la prefazione.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ 'Dear Sereni, following our conversati0n, I would like to signal Howl by Allen Ginsberg as very important for the Beat Generation movement. You can read it in "Evergreen Review" Vol. I, N°2. Although I think it would be too short for a Silerchia, unless it included a long preface. This poem is considered to be the manifesto of the movement, not to mention its poetic value'.

¹⁶¹ 'Dear Alberto, a few days ago, talking to Sereni about the opportunity to publish *Howl* by Alen Ginsberg (the "manifesto" of the Beat Generation) in a Silerchia, I told him that I thought it would be too short. Thinking again, I believe that publishing it with parallel text, a preface and the necessary notes, it would become a normal volume. I know that Feltrinelli has an option on the poem. If you decide to publish it I would be happy to give you the translation and the notes that I have made while studying the Beat Generation. Everything is ready. I would need to only write

Fernanda Pivano to Alberto Mondadori
13 January 1960
Archivio Fondazione Mondadori – Milan

Pivano's proposal regarding an Italian translation of 'Howl' arrived just a few months after US literary agent Sterling Lord recommended the poem to Erich Linder, director of ALI – Agenzia Letteraria Internazionale, who in turn had finalized the contract with Feltrinelli. The following letter is dated 18th September 1959:

In the same packet I am sending you a collection of poems by Allen Ginsberg [...] HOWL. Ordinarily I would not burden you with the problem of marketing poetry, but I think this book might have a good chance over there. [...] HOWL has been involved in a widely publicized censorship battle, and the book has been selling furiously in this country. [...] P.s.: Feltrinelli might be interested in HOWL, Ginsberg tells me.¹⁶²

Sterling Lord to Erich Linder
18 September 1959
Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milano

In the light of this data, it would appear Pivano's cultural engagement in promoting new literature was apparently in line with the strategies of the most important and respected literary agents of the time, Sterling Lord in the US and Erich Linder in Europe, and also with the interests of one of Italy's most important and modern publishers, Feltrinelli. In Italy, excerpts of 'Howl' in translation had been published in 1958 in *Presenza*, bi-monthly magazine of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, translated by poet and translator Roberto Sanesi. The fact that Pivano tried to draw the attention of Italy's biggest publisher, Mondadori, towards what would later be considered as the Manifesto of the Beat Generation can be read as a sign of Pivano's sense for the game. The sense for the game is developed by agents acting in a particular field through experience, allowing them to internalise patterns ('regularities') leading to probable outcomes in the economic system of the field, defining a set of practices which are at the same time objective and sensible.¹⁶³ The sense for the game is never imposed explicitly upon agents, but represents a

the preface.' Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Alberto Mondadori, fasc. Fernanda Pivano*, 13/01/1960.

¹⁶² Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Agenzia letteraria internazionale – Erich Linder, *Serie annuale 1959*, B.15, fasc. 31, (The Sterling Lord Agency), 18/09/1959.

¹⁶³ 'Produced by experience of the game, and therefore of the objective structures within which it is played out, the 'feel for the game' is what gives the game a subjective sense - a meaning and a *raison d'être*, but also a direction, an orientation, an impending outcome, for those who take part and therefore acknowledge what is at stake (this is *illusio*

gradual and invisible conversion of an original habitus which leads to the acquisition of a specific habitus which allows the players to be part of the game.

Vittorio Sereni's reply to Pivano's proposal arrived on the 18 January 1960 showing a certain degree of ambiguity regarding the opportunity to publish the poem by Allen Ginsberg, an opportunity that Vittorini would assess only after reading Pivano's translation: 'Cara Nanda, puoi mandarci la tua traduzione della poesia *Howl* di Allen Ginsberg. Malgrado l'opzione di Feltrinelli, vedremo, dopo averla letta, cosa si potrà fare.' (Elio Vittorini to Fernanda Pivano, 18/01/1960, Archivi Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milan).¹⁶⁴ Vittorio Sereni's uncertainty regarding the publication of an Italian version of 'Howl' was probably due to fears of potential censorship because of the poem's language which was considered obscene, particularly concerning the references to drugs and to homosexual intercourse. In fact, Fernanda Pivano signed an official contract for her translation only seven years after the actual publication of the volume. In *C'era una volta un beat* (2003) she wrote:

Il 2 gennaio 1960 consigliai al mio editore la pubblicazione di *Howl* di Allen Ginsberg, che era bloccato da un'opzione di Feltrinelli, ed ebbi l'incarico verbale di tradurlo. Si arrivò all'11 dicembre 1972, quando già avevo terminato da tempo la traduzione, prima che ricevessi il contratto (Pivano 2003: 14).¹⁶⁵

The cautious approach of the publisher – afraid that the book might be seized – caused a substantial delay in the volume's publication in Italy.

In post-war Italy, cultural production in general was still subject to state censorship, particularly when it came to scenes and themes deemed obscene and pornographic, and therefore liable to outrage public decency. In the years following the war, as David Forgacs argued, cultural policies presented a high degree of continuity with those of the Fascist regime: '[T]here was considerable *de facto* continuity between the operations of the Ministero della Cultura Popolare

in the sense of investment in the game and the outcome, interest in the game, commitment to the presuppositions - doxa - of the game). And it also gives the game an objective sense, because the sense of the probable outcome that is given by practical mastery of the specific regularities that constitute the economy of a field is the basis of 'sensible' practices, linked intelligibly to the conditions of their enactment, and also among themselves, and therefore immediately filled with sense and rationality for every individual who has the feel for the game (hence the effect of consensual validation which is the basis of collective belief in the game and its fetishes)' (Bourdieu 1990: 66).

¹⁶⁴ Dear Nanda, you can send us the translation of the poem *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg. Although Feltrinelli's option on the poem, we will see what can be done after reading your translation.

¹⁶⁵ On the 2nd of January 1960 I suggested to my editor to publish *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg, on which Feltrinelli had an option, and I received the verbal task of translating it. It was only the 11th of December 1972 – long after I had completed the translation – that I received the contract.

and those of the successive undersecretariats that succeeded it' (Forgacs 2005:17). Continuity was maintained mainly through the retention of several laws and the employment of the same personnel across different state organs, propagating 'inbuilt conservatism and hostility to reform' (Forgacs 2005:17). Moreover, particularly important in this context are the forms of party-state permeation that dominated the fifties and the sixties, and the 'entwinements of Catholic norms and prescriptions with secular ones – largely to do with the civic power of the Church and the Catholic movement and the central position of the DC as keystone of postwar coalitions' (Forgacs 2005:19). Among the works that were censored during the fifties and sixties there are those that featured more or less overt homosexual themes, such as *La lunga notte di Singapore* by Bernardino del Boca (1952, Gastaldi) and *Ragazzi di vita* by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1955, Garzanti), but also those that featured elements clearly connected to the Resistance, such as Beppe Fenoglio's short story collection *I ventitré giorni della città di Alba* (1952, Einaudi) and *Il partigiano Johnny* (1968, Einaudi).¹⁶⁶ Among other works that were reported or taken to trial for obscenity and pornography between the forties and the 1960s are the following Italian translations: David Herbert Lawrence's *L'amante di Lady Chatterley* (1946, Mondadori), Jean-Paul Sartre's *Il muro* (1947, Einaudi), and James Joyce's *Ulisse* (1960, Mondadori).¹⁶⁷

Censorship requests came often from within the publishing houses themselves, worried about potential financial setbacks if their volumes were seized and destroyed (Cooke 2005: 123). This is the case, for example, with Pier Paolo Pasolini, who carried out an operation of self-censorship for *Ragazzi di vita* in response to his publisher Livio Garzanti's sudden 'scrupoli moralistici' (De Laude 2018: 93). Although Pasolini replaced all the obscene words with dots and damped down the more explicit passages of his book, in 1955 he was issued with a summons to appear in court together with his editor after a joint operation of the judiciary and the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, led in those years by the Christian Democrat Ferdinando Tambroni. Similarly, during the 1960s, Pivano and Ginsberg engaged in a long and complex censorship debate with editors at Mondadori, who wished to expurgate from Ginsberg's poems any words and passages that might have caused problems with public decency. Pivano's reluctance to tamper with Ginsberg's poems resulted in a fierce battle with the editors at the Italian publishing house, which in turn led to the solution of replacing obscene words in the Italian translation by printing only

¹⁶⁶ On the censorship faced by del Boca's *La lunga notte di Singapore*, see the interview in Dall'Orto 1985 (pp. 79–97); on Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Ragazzi di vita*, see De Laude 2018; on Beppe Fenoglio's *I ventitré giorni di Alba* and *Il partigiano Johnny*, see Cooke 2005. For further reading on post-war Italian publishing history and editorial censorship see Ferretti 2004 and 2012.

¹⁶⁷ See Ferretti, *Storia dell'editoria letteraria in Italia* [Kindle version], loc. n. 2048, and De Laude, *I due Pasolini*, p. 111.

the Italian initial, followed by an equal number of dots to the Italian equivalent, to indicate the omitted letters (leaving the original parallel text intact).¹⁶⁸

For the publishing house Feltrinelli, at the end of 1960, Fernanda Pivano was writing the introduction to Luciano Bianciardi's translation of *The Subterraneans* and was given the task of preparing an anthology of modern American poets. The anthology, which finally came out with the title *Poesia degli ultimi Americani*, was published only four years later, in 1964, after many uncertainties and numerous requests of changes to the original plan advanced by the publisher.

The numerous resistant forces that intertwined and slowed down the process of dissemination of Beat poetry in Italy show how the cultural elite, which held the reins of the publishing market, was conflicted about the publication of the new and disruptive form of literature which was recognised in the texts produced by the Beat Generation. If on the one hand Beat authors had shown potential to achieve good sales figures abroad and a strong engagement with the public, in particular the younger generations, on the other hand, the literature they produced was antagonized by Italian editors and intellectual figures which were unwilling and, at times, unable to understand the new language and culture encapsulated by the Beats, combined with the fact that their texts were prone to cause troubles with censorship. Documents and chronicles of Pivano's accounts of her engagement with the literary field, blatantly expose the difficulties she encountered while working towards the publication of Beat literature in Italy. In *C'era una volta un beat*, she wrote:

A vedere le documentazioni contenute in questa cronaca può venire il sospetto di trovarsi di fronte a un libro di memorie antieditoriali. È un sospetto infondato. Non c'erano e non ci sono fatti personali tra me e le case editrici interessate, ma c'era soltanto la fatica che si deve fare sempre per rompere le resistenze politiche, le paure culturali, le difese dei poteri che legano insieme le strutture burocratiche, istituti codificati, monumenti e blocchi di marmo mentali degli Establishments quando da qualche parte arrivano urgenze nuove, necessità di aggiornamento, fresche energie di nuove generazioni; [...] ancora oggi rimango stupita se ricordo l'ostilità accanita con la quale tutto questo è stato ostacolato e bloccato (Pivano 2003: 14).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ On this, see chapter 5.6.

¹⁶⁹ 'Looking at the documents included in this account one might have the suspect to be reading an anti-editorial memoir. This suspect is unfounded. There weren't and there aren't personal facts between me and the publishing houses involved. There were only the efforts that one must always do to break political resistance, cultural fears, the protection of powers that tie together bureaucratic structures, codified institutions, monuments and mental marble blocks of the Establishments when, somewhere, new needs come up, the need for renewal, fresh energies of new generations; [...] still today I am astonished if I think of the stubborn hostility with which all this has been hindered and stopped'.

Although Pivano's words deny any kind of personal issue with the publishers she was collaborating with, her ambitious engagement and the mechanisms she resorted to in order to achieve her goal caused clashes and disagreements with editors and publishers.

5.1 First contacts with City Lights Books and the encounter with Allen Ginsberg

Considering the resistance and the uncertainties shown by the editors at Mondadori and Feltrinelli, Fernanda Pivano decided to get in touch directly with Lawrence Ferlinghetti, owner and director of City Lights Books bookstore in San Francisco. By establishing a direct link with one of the pivotal characters of the Beat Generation, Pivano probably aimed to reinforce her cultural capital by securing her position of bridging tie between the American Beat network and the Italian literary network. In the very first letter that she sent to Ferlinghetti on 21 April 1960, she wrote:

Dear Mr. Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso told me to write to you [...] I am working here in Italy on Beat literary movement [...] please don't send me to hell. I really don't know how to manage this thing from here. [...] I am mailing you a copy of a popular magazine where I published something about you all. [...] I am editing a special issue of the Roman literary magazine "Il Caffè" dedicated to the beats, and thought of putting there 'Dog'. Do you approve or would you rather have something else? [...] Be patient and answer me. Please let me know if you need something from Italy. I would enjoy to be of help if possible.¹⁷⁰

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

21 April 1960

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

By establishing a direct link with a key figure of the American literary group such as the director of City Lights Books, Pivano paved the way for the construction of a network which would later on allow her to build and accumulate symbolic capital within the literary field, overturning at the same time the dominant narrative which sees the role of the translator as subservient to that of publishers and editors, restating the potential of the translator's cultural power.

¹⁷⁰ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 21/11/1960.

Pivano's efforts in channeling in her hands the cultural flows between the literary network of US counterculture and the Italian literary network caused inevitable clashes with the publisher. By establishing herself as a crucial and independent actress in the process of cultural exchange, Pivano managed to subvert or, at least, contrast those power structures that were canonically imposed on translators in publishing practices. This would become apparent in a letter that the literary director of Mondadori sent to Paolo Cazzani, the lawyer who will deal with Fernanda Pivano's lawsuit against the publisher, on 25 October 1967:

In generale c'è la tendenza della Pivano a considerare opera propria, patrimonio suo e viscere sue le opere degli autori da lei tradotte. Le sue abitudini mondane, di viaggi ecc., fanno sì che lei tenda a costruirsi come rappresentante unica ed esclusiva di questo o quell'autore in Italia, e dunque passaggio obbligato per chiunque si interessa a quegli autori.¹⁷¹

Literary director at Mondadori to Paolo Cazzani

25 October 1967

Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Segreteria

The letter shows clearly how Fernanda Pivano managed to actively penetrate the mechanisms of the publishing machine, construing and taking on a hybrid role which did not fall in any of the canonical categories within the literary field. Unlike other translators, Pivano's privileged social class and the cosmopolitan lifestyle allowed her to independently nurture social ties and accumulate crucial social capital: she was, in fact, not only a translator, but she functioned as a bridging and cultural gatekeeper, becoming a reference point in the literary and editorial relationship between Italy and the US. As observed by Cottenet (2017), a sociology of cultural mediators distinguishes them 'in terms of their functions—translators, prefacers, critics—and strives to identify their positions in the "transnational field" of translation' (Cottenet 2017: 35), with the latter understood as an 'intermediary space wherein the struggle for acquisition of cultural or symbolic capital is waged between importers of increasingly cosmopolitan status' (Cottenet 2017: 35). Pivano's habitus and her trajectory across the field featured a high degree of independence: her ambition to disseminate a specific segment of American literature, the subsequent strategies she put in place to achieve her goal and her professional positioning within

¹⁷¹ 'In general, Fernanda Pivano has a tendency to consider the texts of the authors she translates as her own work, own patrimony and own viscera. Her worldly habits, travels and so on, make her believe that she can present herself as one and only agent for this or that author in Italy, thus becoming an obligatory step for those who are interested in those authors'. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale autori italiani*, fasc. Fernanda Pivano, 25/10/1967.

the book market seem to respond to Senstad's (2020) definition of independent literary mediators, namely 'translators or other agents who advocate for and are personally invested in the translation of particular titles and/or literature from particular geographical areas; [...] Independent cultural mediators are often freelancers and are not formally employed' (Senstad 2020: 98-9). Led by personal ambitions, goals and *teloi*, the translator whose cultural activity expands into other professional areas within the book industry might encounter resistance and opposition from those who perceive these interferences as illegitimate, especially when these practices are linked to the concept of cultural gatekeeping. As argued by Franssen and Kuipers (2013), acquisition of translation rights 'is best understood as a decision-making *process*—one not involving a single "gatekeeper" but rather a "gatekeeping network" in which power is distributed across a range of actors' who are 'embedded in and constrained by the (organizational) *field* [...]'. The logic(s) of the field—and the specific positions that actors have within it—constrains and guides their thoughts and practices' (Franssen and Kuipers 2013: 49-50). Within this structure, the cultural object has to be "produced" or created in a collective process' (Franssen and Kuipers 2013: 50). Considering the collective nature of the process of creation of cultural goods, it becomes evident how Pivano's independent approach was perceived as problematic by other actors in specific positions within the book industry. As is evident from the mapping of her trajectory across the Italian literary field, Pivano undertook tasks that exceeded those traditionally associated with translators, taking on a role that I would like to term *diffused translator*. On top of translating the texts of the Beat writers, Pivano carefully nurtured her personal and professional relationship with them, acting simultaneously as a literary scout and as an agent, and by physically meeting them in the US and Europe, or bringing them to Italy. She became a crucial bridging tie between the American counterculture literary *milieu* and the Italian literary field, thus taking on a 'boundary-spanning position' (Hirsch 1972: 644) which is typical of other editorial professional profiles, such as acquisition editors, literary agents and talent-scouts. Pivano's *telos* in disseminating the works of the Beat authors notwithstanding the resistance of the Italian literary establishment, and her *diffused* role in literary dissemination, is brilliantly exemplified by her enterprise in starting the independent publishing house *East 128* in 1963, together with Allen Ginsberg and Ettore Sottsass Jr,¹⁷² with the clear aim of creating room for the publication of those authors whose manuscripts were being rejected in the 'holy name of commercial value'.¹⁷³ Archival evidence and personal testimonies relating to Pivano's cultural activity hint that her diffuse and all-

¹⁷² On the publishing house East 128 see chapter 5.3.

¹⁷³ Excerpt from a letter from Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg, 28/09/1963, see pp. 114-115.

encompassing approach to the role of the translator was often perceived as illegitimate by other actors occupying different positions within the field of the book industry.

On 1 March 1961, Pivano wrote again to Ferlinghetti at City Lights, to update him about the anthology she was preparing for Feltrinelli, to buy various books and magazine issues, and to establish a direct channel of communication with the main hub for Beat and American counterculture art and literature:

Dear Larry Ferlinghetti,

Do you remember me. I wrote about one year ago [...] I am the crazy old woman who started years ago the campaign to make you people known here. Now they know you so well that sometimes they teach me who you are. Which is exactly what I was hoping. I told you months ago about an anthology to be published in a magazine, *Il Caffè*; which I was lazy and impolite enough not to send to you, but you didn't miss much. I wasn't that lazy about the anthology, though; I obtained to do it for a big publisher rather than for a magazine, and Feltrinelli is going to publish it [...] I would love to submit the plan of it to you; by now only Gregory saw it when he was here around [...] may I send you the plan of the anthology? I would love you to see it. [...]; I think it deserves your attention. I strongly suggested your *Her* to Mondadori, [...] I would love to put some of it in the anthology [...] Please send me the last book of Jack [...] and *Tristessa*; and *Her*; and, at any price, *Junkie* of the so called William Lee [...] Please Larry, take me as a friend more than a customer and keep me in touch with the things that you do: they keep asking me prefaces and editing and I really must know what is going on.¹⁷⁴

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

01 March 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

On 31 March 1961, while walking back from Alice Toklas's home in Paris, Pivano and Ettore Sottsass saw, on the other side of the road, Allen Ginsberg together with Gregory Corso and Peter Orlovsky: 'Corso mi aveva indicato a Ginsberg, probabilmente dicendogli chi ero, e Ginsberg mi aveva sorriso, mi aveva fatto cenno attraverso la strada di avvicinarmi' (Pivano 2008: 741).¹⁷⁵

The significance of this encounter is very clear to Pivano, both on the personal and professional level, that she defines it, in fact, a 'svolta importante nella mia vita' ('a crucial turning point in my life', 2008: 741). She is well aware that by establishing close links with the American poet

¹⁷⁴ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 01/03/1961.

¹⁷⁵ 'Corso pointed at me and probably told Ginsberg who I was, and Ginsberg smiled at me, and made a gesture to tell me to come closer'.

and collaborating with him, she would be able to accrue social capital that would give her leverage and negotiating power within the publishing field.

The group spent five days together, and Pivano and Ginsberg worked on the Italian translations and volumes that Pivano was preparing for Mondadori and Feltrinelli:

[...] cinque giorni 24 hours gettata su Ginsberg come un salvagente, Ginsberg generoso e paziente come una scialuppa di salvataggio [...] instancabile al tavolo con me a fare elenchi, aggiungere nomi, cambiare titoli, l'antologia di poesia e l'antologia che si sarebbe chiamata *Jukebox all'idrogeno* [...] decisione di mettere insieme *Howl* e *Kaddish* [...] ancora tutto in alto mare, ignara che sarebbe stato in alto mare per anni, che ci sarebbero stati fiumi di lettere, di discussioni, di resistenza (Pivano 2003: 27).¹⁷⁶

In her accounts of the encounter with Ginsberg, Pivano constantly highlights how crucial the poet's help was to be able to translate the complex language of the poems: 'Ginsberg mi aiutò enormemente per l'una come per l'altra cosa. [...] Su questo piccolo notes Ginsberg mi scrisse spiegazioni e definizioni. Le conservo ancora e sono pagine preziose di un epistolario che mi è molto caro e prima o poi affiderò alla Columbia University che conserva tutte le carte di Ginsberg' (2003: 29).¹⁷⁷

Through Ginsberg, Pivano met Maurice Girodias, editor and founder of Olympia Press, a publishing house renowned for publishing works often harassed by the censorship, particularly for their erotic and sexual character. Girodias published, among others, works by William Burroughs and Henry Miller, and the English translations of books by Guillaume Apollinaire, Marquis de Sade and Vladimir Nabokov. Maurice Girodias's literary dissemination was of particular interest for Pivano because of the political value of his agency regarding sex and sexual liberation. She observes that: 'A quei tempi questi libri parevano soltanto libri pornografici ma più o meno consciamente era chiaro che se uno pubblicava tante storie pornografiche così giuste e così leggibili, così "letterarie" e così liberatorie, stava facendo a proposito del sesso

¹⁷⁶ '[...] five days 24/7 thrown on Ginsberg as if he were my life jacket, patient and generous as a lifeboat [...] tireless, sitting together with me at the table making lists, adding names, changing titles, the poetry anthology and the anthology that would be called *Jukebox all'idrogeno* [...] the decision of putting *Howl* and *Kaddish* together [...] everything was still up in the air, and I was not aware that things would remain like this for many years, that there would be oceans of letters, arguments, resistance'.

¹⁷⁷ '[...] Ginsberg helped me enormously with both. [...] On this little notebook he noted explanations and definitions. I still have it. They are precious pages of an epistolary that is very dear to me and that, sooner or later, I will donate to Columbia University which holds all of Ginsberg papers'.

un'operazione che oggi si direbbe politica: stava cercando di rompere con l'accerchiamento sociale della repressione sessuale' (Pivano 2003: 32).¹⁷⁸

Through the direct contact established with Allen Ginsberg, Fernanda Pivano was able to accrue social capital that would help her pursue her professional objectives. Thanks to her achievements as a translator and cultural broker within the Italian literary field, and by engaging in close collaboration with Ginsberg on matters of publication and translation, Pivano was recognised as a trustworthy and valued social tie by the American author. On 1 April 1961, Allen Ginsberg wrote to Lawrence Ferlinghetti asking him to contact Mondadori and demand that Pivano be tasked with the editing of his own anthology:

Larry,

talking with Nanda Pivano in Paris discussing Feltrinelli + Mondadori etc. It would simplify matters if you would arrange for her to be the editor of the Mondadori book so that – since we have talked – she knows what to do in selecting poems. So if you write to Mondadori, say that she is supposed to be the editor of that Ginsberg book. She already was asked to write the preface, has translated Howl well, and originally arranged + suggested that book and the Feltrinelli anthology which she is also editing – so if she edits my own book everything will be under our – her control.

O.K.?¹⁷⁹

Allen Ginsberg to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

01 April 1961

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milano

The positive feedback on Fernanda Pivano and her work that Ginsberg relayed to Ferlinghetti shows that the relationship of collaboration between the American writer and the Italian translator was based on mutual professional respect and shared professional objectives. Fernanda Pivano was able to present herself as a reliable intermediary to the point that Ginsberg understood that cooperation with her would allow him and Lawrence Ferlinghetti to influence matters of publication in Italy. Simultaneously, through the endorsement and support that she received from key American literary figures, and thanks to the transmission of symbolic capital deriving from the tight relationship of collaboration between author and translator, Pivano was able to operate a

¹⁷⁸ 'Back then, those books seemed to be simply pornographic, but more or less consciously, it was clear that, by publishing so many pornographic stories which were so readable and good, so "literary" and liberating, the editor was carrying out an operation that today would be defined political in regards of sex. They were trying to break the links of the social encirclement of sexual repression'.

¹⁷⁹ Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 01/04/1961.

decentralisation of decision power on editorial matters, which no longer was completely concentrated in the hands of the publisher.

5.2 The end of the collaboration with Mondadori, the consultancy for Rizzoli and the publication of *La scimmia sulla schiena* (1962, *Junkie*) by William Burroughs

Once back from Paris, on 13 April 1961, Fernanda Pivano's collaboration with Mondadori was ended by editor Vittorio Sereni. Pivano's account of the event, reported in her diary, provides some clear indications of the elements that shaped the power imbalance between the two. She refers to the fact that Sereni, while the two directors of the publisher were away, used his 'full powers' and his status to fire her. She hints moreover at extensive comments on her appearance made by the editor, something which can be inscribed in a power struggle defined by persisting patriarchal structures that existed inside within the publishing industry:

Il 13 aprile 1961 Vittorio Sereni, in un momento in cui aveva pieni poteri di direttore letterario, mentre Arnoldo era indisposto a Portofino e Alberto a curarsi in Svizzera, aveva lodato con esagerazione il mio aspetto, aveva dimenticato il frutto del mio lavoro di due decenni, aveva evocato la sua carica liceale e il suo nuovo potere di factotum e con un fumoso discorso mi aveva licenziato dalla Mondadori, senza preavviso e senza liquidazione (Pivano 2008: 742).¹⁸⁰

Moreover, Pivano claims that the official motivation provided by Sereni to the heads of the publishing house to justify his decision was that 'protegevo troppo i "miei amici", cioè Ginsberg, Kerouac and Burroughs's (Pivano 2008: 742).¹⁸¹

Pivano's strategy of establishing strong networks of collaboration allowed her to accrue social capital and in turn to be recognised as a powerful and trustworthy intermediary in the process of cultural exchange to the eyes of foreign authors and editors. The cultural relevance that Pivano managed to acquire was used to promote her personal agenda in terms of authors she wished to bring to Italy, but also to negotiate her position, role, and participation within the publishing field, and finally to maintain an economic return from her cultural work. However,

¹⁸⁰ 'On the 13th of April 1961, at a time when Vittorio Sereni had full powers of literary director, while Arnoldo was unwell and in Portofino and Alberto was in Switzerland in hospital. Sereni had praised extensively my appearance, he had forgotten about the results I had achieved in over twenty years of work, he evoked his scholarly stance and his new role as factotum, and he fired me with vague reasons, without any advance notice nor settlement'.

¹⁸¹ 'I protected "my friends" too much, in other words Ginsberg, Kerouac and Burroughs'.

Pivano's trajectory and positioning in the field were not recognised as legitimate and accepted by the publishing elite. While translation skills were required by editors and publishers, there is a tendency to antagonise a translator's effort to broaden the range and breadth of their agency, particularly when this operation leads the translator to carry out tasks and functions traditionally associated with other figures within the publishing field such as the acquisition editor, the literary scout or literary agent. These dynamics are strictly linked to the identity-shaping elements such as self-perception and self-positioning within the field, and the subsequent construction of a habitus through which the translator wishes to take on specific roles or achieve particular accomplishments. This ambition can be limited or hindered by power structures that define the field.

In the article 'Translators' Identity Work: Introducing Micro-Sociological Theory of Identity to the Discussion of Translators' Habitus' (2014), Sela-Sheffy, drawing on the theories developed by Goffman (1956, 1963, 1974), integrates aspects of the concept of habitus (which stems from studies in sociology) with the concept of identity (usually pertaining to the field of psychology):

However, while "habitus" and "identity" have much in common as research agendas, as conceptual tools they have been differently oriented, according to two separate traditions. While the habitus concept has been developed within a European historical sociology, to be later integrated into Bourdieu's structuralist view of fields, conceptualizing identity is anchored in several fields of study that lie at the intersection between sociology and psychology. [...] My own work on the habitus of translators has led me to integrate aspects of these two theoretical perspectives. Taking translation as an important agency of culture transfer and change, I have become growingly interested in the enigma of the apparent discrepancy between the enormous potential of translators' cultural power and their actual feeling of being deprived of it (Sela-Sheffy 2014: 44).

From the case of Fernanda Pivano, it can be observed that the deprivation of cultural power is represented primarily by the changing of contract agreements and oscillations of wage, as demonstrated in the letter sent to Linder in 1968 (see page 55), culminating in the termination of the collaboration with Mondadori in 1961, which represents a disrepute of her cultural value and agency. Although Fernanda Pivano defines, in her accounts and letters, the termination of the collaboration with Mondadori as 'licenziamento', a layoff, from the letter that she sent to Erich Linder in 1968 it rather seems a lack of renewal of her contract with the publisher. In the letter, after describing the layoff as '[...] un'altra clamorosa amarezza' ('a further clamorous disappointment') and giving an account of the continuous reductions of her wage by Mondadori,

Pivano specifies that, between her and the publisher, there was only a verbal agreement of a three-month advance notice in case of contract termination:

[...] Questo contratto scadeva entro marzo e al momento della firma originaria, nel 1958, si era rimasti intesi verbalmente su un preavviso di tre mesi in caso di scissione. Ma fu soltanto alla fine dell'aprile 1961, mentre Arnoldo era a Portofino e Alberto era in America, che mi venne annunciato da Sereni che il mio contratto era scaduto. Non ebbi una lira di liquidazione, dopo sette anni che prendevo uno stipendio mensile.¹⁸²

Fernanda Pivano to Erich Linder

1968

Archivio Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano

The contract was signed in 1958, and – as shown in the letter sent to Arnoldo Mondadori in March 1959 – renewed on the 17 March 1959.¹⁸³ It is unclear if the contract was renewed again in 1960, but the data collected seems to indicate that Fernanda Pivano kept receiving a wage until Vittorio Sereni gave her communication of the termination of their collaboration, without any kind of advance notice.

In another letter sent to Ferlinghetti and contained in a folder at the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, Pivano seems to suggest that one of the reasons for the termination of her contract of collaboration by Mondadori, was a means for the publisher to reclaim ownership over publication strategies, particularly because Pivano had ‘obliged’ them to publish the Beats. In the letter, dated 12 April 1961, Pivano wrote:

Dear Larry,

[...] You see, this story of publishing them has created a tension tensor and tensor à mesure qu'ils devenaient fameux. They don't forgive me for knowing that I obliged them to publish them: now they want a new virginity and to believe that they have been so smart. You know all this it is so idiotic. So now I'll work for Mondadori only for another three months and then for somebody else: I don't know yet for whom, but I will let you know as soon as I have signed a new contract. It is sort of funny after fourteen years I work for them: like changing husband or wife or something [...] ¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² ‘[...] this contract expired in March and, when it was initially signed, in 1958, we had a verbal agreement that, in case of termination, I would receive a three-months advance notice. But it was at the end of April 1961, while Arnoldo was in Portofino and Alberto in America, that I was told by Sereni that my contract had expired. I did not receive any settlement, after seven years with a monthly wage’. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Agenzia letteraria internazionale – Erich Linder, Serie annuale 1968, B.55, fasc. 34, Fernanda Pivano.

¹⁸³ See page 55-56.

¹⁸⁴ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 12/04/1961.

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

12 April 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

From this excerpt, on top of Pivano's claim of having directed the publisher towards the publication of Allen Ginsberg almost against their will, and the hypothesis that the editors at Mondadori wished to get rid of her agency and pressure, Pivano seems to admit that from the moment she received notice of the termination of her collaboration, the agreement of a three-month advance notice was maintained by the publisher. The letter contains further interesting elements that help us identify dynamics and power struggles that shape the publication process of Allen Ginsberg's *Jukebox all'idrogeno*:

[...] I am not going to be able to control the situation anymore if I don't have a real task as the editor of the books. For instance it was already difficult as it was to check what they were doing with Allen's choice of poems, but now I wouldn't have any way to prevent any cutting or changing of his text. So it is really necessary now that you ask that I edit the book: they asked me months ago to write a preface and to translate the poems but not to take care of the choice and the cuts; I refused the translating, except for howl to have a way of not letting its tension fade out in a edulcorate version "fit to children" as they like, and I accepted the prefacing [...]¹⁸⁵

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

12 April 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

After being removed from the team of collaborators at Mondadori, Pivano was worried about the decision that the publisher might have taken regarding cuts to the poems and changes in the plan of publication. The highly controversial linguistic features of *Howl* concerned the publisher, that suggested on many occasions to perform changes and cuts to the text to avoid problems with the censorship. The negotiations towards a final draft of the translation would see a fierce battle between Pivano and the editors at Mondadori. In the excerpt above, Pivano asks Ferlinghetti to intercede and talk the publisher into giving her the task of editing the book. Toward the end of the letter (see following excerpt), she reiterated the request and asked Ferlinghetti to send the same email to her as well, because she is worried the publisher might pretend not having received it. I

¹⁸⁵ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 12/04/1961.

believe that this request by Pivano stands out as to highlight the complex strategies of power and negotiations that the translator and collaborator had to deal with and be prepared for to further her agency:

[...] Please let me hear from you and if you think it is a good idea to ask that I edit Allen, please send me a copy of the letter, because they might pretend not to have received it. If you think it is better to let them do as they want to, do not worry to let me know, because I believe more in your judgement than in mine [...]¹⁸⁶

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

12 April 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

The same letter provides with data about the developments with Feltrinelli and the anthology of Beat poetry that Pivano was preparing:

[...] As for the Feltrinelli anthology the director of the firm, called Riva, is getting more and more involved in the thing and writing to the poets and trying to do the editing himself rather than letting me doing it; but at least he has always been friendly towards them, so I do not mind, [...] no harm is involved for our friends or at least no bad will [...]¹⁸⁷

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

12 April 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Although the excerpt above shows signs of a positive collaboration with Valerio Riva, director of the publishing house Feltrinelli, who seems to be very keen in the editing of the poems to be included in the anthology *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, several problems and interferences would delay the publication of the anthology by four years, something which Pivano sums up as a '[...] divergenza di vedute col direttore letterario della casa [...] dichiarata in una lettera del 13 febbraio 1963 che mi chiedeva di rifare il piano dell'antologia' (Pivano 2003: 15).¹⁸⁸ The new plan for the anthology that Pivano refers to in this passage appears to be the result of an attempt by the literary

¹⁸⁶ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 12/04/1961.

¹⁸⁷ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 12/04/1961.

¹⁸⁸ '[...] diverging views with the director of the publisher [...] declared through a letter on the 13th of February 1963 with which I was asked to change the plan of the anthology'.

director of the publisher and American poet Arnold Weinstein to promote the New York School rather than the Beats.¹⁸⁹

In the last section of the letter, Pivano provides Ferlinghetti with more information about the intricate dynamics shaping the publication of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* in Italy, and Pivano makes a clear reference to a close-mindedness of her bosses at Mondadori:

[...] you must think that for years Mondadori refused to publish *Howl*; he wanted it only when he heard that I was doing the anthology with Feltrinelli. Hell, and god knows how much I insisted with them. It would be a good way oh punishing them not to give them the copyrights, but after all I think that for Allen the best is having his poems circulating as much as possible. Provided they are not changed in their meaning for fear of censorship [...]. I hope my next boss will be open minded and will welcome you all with me. [...]¹⁹⁰

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

12 April 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

A few days later, Fernanda Pivano was hired by the publisher Rizzoli, thanks to the help of Carlo Ripa di Meana, Italian politician and collaborator first for the publishing house Boringhieri and then Rizzoli: '[...] il 17 aprile Carlo Ripa di Meana mi aveva fatto assumere dalla Rizzoli come consulente e il 26 aprile avevo preso parte alla prima seduta alla Rizzoli con Carlo Bo e Giorgio Zampa'¹⁹¹ (Pivano 2008: 742-743). At Rizzoli, Pivano promoted the publication of *Junkie*, by William Burroughs. The volume came out in 1962 with the title *La scimmia sulla schiena*, translated by Bruno Oddera and with an introduction by Fernanda Pivano. For this occasion, Pivano translated and worked towards the publication of an essay by Burroughs about the use of apomorphine to treat heroin addiction. The article, refused in the US, was published for the first time in Italy, as demonstrated by a letter that Burroughs sent to Pivano on 05 February 1962:¹⁹²

Dear Nanda Pivano:

¹⁸⁹ See p. 121.

¹⁹⁰ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 12/04/1961.

¹⁹¹ '[...] on the 17th of April, Carlo Ripa di Meana had me hired at Rizzoli as a consultant and on the 26th of April I participated to the first meeting at Rizzoli together with Carlo Bo and Giorgio Zampa'.

¹⁹² At present I was not able to trace the publication of the essay.

I am looking forward to seeing the Italian edition of *Junkie* with your preface – as regards the payment for the essay on apomorphine I would appreciate if they could send it Cargo T. Cock London [...] I have been in touch with Mondadori and they say publication of *The Naked Lunch* is definite for this Spring. As regards the Soft Machine rights I don't know how they stand – Girodias has been acting as my agents and I suggest that Rizzoli contact him – Thank you many times for your interest in my work and your very successful efforts to further publication in Italy – The article on apomorphine, which I tried to publish more than a year ago in America, will appear for the first time in Italian. (Pivano 2003: 39)

Pivano was therefore also working towards the publication of the volume *Soft Machine*, which in the end was published in 1965 by SugarCo.¹⁹³ Although Burroughs reports that he is in talks with Mondadori about the publication of *Naked Lunch*, the rights of the volume were passed on to SugarCo which published it in 1964.

Moreover, considering the hardships of the relationship with Mondadori and the uncertainties with regards the publication of *Howl*, Pivano was striving to find a plan B for the publication of *Howl*, and was pushing for the publication of the volume *A casebook on the Beat* (Parkinson, 1961) through Rizzoli, to make sure that Ginsberg's *Howl* would circulate in Italy:

Dear Allen,

[...]

Mondadori asked me to make your anthology, but never send a formal request; Feltrinelli keep postponing a meeting supposed to decide about the translators of the other poets (this meeting is being postponed since last November, and the translation were supposed to be given to the publisher in February, the past one). [...] The Mondadori delay is probably due to the fact that *The Subterraneans* has been banned and we are waiting for the lawsuit [...] so I suppose that Mondadori is frightened that a scandal would greet also your *Howl*. I don't know exactly, also because some months ago I left Mondadori after 14 years I worked for them. I was tired of arguing with them about you and Jack; after all now Jack's books are out and I thought your book too was done. Anyway I am now working for Rizzoli who seems to be changing his program and swiftng to a more intellectual plan from his commercial one, and I immediately suggested to publish the *Casebook*, so your *Howl* would anyway come out for the Italian readers. Allen dear, I swear I couldn't have done more for you all; please try to realize how difficult it is in a damned catholic country [...] ¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Translation by Donatella Manganotti and with an introduction by Giansiro Ferrata.

¹⁹⁴ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 13/07/1961.

It is interesting to note that, in her correspondence both with Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg, Fernanda Pivano avoids saying that her contract was terminated by the publisher, possibly to maintain the cultural capital and the recognition she was trying to accumulate and establish in the eyes of the American actors. She told the author that she decided to stop working at Mondadori, adding that, among the reasons that pushed her away from the publisher, was the fact that Mondadori gave the task of translating *Naked Lunch* to a professor who would be more inclined to cut indictable passages of the novel:

I am having the Rizzoli publish Junkie, will make a big preface just to open a way to Burroughs to have *Naked Lunch* out. *Naked Lunch* has been translated by a professor so that he would agree to cut much. One of the reasons why I left Mondadori. Maybe you should ask Mondadori a final time of publication of your anthology to engage them. I am scared your *Howl* too be published with cuts or changings: I cannot control anything being out and not having to do it myself. I thought you were not needing me anymore but this Sequestro of the *Subterraneans* threw everything upside down.¹⁹⁵

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

13 July 1961

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

To counter the resistance met at Mondadori for the publication of *Naked Lunch*, Fernanda Pivano planned on popularising Burroughs for Italian readers through a preface to be included in the Italian translation of *Junkie*, *La scimmia sulla schiena* (1962). In 1961, Mondadori was still evaluating the publication of *Naked Lunch* (published in 1964 by SugarCo), and professor of Anglo-American literature Carlo Gorlier had been assigned the task of the translation.

5.3 Edizioni East 128 and *Pianeta Fresco*

Fernanda Pivano's search for stronger cultural and editorial independence reached its peak in the late 1960s when, together with her husband and designer Ettore Sottsass Jr., she founded the independent publishing house East 128, under which the journal *Pianeta Fresco* was printed and distributed between 1967 and 1968. Active during 1963 to 1968, the publishing house *East 128*

¹⁹⁵ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 13/07/1961.

became primarily a catalyst for the publication of the works of authors linked to the Beat Generation, but also an output for the works of its two owners. Excluding Sottsass and Pivano, *Room East 128* published works by: Philip Whalen, Michael McClure, Gregory Corso, Stephen Levine, Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Moreover, the publication of works by Ed Sanders, Diane di Prima and Gary Snyder was scheduled but never accomplished.¹⁹⁶ The creation of the publishing house and of the magazine *Pianeta Fresco* are a direct consequence of the initial collaborative experience between Pivano and Sottsass that resulted in the bulletin *Room East 128*. In 1962, Pivano travelled together with her husband to Palo Alto where Sottsass was hospitalized to cure his nephritis, in room 128 in the eastern wing of the Palo Alto Medical Center. To keep him active and distracted from the pain, Pivano arranged for a mimeograph to be installed in the designer's hospital room:

Poi in quella stanza dei miracoli prese vita l'idea che avrebbe portato alla nascita di una piccola casa editrice [...]. La Pivano fece portare clandestinamente nella stanza [...] la macchina per la stampa a ciclostile, gli inchiostri, le carte speciali e tutto il resto. Nacque così un giornale di sette fogli sciolti che nella testata porta la scritta "Room East 128 Chronicle (Borsani 2021: 38).¹⁹⁷

Pivano and Sottsass sent the bulletin to their friends in Italy to keep them updated on Sottsass's health. The bulletin was a collage which put together *pop* materials taken from newspapers, advertisement, candies' and medicines' packaging: 'Poiché la composizione era fatta a collage venivano già automaticamente scavalcate le condizioni che regolano l'impaginazione tipografico/industriale [...] *Room East 128 Chronicle* è stato un giornalino che in qualche modo precedette la grafica underground' (Pivano 2003: 39).¹⁹⁸ In total, three issues of *Room East 128 Chronicle* were published (two in June and one in July 1962, with the second and third issue printed in a typography), with a limited run of copies, respectively thirty, ninety and one-hundred and forty (Borsani 2021: 38-9). The bulletin combined mainly playful texts by Fernanda Pivano with collages, images, and illustrations by Ettore Sottsass.

¹⁹⁶ The full list of publications by *East 128* can be found in Borsani 2021, p. 143. See also Appendix D.

¹⁹⁷ 'In that room of miracles was born the idea which led to the creation of a small publishing house [...]. Pivano arranged to secretly install in the room [...] a mimeograph, the inks, the special paper and everything else. And just like this, a small, seven-page, non-bound zine was born. Its header said "Room East 128 Chronicle".'

¹⁹⁸ 'Since it was structured through the technique of the collage, the norms regulating the typographic/industrial layout were automatically surpassed [...] *Room East 128 Chronicle* was a small publication that, in a certain sense, preceded the underground graphic design'.

Once back from the United States, in 1963 Pivano and Sottsass started publishing small, valuable volumes that featured short, unpublished, handwritten texts by American writers, sometimes accompanied by their own illustrations or photographs made by Ettore Sottsass Jr. With a limited print run that never exceeded four-hundred copies, these volumes were distributed across a narrow circle made primarily of friends. The need to establish an independent publishing house lay predominantly in Fernanda Pivano's wish to offer a platform for publication to those authors who were struggling to get their works accepted by traditional publishers, subject to the rules of the market, as exemplified in Pivano's letter to Allen Ginsberg dated 28 September 1963:

This time I want to tell you about the so-called publishing house of Ettore. I have always been ashamed of speaking of it to you because actually we are not sure to be able to do it decently. We are putting in it all the money we can spare, which is not much following the average standards but is a lot for us. The idea came to us in San Francisco when we saw Phil and felt indignant because people are rejecting his Ms. We thought that many lovely persons like Phil might have some Ms. that any publisher would reject in the holy name of COMMERCIAL VALUE. So we thought of publishing short books of thirty or maybe forty pages in silk screen, the idea being that the poet writes the poem himself; this and the fact of putting pictures and if possible drawings by the author, would make the book interesting from the collectors' point of view.

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

28 September 1963

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

By establishing an independent publishing house with no interest in financial gains, ('no money involved in this: a little account on royalties, a little sum for your trouble in handwriting; just the fun of it', Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg, 28 September 1963), Pivano and Sottsass entered a mechanism of restricted cultural production, where the objects produced are destined primarily to the consumption by cultural producers. As observed by Bourdieu (1971), the system of restricted production produces, at the same time, the 'instruments for the appropriation of those goods'¹⁹⁹ (Bourdieu 1971: 55). In the case of Fernanda Pivano, an independent publishing house whose literary and artistic outputs were directly linked to the social ties established by Pivano in the United States, and to the extensive symbolic and cultural capital embedded in Pivano and Sottsass's collaborative partnership. As is evident from the letter to Ginsberg, Pivano relied on

¹⁹⁹ From the original French: 'et des instruments d'appropriation de ces biens'.

the networks she had nurtured with American authors for the supply of original and unpublished works:

So Phil is now working at it; of course he will be free of republishing his poem in any future collection of his [...]. Then we asked Mike, if he has anything out of the commercial war; [...] Ted and Larry know about this [...] here I am asking you if there is anything that you would like to see printed that way, in your own handwriting, with some drawings if you ever made any and with pictures of yours that you like²⁰⁰

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

28 September 1963

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

In the field restricted production, the cultural object is neither submitted to the laws of the wider market nor to the general public [*'le grand public'* (Bourdieu 1971: 55)], but it is circulated within a limited circle of intellectuals. Therefore, the field develops its own set of criteria for the recognition of the cultural value of the product.²⁰¹ By publishing original works with Edizioni East 128 Pivano scouted literary works often rejected by the mainstream and traditional book market, primarily because of economic reasons, and submitted them to the dynamics of cultural recognition of the field of restricted production. The inherently closed nature of this kind of productive framework – and the circularity of the production-consumption relation – brings about a recursiveness in the mechanism of generation of symbolic capital transferred onto and accrued by the goods produced.²⁰²

The experience of *Room East 128 Chronicle* is interesting as a prelude to Pivano and Sottsass's *Pianeta Fresco*, a journal which served as a model for the numerous Beatnik-inspired fanzines that mushroomed in Italy during the '60s and the '70s, *'[A]nticipando il vero e proprio boom della produzione di controcultura in Italia, riconducibile agli anni 1970-1977'*²⁰³ (Martino 2017: 81). Only two issues of *Pianeta Fresco* appeared: issue 1 in 1967 and issue 2/3 in 1968,

²⁰⁰ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 28/09/1963.

²⁰¹ *'[T]end à produire lui-même ses normes de production et les critères d'évaluation de ses produits'* (Bourdieu 1971: 54).

²⁰² *'Avec la circularité et la réversibilité quasi parfaites des relations de production et de consommation culturelles qui résultent de la fermeture du champ de production restreinte (et même des différents secteurs de ce champ), les conditions sont remplies pour que le développement des productions symboliques revête la forme d'une histoire quasi réflexive: l'explicitation et la redéfinition incessante des principes implicites que provoque la confrontation avec les jugements portés sur l'œuvre propre ou avec les œuvres des autres producteurs sont de nature à déterminer une transformation décisive du rapport que le producteur entretient avec son œuvre et par là de son œuvre'* (Bourdieu 1971: 62).

²⁰³ *'[A]nticipating the boom of counterculture production in Italy, ascribable to the years 1970-1977'*.

with a limited print-run of less than six-hundred copies in total for both issues.²⁰⁴ *Pianeta Fresco* was a psychedelic publication that situated itself at the intersection between Beat culture and hippie culture:²⁰⁵ ‘La grafica [...] fu ispirata [...] al *San Francisco Oracle*, che era uscito nel febbraio a San Francisco e avevamo visto con stupore e felicità, stimolo indimenticato e indimenticato esempio di una creatività che si sottraeva o contestava qualsiasi esigenza commerciale e industriale’ (Pivano 2003: 120).²⁰⁶ The *San Francisco Oracle* was an underground, psychedelic publication produced in San Francisco between 1966 and 1968 which came out in twelve issues. Through poetry, art and its psychedelic design, the *San Francisco Oracle* functioned as a catalyst for artistic expression of the multicultural community that populated the Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood in San Francisco, the ‘hippie central, a swirling, colorful, all-hours hub of youthful yearning’ (Lemke-Santangelo 2009: 1) and hub counterculture movements in 1960s. The magazine was started and directed by New York poet Allan Cohen (with the initial title of *P.O. Frisco*), with the collaboration of artist Michael Bowen. The magazine featured a distinctive experimental, multicoloured design: ‘The generous, even frenzied, use of colours and patterns in the Oracle (as in the poster art) was designed to replicate on paper the hallucinatory experience’ (Ashbolt 2007: 41).²⁰⁷

The aims and intentions of *Pianeta Fresco* mirrored the guiding principles of the publishing house *East 128*, and its themes and design are evidently indebted to the *San Francisco Oracle*. As reported on a flier that was circulated for the publication of the first issue,²⁰⁸ *Pianeta Fresco* ‘pubblica traduzioni della Stampa Internazionale Underground o testi originali di italiani che per loro decisione cosciente non si lasciano sopraffare dal consumismo delle Case Editrici o dalle politiche di potere dei Gruppi Letterari’ (Borsani 2021: 47).²⁰⁹ In open contrast with the principles underlying the productive cycle of mainstream, and commercial media, the underground publication relied on the synergies deriving from the transversal collaboration among authors, translators, designers, printers and distributors:

²⁰⁴ A fourth issue was almost completed but never published. Its pages are available at Fondo Pivano, Fondazione Benetton (see Borsani 2021: 48).

²⁰⁵ See Martino 2017: 83.

²⁰⁶ ‘The design [...] was inspired [...] by the *San Francisco Oracle*, that came out in February in San Francisco. We discovered it in awe and amazement: it was an unforgettable inspiration and example of a creativity that dodged and contested any industrial or commercial demand’.

²⁰⁷ For further reading on the *San Francisco Oracle*, see also Leamer 1972, Lewis 1972, Armstrong 1981, Peck 1985, Cohen 1993, Duncan 2014.

²⁰⁸ Now in Borsani 2021: 47.

²⁰⁹ ‘[P]ublishes translations of the Stampa Internazionale Underground or unpublished texts of Italian authors who, willfully, do not accept to be overpowered by the consumerism of the publishing houses or by the power politics of the literary groups’.

Pianeta Fresco è una rivista che esce senza ordine di tempo, è finanziata privatamente, è diretta da Fernanda Pivano con l'appoggio culturale e morale di Allen Ginsberg, è disegnata da Ettore Sottsass con l'aiuto di amici, è stampata da Giovanni Lana, è spedita da Angelo Pezzana della Libreria Hellas di Torino ad altre librerie, amici e conoscenti, fa parte dell'Underground Press Syndicate (UPS)²¹⁰ (Borsani 2021: 47).

With Pivano in the role of 'direttore responsabile', Ginsberg as 'direttore irresponsabile' and Sottsass as 'direttore dei giardini', *Pianeta Fresco* collected all the themes and ideas that were dear to Fernanda Pivano's cultural action. As observed by Martino (2017):

La rivista affronta i tabù sessuali, tratta di droga e viaggi alternativi a poco prezzo, protesta contro la guerra del Vietnam, sogna una politica radicale, predica le religioni orientali, il tutto condito da musica e arte pop. I testi invadono i disegni che a loro volta ingombrano le pagine, il nero tradizionale è sostituito dalla tavolozza dei colori dell'arcobaleno, il senso di lettura è sovente invertito e slogans, collages e cornici non sono solo di abbellimento, ma chiedono di essere "letti" al pari dei testi.²¹¹

Pianeta Fresco, whose title is to be initially attributed to Gary Snyder and later suggested to Pivano and Sottsass by Ginsberg,²¹² was born on the 12 September 1967 (Pivano 2008: 1026), during one of Ginsberg's visits to Italy. It saw the collaboration of Italian and international authors and artists and featured both original and already-in-print works, such as Fernanda Pivano's translation of Allen Ginsberg's 'Who be kind to' ['Con chi essere gentile'], a tri-lingual version of the 'Prajnaparamita Sutra' (Shunryu Suzuki's Japanese version, Allen Ginsberg's English version, and Fernanda Pivano's Italian translation), and the translation of the 22-pages long 'Houseboat summit', ['Dialogo di Sausalito'], a conversation between Alan Watts, Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, first published in the *San Francisco Oracle*.²¹³

A closer look at the list of contributors and collaborators might help understand the mechanisms through which *Pianeta Fresco* accessed copy for its publications and, at the same

²¹⁰ 'Pianeta Fresco is an aperiodic magazine, it is privately funded, it is directed by Fernanda Pivano with the cultural and moral support of Allen Ginsberg, it is designed by Ettore Sottsass with the help of friends, it is printed by Giovanni Lana, it is distributed by Angelo Pezzana, owner of the Hellas bookshop in Turin, to other bookshops, friends and acquaintances, it is part of the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS)'.

²¹¹ 'The magazine engages with sexual taboos, talks about drugs and alternative trips for a cheap price, it protests against the Vietnam war, dreams of radical politics, preaches the religions of East Asia and mixes everything up with pop art and music'

²¹² See Borsani 2021: 47.

²¹³ *San Francisco Oracle*, vol. 1, n. 7, 1967,

time, provide an explanation for its short lifespan. Among its contributors we can find American authors such as Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Philip Lamantia, Timothy Leary and Neal Cassidy, as well as Italian writers and activists involved in the Beat literary milieu and connected to the production of underground zines and journals such as Gianni De Martino, Poppi Ranchetti, Andrea D'Anna, Giulio Saponaro and Vittorio Di Russo, in addition to artists such as Michelangelo Pistoletto and Myriam Sumbulovich.²¹⁴ As is evident from the list above, *Pianeta Fresco* relied on a network of collaborators made of both incumbent and newcomer contributors,²¹⁵ a network characterised by the 'small-world' nature of its social ties. *Pianeta Fresco*'s embeddedness within a limited circle of trusted friends and authors might be at the root of the magazine's short longevity: while this structure ensured a constant availability of quality copy, it imposed limitations on the magazine's reach and, subsequently, to its survival (see La Penna 2018: 129-130).²¹⁶

5.4 The publication of the anthology *Poesia degli ultimi americani* (1964, Feltrinelli)

The reasons behind the delay in the publication of the two volumes of Beat poetry by Feltrinelli and Mondadori were diverse. *Poesia degli ultimi americani* was published by Feltrinelli only five years after the start of the project. In a letter to Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Fernanda Pivano claims that this delay could be imputed to the interference of Arnold Weinstein, poet, scholar, and librettist associated with the New York school of art movement. In February 1963 Pivano wrote to Ferlinghetti:

²¹⁴ Full list of main collaborators: Renzo Angolani, Archizoom [Dario Bartolini, Lucia Bartolini, Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Massimo Morozzi], Gianni Berengo Gardin, Andrea D'Anna, Walter De Nardis, Vittorio Di Russo, Giordano Falzoni, Pino Franzosi, Renzo Freschi, Piero Gilardi, Allen Ginsberg, Gianni Lana, Lorenzo Malli, Pierfrancesco Marcenaro, Antonio Mariani, Livio Marzot, Puccio Paleari, Paolo Pasciolla, Donatella Pera, Mauro Petroni, Gianni Pettena, Angelo Pezzana, Roberto Pieraccini, Aldo Piromalli, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Fernanda Pivano, Graziella Puntelli, Poppi Ranchetti, Giulio Saponaro, Gianni Scarpelli, Miro Silvera, Piero Simonelli, Ettore Sottsass, Myriam Sumbulovich, Giorgio Taviglione, Tommaso Trini, Piero Vignozzi.

The list is available on the webpage dedicated to *Pianeta Fresco* at <https://www.culturedeldissenso.com/pianeta-fresco/>, for the project 'Alle due sponde della cortina di ferro: le culture del dissenso e la definizione dell'identità europea tra Italia, Francia e URSS (1956-1991)', University of Florence. Last accessed 10/01/2022.

²¹⁵ On the potential kind of links within a team see Guimer, Uzzi, Spiro and Amaral 2005: 698.

²¹⁶ On the 'paradox of embeddedness' see also Uzzi 1997.

[n]ow, Larry, did you notice I refused to speak of that damned anthology [...] The reason was that after they [Feltrinelli] got the copyrights they tricked me out of telephone or visits. So much so that I had a lawyer writing them; and they just kept postponing things. Now Creeley writes me from Vancouver that he has seen on a magazine published by Feltrinelli, *Il Verri* (which I am mailing to you air mail) an article on you all: and when I looked through it I saw with horror that it was a very violent and vulgar attack against Allen [...].²¹⁷

The reason why Feltrinelli decided to publish an article against Allen Ginsberg appears to be nonsensical when we consider the fact that Feltrinelli had – initially - bought the rights of the poem. The issue of *Il Verri* mentioned by Creeley and Pivano is issue n. 1 from 1962, where Glauco Cambon published an article with the title “Nuovi poeti americani” in which he presented Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Gary Snyder, Robert Duncan and Denise Levertov, including various translations of their poems. The article contained a ‘dull but correct’ translation of the poem *Supermarket in California* by Allen Ginsberg, and a ‘very wild attack against you [Ginsberg] as a preface to it’.²¹⁸

In a letter sent to Ferlinghetti in 1964, Pivano provided one possible explanation for the complicated negotiations with Feltrinelli:

[...] This damn anthology has a very hysterical story. I started on Summer 1960 and it was due in June 1961. But Arnold Weinstein, who happened to be on a fellowship in Florence, heard about it and rushed to Feltrinelli and told him that I was no good, that he was a big friend of the beat and somehow their lawyer in Europe and that he was the only person who could possibly do the anthology; and of course he gave him his plan for the anthology. [...] The main program of the new plan was to show Allen as an inconsequential clown and Ashbery as the only poet of some importance in the group; and Feltrinelli started asking permissions of publication of poems belonging to that plan and not mine. So, for instance, Duncan was asked of a poem and he resented horribly and wrote an infuriated letter saying that if he had to be represented by that poem he would rather not to be included in the anthology at all (it was the poem about homosexuality).²¹⁹

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

24 May 1964

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

²¹⁷ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 04/02/1963.

²¹⁸ *Il Verri*, issue n. 1, February 1962, Feltrinelli, pp. 59-80. The quotations are from a letter from Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg, 16/02/1963, Fernanda Pivano Archives, Fondazione Benetton, Milan, Allen Ginsberg, 116.1_i.

²¹⁹ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 04/02/1963.

The change of the plan for the anthology by Feltrinelli was intended to side-line Fernanda Pivano and her project of dissemination of Beat literature. To regain ownership over the publication, Pivano decided to employ a lawyer to prove that Lawrence Ferlinghetti sold Feltrinelli the rights to publish Allen Ginsberg's poems in an anthology which was *in favour* of the Beat poets, rather than to be published in a magazine which antagonised them. To do this, Pivano needed the help and collaboration of the director of City Lights:

The point is: you gave the copyrights for the anthology, which was to be done by me, in favour of Allen; they used them for a magazine in an article against Allen. Did you agree that they could use those copyrights also on magazines? Please check and let me know, because my lawyer is waiting for it to go on [...].²²⁰

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

04 February 1963

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

As Pivano claimed in the two letters of April and July 1961 (see p. 57-59), the fact that Feltrinelli kept postponing the meeting to decide which poets to include in the anthology and also the fact that literary director Valerio Riva wished to take control of the editing, might be interpreted as signs of the attempt to revolutionise the original plan for the anthology from what had been agreed with Pivano, to accommodate Weinstein's suggestions.

The strategy of threatening to sue Feltrinelli for their use of Ginsberg's poems against the Beats in *Il Verri* seemed to work, because the president of the publisher – in a letter sent on 13 February – wrote to Pivano confirming the intention of resuming the publication of the anthology of Beat poetry:

Cara Fernanda Pivano,
nella nostra conversazione di ieri, 12 febbraio, abbiamo deciso di riprendere l'antologia della poesia americana ex-beat. Ci siamo detti che conviene rinnovare completamente l'impianto, lo schema originale di questa antologia, facendone una specie di antologia aperta che, dalle principali correnti beat, raccolga e documenti gli sviluppi della poesia americana. Questo nuovo piano Lei lo presenterà; sia a me che a Riva, il 5 marzo (Pivano 2003: 15).²²¹

²²⁰ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 04/02/1963.

²²¹ 'Dear Fernanda Pivano, during our conversation yesterday, 12th February, we decided to resume the anthology of ex-Beat American poetry. We agreed that it would be convenient to completely renew the plan, its original structure,

The request of changing the plan of the anthology was advanced by the publisher almost three years after assigning Pivano the task of editing the volume (22nd November 1960): this delay made it necessary to revise the structure of the volume because, in the meantime, other publications on Beat authors had come out in Italy, as pointed out by Pivano in the following excerpts from two letters sent to Lawrence Ferlinghetti in 1963:

[...] in the meantime a couple of that kind of anthologies came out in Italy, making the most out of the label beat.²²²

and

This anthology is the last testimony of publishers' crazyness. They kept me three years postponing the thing to the point that I had to use a lawyer to oblige them to fulfil that contract. Then they tried to trick me by giving me only fifteen days to produce a plan. Of course it was crazy because the situation has much changed in the past years and it was then that I had deeply studied the scene. Imagine how much I could have worked in those five months in America if I had known that I was supposed to do the book after all.²²³

The setbacks Pivano refers to evidently jeopardised her primacy in the operation of cultural dissemination of a specific segment of American literature. These publications were translations of two volumes that had been published in the US: *The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men*, edited by Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg (1958, Citadel Press), translated into Italian for Guanda by Luciano Bianciardi and published in 1961 with the title *Narratori della generazione alienata: beat generation e angry young men*; and the volume *The Beats*, edited by Seymour Krim (1960, Gold Medal), translated into Italian for Lerici Editore by Marisa Bulgheroni and published in 1962 with the title *I Beats*. (In 1963, Guanda would publish a volume with the title *Poesia americana del '900*, edited by Carlo Izzo, containing Ginsberg's *The Shrouded Stranger* and *A Supermarket in California*).

and turn it into some sort of open anthology that, starting from the main Beat currents, collects and documents the development of American poetry. You will be presenting the new plan both to me and Riva on 05 March'.

²²² City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 16/02/1963.

²²³ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 18/04/1963.

The novel publication plan for the Feltrinelli anthology was elaborated together with the help of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and Ted Wilentz, to whom Pivano asked assistance:

Dear Larry,

great, Great, GREAT. The damned anthology is going to be done. My lawyer exploited the magazine which I sent you and talked the publisher Feltrinelli into knowing better and doing our anthology or being sued.

The problem is that in the meantime a couple of that kind of anthologies came out in Italy, making the most out of the label beat; so we thought to change mine and call it Anthology Of The New Exiled Poetry of America or something like that: any suggestion would be appreciated.

[...]²²⁴

Fernanda Pivano to Lawrence Ferlinghetti

16 February 1963

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Unfortunately, while conducting the research for this thesis, I was unable to find further evidence or data about the dynamics described by Fernanda Pivano in her letters to Ferlinghetti. A further – and controversial – element that she identifies as complicating the editorial process of the publication of the anthology *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, is a dispute over the rights of Allen Ginsberg's poems between Feltrinelli and Mondadori, which Pivano identifies as arising from the deterioration of the relationship between her and Mondadori. Pivano claimed, in fact, that Mondadori refused to give permission to Feltrinelli to publish *Howl* in the anthology to jeopardise her editorial work:

Dear Larry,

how to thank you for your patience. I put the pomes you suggested in the plan and Feltrinelli will formally ask for permission [...]

I hope that Mondadori will not make things difficult again. It seems that the basic reason for not making the anthology until now is that it didn't give Feltrinelli the copyright of reproducing *Howl* just to be nasty to me: the same reason why he bought Allen's and yours copyrights only after I stopped working for them. But it is so difficult to know the real truth behind the industrialized publishers' lies.²²⁵

²²⁴ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 16/02/1963.

²²⁵ City Lights Books records, BANC MSS 72/107 c, box 10:11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 04/03/1963.

Although Fernanda Pivano is not completely certain about the explanation (probably provided by Feltrinelli) to justify the delay which affected the publication of *Poesia degli ultimi americani* (note the word ‘seems’ underlined in the original letter, and the final line of the excerpt above), an interference by Mondadori might also explain the decision of Feltrinelli to completely change the palimpsest of the publication, when unable to publish the central work of Beat poetry by Ginsberg, and therefore endorsing Weinstein’s program focused on Ashbery. Moreover, Valerio Riva’s willingness to maintain control over the editing process, was possibly aimed at limiting Fernanda Pivano’s involvement with the project in case of a change in the publication plan. The anthology, titled *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, came out in 1964 and was presented on the 28 November at the Feltrinelli bookstore in Milan. The majority of the poems are translated by Giulio Saponaro, a few by Fernanda Pivano who also penned the introduction to the volume.

5.5 Translating Allen Ginsberg into Italian

Pivano’s work on the anthology *Jukebox all'idrogeno* was several years long. As shown in the letter to Mondadori,²²⁶ Pivano had already completed a first draft of the translation of the poem *Howl* in January 1960, but the events that took place in the following years (in particular the encounter and friendship with Allen Ginsberg and the delays in the publication of the volume by Mondadori) led her to revise, re-draft and re-design both her translations and the plan for the volume, which eventually took the form of an anthology and was published in 1965. The final structure of the volume, its title, and the linguistic and stylistic choices in the Italian translations are highly indebted to the tight and fruitful relationship of collaboration that Fernanda Pivano established with the American author right after their encounter in Paris in 1961.

Jukebox all'idrogeno contains most of the poems included in the two collections *Howl and other poems* (1956) and in *Kaddish and other poems* (1960) published by City Lights Books, and is divided in three main sections that follow the long introduction penned by Pivano (‘Un

²²⁶ See p. 95.

poeta, non soltanto un minestrone Beat') and the relevant notes. All poems have the original parallel text. Section one and section two are titled after the two original collections: 'Urlo e altre poesie' and 'Kaddish e altre poesie' and reproduce the content and structure of the original collections, with the exception of one poem that was excised ('Song'), and one poem added in section two ('The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express'). The section titled 'Urlo e altre poesie' contains all the poems of the American version, except for 'Song', not included in the Italian version. The remaining poems are all translated in the Italian version (which also includes the translation of William Carlos Williams's original introduction): 'Howl' ['Urlo'], 'Footnote to Howl' ['Nota a Urlo'], 'A supermarket in California' ['Un supermarket in California'], 'Transcription of organ music' ['Trascrizione di musica da organo'], 'Sunflower sutra' ['Sutra del girasole'], 'America' ['America'], 'In the baggage room at Greyhound' ['Nel bagagliaio di Greyhound'], 'An asphodel' ['Un asfodelo'], 'Wild Orphan' ['Orfano selvaggio'], 'In back of the real' ['Dietro al reale'].²²⁷

The section titled 'Kaddish e altre poesie' includes all the poems contained in the collection *Kaddish and other poems* ('Kaddish' ['Kadish'], 'Poem Rocket' ['Poesia razzo'], 'Europe! Europe!' ['Europa! Europa!'], 'To Lindsay' ['A Lindsay'], 'Message' ['Messaggio'], 'To Aunt Rose' ['Alla zia Rosa'], 'At Apollinaire's Grave' ['Sulla tomba di Apollinaire'], 'The Lion for Real' ['Il leone sul serio'], 'Ignu' ['Ignu'], 'Death to Van Gogh's Ear!' ['Morte all'orecchio di Van Gogh'], 'Laughing Gas' ['Gas esilarante'], 'Mescaline' ['Mescalina'], 'Lysergic Acid' ['Acido lisergico'], 'Magic Psalm' ['Salmo magico'], 'The Reply' ['La risposta'], 'The End' ['Fine']) and the translation of the poem 'The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express' ['Il mutamento: Rapido Kyoto-Tokyo']. This particular poem was not included in the 1960 collection *Kaddish and Other Poems*, but it was published for the first time in the American magazine *Fuck You: A magazine of the Arts*, in December 1963.²²⁸

The third and last section of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, titled "Gli agnelli d'America" [The lambs of America], contains the translation of the notes written by Allen Ginsberg for the recording of *Howl* ('Note scritte quando finalmente venne inciso "Urlo"'), the translation of the article 'Poetry, Violence and the Trembling Lambs' ['Poesia, violenza e gli agnelli tremanti'] which was first published in 1959 in the magazines *San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Village*

²²⁷ In the original version, 'An Apshodel', 'Wild orphan' and 'In the back of the real' make up a separate sub-section titled 'Earlier Poems'. This separation was not kept in *Jukebox all'idrogeno*.

²²⁸ *Fuck You/ A magazine of the Arts*, 5 (5) December 1963, pp. 1-4. In this issue, the poem appeared as 'The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express July 18, 1963'. Later on, it came out in Allen Ginsberg's poetry collection *Planet News* (City Lights Books, 1968) with the title 'The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express',

Voice,²²⁹ and the translation of the commentary to the second edition of 'Kaddish' ('Commento alla seconda edizione di 'Kaddish'). The final structure of the anthology was agreed with Ginsberg, as evident in the letter from Pivano to the American author on the 28 February 1964: 'Dear Allen, [...] Your Mondadori book is due next Summer. Includes, as you know, Howl and other Poems, Kaddish and Other Poems, On Kyoto Tokyo Express, Notes on Howl (record), Village Voice Article'.²³⁰

As is evident from the correspondence exchanged between Pivano and Ginsberg from 1961 to 1965, the Italian translator and the American author worked closely in defining the final structure of the anthology. Analysis of the epistolary exchange around the inclusion and translation of the poem 'The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express' in *Jukebox all'idrogeno* offers useful insights into the tight relationship of collaboration and mutual trust between author and translator, a relationship based on constant dialogue and the involvement of both parties in every phase of the creative process of the anthology. Pivano received a first draft of the poem enclosed to a letter from Allen Ginsberg on 26 September 1963, a few months before its publication in the *Fuck you* magazine: 'Dear Nanda, [...] Also enclosed crude version of a new poem, at least it maybe can tell you where I'm at & how I resolved the problems I was in as of Magic Psalm & Lysergic Acid & Palante essay'.²³¹ A few months later (November 1963) Ginsberg sent a short, handwritten message on the back of a City Lights Books postcard suggesting including the 'Kyoto-Tokyo' poem in his anthology: 'Dear Nanda [...] the new poem I sent you, if it is not too dirty, might be good to include in my book. Otherwise, do what you think wise [...]'.²³² Pivano welcomed the poet's suggestion and, in January 1964, sent him a letter with seventeen queries regarding the translation of the poem (mainly referring to terminology linked to East-Asian religions and philosophies and specific reference to American culture and history): 'Allen dear, will you be a holy man again to me. Am translating your Kyoto Tokio poem. Please check or fill the following, will you?'.²³³ The closing lines of the letter provide evidence on the constant

²²⁹ The article first appeared in *San Francisco Chronicle*, This World, 26 July 1959, p. 27, and was reprinted in: *Village Voice*, vol. 4, no. 44, 26 August 26, 1959, pp. 1, 8; Thomas Parkinson, ed., *A Casebook on the Beat* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1961), pp. 24-6; Donald Allen and Warren Tallman, eds., *Poetics of the New American Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1973), pp. 331-33.

²³⁰ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 28/02/1964.

²³¹ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 26/09/1963.

²³² Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 09/11/1963.

²³³ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 13/01/1964.

involvement of the poet in the process of translation and setup of his Italian anthology: ‘Am sending your Ms. for composition. Any change you want? I think the book will be out before summer (the Mondadori one). Am so glad’.²³⁴ Ginsberg’s reply to Pivano’s queries arrived only a few days later: a three-page long letter offering extensive clarifications and explanations about the difficult passages listed by the translator. It is interesting to note that, to Pivano’s questions, the author responded consulting the translator, wondering if the poem could be too cumbersome for Italian readers and whether it should be left out: ‘Dear Nanda, [...]. There are so many odd references in the poem (some dependent on previous poems) that if you judge this poem to be incomprehensible to a stranger, an Italian stranger, don’t bother with it. I can’t tell. I thought it was the best poem-statement I’d written in several years’.²³⁵ The importance of a direct connection with the poet to discuss and ask for clarifications about his verses is a crucial aspect of Pivano’s engagement in literary translation and cultural dissemination. As she clearly stated in the response to Allen Ginsberg’s doubts about the opportunity to include his poem in the anthology:

Dear Allen, [...]. No no, your poem is clear and as for me it is very beautiful. But you see your poems are often so involved with your remembrance of physical realiteies that it is hard to get through an image if you don’t know what is underlying it. And since you are so helpful and kind of course I am exploiting you. Dear. Thank you.²³⁶

The version of the poem ‘The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express’ included in *Jukebox all'idrogeno* corresponds to the version published in December 1963 in the magazine *Fuck you/ A magazine of the Arts*.

As the excerpt from the letter above demonstrates, Allen Ginsberg’s help with the language was crucial in helping Fernanda Pivano in her endeavour of translating the poems contained in *Howl and other Poems* and *Kaddish and other Poems*. The correspondence that goes from 1961, (the year of Pivano’s encounter with Ginsberg), to 1965, (the year of publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*), contains numerous letters in which Pivano asks Allen Ginsberg for clarifications and explanations of the difficult passages of his poems.²³⁷ This correspondence

²³⁴ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 13/01/1964.

²³⁵ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 17/01/1964.

²³⁶ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 24/01/1964.

²³⁷ The correspondence relating to this span of time is contained in three folders held at Fondo Fernanda Pivano that cover a period that goes from 1961 to the summer of 1967. The three folders contain, in total, around 150 items of correspondence.

contains lists of poem titles followed by long sets of questions and/or clarifications about specific words, expressions or concepts to which Ginsberg replied individually and thoroughly. As mentioned earlier with regards to the 'Kyoto-Tokyo' poem, an analysis of Pivano's queries shows that Ginsberg's help was needed primarily to understand passages connected to his biography, especially those linked to his mother's mental health condition (a prominent theme in Ginsberg's poetry) particularly in *Kaddish*: 'Kaddish--a few of the things you question are specific literal reportage of my mother's paranoiac complaints, used as surreal fragments'.²³⁸ Further consultations revolve around terminology that is specific to Indian and East Asian religions and doctrines, such as 'mandala', 'yin' and 'Kra and Pukti'. Pivano also sought his assistance with the translation of popular, modern American TV productions that were unavailable to the Italian public, such as *Looney Tunes* and *Woody Woodpecker*. Moreover, many of Ginsberg's clarifications refer to passages or poems written under the influence of psychotropic substances and the visions connected to their use, as exemplified in several letters of the author, such as in the long explanation that Ginsberg provided for the poem *The reply*:

All sounding incoherent perhaps: the point was, that under the influence of this Ayahuasca drug [...] I had or thought I had an absolute vision of death—and it FELT being non verbal like a big inhuman OCTOPUS-like God. So I got all sorts of octipussy images there. No reason God should be anything like human, I realized & shuddered.²³⁹

or in the explanation offered for the poem *Lysergic acid*:

Well, this poem written under the influence of LSD while high—I imagine “it” or “God” starting at my little sneap-snop ego [...] The LSD poem written at Stanford at Mental Heath Experimental Lab and I'd asked the doctor to bring me various things to look at while under state of drug.²⁴⁰

Finally, a number of queries dealt with Ginsberg's poetic device of composing lines made of sequences of nouns, such as “boy soft fire in breast politics” or “[t]hink factory pushes junk autos tin dreams of eros”.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 02/03/1963

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ See Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 07/02/1963; 02/03/1963; 04/05/1964; 24/05/1964; 25/06/1964.

Fernanda Pivano did not comment often on her translation practice and strategies: the testimonies making up her professional autobiography (such as the *Diari* 2008 and 2010, or volumes such as *C'era una volta un Beat* 2003) offer only brief and general references to the difficulties she encountered while translating the poetry of the authors of the Beat Generation. The main challenge was posed by the new, disruptive language that the Beat writers used, with particular attention paid to the poems of Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg's works feature a highly informal, spoken language register, and the poet makes extensive use of slang words and expressions that belong to the sphere of sex and drug use. The informal register is often contrasted with the use of scientific and philosophical terminology pertaining to fields of psychiatry and religion, with considerable presence of elements belonging to Hebraism and to the religions of East Asia. Moreover, the highly autobiographical nature of the poems is reflected in the numerous cultural references to American society and culture, but also to the subcultures and counter-culture movements that populated the US during the Fifties and Sixties. Translating Beat poems meant also dealing with a particularly elaborate and innovative sentence structure, where often nouns are juxtaposed to create specific images, tropes, and rhythms.

A commentary on Pivano's own approach to translating American literature can be found in the paper that she delivered at the conference on literary translation organised in New York in 1970 by PEN American Center. In her talk, Pivano discussed the difficulties encountered while trying to render the new American prose-like verses into Italian, while struggling to abandon the mannerism and the conservative elegance which characterised Italian literature:

When I started in Pavese's wake, or footsteps if you prefer, doing my own work (of whatever significance it might have been), I learnt most of the technical approaches to a page to be translated from him. I learnt the very first rudimental practice of underlining all the unfamiliar words and all the slang words, to read aloud a sentence trying to reach whatever rhythm the original sentence seemed to have to my ear, to try hard to forget our Italian so-called formal elegance, by which what was actually meant was a French-like sonority or roundness of sound - a rotundity, if this makes any sense (Pivano 1971: 324).

A central challenge in the translation into Italian of Beat poetry was represented by the extensive use of slang words and expressions, combined with the prosodic features that characterised American versification:

And right away our "cross and delight" problems sprang out from those pages: the problem of occasionally understanding American slang and always of inventing an Italian slang, and the problem of shifting pages which were rhythmically flowing away on mostly monosyllabic or

bisyllabic American words to pages slowed down and made heavy by our long plurisyllabic words (Pivano 1971: 324).

The scarcity of contact opportunities with American English and the difficulty of accessing linguistic tools such as dictionaries and glossaries further complicated the problem of understanding and translating slang words in literary texts:

The problem of understanding American slang sounds now quite meaningless to our young translators, who have at their disposal numberless dictionaries and vocabularies and varieties of specific slang glossaries; they can also meet numberless English-speaking tourists in Italy or they can eventually take a plane and fly to America or to England for help. We all know how fast times are a-changing and I see someone around who might remember that all such chances were not given to the Americanisti of the decades I am talking about; and that, rather than disheartening us, the tantalizing difficulties were fascinating us, as if the obscurity of a word were stimulating to the discovery of an all-clear but quite new language (Pivano 1971: 325).

Rhythm is a fundamental aspect of Ginsberg's poetry, particularly when we consider its performative character. Pivano was concerned about the difficulty of rendering those quick-snapping, long sequences of interlocked nouns into Italian, where the syntactic structure is weighted down by the consequent use of the preposition 'di':

[W]hen the first shock was over, the technical problems started: how was I to keep that rhythm with our slow, always too slow, too slow forever, Italian-language rhythm? How was I to contract our long words into short, sometimes snapping monosyllables? How was I to work out those clicking genitive inflections built up as they were in a vertical crescendo with our unruffled extensive sequences which were built up with endless "of" and "of the" and heavy syntactical constructions? How was I to invent an Italian way for those sequences of nouns-used-as-adjectives to build up a running-shot image large enough to include everything, really everything, really all the ugly-beautiful ecological reality of whatever was rising up from those lines? (Pivano 1971: 331-32).

In this respect, Fernanda Pivano's translation of *Howl* does not experiment with the Italian language by trying and finding new, equivalent linguistic structures, nor does she try to coin new terms to express novel concepts and ideas.²⁴² Considering these aspects and the substantial

²⁴² See the examples of the word 'hipsters' in *Howl*, that in the Italian version remains 'hipsters' with an endnote that offers an explanation of the term, or of the term 'geek' in *Europe! Europe!*, that in the Italian version was translated with the more general term 'clown', accompanied by an endnote explaining the original meaning of the term 'geek'. See Ginsberg 1965, p. 435 endnote n. 1 and p. 445 endnote n. 7.

apparatus of notes which accompanies the target texts, Pivano's translations can be considered documentary translations.²⁴³ According to Christiane Nord's theorising, a documentary translation 'serves as document of a source culture communication between the author and the source text recipient' (1991: 72). Among these types of translations, there are word-for-word and literal translations in which some 'cultural-specific lexical items in the ST are retained in the TT in order to maintain the local colour of the ST' (Munday 2001: 81). In her translation practice, Pivano pushes the boundaries of the target language by trying to be as faithful as possible to Ginsberg's voice, mostly replicating the original structure of the poem. At the same time, this technique resulted often in criticism for her translations, dismissed often as 'traduzioni interlineari' due to the closeness to the original in terms of syntactic structure and style. As she claimed during her award speech for the Monselice translation prize in 1975: 'Ancora una volta seguii il mio vecchio trucco di essere fedele all'originale; ancora una volta fui accusata di fare traduzioni interlineari' (Monselice 1976: XXXI); truthfulness to the original meant, for Pivano, '[E]vitare la tecnica in voga fra i traduttori francesi e seguita da alcuni traduttori italiani, che consisteva nell'alterare la struttura della frase inglese per ottenere i lunghi periodi cari ai ritmi francesi' and 'difendere una fedeltà totale al testo in tutta la sua gamma, dall'intonazione alla punteggiatura' (Pivano 1976: XXIV, XXVII). Pivano's rationale behind this approach is to give the readers a sense of the original work as it had been written.²⁴⁴

The mimetic approach to the translation of poetry 'tends to have the effect of reemphasizing, by its strangeness, the strangeness which for the target language reader is inherent in the semantic message of the original poem' (Holmes 1971: 97) and may result in an 'enrichment of the target literary tradition with new formal resources (Holmes 1971: 98). This is achieved either by replicating specific line structures (such as noun or adjective juxtapositions) or by maintaining some words in English, producing a translatorial interference in the TT, where 'in translation, phenomena pertaining to the makeup of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text' (Toury 1995: 275). Pivano's effort in producing a mimetic translation of the poems, combined

²⁴³ As opposed to instrumental translation which 'serve as an independent message-transmitting instrument in new communicative action in the target culture, and is intended to fulfil its communicative purpose without the recipient being conscious of reading or hearing a text which, in a different form, was used before in a different communicative situation' (Nord 1991: 73).

²⁴⁴ I found a way to turn the running-shot descriptions into Italian by following my old trick of just being faithful to the original. I was typically criticized for it: a young man wrote that my translation was just what we call *interlineare* or *bigino*, one of those word-by-word translations used in Italy by lazy pupils who don't feel like working on their Latin or Greek homework; an old man wrote that I hadn't worked hard enough on it. After all, times had not changed so much as far as criticism was concerned; and I have not been very discouraged, because I still feel some connection between those all including images and my attempts to make them understood in Italian or at least to give our readers a feeling about them as they have been originally written down. (Pivano 1971: 332).

with her refusal to domesticate Allen Ginsberg's language through the creation of neologisms or experimental language, results in a politically subversive translation because it creates a linguistic space that can *host* the foreign, turning the linguistic system into a place of hospitality, reinstating 'the ability to approach the other as other' (Polezzi 2020: 324) rather than erasing it through substitution, a phenomenon which is 'at the heart of all communication and cultural production' (Polezzi 2020: 324).²⁴⁵ Pivano's approach to translation seems to resonate with Gayatri Spivak's idea of a 'literalist surrender' (Spivak 1993: 188), according to which by submitting to the 'rhetoricity of the original text' (Spivak 1993: 189) translators avoid tendencies of homogenisation and assimilation that obscure cultural differences and that are typical of colonialist translation.²⁴⁶ Although in a different context (Spivak's argument deals with Western translation practices of Global South women's literature, Pivano translates an American poet), a literalist approach to the translation of Beat poetry – and the subsequent *translatedness* featured in the TTs – signals the alterity of the ST and maintains the subversive nature of the poems' marginalised voices expressed through gay-coded language and transient slang connected to substance abuse.

The word-for-word approach to the translation of Beat poetry appears to be the same approach that Pivano had used in her translation of the *Spoon River Anthology*. As observed by Moscardi (2013) 'La traduzione è quasi sempre letterale, aderente anche alla forma dell'originale' (66).²⁴⁷ This attitude towards a 'foreignising' approach to translation seems to reflect the *role-image* claimed by Pivano within the cultural field, namely that of the *cultural mediator*. According to Sela-Sheffy (2014), within the framework of identity and self-presentational discourses of top literary translators, there are three main role-images that are 'mobilized and negotiated by [...] translators [...] so as to maintain their working ethos and signalize their privileged status' (51). These role-images are: 1) the cultural gatekeeper, 2) the cultural mediator and 3) the artist. Translators who belong to older generations and who own greater cultural and symbolic capital within their field-system 'tend to embrace the role of cultural custodians and educators' (50), meanwhile translators that present 'a more cosmopolitan background and knowledge of a greater variety of languages often tend to claim their role as ambassadors of foreign cultures, in charge

²⁴⁵ On translation and hospitality see also Ricœur 1965.

²⁴⁶ Similarly, Venuti (2008) discusses the foreignising approach to translation: 'I want to suggest that insofar as foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations' (Venuti 2008: 16).

²⁴⁷ 'The translation is nearly always a literal translation which reproduces the structure of the original'.

of improving the provincial local taste' (50-51). Both categories, however, 'embrace the image of the translator-artist, whose prime asset is their inborn talent and unique personality, and whose prior commitment is purely aesthetic' (51). Considering Pivano's trajectory across the field and her positioning within it, we can see how the nature of her cultural action resonates with the category of the cultural mediator: her cosmopolitan background, her connections both in Europe and the United States, and her ambition to bring to the Italian public the verses of the young American Beat poets as 'they [had] been originally written down', shaped her pioneering and renovating cultural agency within the Italian literary field as a cultural mediator. The investigation of these categories appears relevant because it caters for an understanding of the translation norms and the choices that the translators make within a text: '[T]ranslators' identity talk offers an insight into their ways of doing translation, specifically their translation norms' proving that, for example, 'the value attached to domestication or to foreignization is dependent on the role-image claimed by the translator' (Sela-Sheffy, 2014: 52). According to Sela-Sheffy's analysis, it is possible to argue that Fernanda Pivano's use of a foreignizing approach to translation responds to the role-image of the cultural mediator that she claimed, and to the innovative nature of her operation of cultural dissemination. At the same time, as shown in the excerpt from Pivano's paper delivered at the PEN America conference on translation, such a choice is harshly criticised and dismissed by those actors who, given their central positioning within the field, claim the role of educators and cultural custodians:

[M]y findings on elite literary translators suggest that those who claim the role of cultural custodians usually consider foreignization a flaw, associating it with ignorance and lack of talent. At the same time, for those who claim the role of cultural mediators, the same norm of foreignization may sometimes be considered (if less commonly) a merit, associated with a pioneering attitude and cosmopolitanism. [...] However, in the identity discourse of non-elite translators, foreignization is quite consistently rejected, condemned as a symptom of a "word for word" mechanistic translation, and associated with lack of creativity, incompetence or laziness (Sela-Sheffy, 2014: 52).²⁴⁸

The close collaboration (and friendship) between the Pivano and Ginsberg facilitated the translation process at every stage, from the translation of difficult and obscure passages of the poems, to the resolution of the intricate censorship issues raised by the publishing house.

In her autobiographical testimonies, Pivano is adamant about the assistance she needed to complete her translation tasks. Pivano's work on the translation of the poems of Allen Ginsberg

²⁴⁸ See also Sela-Sheffy 2008.

is highly indebted to the help she received from the poet himself, but also from other American authors, and from literary and non-literary figures that she came in contact with both in Italy and during her trip to the United States in the Sixties. In 1960, Pivano reports that she was still *trying* to translate *Howl*, thus referring to the evident challenges that the poem's slang language was posing to her: 'Io cercavo di tradurre *L'urlo* e mi facevo insegnare un po' di slang dal designer italo-americano Sergio dello Strologo' (Pivano 2005: 659)²⁴⁹. Later on, while in California in 1962, Pivano received assistance from a number of people close to the Beat Generation who helped her understand the poem and the general socio-cultural context within which the poem hailed from: 'But there were other problems, sometimes easy problems due to my ignorance of Ginsberg's environment (and Michael McClure helped me a lot, going for hours through Ginsberg's book with me while Ginsberg was in India)' (Pivano, 1971: 332). In a letter sent to Ginsberg on 20 December 1962, Pivano wrote: 'All your friends have been angels to us and it was so lovely to see how fond of you they are [...]. Everybody helped me translate your poems: Mike spent all his free afternoons explaining me them, and Ted and Esther, and Victor, a friend of Shig'.²⁵⁰ By looking closely at the evolution of the professional and personal relationship between Fernanda Pivano and Allen Ginsberg, it is possible to appreciate a growing reinforcement of the collaborative aspect between author and translator with regards to the translation process.

Drawing on the typological observations on author-translator collaborations elaborated by Hersant (2017), the relationship between Pivano and Ginsberg seems to be primarily that of the *questions-and-answers* type, taking the form of a fruitful epistolary exchange. As argued by Hersant, this type of collaboration appears to be the 'richest exchange [...]' and the one most likely to affect the final outcome' because it 'occurs during the translation process, and as difficulties are encountered, when the translated material presents a maximum of plasticity' (Hersant 2017: 93-4).

As the archival data presented in this chapter shows, Ginsberg and Pivano's questions-and-answers-collaboration turns, at times, into what is defined *carte blanche* collaboration. This type of collaboration requires a certain degree of trust from the author's side, usually based on previous experience with a specific translator or on their reputation.²⁵¹ The analysis of the archival evidence

²⁴⁹ 'I was trying to translate *Howl* and I asked the Italo American designer Sergio dello Strologo to teach me some slang'.

²⁵⁰ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 20/12/1962.

²⁵¹ 'By giving *carte blanche* to their translator, some authors show a type of trust, which may be based on an earlier collaborative experience, on the translator's reputation or on the author's own conception of the writing process' (Hersant 2017: 92).

shows that trust was present already from the start of the collaboration between Pivano and Ginsberg, fostered by shared aesthetic and social values and the common purpose of cultural dissemination, as evident in a letter dated 01 April 1961 from Allen Ginsberg to Lawrence Ferlinghetti:²⁵² ‘So if you write to Mondadori, say that she is supposed to be the editor of that Ginsberg book. She [...] has translated *Howl* well, and originally arranged + suggested that book [...] if she edits my own book everything will be under our – her control’. Towards the end of the work for the anthology, Ginsberg’s trust in his translator grew stronger as a result of their long and assiduous epistolary exchange, and Pivano was identified as ‘competent to speak for me’²⁵³ and take decisions on behalf of the author: on several occasions Ginsberg reinstated his full approval for any decision that his translator might take on matters of editing of his texts in translation.²⁵⁴

The synergy between the Pivano and Ginsberg was already evident upon their first encounter in Paris in 1961: on this occasion, the translator and the poet spent several days working together and discussing the content of the anthologies of Beat poetry on which Pivano was working at the time (*Jukebox all'idrogeno* and *Poesia degli ultimi americani*).²⁵⁵ In ‘Un poeta, non soltanto un minestrone Beat’, the introductory note to *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (1965), Fernanda Pivano thanks both Allen Ginsberg and other Beat writers, such as Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Michael McClure, Peter Orlovsky and Gregory Corso among others, who helped her finalise the translation of the poems included in the anthology, :

Desidero ringraziare per il paziente, prezioso aiuto ricevuto nel corso della traduzione di *Howl*, i poeti Gregory Corso, Mike McClure, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Harold Norse, Peter Orlovsky. Desidero ringraziare Allen Ginsberg per i titoli che mi ha suggerito (quello della raccolta e quello dell'introduzione); ma ancor di più per la sua infinita pazienza e per le sue lettere indimenticabili, che mi hanno aiutato a capire certi riferimenti della sua poesia ma soprattutto mi hanno rivelato una nuova generazione di uomini. (1965: 85-86)²⁵⁶

²⁵² Letter already quoted. See p. 105.

²⁵³ See letter from Allen Ginsberg to Raffaele Crovi dated 05 August 1965, p. 166.

²⁵⁴ See also the letters dated 09 June 1965 and 18 August 1965 on p. 169 and 167.

²⁵⁵ Ginsberg sedette a un tavolino subito ingombro di libri, pezzetti di carta, bicchieri, portacenere, matite e mi corresse il primo abbozzo dell'antologia di poeti che avevo in mente di fare e più tardi pubblicai con Feltrinelli vincendo a fatica le resistenze di un direttore editoriale ostile (1995: 14).

²⁵⁶ ‘I would like to thank poets Gregory Corso, Mike McClure, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Harold Norse, Peter Orlovsky for their patient help with the translation of *Howl*. I would like to thank Allen Ginsberg for the titles he suggested (the title of the collection and the title of the introduction); but I would like to thank him even more for his never ending patience and for his unforgettable letters, that have helped me understand some references of his poetry and, above all, revealed to me a new generation of men’.

The tight collaborative relationship established by Pivano and Ginsberg seems to have reached its peak at the end of the Sixties and at the start of the Seventies while Pivano was working on the translation of the poems included in *Mantra del Re di Maggio*, the last work by Ginsberg translated by Pivano, published for Mondadori in 1973 and which contains Ginsberg's poems from *Reality Sandwiches* (1963) and *Planet News* (1967). In the acknowledgments to the collection of poems, Pivano wrote:

Tutte le note di questo volume e la traduzione della poesia *Television was a Baby Crawling Toward that Deathchamber* sono state fatte con la collaborazione paziente e costante di Allen Ginsberg. Per la traduzione di *Television was a Baby...* sono stati incisi quattro nastri a quattro piste. Per le poesie *Holy Ghost on the Nod over the Body of Bliss* e *Kral Majales* sono stati incisi due nastri a quattro piste. Gli interventi di Ginsberg sono stati abbastanza pesanti da poter considerare il poeta anche co-traduttore di queste tre poesie. Il titolo della raccolta è stato deciso con lui nel maggio 1972 durante alcuni giorni di discussione nelle strade/parco/ristoranti di Denver e in macchina sull'autostrada tra i pendii rossi delle Rocky Mountains, Colorado. (1973: 5)

As is evident, in this note Pivano claims that the poet can be considered a co-translator of the work, given the extensive help provided, and the degree of his intervention. A 'choral translation' as argued by Lima (1999) in the article 'Le "voci" italiane di Allen Ginsberg':

Una traduzione per certi versi corale dunque insieme ai poeti amici di Ginsberg e a Ginsberg stesso, col quale si instaura un'amicizia e una collaborazione costante, in certi casi anche di co-traduzione, nei luoghi i più disparati, nelle situazioni più diverse, talvolta tutt'altro che facili (234-235).

Pivano's translations of Allen Ginsberg's poems into Italian are therefore the result of a multi-layered process of authorial interactions that shaped Pivano's understanding of the poems and, consequently, the target texts.

The archival data collected shows that Pivano's work on the translation of *Howl* was often carried out in the presence of either Allen Ginsberg himself, or of other Beat authors. Although this kind of verbal collaboration did not produce any documentary testimonies that can offer insight into the translation process of this specific poem, there are some insights that can be gleaned by observing the translation published in the first edition of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, in 1965.

By taking a closer look at the Italian translation of *Howl*, the reader notices immediately that Pivano maintained the poem's core structure. The long poem is divided in a series of stanzas

(without any spacing between them and composed of varying number of lines) introduced through the reiteration of the same grammatical element or substantive or phrase. The repetition of these elements contributes to giving the poem its distinctive rhythm, and conferring on it a ‘psalmic’ character when performed on stage. In the Italian version, Fernanda Pivano maintains all of these repetitions (which are also reproduced visually in the first edition of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* from 1965, where the reiterated elements are not indented while the remaining verses are). In section one of the poem, most of the stanzas are introduced by the relative pronoun ‘who’, which in Italian is rendered with the pronoun ‘che’. Towards the end of the section, the repetition of ‘who’ is interrupted by the use of the prepositions ‘to’ and ‘with’, that Pivano renders with the correspondent ‘per’ and ‘con’, thereby still maintaining intact the structure of the poem. The following two sections present a similar structure, with each stanza introduced by the word ‘Moloch’ in section two, and the phrase ‘I’m with you in Rockland’, that Pivano maintains throughout the poem in the target text. Below some examples:

Part I

[...]

who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat
up smoking in the supernatural darkness of
cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities
contemplating jazz,

who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and
saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement
roofs illuminated,

who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes
hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy
among the scholars of war,

[...]

with mother finally *****, and the last fantastic book
flung out of the tenement window, and the last door
closed at 4 A.M. and the last telephone slammed at the
wall in reply and the last furnished room emptied
down to the last piece of mental furniture, a yellow
paper rose twisted on a wire hanger in the closet, and
even that imaginary, nothing but a hopeful little bit of
hallucination—

[...]

Parte I

[...]

che in miseria e stracci e occhi infossati stavano su
imbottiti a fumare nel buio soprannaturale di
soffitte a acqua fredda galleggiando sulle cime
delle città contemplando jazz,

che si squarciavano cervelli al Cielo sotto la Elevated
e vedevano angeli Maomettani illuminati bar-
collanti su tetti di casermette

che passavano per le università con freddi occhi ra-
diosi allucinati di Arkansas e con tragedie Bla-
kiane fra gli studiosi della guerra,

[...]

con mamma finalmente ..., e l'ultimo libro fantastico
scaraventato dalla finestra, e l'ultima porta chiu-
sa alle 4 del mattino e l'ultimo telefono sbattuto
in risposta contro il muro e l'ultima stanza
ammobiliata svuotata fino all'ultimo pezzo di
mobilia mentale, una rosa di carta gialla attor-
cigliata su una gruccia di fil di ferro nell'arma-
dio, e perfino essa immaginaria, nient'altro che
un pezzetto di speranza nell'allucinazione –

to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose [...]

*and stand before you speechless and intelligent and
shaking with shame, rejected yet confessing out the
soul to conform to the rhythm of thought in his naked
and endless head,*

[...]

*with the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out
of their own bodies good to eat a thousand years.*

(p. 112-14-28-30)

Part II

*What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open
their skulls and ate up their brains and
imagination?*

Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and
unobtainable dollars! Children screaming under
the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men
weeping in the parks!

Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the
loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy
judge of men!

Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the
crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of
sorrows! Moloch whose buildings are judgment!
Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stunned
governments!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose
blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers
are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal
dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!

[...]

(p. 132)

Part III

*Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland
where you're madder than I am*

I'm with you in Rockland

where you must feel very strange

[...]

per ricreare la sintassi e la misura della povera prosa
umana e fermarvisi di fronte muti e intelli-
genti e tremanti di vergogna, ripudiati ma con
anima confessa per conformarsi al ritmo del
pensiero nella Sua testa nuda e infinita,

[...]

col cuore assoluto della poesia della vita macellato
dai loro corpi buono da mangiare per mille anni.

(p. 113-15-29-31)

Parte II

Quale sfinge di cemento e alluminio gli ha sfracel-
lato il cranio e gli ha divorato il cervello e
l'immaginazione?

Moloch! Solitudine! Lerciume! Schifezza! Spazzatura
e dollari inafferrabili! Bambini che strillano nei
sottoscala! Ragazzi che singhiozzano negli eser-
citi! Vecchi che piangono nei parchi!

Moloch! Moloch! Incubo di Moloch! Moloch spietato!
Moloch mentale! Moloch duro giudice di uomini!

Moloch prigioniero incomprensibile! Moloch galera col
teschio della morte senz'anima e Congresso di
dolori! Moloch i cui edifici sono sentenze! Mo-
loch vasta pietra di guerra! Moloch governi stu-
pefatti!

Moloch la cui mente è pure macchinario! Moloch
il cui sangue è denaro che scorre! Moloch le
cui dita sono dieci eserciti! Moloch il cui petto
è una dinamo cannibale! Moloch il cui orecchio
è una tomba fumante!

[...]

(p. 133)

Parte III

Carl Solomon! Sono con te a Rockland

dove sei più matto di me

Sono con te a Rockland

dove certo ti senti molto strano

I'm with you in Rockland

where you imitate the shade of my mother

I'm with you in Rockland

where you've murdered your twelve secretaries

I'm with you in Rockland

where you laugh at this invisible humor

[...]

(p. 138)

Sono con te a Rockland

dove imiti l'ombra di mia madre

Sono con te a Rockland

dove hai assassinato le tue dodici segretarie

Sono con te a Rockland

dove ridi a questo humor invisibile

[...]

(p. 139)

A similar structural iteration is also maintained to the section title "Footnote to Howl", where nearly every verse starts with the word 'holy':

Footnote to Howl

[...]

Holy Peter holy Allen holy Solomon holy Lucien holy

Kerouac holy Huncke holy Burroughs holy Cassady

holy the unknown buggered and suffering beggars

holy the hideous human angels!

*Holy my mother in the insane asylum! Holy the cocks of
the grandfathers of Kansas!*

Holy the groaning saxophone! Holy the bop apocalypse!

*Holy the jazzbands marijuana hipsters peace peyote
pipes & drums!*

*Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and pavements! Holy
the cafeterias filled with the millions! Holy the
mysterious rivers of tears under the streets!*

(p. 144-46)

Nota a Urlo

[...]

Santo Peter sant Allen santo Solomon santo Lucien

santo Kerouac santo Huncke santo Burroughs

santo Cassady santi gli sconosciuti mendicanti

rotti in c... e sofferenti santi gli orrendi angeli umani!

*Santa mia madre nel manicomio! Santi i c.... dei
nonni del Kansas!*

Santo il sassofono gemente! Santa l'apocalisse del bop!

*Santi gli hipsters del jazz e della marijuana pace
e streppa e tamburi!*

*Sante le solitudini dei grattacieli e delle strade! Sante
le cafeterias piene di milioni! Santi i fumi miste-
riosi di lacrime sotto le strade*

(p. 145-47)

In order to maintain the rhythmic pace of the poem, the word order of the source text is reproduced quite loyally in the target text, although the translator operated some changes, probably due to stylistic reasons. This is quite evident while investigating the translation of the many sequences of adjectives and/or nouns that are often used by Allen Ginsberg in his poem. Immediately in the first, famous verses of *Howl* we can see that the order of the adjectives 'hysterical' and 'naked' in the source text is inverted in the target text:

<i>I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked,</i> (p.112)	Ho visto le menti migliori della mia generazione distrutte dalla pazzia, affamate nude isteriche , (p.113)
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Similarly, in lines 8-9, the sequence (and the rhythm) of nouns and adjectives ‘poverty’, ‘tatters’, ‘hollow-eyed’ and ‘high’ is broken in the Italian translation by the anticipation of the verbal phrase ‘sat up’ before the adjective ‘high’: ‘che in miseria e stracci e occhi infossati stavano su | imbottiti [...]’:

<i>who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,</i>	che in miseria e stracci e occhi infossati stavano su imbottiti a fumare nel buio soprannaturale di soffitte a acqua fredda galleggiando sulle cime delle città contemplando jazz,
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

But the choice of altering the word order is not consistent throughout the translation. In the target text there are also examples where Pivano maintained the order of the adjectives or nouns from the source text. For example, in the resonant alliteration ‘[...] kind king light of mind,’ the translator opted for keeping the word order unvaried and managed, to a certain extent, to maintain the alliteration by repeating the sound ‘l’ and transforming the noun ‘king’ into the adjective ‘regale’:

<i>ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind</i> (p. 114)	Urli fra pattumiere e dolce regale luce della mente (p.115)
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------

Or again in the following sequence of nouns which, in the target text, are listed in the exact same order as in the source text:

<i>who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma on the impulse of winter midnight streetlight smalltown rain</i> (p. 116)	che sobbalzavano in limousine col Cinese dell’Oklaho- ma sotto un impulso di inverno mezzanotte luce stradale provincia pioggia (p.117)
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Most of the noun+noun compounds used by Ginsberg are maintained by Pivano, who added a footnote to explain their meaning. Two examples are the compounds a) ‘paint hotels’ and b) ‘peyote solidities’:

a)
*who ate fire in **paint hotels** or drank turpentine in
 Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their torsos
 night after night,*
 (p. 114)

b)
***Peyote solidities** of halls, backyard green tree cemetery
 dawns, wine drunkenness over the rooftops,
 storefront boroughs of teahead joyride neon
 blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree
 vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn,
 ashcan ranting and kind king light of mind,*
 (p.114)

a)
 che mangiavano fuoco in **alberghi vernice** o bevevano
 trementina nella Paradise Alley, morte, o notte dopo notte
 si purgatorizzavano il torso,
 (p.115)

b)
Solidità Peyota di corridoi, albe cimiteri alberi verdi
 retro cortili, sbronze di vino sopra i tetti, rioni
 di botteghe in gioiose corse drogate neon ba
 lenio di semafori, vibrazioni di sole e lune e
 alberi nei ruggenti crepuscoli invernali di Broo-
 klyn, urli fra pattumiere e dolce regale luce della
 mente,
 (p.115)

Both noun+noun structures have endnotes which explain their meaning:

- a1) Alberghi vernice: Questa aggettivazione di sostantivi è una caratteristica dello stile di Ginsberg. Qui il poeta allude a una legge di New York in forza della quale tutti gli edifici vanno riverniciati ogni tre anni, col risultato che i muri delle costruzioni da poco sono rivestite da molti strati di colore sovrapposto e acquistano un aspetto di sciatteria e di volgarità (Pivano, 1965: 435-436).
- b1) Solidità Peyota: Si allude alla droga ricavata dai frutti di una varietà di cactus che gli indiani del Messico usano in certe cerimonie. Huxley (che ha partecipato a una serie di studi che si sono svolti a Harvard per determinare gli effetti di questa droga) ne parla in *The Doors of Perception* (1954). Il peyote suscita visioni di immagini solide e allucinazioni tridimensionali. Rimando il lettore alle pagine dell'Introduzione nelle quali ho descritto gli effetti di questa droga (Pivano, 1965: 436).²⁵⁷

A further challenge encountered by the translator was how to render into Italian the slang words and expressions used by Ginsberg, particularly when these refer to sex and drug use. A typical problem with the translation of slang expressions between English and Italian lies in their diachronic and diatopic variation: while many of the words present in the source text are still widely used in American English today, the Italian equivalents chose by Pivano may appear, to a contemporary reader, outdated or unintelligible, and/or diatopically marked as regional variations.

²⁵⁷ The two endnotes are respectively endnote n. 8 and 12 to 'Urlo'.

An example of this phenomenon can be found in the translation of the expression ‘junk-withdrawal’ in the following stanza:

<i>suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grindings</i>	straziati da sudori Orientali e scricchiolamenti di
<i>And migraines of China under junk-withdrawal</i>	ossa Tangerini e emicranie Cinesi nel rientro
<i>In Newark’s bleak furnished rooms,</i>	dalla streppa in una squallida stanza mobiliata
(p. 116)	di Newark,
	(p.117)

The noun ‘streppa’, is documented as a regional variation present in northern Italy – influenced by the English ‘trip’ – and is a synonym for the hypernym ‘droga’ [*drugs*]. Battaglia’s *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* provides the following definition: “Streppa ☐ Strippa: sf. Gerg. Sostanza stupefacente, droga. [...] Voce del gergo giovanile [...] che si rifà alla forma dial. sett. *streppa* ‘strattone’ (cioè scossa che allontana il drogato dalla realtà), sulla quale tuttavia pesa l’influsso dell’ingl. *trip*, propr. ‘viaggio’ e, quindi, ‘stato di esaltazione provocato dall’assunzione di droga’ (2000: 374). A contemporary translator would have probably maintained the standard register of “junk-withdrawal” and used the Italian construct ‘crisi di astinenza’.

A strategy used by Pivano to address the problem of slang words that did not have an equivalent in Italian is that of generalization through hypernyms, as such is the case of the constructs c) “angry fix” and d) “teahead joyride”:

c)	c)
<i>dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn</i>	trascinarsi per strade di negri all’alba in cerca di
<i>looking for an angry fix,</i>	droga rabbiosa,
(p. 112)	(p.113)
d)	d)
<i>storefront boroughs of teahead joyride neon</i>	[rioni] di botteghe in gioiose corse drogate neon ba-
<i>blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree</i>	lenio di semafori, vibrazioni di sole e lune e
<i>vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn,</i>	alberi nei ruggenti crepuscoli invernali di Broo-
<i>ashcan ranting and kind king light of mind,</i>	klyn, urli fra pattumiere e dolce regale luce della
(p.114)	mente,
	(p.115)

In example c), the expression “angry fix” becomes “droga rabbiosa” with an evident generalisation of the word “fix” that, in the jargon of drug use, refers to: “a supply or dose of

something strongly desired or craved [...] especially: a shot of a narcotic”²⁵⁸ or “An injection of an addictive drug such as heroin can be referred to as a fix. [*informal*]”²⁵⁹, whereas, in Italian, the term ‘droga’ [drugs] is used as an hypernym for the concept of ‘dose of drug’. Similarly, the noun+noun compound “teahead joyride” is generalised in its translation into “gioiose corse drogate”, a compound made of adjective+noun+adjective. The compound ‘tea-head’ is a slang noun that refers to a marijuana user (“tea-head *n. slang* (originally *US*) a habitual user of marijuana”),²⁶⁰ whereas in Pivano’s translation the noun becomes an adjective that describes the noun ‘joyride’, which also displays a slight shift in meaning in its translation. A ‘joyride’ is a colloquial noun that indicates a trip on a vehicle characterised by reckless driving and/or by the lack of permission of the owner: “joy-ride: colloquial (originally *US*). A pleasure trip in a motor car, aeroplane, etc., often without the permission of the owner of the vehicle”²⁶¹ or “joyride: NOUN 1. a ride taken for pleasure in a car, esp in a stolen car driven recklessly”.²⁶² The Italian rendering operates a shift in the meaning of the expression, both with the transformation of the noun into an adjective, but also with the translation of ‘joyride’ as ‘corse gioiose’ [*happy rides*], hence missing the nuances of a reckless kind of driving but also the element of riding a stolen vehicle, which was a common theme in the biographies of Beat authors. Finally, the translation of terminology related to sex proved to be particularly challenging, primarily because of the censorship problems that it raised (which are examined in greater details in chapter 5.6).

The translator’s archives hold documents that shed light on the epistolary collaboration between Pivano and Ginsberg regarding the translation of other poems included in the volume *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, such as: ‘Kaddish’, ‘Ignu’, ‘Europe Europe’, ‘Laughing Gas’, ‘Death to Van Gogh’s Ear!’, ‘Rocket Poem’, ‘At Apollinaire’s Grave’, ‘Mescaline’, ‘Lysergic Acid’, ‘Magic Psalm’, ‘The reply’ and ‘The end’. Between January and March 1963, Pivano sent several letters to Allen Ginsberg asking for help with words and expressions she struggled to understand from the source texts. The first example of the type of queries she had can be found in a response letter from Ginsberg – who was in India at the time – sent on January 24, 1963.²⁶³ Although I was not able to retrieve Pivano’s original letter, judging from Ginsberg’s response, the translator was busy

²⁵⁸ Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fix>. Last accessed 14/10/2021.

²⁵⁹ Collins Dictionary, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/fix>. Last accessed 14/10/2021.

²⁶⁰ Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/198340?redirectedFrom=teahead#eid19060403>. Last accessed 14/10/2021. The same dictionary registers the first use of the word ‘tea-head’ in William S. Burroughs’s novel *Junkie*, 1953.

²⁶¹ Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101812?rskey=5tNVvr&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>. Last accessed 14/10/2021.

²⁶² Collins Dictionary, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/joyride>. Last accessed 14/10/2021.

²⁶³ Unfortunately, I was not able to find Pivano’s letter to Ginsberg.

working on the poems ‘Kaddish’, ‘Igny’, and ‘Europe Europe’. the questions related to ‘Kaddish’ and ‘Igny’ focus on autobiographical references to the poet’s life (the name ‘Svul Avrum’ which is Ginsberg’s name in Hebrew and the reference to the ‘Peten Rainforest’, a forest in Southern Mexico where the poet spent a period of time. Ginsberg provides long explanations for the expressions that Pivano was struggling to translate. From Ginsberg’s response, it is possible to argue that Pivano was probably investigating the rhythmic aspect of the poem and was struggling to understand the meaning of those lines that were built through a rapid juxtaposition of nouns. In his letter, Ginsberg provided extensive explanations for both aspects. Regarding the rhythm in *Europe Europe* Ginsberg wrote:

The construction of Europe Europe is this: I was trying to get a jazzy syncopated short line which could build to rhythmic climax; instead of using usual long lines. If you have copy of my Fantasy record, you see how it sounds, I read it about right there. To do that I eliminated most punctuation, and made run-on lines (often beginning a phrase at end of one line & ending it on the next) and often condensed different images and jammed them together, & used puns, & odd jumps.²⁶⁴

And about the creative process behind the poem:

Main principle of Europe was I took a lot of key words from different ideas and collapsed them together -- like “France eats oil & dead salad arms & legs in Africa” referring to Algeria war. Britain cooks Jerusalem too long -- i.e. Britain taking too long to build Blake’s Jerusalem; also Britain cooks all her vegetables including the famous jerusalem artichokes till they are too soggy. etc etc. Odd jokes.²⁶⁵

Pivano’s main questions about *Europe Europe* refer therefore to the phrasal constructs which Ginsberg uses profusely, juxtaposing nouns or adjectives. In most cases (but not always), Ginsberg’s explanations do not affect Pivano’s choices in translation – which remains often a word-for-word translation – but the poet’s explanations are included in the endnotes of the volume to offer clarification and contextualisation to the readers. A few examples are the four lines indicated in the following extract of *Europe Europe*:

nor boy loves boy soft
fire in breast politics (1)

né ragazzo ama ragazzo con morbido
fuoco nel taschino pasticcio (1)

²⁶⁴ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 24/01/1963.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

electricity scares downtown (2)
radio screams for money
police light on TV screens (3)
laughs at dim lamps in
empty rooms tanks crash
thru bombshell no dream
of man's joy is made movie
think factory pushes junk
autos tin dreams of Eros (4)
mind eats its flesh in
geekish starvation and no
man's fuck is holy for
man's work is most war
(pp. 286, 288)

l'elettricità spaventa in città (2)
la radio grida che vuole denaro
la polizia nella luce degli schermi TV (3)
ride a lampade fioche in
stanze vuote carri armati stritolano
tra luci di bombe nessun sogno
di gioia umana è ridotto in cinema
fabbriche del pensiero vendono come eroina
automobili sogni di latta di Eros (4)
la mente mangia la sua carne in
fame da clown e nessun
f..... d'uomo è santo perché
il lavoro d'uomo è soprattutto guerra
(pp. 287, 289)

The Italian translation of the lines in (1) operates a slight shift in the terminology used: “breast” becomes “taschino” according to Ginsberg’s indications in his letter: “no boy loves boy (with) (a) soft fire in their (breast)((pocket) politics. breast politics means the deals hassles & givings & takings of love affairs”.²⁶⁶ Pivano does not add an endnote in this case, but the choice of the word ‘taschino’ to translate “breast” rather than its most direct equivalents ‘seno’ or ‘petto’ is an evident result of the collaboration with the poet, as demonstrated in Pivano’s response, dated 7 February 1963:

Dearest Allen, thank you, this time not only for the big thing of receiving your letter, but also for the precious help you gave me. Yes, now I see, I would never think of the breast pockets of the boys, or instance, or of the Jerusalem artichokes.²⁶⁷

Ginsberg provided also extensive explanation to Pivano’s queries regarding lines (2), (3) and (4). Contrary to example (1), in this case Pivano’s translation maintains the word order and structure of the source text and reports Ginsberg’s explanations in three different endnotes. In his letter, Ginsberg explained:

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 07/02/1964.

(2) Electricity scares downtown (meaning radios television loudspeakers scare people walking downtown in cities)

(3) Police light on TV screens - - - I was thinking of all the murder & detective & gangster & army television shows pouring the blue light of their anxiety into peoples houses. Cops & robbers shows, wherein always the poor gangster is portrayed as a beaten rat. That generally scares my cousins & uncles in Newark to be law abiding. They leave the room to go get a sandwich in kitchen or go to the bathroom, the TV set is still turned on. So “Police light on TV screens laughs at dim lamps in empty rooms”. The station is changed to newsreel so immediately “tanks crash thru bombshell”

(4) “Think factory pushed junk autos tin dreams of eros” means, “In my opinion, I think that scientific factories (think factories) and advertising agencies (also think factories) are pushing (peddling) lousy chromium easily-brokendown-cheap conspicuous-consumption-habit types of automobiles. Like a pusher pushing junk to addicts. And these autos are only tin dreams of eros. The tin in the autos dreams of love. The buyers of the autos think they’ll get love if they display themselves in big tinny autos. The Think factories that make and advertise the authors take advantage of these tinny (cheap) dreams of eros, and push these junky (short lifetime) autos on people”. Therefore, Think factory pushes junk autos tin dreams of eros. Is that clear?

Confronted with the evident complexity of the lines in question, and consequently with the high density of meaning attached to them, Pivano opted not to operate through explication, but offered clarification through endnotes. Nonetheless, some small syntactic variation in the translation were probably aimed at making the target text slightly easier to understand. For example, in the translation of verse (3), ‘police light on TV screens’, the subject ‘police light’ is split and ‘police’ remains the subject meanwhile the element ‘light’ becomes the object of the preposition referring to TV screens, ‘la polizia nella luce degli schermi TV’. Similarly in (4), the construct ‘junk autos’ – where the attributive noun ‘junk’ describes the low quality of the noun ‘autos’ – is translated into Italian with the noun ‘eroina’ and introduced by the adverb ‘come’: ‘fabbriche del pensiero vendono come eroina automobili sogni di latta di Eros’. The sequence of nouns present in the source text is therefore not maintained in Italian. The endnotes to the abovementioned verses report Ginsberg’s explanations to Pivano’s queries, for example:

- l’elettricità: si intende radio, televisione, altoparlanti, ecc;
- fabbriche del pensiero: si intende fabbriche scientifiche e agenzie pubblicitarie;

- automobili sogni di latta di Eros: chi compra le automobili sogna per lo più di servirsene per conquistare facili amori; e le compra come i tossicomani comprano la droga. (Ginsberg 1965: 445).²⁶⁸

Similarly, Pivano reports in an endnote Ginsberg's commentary on the 'odd jokes' that, in Europe Europe, are obtained through collapsing together 'key words from different ideas'.²⁶⁹ The verses: "America hides mad meat | in refrigerator Britain | cooks Jerusalem too long" (Ginsberg 1965: 288) are rendered in Italian as "l'America nasconde carne pazza | nel frigorifero l'Inghilterra | cuoce Gerusalemme troppo a lungo" (1965: 289). The endnote at the end of the Italian line informs the reader: "Doppio senso. L'Inghilterra impiega troppo tempo a erigere la Gerusalemme di Blake. Oppure: anche i cuochi inglesi cucinano i Carciofi di Gerusalemme facendoli scotti" (1965: 445). It is interesting to note that, by including in the endnotes the direct translation of Allen Ginsberg's explanations of the passages of his poetry, the Italian translations of Ginsberg's poems amplify the author's voice, offering the readers an extended commentary from the author which is not present in the original version.²⁷⁰

In the letter that Pivano sent to Ginsberg on 7 February 1963, she attached one and a half typewritten pages with questions about ten poems included in *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (including further questions about 'Europe Europe'): 'Kaddish', 'Laughing Gas', 'Death to Van Gogh's ear!', 'Europe Europe', 'Rocket Poem', 'At Apollinaire's Grave', 'Mescaline', 'Lysergic Acid', 'Magic Psalm', 'The reply' and 'The end'. Most questions revolve around three main categories, such as elements pertaining to Ginsberg's biography, American culture, and lexical elements connected to Asian religions and philosophies. Ginsberg responded to Pivano on 2 March 1963, with an 8-page long letter: five of the pages discuss Pivano's questions and offer explanations to her doubts.

A few examples of queries that fall in the first category (Ginsberg's personal biography) can be taken from the poem *Kaddish*. Here, Pivano lists four words or verses: "Wires (electroshock?); Three sticks (novocain injection in the spine?); Bugs of Mussolini (insects?); Aunt rose passing water thru the needles of Spanish Civil War".²⁷¹ Ginsberg clarified that these questions refer to "specific literal reportage of my mother's paranoia complaints, used as surreal fragment. Wires: she always used to complain that since lobotomy the doctors had "put wire in

²⁶⁸ See endnote number 3, 4 and 6.

²⁶⁹ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 07/02/1963.

²⁷⁰ On the history of footnotes and endnotes see Zerby 2002 and Grafton 1997.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

her head” – its a common image among mad people – wires in their head, connected to secret control rooms etc.” or “bugs of mussolini – complained that her enemies were throwing poisoned bugs at her – also complained that Hitler and Mussolini were ‘out to get me’, persecuting her directly”.²⁷² These elements are faithfully translated by Pivano in the Italian version of the poem, without providing further explanations in the endnotes.

Among the queries relating to American popular culture, for example, there are those about TV cartoons and their characters, as in *Laughing Gas*:

*At that moment the whole goofy-spooky of the
Universe WHAT?! Joke Being slips into Nothing like
the tail of a lizard disappearing into a crack in the
Wall with the final receding eyehole ending Loony
Tunes accompanied by Woody Woodpecker's hindoo
maniac laughter in the skull. Nobody gets hurt. They
all disappear. They were never there. Beginningless
perfection.
(p. 348)*

In quel momento l'intero spaventapasseri dell'Uni-
verso COSA?! l'Essere Scherzo scivola nel Nulla co-
me la coda di una lucertola scompare in una fessura
della Parete con un ultimo occhiello si ritira come
finale ai Loony Tunes accompagnati dalla folle risata
indù nel teschio di Woody Woodpecker. Nessuno
resta ferito. Tutti scompaiono. Non ci sono mai stati.
Perfezione senza inizio.
(p. 349)

In her letter to Ginsberg, Pivano asked: ‘The Loony Tunes in Laughing gas, are the movie cartoons? And Woody Woodpecker is a TV character?’²⁷³. Ginsberg did not limit himself to reply to Pivano’s question, but offered a rather articulated reply, providing insight into the complex mechanisms of image-juxtaposition in his writings. For example, to the question about Loony Tunes, Ginsberg replied:

That’s a series of US movie cartoons, mostly featuring Porky Pig, main character. Each cartoon ends with Porkey pig having escaped disaster, & then suddenly the cartoon screen narrows into a series of smaller & smaller circles one within another (like a diminishing funnel-like mandala)

and to the question on Woody Woodpecker he explained:

²⁷² Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 02/03/1963.

²⁷³ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 07/02/1963.

Woody Woodpecker is an allied cartoon character, hero of a series of cartoon disasters in technicolor, he's always smashed & flattened & blown up but always reappears cartoonlike behind a factory or tree trunk with a stick of dynamite to blow up his beastly enemies. and as he triumphs or skips away he gives a long idiotic compulsive machinelike laugh. rather like in Zimmer's book *Myths of India* the story of the man going into the pool to find out reality – first pages.²⁷⁴

A direct translation of Ginsberg's explanations can be found in the endnotes to the poem.²⁷⁵

Many of Pivano's queries relate to word and concepts connected to religions and philosophies from India and East Asia, such as: 'yin', 'Kra and Pukti' and 'mandala'. Most of these terms are explained in the endnotes to the volume, often through a direct translation of Allen Ginsberg's words in the letter sent to Pivano.

Although Ginsberg received many questions from his Italian translator, the American author hardly ever interfered with her translation strategies, telling or suggesting to her how to translate a word or a line. From the archival documents collected, I was able to find only one occasion where Ginsberg suggested directly to Pivano how to translate a specific word, but only as a follow-up commentary on Pivano's request on his opinion. In the letter dated 7 February 1963, Pivano wrote: "In *Rocket* I translated Loony Pierre with Pierrot, do you like it". Moreover, in the list attached to this letter, Pivano also noted down a query regarding the name 'Romeo sadface'. In the 2 March letter, Ginsberg replied to Pivano queries, offering a thorough explanation of a whole verse of the poem *Poem Rocket* (*Poesia Razzo*):

Rocket: original clown is Pierrot Lunaire (as in Poesy and Schoenberg). I simply americanized that to Loony Pierre. Use any Italian equivalent you want. I was just avoiding using pierrot lunaire directly, Pietro lunatica or whatever, something slangy like loony is in the US, tho it has same classic root for mad – moon. luna. I was just making fun of older romantic notions of the moon—Romeo swearing by it (this Romeo Sadface) – you can say Rome TristCara or whatever it is in Italian. "drunken river" refers to was it Tu Fu no Li Po who died drunkenly "trying to embrace the moon in the Yellow river". I just made that line a hodgepodge of romantical moon-myths. to contrast with fact we'll reach the "real" (dusty?) moon soon.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Both excerpt are from the letter from Ginsberg to Pivano dated 2 March 1963, Fondo Fernanda Pivano.

²⁷⁵ See Ginsberg 1965, p. 451, endnote 3 and 4.

²⁷⁶ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 02/03/1963.

In the Italian translation of this verse, Pivano chose to translate ‘Romeo Sadface’ into ‘Romeo Facciatrister’ and ‘Loony Pierre’ into ‘Pierre Lunatico’:

*Old moon my eyes are new moon with human footprint
no longer Romeo Sadface in drunken river Loony
Pierre eyebrow, goof moon
(p. 276)*

Vecchia luna i miei occhi sono luna nuova con im-pronte
umane
non più Romeo Facciatrister nel fiume ubriaco e Pierre
Lunatico sopracciglia, luna imbrogliata.
(p. 277)

The endnote to ‘imbrogliata’ reports Ginsberg’s explanation and some further additions from Pivano:

Il poeta elenca tutti i miti romantici della luna, per creare un contrasto con la luna reale che stiamo per raggiungere. Romeo Sadface – cioè Romeo Triste in volto – che bestemmia alla luna; Li Po che morì ubriaco nel Fiume Giallo nel tentativo di abbracciare la luna; Loony Pierre, che è la forma americanizzata di Pierrot Lunaire: quello famoso che cantava, col viso infarinato e le alte sopracciglia, le sue serenate alla luna. In più, nell’americanizzazione di “Loony” Ginsberg ha inserito il senso di “lunatico” (pazzo), comune soprattutto nello slang (Ginsberg 1965: 444).

As can be observed, the extensive and scrupulous hermeneutical work that Pivano carried out on Ginsberg’s poems together with the poet’s careful and highly organized collaborative approach, allowed them to produce an unpublished, informal and extremely detailed commentary on the translations of several poems. This commentary was subsequently used to help other translators who were struggling with translating the same poems into other languages. As a matter of fact, the glossed proofs were sent to, and used by, many European translators, as Bill Morgan, Ginsberg’s personal archivist and bibliographer, confirmed. During an interview conducted in October 2018, he stated that ‘Nanda’ “really did play quite a significant role in his translations in almost every language”:

Nanda was very important throughout his [Ginsberg] entire life [...] she was one of the first translators of his work. He answered her questions about translations, especially American words or idioms she wasn’t familiar with [...] usually in letters [...] he translated, or he would help her with the translation and then he would send copies of those translations to let’s say the German translator or the French translator [...] so it always started out with him looking back at what he had told Nanda, and so for that reason also their correspondence and their work

together is important, and I think she translated most of his earliest works for an awfully long time [...] in many many cases she would be the first translator of his works, and so Allen would go through the questions very carefully, answer her questions, and then keep those answers so when the French translator – for instance – would be translating the same poem, Allen would give that person the same answers, and I think it almost always started with Nanda, that's who he communicated with the most of all of the translators [...] he basically used his letters to her answering her questions, to answer other translators' questions, even before they began to ask him, so she really did play quite a significant role in his translations in almost every language for that reason.²⁷⁷

Corroborating evidence for Bill Morgan's words can be found in many of the letters that Ginsberg sent to Pivano. In a letter sent in 1964, which reveals a particular awareness of the documentary value of their epistolary exchange, the poet suggested storing all the proofs of her translation work with care: 'Be sure to keep ahold of these proof pages when you are all finished. They can be sold to raise money – all sorts of Universities here keep writing asking of items like this (sic)'.²⁷⁸ Furthermore, while assisting Pivano in her translation efforts, Ginsberg seems to become aware of the challenges and difficulties that the translation of his poems entails, and expresses appreciation for the efforts of the translator:

I see what a huge effort Herculean you've had to go through to translate my poetry. I hadn't (sic) realised till I received proofs what a huge book it will be and how much a weight it must have been on you. I only thank god (sic) I answered all your letters & detail (sic) questions before this. Poor Nanda what a load you've been carrying.²⁷⁹

Pivano and Ginsberg's joint efforts in the study and translation of the poems have indeed produced a wealth of documents, which engage with the most complex and problematic linguistic and cultural aspects of the translation. Pivano's work became instrumental in the exchange between Ginsberg and other translators, thus facilitating the poems' interpretation and translation in several other languages. Ginsberg asked Pivano to collect that part of their correspondence that centred on the linguistic challenges of the translation in order to help him assist other translators (into Bengali, Czech, French, German, Hebrew and Russian) who were working on his poems:

²⁷⁷ Interview with Bill Morgan, 05/10/2018.

²⁷⁸ Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 04/07/1964.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

I have also been working on correction of French Translation by Jean Jacques Lebel – it's heavy work. I am wondering for later use, is it possible for you to have made thermofax or ozalid copies of those parts of my letters explaining words or passages of the poems you translated? There must be 10 or more pages of exact explanations scattered in all these letters. It would be useful for me to have a copy available that I can recopy. The reason for this is that every few months I have correspondence with a translator, and I have never had the time to take the same pains that I did with you to make it as exact as possible.²⁸⁰

As an example, in 1963, on the suggestion of Edouard Roditi, French translator Michel Salomon, who had published the first translation of *Kaddish* in his review²⁸¹, wrote to Pivano to ask to see her translation of *Howl*, after being authorized by Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti to translate the poem. In his letter, Salomon clearly refers to the difficulty of translating Ginsberg's work:

Madame,

Je vous écris de la part de mon ami et collaborateur E. Roditi. Voici pourquoi: ayant publié naguère dans ma revue la première traduction du Kaddish de Ginsberg, Allan et son éditeur m'ont autorisé à traduire Howl pour les Éditions Discographiques Françaises. C'est une très rude entreprise, et je sue sang et eau sur cette traduction. Roditi me suggère de vous demander la traduction italienne que vous avez établie vous même il y a quelque temps. [...].²⁸²

Michel Salomon to Fernanda Pivano

04 January 1963

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

The data and testimonies collected in preparation of this thesis shed light on the crucial role played by the close-knit relationship of collaboration established between the translator and the authors, that Nancy Peters, publisher, writer and co-owner of City Lights Books and Publishers, defines as an 'unusually close and productive one': 'Ginsberg had deep respect for her and was grateful for her scrupulous attention to getting the language just right.'²⁸³ The relevance of the translator's work of hermeneutical research on the poetry of Allen Ginsberg appears therefore to be significant in the broader European literary context: Pivano's work revealed itself to be instrumental not only for the reception of American counter-culture literature in Italy, but it also served as a gateway for its diffusion to other countries.

²⁸⁰ Archivio storico Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 14/08/1964.

²⁸¹ At this point in the research, I was not able to identify the publication of *Howl* in Salomon's review.

²⁸² Pivano replied to Salomon's letter sending her translation of *Howl* only months later, in June of the same year.

²⁸³ Private e-mail correspondence, 18 May 2021.

5.6 The publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (1965, Mondadori)

Similarly to *Poesia degli ultimi americani*, the publication of the volume *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, which contains the translation of Allen Ginsberg's prime works such as 'Howl' and 'Kaddish', encountered setbacks and delays. As shown in chapter 5, Fernanda Pivano had pitched the idea of publishing the Italian version of Ginsberg's poems to Mondadori already at the start of 1960, when she had already translated 'Howl' and prepared the notes to the poem. From that moment, the publisher never sent a formal request and Pivano only signed a contract for that project in 1972, while the volume was published at the end of 1965. From the collected archive data presented in the previous sections, it becomes apparent that the complex relationship and power struggles between Fernanda Pivano and the Milan based publishing house Mondadori greatly affected the timeline of the publication of the volume. To these elements, it is necessary to add problems of censorship which the publisher wished to address prior to the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. The fear of government censors seizing the volume led to a long and complex negotiation regarding the editing of the translations of the poems, which involved Fernanda Pivano, Allen Ginsberg and the editors at Mondadori.

If finessing and perfecting the translation of the poems took Fernanda Pivano a very long time, she spent a similar amount of time was dedicated to preparing an extensive and detailed introduction to the poet for the Italian readers. In 1963, in fact, Pivano sent yet another version of her introduction to the anthology to Allen Ginsberg, asking him to read through it and correct any mistakes, together with a biographical note covering all the major events connected to the lives of Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Allen Ginsberg. The long and complex negotiation about cuts and changes to the poems indictable words and paragraphs wanted by the publisher was crucial in shaping the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*: 'Your personal collection with Mondadori is also undergoing. Our next problems will be to persuade them against cuts or asterisks: but there I am exactly on this purpose, and I will let you know' (Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg, 13th November 1963, Archivi Fernanda Pivano). Fernanda Pivano was not new to the problem of censorship enacted by publishers wishing to tame their own publication in order to avoid problems and confiscations. In fact, in the same letter – in which she tells Ginsberg that she has been fired by Rizzoli for 'protecting too much her Beat friends' – she adds that after pitching to Rizzoli the publication of *City of Night* (1963, Grove Press) by John Rechy, the publisher rejected it, only to acquire and publish it after her dismissal with substantial cuts and changes: 'This cuts problem is a damned one: for instance when I was at the Rizzoli's I suggested

Rechy; they refused it; now they are going to publish it because they are planning to cut large sections without telling anybody and they know that I am no more there to check and to warn Rosset in time'²⁸⁴ (Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg, 13th November 1963, Archivi Fernanda Pivano). Although I am not able, at this stage in my research, to validate Pivano's words with further evidence, from her account it becomes apparent that her efforts to ensure the publication of the authors she was in contact with was perceived as problematic by the publishers, who put this forward as a motivation to cease their collaboration with her. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Pivano felt that she also had the task of supervising the publication process, making sure that the translations published would not be a 'clean' version of the original. If Pivano was not able to intervene with Rizzoli for the publication of Rechy's *City of Night*, she was set to prevent the same from happening to Ginsberg's anthology with Mondadori.

At Mondadori Elio Vittorini, director of the series 'Nuovi Scrittori Stranieri', was dealing with the publication of Ginsberg's anthology and Fernanda Pivano was working as a mediator between the publisher and the author for matters of editing of the text and for the title. The title *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, in fact, was the result of a series of negotiations between Ginsberg and Vittorini. The first title suggested by the Italian editor was *Poesia come urlare*, which was refused by Ginsberg who preferred *The hydrogen jukebox*.²⁸⁵ Vittorini's counter proposal was *Jukebox H₂*: 'Cara Nanda, Jukebox all'idrogeno mi lascia un po' incerto: preferire una traslazione più "concreta" di questo titolo in Juke-box H₂; anche se la formula H₂, indicante semplicemente doppia molecola dell'idrogeno, non è d'uso normale. bèh: ripensiamoci sopra ancora un poco'.²⁸⁶

Pivano argued that the title *Jukebox H₂* was meant to have Ginsberg's poetry associated with the Italian movement centered around programmed art, brought forward by groups such as "Gruppo T".²⁸⁷ Skeptic of the association with these groups, Pivano warned Ginsberg in a letter dated 1 April 1964:

²⁸⁴ Barney Rosset, owner of the publishing house Grove Press and publisher and chief editor of the *Evergreen Review*.

²⁸⁵ Other titles suggested by Ginsberg were: *Howl of the Hydrogen Jukebox*, *Taste my Mouth in Your Ear*, *Death is a Letter that was never Sent*. Further rejected titles were: *The Sexy Lamb*, *Trembling Lambs*, *Laughing Gas*, *Ghost Traps*. (See letter from Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg, Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 01/04/1964.

²⁸⁶ 'Dear Nanda, I am not fully convinced by the title *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. I would rather have a more concrete translation of this title, such as *Juke-box H₂*; although the formula H₂ – which simply indicates a double hydrogen molecule – is not commonly used. Well, let's think about it'.

²⁸⁷ For further readings on "arte programmata" in Italy and "Gruppo T" see: Meloni L., *Gli ambienti del Gruppo T. Arte immersiva e interattiva*, (Silvana Editoriale: Cinisello Balsamo, 2004); Margozzi M. – Meloni L., (ed.), *Gli ambienti del gruppo T. Le origini dell'arte interattiva*, catalogo della mostra, Roma, (Silvana Editoriale: Cinisello Balsamo, 2006).

Dear Allen, [...] he says he would rather call it Jukebox H₂. [...] He probably wants it because there is a group of poets here who are making what they call the programmed poetry [...] I would hate to raise even the suspicion of any connection of you with them, although they are serious and nice persons. But I don't want to interfere too much and I let you decide, I am just obliged to beg you to send me as soon as you can your word²⁸⁸

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

01 April 1964

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Besides the discussion around the title of the volume, a very long and complex history of negotiations regarding the editing of indictable words and scandalous lines of the poems preceded the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. Although the contract that Mondadori signed to obtain the rights to publish Ginsberg's poetry contained a condition which established that the poems would be published integrally, the editors at the Milan-based publisher wished to edit indictable words and scandalous passages to avoid issues with censorship. At the end of 1964, Mondadori asked external collaborators to review Pivano's translation and evaluate possible editing options. Quite typically, the views expressed by English literature scholar Agostino Lombardo are quite negative with regards to Pivano's work, meanwhile the comments by Italian journalist and literary critic Angelo Mainardi are more positive.

Lombardo first criticises both Pivano's introduction and translation (without going into any details), but also argues that the translator should have operated a better selection, probably including poems from the newly published *Reality Sandwiches*, that City Lights Books had published in 1963:

Caro Covi,

[...] Non sto a commentare né l'introduzione né la traduzione, che pure avrebbero ampio motivo d'essere discusse, e nemmeno la scelta, che in realtà non è stata operata affatto, come forse sarebbe stato meglio (e d'altro canto, è curioso che non siano state tradotte le poesie dell'ultimo volume di Ginsberg uscito l'anno scorso, "REALITY SANDWICHES").²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 01/04/1964.

²⁸⁹ 'Dear Covi, [...] I will not comment the introduction and neither the translation which should be widely discussed, and neither the poems selection, which actually never happened, and it would have been better if it had (it is peculiar that the poems from the last book by Ginsberg, REALITY SANDWICHES, published last year, haven't been translated [...]).' Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Segreteria editoriale estero - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg), 04/11/1964.

Agostino Lombardo to Raffaele Crovi
04 November 1964
Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan

The reasons why Pivano did not include poems from *Reality Sandwiches* are twofold. First of all, three poems from *Reality Sandwiches* had already been included in the anthology that was about to be published by Feltrinelli (and that Pivano had read long before *Reality Sandwiches* came out in the US), and secondly Pivano had already discussed with Ginsberg the opportunity to select poems from the new collection, and agreed not to spoil the volume in view of a future publication with Mondadori (that was evaluating buying the rights):

Dear Allen,
a quick note. Mondadori received *Reality Sandwiches* and asks if I want to include some of it in the collection of Kaddish and Howl. Am waiting for your answer to say yes or no.
What I feel is that it would be better not to spoil the book and keep it to publish it together with your next one (I mean in Italy). As you know Mondadori cannot publish a book by itself if it has not a certain length.²⁹⁰

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg
13 November 1963
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Lombardo goes on to list all the edits he deemed necessary to ward off a reaction from the censorship, suggesting four options: use dots to replace ‘bad’ words, fully erase poems containing scandalous passages substituting any problematic term with a ‘more acceptable’ one, or leave the text in English and adding an explanatory footnote:

[...] Le pagine in cui una lettura incline al pregiudizio potrebbero trovare da ridire, sono le seguenti [...] Come Lei vedrà, io ho segnato a matita, in ogni pagina, i suggerimenti relativi: che sono poi quelli o di mettere dei puntini o di eliminare la poesia o di sostituire un termine ad uno più accettabile o di inserire il testo inglese, aggiungendo una nota esplicativa e riassuntiva. Quest'ultimo espediente potrebbe servire a proposito di *Howl*, che è la cosa migliore che Ginsberg a mio avviso, abbia scritto, e che non può essere tagliato senza danni.²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 13/11/1963.

²⁹¹ ‘The pages that could be susceptible to a reading inclined to prejudice are the following [...] As you can see, I have written in pencil, on every page, the relevant suggestions: which in the end are either using dots or to discard the poem, or to substitute a term with one which is ‘more acceptable’ or inserting the English text adding an explanatory and recapitulatory footnote. This last option might be useful for *Howl*, which is the best thing that Ginsberg has written, I believe, and that cannot be cut without causing much damage’. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto

A few days later, Mainardi wrote a note commenting on Lombardo's suggestions, endorsing the strategy of using dots for indictable words and leave the English version unaltered, and rejecting the idea of leaving words and lines in English in the Italian translation, and advising against substituting words with more acceptable euphemisms. Mainardi also insisted on the problematic nature of such operation, defining Ginsberg's obscene language as 'exemplar poetic liberation' and highlighting its centrality in Ginsberg's poetry:

[...] I passi di cui il prof. Lombardo suggerisce la soppressione appartengono a: *Urlo, Orfano Selvaggio, Kaddish, Poesia razzo, Messaggio, Il leone sul serio, Gas esilarante e Mescalina*. [...] A mio modesto avviso, un lavoro di forbici non può non alterare la portata del contesto ginsberghiano. *La danse du ventre c'est la danse du ventre*: spazzar via il turpiloquio di Ginsberg (Ma si tratta di escandescenze poetico-liberatorie, al limite persino esemplari) è come cucinare il pesto senza basilico e la bagna cauda senz'aglio. Ma si tratta di evitare le ire censorie. Tra le soluzioni proposte da Lombardo, la migliore mi pare quella di sostituire i brani "sconci" - nella versione italiana - con puntini di sospensione, o righe di puntini, lasciando integro l'originale americano a fronte. Meno felice mi sembra invece l'altra alternativa: quella di rinunciare alla versione di detti brani, lasciandoli in inglese anche nel testo italiano. La proposta di adottare termini meno crudi e colloquiali, ripiegando sull'eufemismo, non mi pare, francamente, da seguire. Rischia di dar luogo a un prodotto goffo, se non buffo (fra tanta asprezza!), e poi la cosa è meno agevole di quanto può credersi a prima vista. Il prof- Lombardo segnala anche la possibilità di escludere integralmente alcune poesie, trasformano la raccolta in una vera e propria antologia. In questo caso, però, si dovrebbe forse far sparire talune composizioni di speciale significato. Del resto anche accettando la soluzione 1) "Urlo" verrebbe amputato di un lungo passaggio d'importanza cospicua.²⁹²

Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Segreteria editoriale estero - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg), 04/11/1964.

²⁹² 'The passages Prof. Lombardo advises to cut belong to: *Howl, Wild Orphan, Kaddish, Poem Rocket, Message, The Lion for Real, Laughing Gas, Mescaline*. [...] My humble opinion is that any cuttings would alter the reach of Ginsberg's context. *La danse du ventre c'est la danse du ventre*: erasing Ginsberg's obscene language (but we are talking about poetic-liberating expressions, sometimes even exemplary) is like making pesto without basil and *bagna cauda* without onion. But we are talking about avoiding the anger of censorship. Among the solutions suggested by Lombardo, I believe that the best one is to substitute the 'dirty' passages – in the Italian version – with ellipsis, or lines of dots, leaving the original American untouched in the parallel text. Not as good seems to be the other alternative: to scrap the translation of those passages keeping them in English in the Italian text. The idea of using less crude and colloquial words substituting them with euphemism does not seem – in my view – a good one. It might make the translation clumsy, if not comic (among so much harshness!), and this operation is less easy than it might seem at first sight. Prof. Lombardo also suggests erasing some poems, transforming the collection into an anthology. But in this case we would have to leave out some poems which are especially significant. After all, also by accepting

Angelo Mainardi to Raffaele Crovi

11 November 1964

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan

Also Elio Vittorini endorsed the idea of substituting each indictable word in translation with as many lines of dots, keeping the English version as is: '[...] "Accettando tutte le indicazioni di brani da censurare che ci dà il Lombardo, adotterei la soluzione di pubblicare però il testo inglese integro di tali brani sostituendo in corrispondenza le omissioni con tante righe di puntini quante ne richiederebbero le parole italiane della traduzione. Come nei giornali della Prima guerra mondiale, così che risulti chiara ed evidente anche dinanzi al pubblico la necessità in cui ci troviamo"''.²⁹³

Mondadori's uncertainty about the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* and about the strategy for the editing its obscene passages, combined with breach of the contractual conditions agreed with Ginsberg and *City Lights*, would have caused further setbacks – and also threaten the very publication of the volume – after several years of work.

Pivano's frustration with the situation is evident in a letter sent to Ginsberg in November 1964, where she indicates that Mondadori is scared by the censorship because of a trial they got entangled in for the publication of *The Group* by Mary McCarthy. Pivano tells the American author that she reminded Mondadori straight away of the contractual agreement they had stipulated with him:

[...] Yesterday I told them formally that you will never permit to put dots in substitution for words. I recalled them that this was your first condition when selling them your copyrights.

After a long discussion what they are proposing is: to publish the integral American version. To leave untranslated the full lines where "dangerous" words are; leaving regular white space in coincidence with the American text. [...] It sounds wild but for yesterday it was the most I could obtain. I said that I will write you for a formal decision on your side only when they send me

solution n. 1, *Howl* would lose a long and important passage'. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Segreteria editoriale estero - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg), 11/11/1964.

²⁹³ '[...] "Accepting all the suggestions by Lombardo about the poems to edit, I would adopt the option of publishing the integral English text of those poems, substituting every omission with as many lines of dots as the number of Italian words in translation. Just like newspapers during World War I, so that it will be clear, also to our readers, what kind of situation we are facing"''. (Vittorini's words are quoted in a note sent by Raffaele Crovi to Vittorio Sereni, dated 17/11/1964, and held in the Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan).

the proofs with definite indications of which voids they want to make. [...] So this is where all my worries and all your kindness landed. What to say. [...]²⁹⁴

The translator goes on advancing the idea of taking the book off the hands of Mondadori, and finding a second publisher which would commit publishing the volume in its integral form:

[...] On Saturday I will speak with another publisher asking if he would be willing to take the full thing in his hands. If he agrees I will try to get the book from Mondadori; but before doing this I must be sure of having a new publisher. You understand. [...]²⁹⁵

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

22 November 1964

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan

The harshness of Pivano's words towards the publishing house derives from a series of unfortunate requests from Mondadori regarding the correction of her drafts and a generally short-sighted handling of the situation. In fact, in *C'era una volta un beat*, Pivano recalls how little time she was given by the publishing house to edit the proofs of her translations (after having worked on them for almost six years): 'Le prime bozze di *Howl* me le mandarono il 14 maggio 1964 con la richiesta di consegnarle entro il 18 maggio...[...] Le consegnai entro il 20 maggio, a tempo di record, lavorando 24 ore su 24. Vittorini capì e mi ringraziò il 22 maggio. Poi, cominciò il silenzio' (Pivano 2003: 55)²⁹⁶ and again, 'Le seconde bozze di *Howl* mi arrivarono nell'agosto del 1964 con la richiesta di consegnarle prima di settembre: le corressi nei pochi giorni di riposo che potevo permettermi al mare, inseguendo Ginsberg attraverso tutti i Paesi del Pianeta con lettere in cui chiedevo decisioni definitive. Arrivai in tempo per la consegna; ma ricominciò il silenzio' (Pivano 2003: 56).²⁹⁷

Mondadori was, at that point, still unsure about the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, and the official decision to go ahead with cuts and changings to the poems was only communicated to Pivano on 16 December 1964:

²⁹⁴ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 22/11/1964.

²⁹⁵ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 22/11/1964.

²⁹⁶ 'They sent me first drafts of *Howl* on the 14 May 1964, asking me to return them by the 18 May. I submitted them by the 20, in record time, working 24/7. Vittorini understood and thanked me on the 22 May, but after that, silence'.

²⁹⁷ 'They sent me the second drafts of *Howl* in August 1964 and I was asked to return them by the end of the month. I corrected them during the few days I was on holiday at the seaside, chasing Ginsberg round the globe with letters asking him for final decisions. I made it on time for the deadline, but then the silence started again'.

Cara Nanda,

faccio il punto sulla questione Ginsberg. L'editore ha accettato la mia proposta (l'unica, permanendo il moralismo della Magistratura Italiana, che ci permetta di realizzare l'edizione italiana delle poesie di Ginsberg): dare il testo inglese integralmente; dare, invece, il testo della tua traduzione con omissioni nei punti incriminabili, contrassegnati o da spazi bianchi o da righe di puntini (meglio le righe di puntini). [...] Se sei d'accordo, ti farò riavere le bozze, con sottolineate le frasi o le strofe che debbono essere purtroppo omesse.²⁹⁸

Elio Vittorini to Fernanda Pivano

16 December 1964

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan

From that moment on, an even more intense exchange of letters involved Fernanda Pivano, who was trying to mediate between the requests of the people at Mondadori and those of Allen Ginsberg. After consulting with Pivano, Ginsberg sent several handwritten letters designed to get his poems published without cuts. The recipients included the director of ALI (Agenzia Letteraria Internazionale), Erich Linder, the Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti, and Alberto Mondadori.

With a pinch of irony, Pivano recalls those epistolary exchanges with Mondadori, making evident how much of the editing process revolved around vulgarisms connected to sex: 'Da allora cominciò una bizzarra corrispondenza a base di figa, cazzo, pompini, inculato, fottere, chiavare, "b.d.c." al posto di buco del culo e simili, dove gli elenchi di queste "espressioni vernacolari" erano preceduti da un solenne "Gentile Signora" e concluse da un formale "Molti cari saluti"' (Pivano 2003: 56).²⁹⁹ The intricate interactions that resulted from the editing negotiations highlight how Pivano's choices aimed primarily at protecting the interests of Allen Ginsberg by ensuring that the poems would be published with fewer cuts and changings as possible. Moreover, it is evident that Pivano also wished to maintain full control over her translation and was determined to fight the publisher to the point of forbidding the publication if her work was to be manipulated without her consent. The decisions that she took aimed at limiting the agency of the

²⁹⁸ 'Dear Nanda, about the Ginsberg situation. The editor has accepted my proposal (the only one that – remaining the moralism of the Italian Magistrature – allows us to accomplish the publication of the Italian version of Ginsberg's poems): print the integral English text meanwhile we print your translations with omissions in the indictable points, signalled by blank spaces or lines of dots (better lines of dots) [...] If you agree I'll send you the drafts with the sentences or stanzas that unfortunately need to be omitted'. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Segreteria editoriale estero - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg), 16/12/64. Now in Pivano 2003: 56.

²⁹⁹ 'From that moment on we started an odd correspondence made of cunt, cock, blowjobs, assfucked, fuck, screw, "b.d.c." for "buco di culo" [asshole] and similar, where these lists of "vernacular expressions" were preceded by a solemn "Dear Madam", and ended with "Many kind regards"'.

publisher over the work of the author and translator, which would have directly affected the texts and their reception, thereby reinstating the power of the translator as owner of the translation and primary administrator in the cultural and linguistic exchange.

To engage in this power struggle, Pivano cleverly used the different types of capital at her disposal. These included primarily the social capital of her networks and the economic capital in the form of threats of lawsuits, ownership over her translation and competition from other publishers, and the cultural capital she had accrued as gatekeeper of a niche segment in the literary panorama. Traces of the strategy deployed by Pivano can be found in the numerous letters that she exchanged with the people at Mondadori and Allen Ginsberg. In the Mondadori archives, in fact, a note from Mainardi to the attention of Crovi reveals the aggressive response by the translator to Mondadori's editing demands:

[...] ho telefonato alla Nanda Pivano per sapere a che punto fosse con la revisione delle bozze dell'Hemingway [...] e subito sono stato sommerso da un subisso di parole aventi come solo argomento la grana Ginsberg. 1) La Pivano sostiene che se entro 15 giorni Ginsberg non avrà appreso le decisioni definitive della Mondadori, farà causa alla Casa Editrice (non so su che base, aggiungo io) [...] 2) altrettanto farà lei stessa se la sua traduzione - depositata presso notaio, dice lei - verrà manomessa (ma di quali "manomissioni" si tratta?). 3) si rifiuta di occuparsi delle bozze del romanzo di Hemingway "se prima la faccenda Ginsberg non sarà andata in porto". A questo proposito, immagino che "Di là dal fiume e tra gli alberi" possa "andare in porto" egualmente nei termini di tempo prestabiliti, cioè senza la collaborazione della Pivano. [...] ³⁰⁰

Angelo Mainardi to Raffaele Crovi

15 December 1964

Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan

First of all, Pivano threatens to have Mondadori sued by Ginsberg for delaying the publication of the volume and claims she would sue them as well if her translation was published with changes that she did not approve. She had, in fact, proceeded to have her translations of Ginsberg's poems

³⁰⁰ 'I phoned Nanda Pivano to ask where she had come with the review of Hemingway's drafts [...] and I was overwhelmed with words about one single topic; the Ginsberg problem. 1) Pivano claims that if Ginsberg does not receive a final decision from Mondadori within 15 days, he will sue the publisher (I don't know on what grounds, I would like to add) [...] 2) she will do the same if her translation – that was notarized, she says – will be manipulated (what kind of "manipulations" is she talking about?). 3) she refuses to take care of the drafts of Hemingway unless "Ginsberg's situation goes forward". About this, I imagine that "Across the River and into the Trees" could "go forward" also without Pivano's collaboration and be completed on time [...]'. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Segreteria editoriale estero - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg), 15/12/64.

notarized and sealed (the document, still sealed, is held in the archives of the Fondo Fernanda Pivano in Milan). Moreover, since she was working on the drafts of the Italian translation of Hemingway's *Across the River and into the Trees*, she tried to blackmail Mondadori into speeding up the publication process of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* by compromising their publication plans of other volumes. To this last threat, Mainardi immediately suggested side-lining the translator and finishing the work without her collaboration, even though Pivano had worked and submitted the translation of Hemingway's volume thirteen years earlier, in December 1951.³⁰¹

If Pivano was being very strict in dealing with Mondadori, Ginsberg appeared, at first, to be willing to take a few steps back from his initial conditions to facilitate the translator's work of mediation with the Italian publisher. In fact, he told Pivano that the very strict conditions that he set at the moment of selling his rights to Mondadori aimed at sparing her difficulties like these. He confirmed moreover that he would have accepted any compromise that would have solved the situation:

Dear Nanda,

[...] regarding the book at Mondadori, there are a few possibilities. Despite what I said at beginning of the arrangements, it would probably be better to compromise and use asterisks with the first letter of the word (like f***) (for fuck) in Italian. That way you would have at least know what is left out. If you leave a whole line blank, they don't know what's happening at all unless they read English.

A second possibility would be to make whatever editorial compromise on the best conditions you could, save you further time and trouble. I had originally been so strict in seeking pre-conditions only in the hope of saving trouble like this now. It didn't work [...]³⁰²

Allen Ginsberg to Fernanda Pivano

04 December 1964

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Considering Mondadori's adamant plan of editing or erasing the passages of the poems that might have caused them trouble with the censorship, Pivano wished to find a different publisher that would have printed her translations in their integrity, and that she would have under control. But

³⁰¹ The volume, with Pivano's translation was published in 1965. As Crovi explains in a letter to Pivano dated 29.12.1964 (Archivio Fondazione Mondadori, Milan, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero* - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34, Allen Ginsberg), the delay in the publication was due to the lack of the authorization from the heirs of Hemingway, which was granted only in 1964.

³⁰² Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 04/12/1964.

the uncertainty of the outcome of such plan pushed her to maintain a dialogue with Mondadori, in an effort to obtain the best possible compromise:

Dear Allen,

[...] if nothing better comes out I will see that Mondadori put asterisks and dots provided they leave integral the American version. This would be the quickest way to have your collection out. The moment would be good: while reviewing my book of essays the Establishment critics start speaking of you in the right way. But I will move slowly because the “better” which I hope might come out is to have a publisher willing to publish an integral version. I am thinking of someone whom I trust fully and whom I can have under control; but he is now undergoing a surgery [...] as soon as he can speak with me I will go to Florence on this purpose. If he agrees I will act toughly with Mondadori: if he doesn’t I will lead the dots campaign with Mondadori.³⁰³

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

10 December 1964

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

This opportunity of getting another publisher was also voiced by Ginsberg who met, in New York, Domenico Porzio from Rizzoli, who seemed eager to publish new poems by the American author:

[...] Another likely possibility is to contact Mr Domenico Porzio [...] I met him here in NY several weeks ago at a party at James Laughlin’s. He made a beeline to me, said he’d read or heard about my work [...] and asked me a book. [...] Perhaps if you bring the problem to him he will offer to take over the anthology of my poetry and publish it? without cuts? [...] Then if he says OK, you can tell Mondadori and we can cancel their contract. I think the contract says something about cuts and censoring, which gives us an out. But if his shift doesn’t work, then best make peace with Mondadori and stop worrying and troubling yourself. [...] ³⁰⁴

Allen Ginsberg to Fernanda Pivano

04 December 1964

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Pivano strongly rejected Ginsberg’s suggestion of re-establishing a relationship with Rizzoli, recalling the resistance that she encountered when working for them after the end of her collaboration with Mondadori in 1961, arguing that the publisher would have never risked

³⁰³ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 10/12/1964.

³⁰⁴ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 04/12/1964.

problems with censorship and that they would have presented Ginsberg under the ‘usual label of dope, homosexuality and so on’.³⁰⁵

In January 1965, Mondadori was still considering the option of cutting entire sections of Ginsberg’s poems: ‘[...]in *Urlo* le sottolineature sono più frequenti che altrove: vedi tu se non sia il caso di omettere per intero alcune strofe’ (Elio Vittorini to Fernanda Pivano, 11.01.1965, Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero* - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34, Allen Ginsberg). On the other hand, Ginsberg’s approach to the problem was becoming less flexible, also encouraged by Italian journalist Lucio Manisco of *Il Messaggero*:

Dear Nanda,

I have been having second thoughts on the Mondadori censorship problem. Went to a party tonite and saw a number of Italians, journalists, etc. including Lucio Manisco of *Il Messaggero*, a friend of Ungaretti. He and others advised taking a strong stand on the question of Mondadori going back on their word, and also taking a strong stand on the integrity (completeness) of the poems as they are now translated. [...] What do you think? Is it too late for me to say NO either publish as is or don’t publish?³⁰⁶

Allen Ginsberg to Fernanda Pivano

05 January 1965

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Pivano was therefore caught between two diametrically opposite positions and decided to mediate between the two. Also her stance regarding the matter had changed: she seemed convinced that no publisher would print the poems integrally, and that the quickest solution to have the book out would be to convince Mondadori to use dots and reject any cuts. In her response to Ginsberg she explains that the only publisher whom she trusts is Vallecchi in Florence (but that she is not sure about their response and she is afraid about further delays if they tried to have the book published elsewhere). Moreover, she insisted that the only helpful thing that a journalist might do for him is to write articles speaking in favour of him and of his poems:

³⁰⁵ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 10/12/1964.

³⁰⁶ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 05/01/1965.

Dear Allen,

[...] My opinion is still that the best way (I mean the quickest way) to have the book out is to accept not any cut but some dots here and there. No Italian publisher whatsoever can possibly publish a integral version of the book without having it confiscated immediately: recent trials have been very hard for publishers. Mondadori was the safest because he published Lolita and Ulysses without any trial; the myth of his unvanquishness as broken by the trial for McCarthy's book. Now they are frightened. [...] If you really refuse dots I can try with Vallecchi who is a publisher in Florence whom I trust. [...] If you really want Ungaretti to interfere I strongly advise you to write yourself directly to him. I am sure he would listen to you while I have good reason to doubt that he would ever listen to any little journalist who might have met him at some party [...] Why doesn't Manisco write an article on "Messaggero" saying that it is a shame that your book has not been published in Italy yet, and how good a poet you are, and why do they not stop speaking of you as they do now and so on? This is the only real help that Manisco or any other journalist can give you [...] what you need in Italy is a campaign to raise public opinion in your favour.³⁰⁷

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

09 January 1965

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

While trying to soften Ginsberg's position, Pivano used the American author's mail of 5 January to prove to Mondadori that they should have reconsidered their idea of cutting entire passages of the poems, otherwise they would have seen the book pulled by the author himself.

In a postcard sent from Prague on the 19 March 1965, Ginsberg accepts the solution of the dots, but is adamant about not allowing cuts, especially in the poem *Kaddish*: 'Dear Nanda, dots are OK, but cuts of paragraphs, especially crucial ragged lips in Kaddish is impossible. I forbid yes. Dots OK [...] don't cut out that Kaddish paragraph'.³⁰⁸

Allen Ginsberg then proceeded to send several handwritten letters aimed at supporting the cause of the publication of his poems without cuts. Among these, there are three letters sent to A.L.I. director Erich Linder, Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti and Mondadori director Arnoldo Mondadori.

Linder was asked to put pressure on Mondadori and give them an ultimatum: a deadline on the 30th of October to have the book out otherwise a lawsuit would have started. Linder also contacted

³⁰⁷ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 09/01/1965.

³⁰⁸ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 19/03/1965. Now in Pivano 2003: 57.

Fernanda Pivano telling her she would update her after a meeting he had scheduled with the people at Mondadori to discuss censorship matters.

Ginsberg also contacted Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti to ask him to intervene and support the cause of the publication of his poems unaltered. Ungaretti, in fact, had met Ginsberg in the US in 1964 and showed appreciation for his poetry. The Italian poet had spent time with Ginsberg and other writers gravitating around the Beat movement and even held a collective reading at Frank O'Hara's house, where he read his 1914 poems and the American poets read their 1964 poems:

Dear Nanda,

[...] Ungaretti is here in N.Y. and proposes to do some translation of several N.Y. poets for a little anthology for Mondadori. [...] I have no record, or have forgotten, what you have translated. Should he duplicate anything you've already done? [...] Or should I request him to try his hand at another version of Howl? He is supposed to be a good poet (I have never read him in Italian) so it would be interesting to see what he does, even if it duplicates your work – his work would not probably be ready for 1 or 2 years. Let me know what you advise on this. I feel pleased there will be so much US poetry in translation, the more the better.³⁰⁹

Allen Ginsberg to Fernanda Pivano

15 May 1964

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Ungaretti's endorsement was directed also toward Fernanda Pivano, as it is evident in a follow-up letter that Ginsberg sent her: 'Dear Nanda, [...] Ungaretti says he knows you [...] Ungaretti assured me that knowing you the translation would be excellent. He spoke very highly of you'.³¹⁰ The endorsement received from such an important figure of the Italian literary and intellectual landscape meant a lot for Ginsberg, who tried to profit from the symbolic and cultural capital associated with Ungaretti to influence publishing matters within the Italian literary field. Even before Ginsberg's request, the Italian poet – informed by Manisco – decided to get in touch with Mondadori and ask them to 'lasciare intatto il testo'.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 15/05/1964.

³¹⁰ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 16/05/1964.

³¹¹ 'Keep the text intact'. Giuseppe Ungaretti to Allen Ginsberg. Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, Allen Ginsberg's letters to Fernanda Pivano, [1961 – estate 1967], 11/07/1965.

Ginsberg's third letter was addressed to Alberto Mondadori. In the long, handwritten letter, the American author clearly communicated his desire to have the poems published, suggesting a compromise that 'might satisfy everybody' (Pivano 2003: 58), that is, print the first letter of the Italian words to be excised and indicate the number of omitted letters with an equal number of dots. The English text should have been published 'as is', and no section or paragraph was to be removed. Moreover, Ginsberg used this letter to legitimise Pivano's authority in publishing matters in the eyes of Mondadori. In a letter sent on the 5 August 1965 to Mondadori editor Raffaele Crovi, Ginsberg attempted to defend Pivano's arguments against censorship of the texts by linking the translator's role to the cultural and symbolic capital associated with the concept of the 'scholar':

I do not assent to any censorship of the language or the texts of my poetry – I have been in contact with Mrs Pivano all along, and I leave all negotiations on this matter in her hands, she is completely competent to speak for me [...] Mrs Pivano will make all decisions for me as regards the text. This is completely proper as she is the scholar and translator of the work.³¹²

Allen Ginsberg to Raffaele Crovi,
05 August 1965,
Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Moreover, by claiming that Pivano 'will make all decisions for me', Ginsberg engaged with the complex notion of authorship and its renegotiation in translation, making the long-standing dilemma of translation, defined as either a recreation or a copy of the original, a central issue. In this instance, Ginsberg suggested that the translator retains ownership over the translated text – and thus authority in editorial decisions – by changing the ontological understanding of the translated texts, which become representations of a literary work, and not mere copies. Hence, they are the sole responsibility – and property – of the translator:³¹³

Dear Mr. Mondadori:

[...] I had been very disturbed by the omissions and changes originally suggested to Mrs. Pivano by the editors at Mondadori, because not only were many colloquial words to be eliminated with no trace, or latinized in a way to disturb the rough force of modern diction; but also a crucial paragraph-strophe of the poem Kaddish was to be excised from the text.

³¹² Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 05/08/1964.

³¹³ On this see Bantinaki 2020.

I had left judgement on these matters in the hands of Nanda Pivano, because she has worked so long, so hard, so lovingly and so carefully on the editing and translation of the text. I wish to leave the final judgement in her hands, because, after all, the book is perhaps more hers than mine or yours. She has done the difficult work (Pivano 2003: 58-59).³¹⁴

The closing statements in the excerpt above are intended to confer upon Pivano – who was working in the interest of the poet – a higher degree of authority in the editorial negotiation, by passing on to her the symbolic capital associated with the author.

Ginsberg tries to achieve this by acting upon the complex concept of authorship and its renegotiation in translation, subverting the hierarchy which sees the translator as subordinate to the author, bringing centre-stage the long-standing dilemma of translation as re-creation or copy of the original. I believe that it is interesting to note that, to legitimate Pivano's agency in the editorial process of her own translation, Ginsberg considered the translated text as a new and different literary creation than the original, and operated in fact a shift in the ownership of the text between author and translator. I would like to argue that this negotiation might give us an indication of the dynamics which define how the role of the translator is perceived by the other actors involved, how this affects directly or indirectly their trajectory and finally how their positioning within the field occurs. We are presented, in fact, (and again), with a situation where the translator's authority is legitimated by factors which are not directly related to competences concerning linguistic skills or literary knowledge, but is rather defined by matters of status, often connected to factors which are external to the practice of translation and that need to be transmitted and endorsed by other actors that are not translators. Once again, the translator appears to be deprived of their own cultural power and professional authority, which need to be granted from the outside.

Pivano's involvement in the translation, editing, and publication phases of Ginsberg's poems in Italian ensured that the texts were made available to the public without major cuts and expurgations. The latter could have significantly affected the specific literary and linguistic features of 'Howl', 'Kaddish', and the other poems included in the anthology. Pivano's stubborn defence of the integrity of her translations, and her ongoing exchange with Ginsberg, prevented any alterations to the translated texts, as happened in other languages, for example in French. While checking Lebel's French translation in order to identify possible solutions to the Italian censorship issues, Pivano spotted the use of 'half-scientific' terminology to replace words

³¹⁴ The letter is dated 18 August 1956.

considered obscene. For example, ‘gyzym’ was replaced with ‘ejaculation’, ‘asshole’ with ‘anus’, ‘buggered’ with ‘sodomisé’, and ‘lays’ with ‘fornications’. This is how she responded to these changes:

Dear Allen,

[...] But now I have seen the French translation which you approved and I see that for instance in Howl the word gyzym has been translated with “ejaculation”; the word asshole, in Howl footnote has been translated with “anus”; the word buggered, in the same Footnote has been translated with “sodomisé”; in Kaddish, part 3, the word lays has been translated with “fornications”. I mean, if I were allowed to use such half scientific words, I might avoid several dots. It would be enough to say member instead of saying cock, for instance; but I thought you would resent for any edulcoration?³¹⁵

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

02 June 1965

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Although Ginsberg had claimed to have been working on the corrections of the French translation,³¹⁶ from his reply to Pivano it becomes apparent that he was not aware about such changes:

Dear Nanda,

[...] Lebel must have tinkered with the corrected translation. I haven’t seen the French book yet. Do what you think OK using half scientific words I ain’t going to resent nothing really. I don’t think dots are so bad tho. But as I said from very beginning the book is as much yrs as mine & the work’s been all yours so best you make all decisions henceforth. I certainly will be happy to see the whole problem off yr shoulders.³¹⁷

Allen Ginsberg to Fernanda Pivano

09 June 1965

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milano

Ginsberg’s reply proves how the close-knit collaboration between author and translator allowed them to maintain a stronger control over the recreation and dissemination of their work into a new

³¹⁵ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 02/06/1965.

³¹⁶ See p. 151.

³¹⁷ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 09/06/1965.

language. It can be argued that, unlike the initial-plus-dots solution, a translation which replaces the words considered obscene with 'less indecent' ones (such as the French translation) might serve the purpose of providing a context for these expressions. On the other hand, it is also true that the initial-plus-dots automatically catches the reader's eye, possibly redirecting them to check the original parallel English text to figure out what the Italian initial stands for. The solution adopted by Pivano, although not the most desirable one, represents a compromise that strives to retain and convey the nuances of the original text, and stands out as a perfect representation of the moral limitations that cultural products were subject to in Italy during those years. Both Lebel's and Pivano's translations suffered changes due to the moral limitations imposed by the then-current socio-cultural context. While Lebel's French translation can work as a standalone text, Pivano's translation has to refer back to the original poems, visually signaling that several words present in the American version could not be included in the Italian one. In the case of Lebel's translation, in fact, his tampering with the English is visible only through a close contrastive reading of the original and his version, while Pivano's chosen solution made her changes obvious.

Notwithstanding the interventions of Ginsberg, Linder, and Ungaretti, and in spite of Pivano's constant pressure, the editors at Mondadori remained unsure about the use of initials and dots until September 1965, when the final agreement was communicated to Ginsberg and Pivano. In a letter to Crovi dated 1 October 1965, Pivano wrote the following:

[L]a ringrazio molto della sua lettera con l'acclusa copia della lettera di Alberto a Ginsberg. Immagino che l'avrà letta anche lei. Da questa lettera risulta che avete deciso di far seguire alle iniziali il numero di puntini corrispondente alle lettere omesse: leggo infatti: 'some words will be indicated by the initials alone, followed by the same number of dots and the omitted letters in the word'. Da questa lettera mi sento autorizzata a correggere le bozze secondo una decisione diversa da quella da voi seguita finora [...] mi rallegro di vedere realizzati, seppure soltanto in parte, i desideri di Ginsberg.³¹⁸

Fernanda Pivano to Raffaele Crovi

01 October 1965

Archivi Fondazione Mondadori, Milano

³¹⁸ 'Thank you very much for your letter with attached the copy of the letter to Ginsberg. I believe that you have read it as well. From this letter it seems like that you have decided to have the initials of each word followed by as many dots as the omitted letters: in fact, I can read: "some words will be indicated by the initials alone, followed by the same number of dots and the omitted letters in the word". After reading this letter I feel authorized to edit the drafts according to a different decision than the one you have been following so far [...] I am happy to see fulfilled – although partially – Ginsberg's wishes'. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero* - AB, b. 34, fasc. 34 (Allen Ginsberg), 01/10/1965.

The book was printed at the end of the year and went on sale on 4 January 1966. Fernanda Pivano saw the first copy on 22 December 1965 and wrote to Ginsberg: 'Dear Allen, I don't know where to start with. Am so full of emotions when thinking of the hours I spent with you. Thank you for having been once more so patient and sweet with me. Today I saw your book. No problem on the jacket: they printed the copy I sent to you and didn't put anything on their own about obscenity. The books will be sent to bookstores on the first week of January and I will send the copies to the critics and to our American friends'.³¹⁹ She also signed and dedicated a copy to Elio Vittorini, director of the Mondadori series that contains *Jukebox all'idrogeno*, 'Nuovi Narratori Stranieri', who was seriously ill. After the editorial struggles that shaped the history of the publication of the volume, Pivano wrote, in a very conciliatory tone: 'Caro Vittorini, non riesco a crederci, ma pare proprio che questa sia l'ultima lettera che ti scrivo a proposito del Ginsberg: oggi ho firmato la tua copia. È inutile che ti dica quanto avrei desiderato venirtela a portare di persona [...] appena ne avrai voglia verrò a trovarti e rideremo insieme di tutti i problemi che abbiamo dovuto superare per far uscire il libro' (Pivano 2003: 71).³²⁰

The first two major events connected to the book launch happened in Naples and Turin. Ungaretti took part in the book launch held at Libreria Guida in Naples, on 12 February 1966:

Dear Allen,

[...] The greatest news is that dearest old Ungaretti promised to come to Naples on February 12 to read some of your poems at Libreria Guida, the old bookstore made famous by Croce. Even if something happens and he will not be able to come, the fact that he accepted and promised is very touching; any travel is important to his old age³²¹

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

26 January 1966

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

Here, Giuseppe Ungaretti gave a talk with the title 'Allen Ginsberg e la nuova poesia americana' [Allen Ginsberg and the new American poetry],³²² and then read some of the poems by Allen

³¹⁹ Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg. Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 22/12/1965.

³²⁰ 'Dear Vittorini, I cannot believe it but it seems like that this is the last letter I send you about Ginsberg: today I signed the copy for you. Needless to say how much I wished I could bring it to you personally [...] as soon as you feel like it I will come visit and we will laugh together about all the troubles we had to face to have the book published'.

³²¹ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 26/01/1966.

³²² Ungaretti's talk is now published with the title 'Presentation of Allen Ginsberg's Poems (Naples 1966)', *World Literature Today*, 63.2 (1989), 212–14.

Ginsberg. Pivano's account of the book launch testifies for the great appreciation that Giuseppe Ungaretti had for Allen Ginsberg:

Il 12 febbraio Giuseppe Ungaretti con la generosità e la pazienza che gli erano caratteristiche venne apposta da Roma a Napoli per aiutarmi a introdurre al pubblico italiano la poesia di Allen Ginsberg. Lesse qualche poesia [...] passò alcune ore con la calma della saggezza a rispondere a giovani poeti seduti per terra intorno alla sua poltrona e mostrò di sapere più cose su Ginsberg, [...] di quanto ostentavano di sapere i tenutari della critica ufficiale. Non dimenticherò mai la grazia con cui questo vecchio poeta rese omaggio senza risentimenti e senza paure a un giovane poeta in via di affermazione (Pivano 2003:73).³²³

In Turin, bookstore owner Angelo Pezzana contacted Fernanda Pivano to tell her that he had covered the windows of his bookshop Hellas with copies of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. Pivano decided to do a book launch at the bookshop and play records of Ginsberg reading his poems:

Dear Allen,

[...] A Torino bookstore sent a picture of his window all full with your anthology. He says: 'I hear from a mutual friend that you are trying to make people know Ginsberg: I want you to know that since the book is out I'm speaking of him so much that my bookstore has been called Ginsberg & Co.'. Isn't it nice? I will go one evening and maybe play your record so that they can hear your voice.³²⁴

Fernanda Pivano to Allen Ginsberg

26 January 1966

Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Milan

The presentation of the book was held on 5 March 1966, in a bookshop packed with young people:

Il 5 marzo c'era stata una conferenza alla Libreria Hellas [...] dove Angelo Pezzana aveva fatto l'intera vetrina con *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (il primo in Italia a mostrare rispetto per questo libro), io in piedi su una seggiola per una folla di giovani che gremivano anche la piazza fuori della libreria (dove si erano

³²³ 'On the 12th of February 1966, Giuseppe Ungaretti – with his usual generosity and patience – came from Rome to Naples to help me introduce the Italian public to the poetry of Allen Ginsberg. He read some poems [...] spent hours answering the questions of the young poets who sat on the floor, around his armchair. He demonstrated to know, about Ginsberg, much more [...] than what is displayed by those who hold the reins of the official critics. I will never forget the grace with which that old, acclaimed poet paid tribute to a young and up-and-coming poet, without fears, without resentment'.

³²⁴ Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Fondo Fernanda Pivano – Sezione Michele Concina, fold. Ginsberg, Allen, [1961 – estate 1967], 26/01/1966.

installate inaspettatamente due camionette della polizia), col sottofondo dell'*Urlo* rispondevo – con domande – a domande ansiose di ragazzi ansiosi per problemi ansiosi (Pivano 2008: 952).³²⁵

At the same bookshop, a second event linked to *Jukebox all'idrogeno* saw the participation of Allen Ginsberg, who held a reading on 20 September 1967. Angelo Pezzana (now journalist and Italian politician) is the founder of the first Italian movement for homosexual liberation and director of the printed publication connected to said movement, named "F.U.O.R.I." (Fronte Unitario Omosessuali Rivoluzionari Italiani), with which both Pivano and Ginsberg briefly collaborated.

The experience of Angelo Pezzana testifies to the importance that the reception of the poems of Allen Ginsberg and of Beat literature in general had on the public, both on the level of the individual, but also as a collective phenomenon that imprinted a renewed course to social and political battles. Pezzana, in fact, in our 2018 interview, highlighted how important it was for him the publication of *Jukebox all'idrogeno*. Although he owned an international bookshop where he paid particular attention to literature published abroad and where he sold books in several languages, his first encounter with Allen Ginsberg and the Beat Generation happened thanks to Pivano's Italian translations: '[...] prima che uscisse *Jukebox all'idrogeno* nessuno sapeva chi fosse Allen Ginsberg'.

The journalist was adamant in referring to his reading of the introduction to *Jukebox all'idrogeno* as a life-changing event: 'io lessi quelle cento pagine e non ero più lo stesso che ero prima'. Pivano's essay did not only function as an introduction to the specific volume, but as an invitation to discover the American Beat Generation, its poets, and the political and social atmosphere connected to it:

[...] in quel libro, le prime cento pagine che dovevano essere un'introduzione al libro, erano in realtà anche una specie di invito alla conoscenza di tutta quella che era la Beat Generation in America, chi erano i poeti, cosa scrivevano, qual era l'atmosfera politica e culturale. È stata una lezione non solo di carattere intellettuale, ma è stato un ritratto della nuova America che mi influenzò moltissimo, [...] quando ho letto quella introduzione di Fernanda Pivano, l'ho cercata e le ho detto voglio venire a conoscerla. Lei mi ha risposto: "Casa mia è aperta, vieni quando vuoi". E per un po' di tempo, io quando chiudevo la libreria salivo in macchina e andavo a Milano, a casa della Nanda e di Ettore

³²⁵ 'On the 5th of March there was a conference at the Hella bookshop [...] where Angelo Pezzana had dedicated the shop windows to *Jukebox all'idrogeno* (the first one in Italy to show respect for this book), I was standing on a chair for a crowd of young people who filled the square outside the bookshop (where, unexpectedly, two police vans showed up), and with *Howl* in the background I answered – with questions – to anxious questions by anxious youths with anxious problems'.

Sottsass, dove c'era un piccolo gruppo di giovani che apprezzavano le idee nuove che lei stava portando in Italia, e quindi era un momento di confronto e di conoscenza per chi non conosceva ancora tutta la nuova cultura che arrivava dall'America. tra un po' esce da Mondadori questo libro che ho faticato anni per imporne la pubblicazione in Italia [...] da lì è nata l'occasione per questa presentazione che bloccò tutto il centro di Torino. [...] nessuno era ancora pronto per capire, tant'è che il giorno dopo a Torino "La Stampa" scrisse: "Arriva a Torino il poeta che predica la fine del mondo" [...]

The access to the new literature and culture coming from the US was relevant both on a cultural and on a social level, and Pezzana's willingness to disseminate Ginsberg's poetry was also connected to matters of personal and sexual identity. The verses of *Howl* had an enormous impact for those who believed in the ideals of the gay liberation, and represented a new language through which individuals could voice their needs of self-assertion and recognition within the social fabric:

Io ero coinvolto su due piani: uno quello culturale, e poi come omosessuale. Perché il cambiamento è arrivato dall'America. Dalle altre parti arrivavano ideologie di violenza. C'era una volontà di divulgazione, ma anche di identità mia personale. [...] Per me è stata una doppia identità conquistata grazie a questa amicizia che ha aperto alla mia vita strade nuove (Pezzana 2018).

Jukebox all'idrogeno found fertile ground for reception among younger generations, becoming a catalyst for the blossoming of Beat Generation-inspired fanzine publications and groups like *Mondo Beat*, *I Lunghi Piedi dell'Uomo*, or *Grido Beat*. Mondadori printed 4835 copies of the anthology's first edition and, by 30 September 1966, 3783 copies had been sold (at a cost of 3200 L. per copy).³²⁶ Considering that, in those years, the average circulation of volumes of poetry was around 3000 copies (such as for Einaudi's series 'Collezione di poesia' established in 1964, and Mondadori's 'Lo Specchio' established in 1940),³²⁷ it quickly became clear that the sales figures of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* were particularly good. It seems likely that Fernanda Pivano's visible advocacy for Allen Ginsberg's poetry (as well as for that of the other Beat authors) played a central role in ensuring strong sales in Italy compared to other European countries, as Nancy J. Peters – publisher, writer, and co-owner of City Lights Books and Publishers – claimed in an email exchange:

³²⁶ Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, *Segreteria editoriale estero* - C, b. 18, fasc. 17 (Allen Ginsberg), 12/12/1966.

³²⁷ See Milani 2017: 301.

The Beat poets were published in France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, and other countries, but their books-in-translation never sold in such large numbers as in Italy. Sales of Ginsberg's work in Italy were continually good. More copies of his books were sold in Italy than any other European country for many years, and this was principally due to Nanda Pivano's endorsement and promotion (Peters 2020).

6. Conclusion

The evidence examined thus far shows how Fernanda Pivano's cultural action and positioning made her a controversial figure within the Italian literary field. The development of her professional trajectory is characterised by a progressive search for visibility and independence that became particularly poignant during the years of promotion and dissemination of the works by the authors of the Beat Generation and peaked with the establishing of her own publishing house, Edizioni East 128, in 1963. Pivano's search for independence stands out as a response to the difficulties and the hindrances that she encountered while pursuing her goal of making American counterculture literature available in translation in Italy. While doing so, she deployed several strategies that allowed her to acquire valuable social, cultural and symbolic capital that she could use to negotiate her position within the field, and thus undermine and subvert the paradigm which sees translators in a subservient position within the hierarchical structure of the literary field.

Fernanda Pivano's activity of dissemination of the literature of the Beat Generation presents a number of pathways through which the translator and cultural mediator was able to create gate-keeping strategies which were fundamental in shaping her professional trajectory. After the initial, crucial mentorship of Cesare Pavese, Fernanda Pivano's literary career path appears to have been influenced by her strategies aimed at the administration and accumulation of cultural and symbolic capital, which she primarily achieved through the establishment of strong networks of collaboration with the authors she wished to disseminate. Her ability to build fruitful professional relationships with the American protagonists of the Beat Generation allowed her to make her mark as the gatekeeper of American counter-cultural literature, thus becoming a pivotal representative of a specific element of the cultural flow between the United States and Italy.

By establishing social ties with these actors, Pivano took on the role of bridging tie between two literary networks and benefitted from early access to new and difficult-to-obtain information, which in turn impacted positively on her trailblazing activity of cultural dissemination. Moreover, the boundary-spanning position favoured the recognition of Pivano's social credentials within the circle of American writers, who identified her as a primary and trusted gateway to Italy as testified by the initial correspondence with authors such as Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs. The translator was able to skillfully use personal connection to emphasise her role.

In the light of these considerations, I have observed how the development of Pivano's translation habitus came to encompass tasks that are traditionally seen as a prerogative of other professional profiles within the book market, such as the literary scout, the literary agent and, finally, the publisher, causing often clashes and disagreements with editors and publishers who perceived the translator's interference as non-legitimate. The evidence I have examined—in particular the editorial correspondence between Pivano and Mondadori—highlights the existence of different editorial practices and aims among translators and publishers. Within this framework of different practices, Pivano's *diffused* translatorial approach appears to be a response to those techniques and strategies that publishers and editors implement to make translators invisible, and which are aimed at retaining control over publication matters limiting translators' cultural power. These strategies are primarily financial (termination of contracts of collaboration, precarious occupational status, refused compensation) and/or aimed at delegitimizing the translator's professional value and authority (criticism of their translations, professional approach and/or status).

Positioning within the field, self-perception and network navigation are elements that concur in affecting the ways in which translators translate, both in terms of choice of authors and texts to engage with, but also in terms of linguistic approach to translation. In the specific case of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, the translator was surprisingly successful in securing a contract to publish a new, disruptive, and niche form of poetic literature with a major publishing house. On a textual level, Pivano adopted a word-for-word approach to translation, striving to replicate the structures and rhythms of the source text. While this approach was often criticised and dismissed by fellow translators and other intellectuals as 'traduzione interlineare', Pivano's 'surrender to the text's literalness' appears to be at the same time linguistically normative and politically subversive. The lack of experimentation in the target text—which reflects Pivano's role-image and interpretation of the cultural mediator—allows for the direct reception of innovative and disruptive concepts and ideas expressed through marginal and transient languages, such as gay coded language and slang connected to substance abuse, thus making translation a place of hospitality.³²⁸ Pivano's close-knit interactions with Ginsberg led to *Jukebox all'idrogeno* becoming a product of collaborative translation. As Zanotti stated in her 2011 study, 'in the presence of a living author engaging in a dialogue with his translators, translation becomes a cooperative process in which author and translator act as communicating vessels' (Zanotti 2011: 86), blurring the boundaries between authorship and the constrained representation of the literary work. In the specific case of

³²⁸ On translation as hospitality and co-presence see Polezzi 2020.

Pivano and Ginsberg, the author's involvement appears to have been non-interventionist, although we should not forget that the absence of a linguistic barrier might favour more extensive authorial interference in the translation process.³²⁹ Indeed, if we exclude the censorship issues with Mondadori where Ginsberg pushed to see his text published without expurgation and excisions, the author offered the translator extensive help but refrained from suggesting specific solutions, giving instructions, or imposing translation strategies on Pivano, who maintained complete freedom in her choices. This particular relationship of cooperation takes on the traits of co-authorship in the author and translator's interactions with the editors, brilliantly illustrated by Ginsberg's following statement: 'Mrs Pivano [...] is completely competent to speak for me'. Acting as a proxy, Pivano involved Ginsberg in the editorial process (which is often carried out exclusively by translators and editors), causing the figures of the author and translator to align with one another in the editorial negotiations. Through constant communication with the translator, Ginsberg was in fact able to maintain full control over and play a central role in the editing process of the Italian versions of his poems – something that does not usually happen in translations, as Lebel's French version of *Howl* perfectly exemplified, with the author unaware of the changes that had been made. Pivano's desire to preserve the innovative linguistic and thematic features of Ginsberg's poetry, and to see it published without expurgations or alterations, clashed with Mondadori's evident concerns about a potential financial loss that a ban on the publication might have caused. In the complex – and unequal – power relationship between editors and translators, Ginsberg's interference allowed Pivano to limit manipulation of the texts by the publishing house; she thus managed to persuade the editors to accept the compromise of maintaining the initial letter of problematic words followed by the appropriate number of dots.

My reading of the evidence suggests that author and translator engaged in a power negotiation that indirectly reinstated three crucial aspects: a) the translator's authorship of the translation (as a representation of the literary product in the target language); b) the status of the translation as an artistic creation that was no longer inferior to the original; and c) the translator's cultural power. By renegotiating the concept of authorship and rejecting his own authorship over the Italian version of his poems ('[t]he book is perhaps more hers than mine or yours'), Ginsberg conferred upon Pivano full authority over publication and creative choices (a). In this way, the ontological understanding of *Jukebox all'idrogeno* shifted from that of derivative work, to literary work proper (b), which was directly linked to, and resulting from, the cultural expertise and artistic work of the translator-author (c). Fernanda Pivano's translation ethics and praxis resulted in a

³²⁹ See Bollettieri and Zanotti 2017: 272–74.

work of literary recreation that takes advantage of a tight dialogical relationship with the text's author. Thanks to this mechanism, Fernanda Pivano was able to establish herself as the primary administrator of the specific cultural and linguistic exchange that relied upon her strongly synergetic relationship of collaboration and mutual trust with Allen Ginsberg. In this operation, the translator exploited the different types of capital at her disposal: first, the social and cultural capital deriving from the network of collaboration she had skilfully established; second, economic capital in the form of lawsuit threats, ownership of her translation, and competition from other publishers. In this regard, it is interesting to note that she proceeded to have the translation of *Howl* notarised so as to retain proof of the original, unedited translation, which could then be used in potential legal actions that might have arisen against the publisher.³³⁰ As seen above, crucial in the resolution of the censorship debate was Ginsberg's legitimation of Pivano's role as the translation's owner, thus strengthening her authority over decisions and requests made to the editors. In doing so, she overturned the dominant narrative, according to which the translator is subservient to the publisher, from within the hierarchical framework of the perceived deprivation of cultural power experienced by translators in the literary market.

Fernanda Pivano's agency as a broker for Beat literature was extremely timely, and her approach to literary transmission facilitated the reception of a literary movement which challenged the established canon and widespread understanding of what American literature was, causing often clashes with the other actors within the literary machine, involved in the process of recognition and dissemination of new authors. The publication of the two anthologies of Beat poetry—*Poesia degli ultimi americani* and *Jukebox all'idrogeno*—during the 1960s, a decade marked by the development of new literary, poetic and aesthetic forms of expression, calls for questions on the impact and influence of Beat writings on major Italian authors such as Edoardo Sanguineti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Amelia Rosselli and more broadly Gruppo 63.³³¹ Moreover, Pivano's engagement in the dissemination of the literature of the Beat Generation represents a valuable case study on the strategies deployed by translators to increase their visibility within the book market and the literary field, while at the same time reinstate their cultural power. While translators practices might differ from those of editors and publishers, and since their cultural action is fuelled by ambition and telos which are not usually aligned with the industrial and

³³⁰ The document, still sealed, is held at the archives of the Fondo Fernanda Pivano in Milan.

³³¹ The works of other lesser-known authors such as Gianni Milano (*Guru* 1967, *Prana* 1968), Aldo Piromalli (*Uccello nel guscio*, 1971) and Eros Alesi (*Che puff. Il profumo del mondo. Sballata*, published posthumous in 2015) show a distinctive Beat inspiration. On these authors and on the 'Italian Beat Generation' see Manca 2018.

financial objectives and goals of publishing houses, a heavy involvement of the translator in the different stages of book production and promotion (from rights acquisition to post-publication promotion and marketing) can benefit not only the reception of the work across the wider public, but also improve sales numbers. A subject-grounded, microsociological reading of Pivano's translation history sheds light on the complex mechanisms through which translators negotiate their self within the literary field and re-define their professional identity in order to pursue their goals.

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Appendix A – Translations by Fernanda Pivano (first editions)

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- Sherwood Anderson, *Storia di me e dei miei racconti (A Story Teller's Story, 1924)*, Turin: Qinaudi 1947.
- Ernest Hemingway, *Morte nel pomeriggio (Death in the Afternoon, 1932)*, Turin: Einaudi, 1947.
- Elizabeth Goudge, *Il delfino verde: il segreto di un amore disperato (Green Dolphin Country, 1944)*, Milan: Bompiani, 1948.
- Raymond Quenau, *Il pantano (Le chiendent, 1933)*, Turin: Einaudi, 1948.
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- Ernest Hemingway, *Addio alle armi (A Farewell to Arms, 1929)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1949.
- Dwight Eisenhower, *Crociata in Europa (Crusade in Europe, 1948)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1949.
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- William Demby, *Festa a Beetlecreek (Beetlecreek, 1950)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1950.
- William Faulkner, *Non si fruga nella polvere (Intruder in the Dust, 1948)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1951.
- Thornton Wilder, *Idi di marzo (Ides of March, 1948)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1951.
- Richard Wright, *Cinque uomini*, collection of stories published in journal, Milan: Mondadori, 1951.
- Francis Scott Fitzgerald, *Di qua dal paradiso (This Side of Paradise, 1920)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1952.
- Ernest Hemingway, *Il vecchio e il mare (The Old Man and the Sea, 1952)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1952.
- Edgar Allan Poe, *Tutti i racconti e le poesie (1953)*.
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- William Faulkner, *Requiem per una monaca (Requiem for a Nun, 1951)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1955.
- William Faulkner, *La pallida Zilphia Gant (1959)*.
- William Faulkner, *La famiglia Stevens (1963)*.
- Ernest Hemingway, *Di là del fiume e tra gli alberi (Across the River and into the Trees, 1950)*, Mondadori: Milan, 1965.
- Allen Ginsberg, *Jukebox all'idrogeno (Howl and other Poems 1956, Kaddish and other Poems 1960)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1965).
- Allen Ginsberg, *Sutra del girasole (Sunflower Sutra, 1955)*, Verona: Franco Riva, 1969.
- Allen Ginsberg, *Testimonianza a Chicago (Chicago Conspiracy Trial Testimony, 1969)*, Turin: Einaudi, 1972.
- Allen Ginsberg, *Mantra del re di maggio (Reality Sandwiches 1963, Planet News 1968)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1973.
- Allen Ginsberg, *Diario indiano (Indian Journals, 1970)*, Rome: Arcana, 1973.
- Thornton Wilder, *Piccola città (Our Town, 1938)*, Rome: Gli Associati, 1975.
- Gertrude Stein, *Autobiografia di tutti (Everybody's Autobiography, 1937)*, Milan: La Tartaruga, 1976.
- Allen Ginsberg, *La caduta dell'America (The Fall of America, 1972)*, Milan: Mondadori, 1981.
- Jack Gelber, *La connection (The Connection, 1959)*, Milan: Ubulibri, 1983.
- Irma Blank, *No words*, Livorno: Belforte, 1994.
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- Jane Austen, *Orgoglio e pregiudizio (Pride and Prejudice, 1813)*, Turin: Einaudi, 2007.

Appendix B – Volumes on American literature and culture written or edited by Fernanda Pivano

Written by Pivano

La balena bianca e altri miti, Milan: Mondadori, 1961.

America rossa e nera, Florence: Vallecchi, 1964.

Beat hippie yippie. Dall'underground alla controcultura, Rome: Arcana, 1972; then Milan: Bompiani, Milano, 1996 and 2017.

C'era una volta un beat. 10 anni di ricerca alternativa, Rome: Arcana, 1976.

Mostri degli anni Venti, Mila: Il Formichiere, 1976; then Milan: BUR, Rizzoli, 1982; Milan: La Tartaruga, 1994-2002; with the title *Leggende Americane*, Milan: Bompiani, 2011 and 2017.

Charles Bukowski, Quello che mi importa è grattarmi sotto le ascelle, Milan: SugarCo, 1982; then Milan: Feltrinelli, 1997.

Hemingway, Milan: Rusconi, 1985 and 1996.

Amici scrittori. Quarant'anni di incontri e scoperte con gli autori americani, Milan: Mondadori, 1995.

Altri amici, altri scrittori, Milan: Mondadori, 1997.

Viaggio americano, Milan: Bompiani, 1997 and 2017.

Album americano. Dalla generazione perduta agli scrittori della realtà virtuale, Milan: Frassinelli, 1997.

Dreamers. La generazione che ha cambiato l'America, (with Cesare Fiumi), Milan: Edimar, 1998.

Dopo Hemingway. Libri, arte ed emozioni d'America, Naples: Pironti, 2000.

Pagine americane. Narrativa e poesia, 1943-2005, Milan: Frassinelli, 2005.

Libero chi legge, Milan: Mondadori, 2010.

Medaglioni, Milan: Skira, 2014.

Lo zio Tom è morto, with a foreword by Masolino D'Amico, Milan: Bompiani, 2015.

Edited by Pivano

Poesia degli ultimi americani, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964.

L'altra America negli anni Sessanta. Antologia in due volumi, Rome: Officina-Lerici, 1971-1972.

Other editors

The beat goes on, (ed. by Guido Harari), Milan: Mondadori, 2004.

Viaggi ad alta voce [1968 / 1979], ed. by Enrico Rotelli, Milan: Bompiani.

Appendix C – Articles by Pivano

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‘Hemingway e l’avanguardia’, *Sempre Avanti*, 27 October 1946.
‘Ad un’antifemminista’, *Sempre Avanti*, 10 November 1946.
‘Non tutti i pesci all’acquarium’, *Omnibus*, 9 June 1947.
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‘Gertrude Stein, pioniera di un secolo’, *Rassegna d’Italia* (3.8), 1948; *Il pensiero critico*, 2, 5 March 1952.
‘Il sud di Faulkner’, *Rassegna d’Italia* (6), 1949.
‘Scott Fitzgerald e la sua generazione’, *Aut-Aut* (6: 492-514), November 1951.
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‘Signori della gavetta. (Da qui all’eternità, James Jones)’, *Tutti* (36), 5 December 1954.
‘Letteratura della Resistenza’, *Tutti* (6), 9 May 1954.
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 'L'ansia di pensare', *Il Messaggero*, 17 June 1976.
 'Dove corri Jerry', *Il Messaggero*, 28 June 1976.
 'La droga è un sistema', *Il Messaggero*, 6 August 1976.
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 'Woody Allen', *Il Messaggero*, 20 August 1976.
 'Un disperato pieno di humor', *Il Messaggero*, 13 October 1976.
 'Breve la vita felice di Ernest Hemingway', *Il Messaggero*, 26 November 1976.
 'La funzione c'è ma non si vede', *Il Messaggero*, 18 December 1976.
 'Cronaca e suggestione', *Il Messaggero*, 15 February 1977.
 'Civilissima selvaggia', *Il Messaggero*, 27 March 1976.
 'La saggezza in riva a un ruscello', *Il Messaggero*, 15 April 1977.
 'La difficile ricerca dell'identità smarrita', *Il Messaggero*, 19 July 1977.
 'In quel beat c'è un fanciullino', *Il Messaggero*, 18 September 1977.
 'Da Carmelo Bene al Gruppo Stranamore', *Il Messaggero*, 26 October 1977.
 'Western tra le stelle', *Nuova Gazzetta del Popolo*, 25 November 1977.
 'Compone musica sorteggiando le note', *Nuova Gazzetta del Popolo*, 14 December 1977.
 'Luther King: non violenza pagata con la morte', *Corriere della Sera*, 4 April 1978.
 'Patti Smith come Salomè', *Corriere della Sera*, 13 September 1979.
 'Così la droga diventa poesia', *Corriere della Sera*, 5 November 1979.
 'Liriche sciovie nella valle dell'oro', *Corriere della Sera*, 15 September 1980.
 'Nel mondo febbrile degli elettori gay', *Corriere della Sera*, 3 November 1980.
 'Tu sei un succo di vespa e boccioli di rosa', *Corriere della Sera*, 9 July 1981.
 'Datemi mille pagine e vi darò un best-seller', *Corriere della Sera*, 27 October 1981.
 'Susan Sontag: "Vorrei mettere in scena Leopardi"', *Corriere della Sera*, 27 December 1982.
 'Gore Vidal: Confucio più democratico di Reagan', *Corriere della Sera*, 19 December 1983.
 'Gordimer: "Anche l'amore diventa politica"', *Corriere della Sera*, 10 May 1984.
 'Saul Bellow: "I miei libri sono comici"', *Corriere della Sera*, 26 September 1984.
 'Questa è l'America dell'avanguardia', *Corriere della Sera*, 9 January 1985.
 'Mailer: "Sono un conservatore di sinistra"', *Corriere della Sera*, 7 November 1985.
 'Detesto lo scrittore casalingo', *Corriere della Sera*, 2 December 1985.
 'Dov'è la libertà? Zuffa tra scrittori', *Corriere della Sera*, 18 January 1986.
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 'Malamud: "Grazie, Robert Redford"', *Corriere della Sera*, 25 February 1986.
 'Leavitt: "Sesso sicuro col computer"', *Corriere della Sera*, 20 January 1987.
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 'La mia perduta famiglia', *Corriere della Sera*, 4 February 1987.
 'Don DeLillo: "Ho raccontato il giallo Kennedy"', *Corriere della Sera*, 8 December 1987.
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 'Amore e politica nella commedia della mia vita', *Corriere della Sera*, 21 April 1988.
 'Alice Walker: "Perché sono donnista"', *Corriere della Sera*, 8 May 1988.
 'L'America ha il suo nuovo Hemingway', *Corriere della Sera*, 13 January 1990.
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 'Il nostro collaboratore Hemingway', *Furore Letterario*, supplement of *Esquire*, August-September 1990.
 'Styron l'orrore e la depressione', *Corriere della Sera*, 5 December 1990.

- ‘Lo strano caso del dottor Auster’, *Corriere della Sera*, 6 January 1991.
- ‘Lo scrittore contro il terrorista’, *Corriere della Sera*, 7 January 1991.
- ‘Sonny Mehta. Un editore del nostro tempo’, *Corriere della Sera*, 13 January 1991.
- ‘Perché scrivo come il dottore’, *Corriere della Sera*, 29 January 1991.
- ‘Stone: dopo Saigon, la droga’, *Corriere della Sera*, 8 January 1992.
- ‘Venezia non è più vera. Così piccola, pare un museo’, *Corriere della Sera*, 19 January 1993.
- ‘Arthur, da profeta quasi santo a umorista quasi pornografo?’, *Corriere della Sera*, 9 February 1993.
- ‘Tra video, rock e cyberpunk ecco il mitico gastroenterologo’, *Corriere della Sera*, 15 April 1995.
- ‘De André. Parole d’amore e anarchia’, *Corriere della Sera*, 3 September 1997.
- ‘Ligabue. per favore non chiamatemi poeta’, *Corriere della Sera*, 1 October 1997.
- ‘Carver, mio marito, “ladro” di idee’, *Corriere della Sera*, 20 August 1998.
- ‘Allen Ginsberg e Peter Orlovsky. Una passione che bruciava di poesie’, *Corriere della Sera*, 28 July 2000.
- ‘Con le bustine di sonnifero non ancora aperte ci ha telefonato. Ma noi non abbiamo capito’, *Corriere della Sera*, 25 August 2000.
- ‘Io e Lou Reed’, *Vanity Fair*, 29 January 2004.
- ‘I buoni, Vasco e i cattivi’, *Vanity Fair*, 8 April 2004.
- ‘Nello sguardo il segreto del suo fascino’, *Corriere della Sera*, 3 July 2004.

Appendix D – Edizioni East 128 publications

Volumes:

- Ettore Sottsass Jr., *Le ceramiche delle tenebre*, 1963.
Tao, with silk-screen prints by Hsiao Chin, 1963.
Philip Whalen, *Monday in the evening*, 1963.
Fernanda Pivano and Ettore Sottsass, *Auguri per sempre*, 1963.
Michael McClyre, *Thirteen mad sonnets*, 1964.
Fernanda Pivano, *Lui (Sottsass) e gli ornamenti per le donne*, 1964.
Ettore Sottsass Jr., *Continua dalla puntata precedente* 1964.
Fernanda Pivano, *Le favole del ferro da stiro. Ricordi di Germana Maruccelli scritti da Fernanda Pivano*, 1964.
Gregory Corso, *The geometric poem*, 1966.
La Poltronova presenta: *Mobili disegnati da Ettore Sottsass*, 1965.
In copertina: *East 128*, 1965.
Fernanda Pivano, *Le belle ragazze*, 1965.
In copertina: *East 128*, 1967.
Stephen Levine, *Notes from the genetic journal*, 1969.
Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *Smoking grass reverie*, 1968.

Unpublished manuscripts found in the archives of Fondo Fernanda Pivano, Fondazione Benetton:

- Ed Sanders, *Its [sic] all right all night long*, 1966.
Diane di Prima, *Martha Graham a Fire Island*.
Ettore Sottsass Jr., *Semitrattato provvisorio della pittura*.
Gary Snyder, untitled project.

Journals:

- Room East 128 Chronicle*, 1 (07 June 1962), Palo Alto.
Room East 128 Chronicle, 2 (19 June 1962), Palo Alto.
Room East 128 Chronicle, 3 (03 July 1962), Palo Alto.
Pianeta Fresco, 1 (1967), Milan.
Pianeta Fresco, 2 (1968), Milan.