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Edited by **Peter Vassallo**

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In memory of

Professor Giorgio Melchiori (1920–2009)
Eminent scholar and humanist

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What Chaucer *Really* did to *Il Filostrato*: The Ending of the *Troilus* and its Italian Sources[1]

Robert Hollander

The implicit rebuke to C.S. Lewis conveyed by my title, which repeats *verbatim* the seven words of the title of Lewis's essay, italicizing the third, is offered in a spirit of collegial playfulness.[2] It is my view that the ending of the *Troilus*, upon which so much attention has been lavished, can only be adequately understood if we are willing to pay precise attention to its careful series of allusions to previous texts, particularly those of Boccaccio and Dante – if not to these alone. I am aware that the present argument is not likely to find many Chaucerians willing to accept some of its premises or findings. I thus entreat the reader to give the analysis that follows a fair hearing; we all must agree that the concluding portion of the *Troilus* is complex and difficult. It may benefit from a new approach, one based in an understanding of its relation to passages in three of its most illustrious Italian precursors, Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, his *Teseida*, and Dante's *Commedia*.

1. This paper is a significantly expanded version of a much briefer treatment: R. Hollander, 'Dante's (and Boccaccio's) bella scola and Geoffrey Chaucer's: The Envoy of the Troilus', Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America (July 2008).
2. C.S. Lewis, 'What Chaucer Really Did to Il Filostrato', repr. in his Selected Literary Essays, W. Hooper (ed.) (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1969 [1932]), 27–44.

The number of stanzas which constitute the ending of the work is itself a matter of some dispute.[3] It is surely possible to believe, as does Donaldson, that stanza 250 (V, 1744–1750), in which the narrator's voice returns after the last presence of Troilus's direct discourse, then to run uninterrupted for the final eighteen stanzas, does in fact mark the beginning of a formal division. The question is made more difficult by the fact that the author's intervention (V, 1744–1750) yields to a resumption of the narrative (V, 1751–1764) before returning to authorial remarks (V, 1765–1785). This intervention, as has been noted, does indeed sound like a summarizing epilogue – the first of several in this, one of the most 'conclusive' endings deployed in any poem. Nonetheless, Tatlock's notion that the ending begins with the first two of the last twelve stanzas (they happen to constitute an *envoi*) appeals to those of us who have noted that Boccaccio's formal conclusion, the entirety of the ninth and last part of his *Filostrato*, is also in the form of an *envoi* (addressed to 'canzon mia pietosa' [*Filostrato* IX, 1, 2]). Chaucer's sense of his own formal *finale* would seem likely to have mirrored that one. However, one is aware that Chaucer's *envoi*, differing from Boccaccio's, is, as was his previous intervention as author, broken by a return to narrative (now after two stanzas), recounting the death of Troilus (V, 1800–1806) and then his 'apotheosis' (V, 1807–1827), which finally yields to another series of concluding gestures (this time without a return to narrative): first, the signal of an ending 'Swich fyn' (repeated five times [one for each Book?] – V, 1828–1832); second, the address to a group of readers, the 'yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she' (V, 1835), and finally the dedication to another, smaller and older, Gower and Strode (V, 1856–1857).

3. E.g., J.S.P. Tatlock, 'The Epilog of Chaucer's Troilus', Modern Philology, 18 (1920–1921), 625–659: 625: twelve (beginning with V, 1786, 'Go, litel bok'); E.T. Donaldson, 'The Ending of Chaucer's Troilus', Early English and Norse Studies Presented to Hugh Smith, A. Brown and P. Foote (eds) (London. Methuen, 1963), 26–45: 35: eighteen (beginning with V, 1744, 'Gret was the sorwe'); M.F. Markland, 'Troilus and Criseyde: The Inviolability of the Ending,' Modern Language Quarterly, 31 (1970), 147–159: 147: seventeen (beginning with V, 1751, 'In many cruel battle'). See J.M. Steadman, Disembodied Laughter: 'Troilus' and the Apotheosis Tradition: A Reexamination of Narrative and Thematic Contexts (Berkeley. University of California Press, 1972), 150–152, for reference to still other discussants and the opinion that one cannot say with any security exactly where the ending begins.

It seems clear that Chaucer composed the final dozen stanzas of his 'epic romance' with the texts of at least three poems open before him on his work table and that he re-read them with an integrative eye: *Filostrato*, *Teseida*, *Commedia*. (This is not to forget such classical staples as Virgil and Statius, about both of whom there will be more, below.) Not many Chaucerians will debate that contention, but none, not even Morgan[4] – has paid sufficient attention to the nuanced reworkings of these texts, which one imagines Chaucer warmly enjoying even as he composed them. Before offering the promised consideration of the conclusion of the work, I think it may be helpful to examine several particulars found at its beginning and at its midpoint.

The narrator as the 'Virgil' of *Amor*

Whether or not Chaucer was aware of the antique orthographic *jeu d'esprit* that made *Amor* the palindrome of *Roma* (and, obviously, *vice versa*),[5] he may well have noted that Virgil's third invocation in the *Aeneid*, the one which accompanies the shift from Odyssean journeys to Iliadic battles, is strikingly, even strangely, erotic. For there (*Aeneid* VII, 37–45) it is Erato, the muse of lyric (and particularly erotic) poetry, whose aid is sought for the ensuing descriptions of *horrida bella*. Chaucer's invocation of Tisiphone (I, 6–11), opening a work that at least asks us to consider its epic pretensions, is similarly surprising to our expectations – which the poet himself has courted – for the generic identity of his poem. What if Chaucer had considered Troilus a fighter rather than a lover? Chaucer reminds himself and his readers at the work's conclusion, Book V, 1765–1771, that the subject

4. G. Morgan, 'The Ending of Troilus and Criseyde,' Modern Language Review, 77 (1982), 257–271.

5. The tradition is literally built into the architectural program of Hadrian's Templum Veneris et Romae (constructed between 121 and 141 A.D.), which was dedicated to two goddesses, Venus Felix and Roma Aeterna. Each of these two divinities, Amor and Roma, placed back to back, presided over one the two cellae that constituted this enormous enclosed space. For recent notice of one major Roman poet's, Ovid's, awareness of this palindromatic tradition, see N. Holzberg, Ovid: The Poet and His Work, tr. G.M. Goshgarian (Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 2002), 69.

of Troilus' prowess in arms was one that he might have plied; the reader who wants the details is sent along to Dares; indeed, once Chaucer finally turns to Troilus as warrior rather than as lover, he kills more than a handful of the Greek force before Achilles slays him (V, 1806): 'thousandes his hondes made deye' (V, 1802). It is a bit ludicrous to see this epic side of Troilus finally expressed. He kills thousands of enemy soldiers in a single verse, where Chaucer had spent some 1126 stanzas detailing his not very manly exploits as a lover. Had this side of Troilus, dispatching thousands of lives in a single line (as he is in turn will be dispatched in another verse of the same stanza: 'Despitously hym slough the fierse Achille' – V, 1806) been central to Chaucer's vision, then Calliope (or Clio, perhaps) might have better been the poet's muse.[6] Instead, she is 'Thesiphone' (I, 6).[7] Where Virgil had invoked the muse of erotic poetry for aid in recounting warfare in the second half of his epic of empire, Chaucer invokes a hellish Fury to help him in his narrative of passionate love. His proemial gestures as 'tragic' poet certainly remind us of the generic identity of Virgil's poem, for the high middle ages *the* classical tragic poem.[8] 'Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write' (I, 7), are thus relatable to a generically Virgilian identity of the narrator,[9] whose subject, 'the

6. Boccaccio had summoned Calliope near the close of his Teseida: XII, 72, 8.

7. Indeed, at III, 45, Calliope will be invoked to help this servant of the servants of love (I, 15) to 'telle . . . the gladnesse / of Troilus, to Venus heriynge' (III, 47–48). Once again, the conventional identity of a muse is not the one that Chaucer has chosen. The same may be said of II, 8, where Clio is the muse of Troilus's revived hopes for sexual pleasure. The invocation at IV, 22–28, makes the three Furies and Mars 'muses' for Chaucer's recounting of the protagonist's 'losse of lyf and love', while at V, 3, the poet again puts the Furies in the role, now to aid in telling of Troilus's death. That Furies preside over both parts of the poem, the part that some readers believe to be 'happy' – in which Troilus becomes enamored of Criseyde – as well as the 'tragic' denouement, is probably significant.

8. For Boccaccio's reference to Tisiphone, her aid enlisted by Palemone because of his hatred for his 'brother', Arcita, see Teseida V, 13, 1 (deriving probably from Thebaid I, 59). See also Teseida V, 57, 8. D.W. Robertson, Jr., A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton. Princeton University Press, 1963), 474, discusses the ironic appropriateness of Tisiphone as muse: According to Nicholas Trivet she 'means' libido.

9. For instance, see Dante's description of the Aeneid at Inferno XX, 113 (a description put into the mouth of Virgil himself): 'l'alta mia tragedìa'. The phrasing probably reveals that Dante thought of Virgil's poem as being 'tragic'

double sorwe of Troilus' (I, 1) is immediately reflective of generic Virgilian concerns (Troy and tragedy) and, more pointedly, Statian narrative and diction. Dante mentions Thebes, with some insistence, as emblematic of the city of destruction in his *Inferno*.[10] In *Purgatorio* (XXI, 92 and XXII, 89) the city is specifically referred to as Statius's subject in his first (and only completed) epic. There can be little doubt that Chaucer recognized Dante's deep involvement with the text of Statius, even if he did not have access to the Dartmouth Dante Project to review easily the ten presences of 'Thebes' or 'Theban' in Dante's text.[11] Few would quibble with the notion that Chaucer's 'double sorwe' is his version of the Dantean phrase 'la doppia trestizia di Giocasta' (*Purg*. XXII. 56), describing the subject of Statius's epic, also either imitated or deployed independently by Boccaccio, *Filostrato* IV, 118, 'doppia doglia'.[12] Dante's second son and commentator, Pietro, describes this verse as indicating the fratricidal war over Thebes, which eventually would cost Jocasta the lives of both her sons: 'In qua Thebaide duplicem tristitiam Jocastae ipse Statius narravit, idest mortem Etheoclis et Polynicis'.[13] Thus does Dante filter the opening verse of Statius's epic, which speaks of 'fraternas acies alternaque regna' (fraternal battles and alternating rulership) as being two causes of the sorrows of Thebes. Chaucer's opening seems a calque on

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in plot as well as diction, of his own poem of being 'comic' in both respects as well. See R. Hollander, Studies in Dante (Ravenna. Longo, 1980), 214–217; and Id., Il Virgilio dantesco (Firenze. Olschki, 1983), 130–132. For discussions of generic concerns in the Troilus, see T.J. Garbaty, 'Troilus V, 1786–1792 and V, 1807–1827: An Example of Poetic Process', Chaucer Review, 11 (1977), 299–305, and A. Clough, 'Medieval Tragedy and the Genre of Troilus and Criseyde', Medievalia et Humanistica, 11 (1983), 211–227.

10. See Inf. XIV, 69; XX, 32; XXV, 15; XXX, 2; XXX, 22; XXXII, 11; XXXIII, 89.
11. There is another, in addition to the nine listed above, at Purgatorio XVIII, 93.
12. However, for the possible source either instead of or along with Dante and Boccaccio in Joseph of Exeter's Ylias, see Jamie C. Fumo, The Legacy of Apollo: Antiquity, Authority, and Chaucerian Poetics (Toronto. University of Toronto Press, 2010), 140–142 and 260, n. 40. Joseph refers to Troy's 'geminos . . . dolores' and Hecuba's 'gemino . . . planctu'. Nonetheless, the fact that the central line and the final line of the Troilus are both nearly certainly Dantean citations makes the likelihood that this first verse is also meant to be appreciated as Dantean in origin an even more attractive possibility. For the other two citations, see discussions, below.
13. In the first redaction of his commentary to Purgatorio XXII, 55–60. Cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project.

Statius's beginning through the intermediating lens of Dante.[14] The narrating poet may imply (I, 7) that he himself is to be taken as weeping while he writes these woeful words. Nonetheless, those who believe that Troilus's love for Criseyde is itself neither blameworthy nor deluded might pay closer attention to the way in which Chaucer loads the dice against such positive readings from the outset. Troilus's sorrow would certainly seem to be 'double' both in his loving and in his losing of Criseyde (see I, 1; 4; 54–56). That his *solaas* is here treated rather pointedly as *sorwe* is a point that – rather surprisingly – may still need making.[15] He

14. I note that J.V. Fleming, Classical Imitation and Interpretation in Chaucer's 'Troilus' (Lincoln. University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 49, has already made this point.

15. For an opposing view, see Tatlock, 635–640, who finds that the epilogue 'contradicts' all that went before. In rebuttal, see Robertson, 501, responding to Troilus's posthumous laughter: 'The laughter is the ironic laughter with which Chaucer depicts Troilus' "wo" from the beginning, a laughter which he, and Troilus from his celestial vantage point, would bestow on all those who take a sentimental attitude toward such love as that between Troilus and Criseyde. If, in the course of the poem, the plight of Troilus has moved us to compassion, we too can laugh, partly at ourselves.' The continuing more accommodating view is represented by Morgan, 271: 'It is to the heights of the divine love that Chaucer also aspires in the final lines of Troilus and Criseyde. His poem ends not with a rejection of earthly loves, but with a triumphant celebration of the all-encompassing love of God.' (For this 'soft Boethian' position, an ungainly compromise between the now mainly deserted [with the notable exception of Dronke] 'naturalist' school and the 'Robertsonians', see n. 22, below.) Steadman, 154–164, offers a developed argument for not considering the epilogue out of joint with the body of the work. See also, in a similar vein, A.T. Gaylord, 'Chaucer's Tender Trap: The Troilus and the "Yonge, Fresshe Folkes",' English Miscellany, 15 (1964), 25–45. And cf. Farnham, 213: 'There is no reasonable possibility of fixing the blame for what has happened, nor indeed of speaking of blame in connection with any single person in the poem. Pandarus, Troilus, and Criseyde all acted, from their own points of view, to the best of their ability; faith in their own good intentions overcame their occasional misgivings and doubts.' This view, possibly an attempt to mediate between the firmer positions at either extreme, for all its indecisiveness, nonetheless has an apparent lasting appeal. One finds it again in C.F. Heffernan, 'Chaucer's Troylus and Cressida: The Disease of Love and Courtly Love,' Neophilologus, 74 (1990), 294–309. After a lengthy presentation of the ironically negative indications that govern our readings of 'courtly love' in the work, Heffernan concludes (306): 'But one is convinced by the power of the love story that Troilus is in the upper spheres gazing down at the earth, laughing at those who mourn his death, because that hallowed place is the just reward of those who love nobly on earth.' It seems that Heffernan believes that Troilus is permanently installed in this lofty sphere; if so, that belief has avoided the obvious reference to his removal from these stars in vv. 1826–1827. (See discussion in the **text,**

resembles Virgil's Aeneas, beseeched by Dido to retell the fall of Troy, who also threatens precisely such lachrymose behavior: 'quis talia fando . . . temperet a lacrimis?' ('who, telling such things . . . would be able to hold back the tears?' – *Aeneid* II, 6–8).[16] In his first stanza Chaucer assumes the role of a potential modern-day Virgil or Statius, whose subject shall be epic and tragic.[17] It is only in the second stanza that his

immediately preceding and following [and in] n. 43.) She goes on to make Troilus the Chaucerian counterpart of the character Dante, who also has suffered the pains of hell before experiencing the joys of paradise, a parallel that one might think worked against the point she is trying to make. It is a little like arguing that Dante allows or even encourages his reader to believe that Francesca might be found among the blessed.

16. Dante twice cites the passage: Inferno V, 126 and XXXIII, 9. In the first instance Francesca speaks: 'dirò come colui che piange e dice'; in the second, Ugolino: 'parlare e lagrimar vedrai insieme'. Some consider still other sources: R.K. Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (Princeton. Princeton University Press, 1945 [1926]), 409, in the note to I, 7, cites Filostrato I, 6, 2, 'Ciò che dirà 'l mio verso lagrimoso'; T. A. Stroud, 'Boethius's Influence on Chaucer's Troilus', Modern Philology, 49 (1951-52), 1-9: 2, cites the opening of Chaucer's Boece: '. . . drery vers of wrecchednesse weten my face with verray teres'. While this last seems as close to our verse as Virgil's line, it would seem at least reasonable that here Chaucer, as singer of the fall of Troilus, thought first of Virgil's Aeneas, about to tell the fall of Troy. It is perhaps worth considering that Dante begins his 'epic' by associating its 'hero' – himself – with Aeneas in his initial difficulties as these are recounted in the first book of Virgil's epic. See R. Hollander, 'Dante's Use of Aeneid I in Inferno I and II', Comparative Literature, 20 (1968), 142–156. It is also possible, if not demonstrable, that Chaucer realized that Boccaccio's other classicizing epic, the Teseida, was exactly one ottava longer than the Aeneid, 9904 verses to Virgil's 9896, the least unit longer it could possibly be. If Boccaccio was keeping count, he contrived to combine outdoing with modesty.

17. For the parallels between the tragedy of Troilus – or 'little Troy' – and the fall of the city, see J.P. McCall, 'The Trojan Scene in Chaucer's Troilus', English Literary History 29 (1962), 263–275, esp. 264, and D. Anderson, 'Theban History in Chaucer's Troilus,' Studies in the Age of Chaucer, 4 (1982), 109–133. Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus, 409: 'Chaucer's poem, with its double change of fortune, is, in the medieval sense of the terms, first a comedy and then a tragedy.' Some might think that this record of generic shifts misses the last one. I am arguing that the work may be first a comedy of love (culminating in Book III), then a tragedy of love (culminating in Book V), and finally a Boethian/Dantean comedy (only at the end of Book V). See the observation of Heffernan, 121: 'There [in the 8th sphere] the tragic outcome of the love story is displaced and becomes divine comedy in a context of Boethian as well as Christian values.' Still closer to my own view is Wetherbee, 254, discussing

truer identity as the English Boccaccio, poet of love and himself subject to *Amore*, begins to take shape in our minds (his first translation of a passage in the *Filostrato* [I, 6] begins, at verse 22, with his address to us as 'loveres', as has long been noted).[18] These opening classicizing signals – perhaps more an indication of the epic identity that the *Troilus* might have developed than of the love story that it is (as is also true of the *Filostrato*) – will also be present in the conclusion of the work.

Troilus as St Bernard: Dante's End at Chaucer's Middle

As John Fleming has been pointing out in his lectures on *Troilus* at Princeton for some years now, the exact midpoint of the poem occurs at stanza 181 of Book III (verse 1263), which contains verse 4111 of the 8221 which comprise the work.[19] Thus the three stanzas of Troilus's hymn of joy at being the recipient of Criseyde's sexual favors, which he has finally gained (as registered in verses 1254–1274 of Book III), thus occupy a privileged space in the work, whether Chaucer put them here with deliberation or not. This song is bracketed by two other songs in this third book. Root argues that Chaucer, having previously borrowed Troiolo's similar song from *Filostrato* III, 74–89 for the *proemium* of his Book III, now borrows from its Boethian

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the phrase 'Go litel book' and the next two lines [V. 1786–1788]): 'The opposition of tragedy to comedy here has been explained as balancing the Troilus, now almost complete, against the as-yet-unwritten Canterbury Tales; but in the context of the conclusion as a whole, the lines may been seen as referring to the precarious generic status of the Troilus itself at this crucial stage in the unfolding, when the significance of its twofold debt to both the tragic vision of the classic poets and the spiritual perspective of Dante's Commedia is still uncertain.'

18. W.M. Rossetti (trans.), Chaucer's 'Troylus and Cryseyde'Compared with Boccaccio's 'Filostrato' (London. N. Trubner, 1873) is the first 'scientific' attempt to present the precise relations between the texts of the Filostrato and the Troilus. Among recent contibutions, see particularly B. Windeatt, 'Chaucer and the Filostrato', in P. Boitani (ed.), Chaucer and the Italian Trecento (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1983), 163–183; C.F. Heffernan, 'Adding Comedy: Boccaccio Filostrato and Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', in Comedy in Chaucer and Boccaccio (Cambridge. D.S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 101–128.
19. While the notion that there is a deliberate numerical design in the Troilus is not widely shared, for an attempt at a demonstration, see T.E. Hart, 'Medieval Structuralism: "Dulcarnoun" and the Five-Book Design of Chaucer's Troilus', Chaucer Review 16 (1981), 129–170.

model for Troilus's second hymn of Criseyde, sung near the end of Book III (vv. 1744–1771).[20] This is the eighth *metrum* of the second book of Boethius's *Consolation*, which concludes as follows, referring to the celestial love which keeps the universe in beneficent order, and might do the same for mankind:

> This love halt togidres peples joyned with an holy boond, and knytteth sacrement of mariages of chaste loves; and love enditeth lawes to trewe felawes. O weleful were mankynde, yif thilke love that governeth hevene governede yowr corages![21]

Geoffrey Chaucer as translator of Boethius sounds only distantly similar to Troilus in this role:

> Than seyde he thus: 'O Love, O Charite!
> Thi moder ek, Citheria the swete,
> After thiself next heried be she —
> Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete! —
> And next that, Imeneus, I the grete,
> For nevere man was to yow goddes holde
> As I, that ye han brought fro cares colde.' (III, 1254–1260)

A reading of Boethius, who insists on the beneficent nature of the marital Venus alone in his song of gratitude and praise, nearly forces the student of the two passages to perceive the ironies that lurk not very far beneath the surface of Troilus's encomium.[22] Citherea, were she to represent the heavenly Venus, would have no son. That Venus whose son is called 'Love' has nothing to do with 'Charite,' nor indeed with Hymen, since the widow Criseyde is most assuredly not a virgin; nor do she and Troilus ever purpose to marry. As though to remind us of this fact, Chaucer shows them 'pleyinge entrechaungeden hire rynges' (III, 1368). The 'orthodox' and proper pagan gods for him to invoke are, indeed, Venus, Juno, and Hymen (cf. *Teseida*, XII,

20. Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus, Notes, 463–466 and 493–494.
21. L.D. Benson (gen. ed.), The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd Ed. (Boston. Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 420–421.
22. For Chaucer as ironist see A.E. Farnham, 'Chaucerian Irony and the Ending of the Troilus', Chaucer Review, 1 (1967), 207–216 – if we disagree on several particulars.

67–68, where they are all three invoked during the wedding of Palemone and Emilia). Troilus's redefined Venus, Cupid, and Hymen do not seem related to marriage in Troilus's prayer, nor do they conduce to 'Charite'.[23] The inversions of 'pagan orthodoxy' are – or should be – plain enough. If we failed to take Chaucer's point at first offer, he allows us a second chance:

> 'Benigne love, thow holy bond of thynges,
> Whoso wol grace and list the nought honouren,
> Lo, his desir wol fle withouten wynges;
> And noldestow of bownte hem socouren
> That serven best and most alwey labouren,
> Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
> But if thi grace passed oure desertes.' (III, 1261–1267)

My working definition of irony coincides with that of D.H. Green, Irony in the Medieval Romance (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1979), 9: 'Irony is a statement, or presentation of an action or situation, in which the real or intended meaning conveyed to the initiated intentionally diverges from, and is incongruous with, the apparent or pretended meaning presented to the uninitiated.' There is growing awareness of the importance of Boethius's text to the ironic strategy behind Chaucer's apparently worldly pose in the Troilus. See Stroud, who considers the work a Boethian recasting of the Filostrato – and see R. Hollander, Boccaccio's Two Venuses (New York. Columbia University Press, 1977), 51, claiming that Boethius plays a similar – if less prominent – role in Boccaccio's work as well. More recently, see Robertson, passim, and Steadman, 66–111. Another view holds that, while the work is Boethian in scope, it nonetheless finds an accommodation for earthly love: see P.M. Kean, 'Chaucer's Dealings with a Stanza of Il Filostrato and the Epilogue of Troilus and Criseyde,' Medium Aevum, 33 (1964), 36–46; S.S. Hussey, 'The Difficult Fifth Book of Troilus and Criseyde', Modern Language Review, 67 (1972), 721–729; and Morgan, 'The Ending', – among others.

23. For a positive reading of the passage in the Filostrato that serves as Chaucer's model along with a rejoinder to it, see P. Dronke, 'The Conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde', Medium Aevum, 33 (1964), 47–52, and Hollander, Boccaccio's Two Venuses, 178. See also the independent judgment of An Sonjae (Brother Anthony), 'Echoes of Dante and Boethius in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', Medieval and Early Modern English Studies, 12, 2 (December 2004), 393–418: 412: 'From a Christian perspective, [Troilus] is wrong about everything important: the nature of love, the nature of bliss, and the identity of God.'

As Root noted,[24] the passage is closely modeled upon St Bernard's prayer to the Virgin in *Paradiso* XXXIII, 13–18:

'Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali,	'Lady, you are so great and so prevail above,
che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre,	should he who longs for grace not turn to you,
sua disïanza vuol volar sanz' ali.	his longing would be doomed to wingless flight.
La tua benignità non pur soccorre	Your loving kindness does not only aid
a chi domanda, ma molte fïate	whoever seeks it, but many times
liberamente al dimandar	gives freely what has yet to be
precorre.'	implored.'[25]

It is difficult to imagine a more pointed inversion. The anatomical precisions of stanza 179 (III, 1247–1253), dismembering Criseyde (who becomes, in Troilus's lustful perusal, successively arms, back, sides, throat, breasts),[26] remind us of the sheer carnality of Troilus's affections, whatever 'heavenly' gloss he may from time to time supply. His current hedonistic outburst masks itself as something nobler ('O Love, O Charite'); his thoughts fly up; his fantasized deeds remain below. The pointed reference to St Bernard's words as found in the final canto of *Paradiso*, which has Mary in the place to which Troilus elevates the sea-born Venus, removes assurance from all but a dogmatic 'naturalist's' insistence on a positive valence for Troilus's recital of enthusiasm for sexual encounter. The jejune responses to these verses on the part of so many modern readers are testament to the difficulty of acknowledging Chaucer's ironic view of carnality in a world that

24. Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus, ad loc.

25. Translated R. and J. Hollander (Doubleday, 2007/Anchor, 2008). Subsequent translations of Paradiso are also from this edition.

26. For a similar phenomenon in Petrarch, see N.J. Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', Critical Inquiry, 8 (Winter 1981), 265–280. On the Canticus Troili (I, 400–420) and its relation to its model in Petrarch (Rvf 132), see at least P. Thomson, 'The Canticus Troili: Chaucer and Petrarch', Comparative Literature, 11 (1959), 313–328, and, most recently, W. Ginsberg, 'Chaucer and Petrarch: "S'amor non c'è" and the Canticus Troili', Humanist Studies & the Digital Age, 1.1 (2011), 121–127.

not only does not share that view, but insists on transvaluating it into a vapid shadow of its mocking self.

Chaucer's Conclusion: (1) Latin Endings and Beginnings

While it is clear that the conclusion of the *Troilus* adheres to the pattern of the narrative portion of the conclusion of the *Filostrato* (VIII, 25–29), following its model with some fidelity, what has not been as frequently considered is the nature of the concerted attention to other epics found in Chaucer's final stanzas:

> And if I hadde ytaken for to write
> The armes of this ilke worthi man,
> Than wolde ich of his batailles endite.
> But for that I to writen first bigan
> Of his love, I have seyd as I kan, –
> His worthi dedes, whoso list hem heere,
> Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle ifeere. – (V, 1765–1771)

His disclaimer, deferring again from epic as he had done at the outset, is probably also meant simultaneously to remind us, in the second verse of this strophe, of the first verse of the *Aeneid*: *Arma virumque cano*. The love poet who controls the narrative of the *Troilus* has another subject, but tells that he *could have sung* 'the armes of this ilke worthi man.' Chaucer's witty *translatio* of Latin literature's best-known first line[27] reminds us not only of Virgil's beginning, but of his own, which similarly invited and dismissed the generic possibility of martial epic, on that occasion borrowing from Statius.

If this stanza reminds us of the beginning of the *Aeneid*, its neighbor (V.1789–1792) still more certainly, as Root has suggested,[28] calls to mind the concluding verses of the epic most closely modeled on Virgil's, the *Thebaid* of Statius:

27. Donaldson, 37, is among those who have noted the obvious echo.
28. Root (ed.), The Book of Troilus, ad loc.

> But, litel book, no makyng thow nenvie,
> But subgit be to alle poesie;
> And kis the steppes, where as thow seest space
> Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.[29]

Thus do major elements of Chaucer's beginning, middle, and ending reveal their elected affinities to beginnings, middles, and ends of antecedent texts. His beginning summons the middle of the *Aeneid*; his midpoint, the end of Dante's *Commedia*; his end, the beginning of the *Aeneid* and the ending of the *Thebaid*. Next we shall turn to the valedictory uses made by Chaucer of his most visited precursor, Giovanni Boccaccio,

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29. In his own ending Chaucer may have hoped to be observed imitating Statius's conclusion of the Thebaid. Its envoi runs as follows (XII, 816–819):

> vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta,
> sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora.
> mox, tibi si quis adhuc praetendit nubila livor,
> occidet, et meriti post me referentur honores.
>
> O live, I pray! nor rival the divine Aeneid, but follow afar
> and ever venerate its footsteps. Soon, if any envy as yet
> o'erclouds thee, it shall pass away, and, after I am gone,
> thy well-won honours shall be duly paid (tr. J.H. Mozley).

See the gloss of R. Hollander (in either the Dartmouth Dante Project or the Princeton Dante Project) to Inferno XXIII, 145–148, relating the last line of that canto ('dietro a le poste de le care piante') to these verses of Statius. An Sonjae, 409, suggests that a detail from Purg. XXI, 130, Statius stooping in his desire to kiss Virgil's' feet, probably reflects these closing lines of the Thebaid. Dante the protagonist now follows humbly in Virgil's footsteps immediately after Dante the poet has allowed a damned Bolognese friar to insult his guide's intellectual capacity (Inf. XXIII, 142–144). That is probably the lowest moment experienced by Virgil as character in a theological epic that spends considerable time and energy revealing his shortcomings from a Christian point of view. See R. Hollander, Il Virgilio dantesco, passim.

Chaucer seems intent, in his conclusion, on bringing into play references to the opening verse not only of the Aeneid, but also of the Iliad, to which he certainly seems to refer thirty-four lines further along when he refers to 'The wrath [. . .] Of Troilus" (V, 1800–1801). He may have known Homer's first verse from one later Latin reflection of that text or another, beginning with the Ilias latina of Publius Baebius Italicus (1st century A.D.), vv. 8–9: 'et bello clarus Achilles. / Quis deus hos ira tristi contendere iussit?'

whose two 'epics' account for more Chaucerian verses in the *Troilus* than all other sources combined.

Chaucer's Conclusion: (2) Italian Footprints in Heaven

The final eighteen stanzas of *Troilus and Criseyde* may be characterized as a mosaic of earlier poems, principally the *Filostrato* and the *Teseida* of Boccaccio, Dante's *Paradiso*, and Statius's *Thebaid*,[30] as has long been recognized. What has been less well understood is the extraordinary care with which Chaucer has manipulated the precedent texts, a care which reflects his keen sense of the way in which they are in fact related. Of the concluding 126 verses of the poem, nearly half, or 58, are nothing other than precise translations, usually word-for-word, of predecessor works. While the basic text is naturally *Il Filostrato* (VIII, 25–29 – accounting for some thirty of Chaucer's lines), considerable matter is plucked from *Il Teseida* (24 lines), and there are borrowings of considerable interest from Statius (4 lines) and Dante (3 lines). Since this is fairly familiar territory for Chaucerians,[31] I offer the following table, along with an invitation to the dubious to consult the apposite Italian and Latin texts.

Troilus, V	source
1744–1747	*Filostrato* VIII, 25, 1–6
1756–1757	" VIII, 25, 7–8
1758–1764	" VIII, 26, 1–8
1789–1792	*Thebaid* XII, 816–819
1800–1806	*Filostrato* VIII, 27, 1–8
1807–1827	*Teseida* XI, 1–3
1828–1834	*Filostrato* VIII, 28, 1–8
1835–1837	" VIII, 29, 1–4
1863–1865	*Paradiso* XIV, 28–30

30. For appreciations of Chaucer's debt to Statius, see P.M. Clogan, 'Chaucer's Use of the Thebaid', English Miscellany, 18 (1967), 9–31, and Anderson.

31. See, for example, H.M. Cummings, The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Works to the Italian Works of Boccaccio (A Review and Summary) (Menasha, Wisc. George Banta, 1916).

While Chaucer, whose artful dodging around Boccaccio – the most relevant lion in his roadway – knows neither moderation nor surcease, purveys the conclusion of his narrative as having several undetermined sources ('thise olde bokes' – 1753) which he has consulted on divers occasions ('[a]nd ofte tyme, I fynde [in them] . . .' – 1758). In fact four and one-half stanzas of his conclusion are translated nearly word-for-word from *Il Filostrato*.

His next three stanzas (vv. 1765-85), which serve as a sort of prelude to his *envoi*, are put forward as Chaucer's own; their task is first (1765–1771) to insist on his identity as poet of love, not war (and thus on the identity of his protagonist as lover, not fighter, in the narrator's treatment of him), and then (1772–1785) to proclaim his absence of malice toward women, a malice which the ladies may have thought they perceived behind his portrait of fickle Criseyde. Having thus defended his poetic stance, having attempted to establish a cordial ground of understanding with his female audience, he now may turn to his book (we have examined the conclusion of this stanza previously):

> Go, litel book, go, litel myn tragedye,
> Ther god thi *makere* yet, er that he dye,
> So sende myght *to make in* som comedye!
> But litel book, no *makyng* thow n'envie,
> But subgit be to alle *poesye*;
> And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace
> Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace [italics added].

Chaucer's envoy returns to the subject of the opening verse of the poem, 'the double sorwe of Troilus.' By any medieval code of literary behavior, *Troilus and Criseyde* would seem to be a tragedy, at the very least from the point of view of its male protagonist. Having bid this tragedy farewell, Chaucer now suddenly and pivotally changes genres – and poetic identities. Verses 2 and 3 of this stanza have proved a stumbling-block to their interpreters.[32] I would tentatively paraphrase them as follows, attempting to underline the importance of the anaphoric presence of words for vernacular 'poet' and for 'poetry' in each of them

32. See Garbaty, 300.

(as well as in the following verse): 'May God grant the power to your maker, before he die, to make [in it] some comic verses.' As many have noted, Chaucer sets these three words for 'making' vernacular poetry off against the 'poesye' of the ancients, authors of lofty 'tragedies'. Indeed, the spirit of comedy, especially as it is emblematized by the *Commedia* of Dante Alighieri, informs much of what follows. I am fully cognizant that my attempt at an interpretive translation of this vexed passage will not convince most readers, and for two reasons: the phrase 'to make in' is a much-debated construct and the understanding that Chaucer may be indicating *this* poem, rather than another future project, perhaps not as yet begun or even unconceived in the poet's mind, seems to violate the apparent clear sense of rather distant futurity. To take the first question first, let us turn to Stephen A. Barney's note to this passage:[33] '*Make in*, a phrase unattested in the sense "compose" elsewhere, is close enough to the last line of the *Prologue to the Legende of Good Women* [Text] F, "And ryght thus *on* my Legende gan I *make*"'[34] to give this reading ("compose") more support than the attempts of others to justify the gloss of "make" as "match".' Precisely, Professor Barney. However, had Chaucer meant only to say 'compose', why did he include that pesky 'in'? In what? It seems to me that the most natural reading of this construction is to understand that it refers to the composition of new material to be included *here*, in his *Troilus*. Now the more difficult part: What does Chaucer intend by the request that his Maker grant this maker, 'er that he dye', the inspiration 'to make in' some comedy? To put a 'comic' conclusion on the *Troilus*? That at least makes sense, since that is what Chaucer did – or so this reader believes.[35] How, then, may we explain the futurity of the phrase 'er that he dye'?

33. Benson (ed.), 1056b.

34. The less-finished G-Text concludes with the identical line.

35. I was relieved to find support for this reading that I had overlooked when composing an earlier version of this essay. B. Windeatt, Oxford Guides to Chaucer: 'Troilus and Criseyde' (Oxford. Clarendon, 1992), 132, identified 'comedie' with what follows, the rise of Troilus's soul to the Eighth Sphere after his death. The 'litel myn tragedye', containing the story of Troilus's passionate and now dissolved union with Criseyde, has been concluded, what remains is comedy. Windeatt's words are worth having: 'The prayer for "comedye" shortly before the flight of Troilus' soul to the spheres (vv. 1807–1827) may also indicate that, while the account of the flight is borrowed from Boccaccio's Teseida, the implications of Troilus' ascent as comedye in

Now whatever Chaucer was, no one has ever won a bet on his professorial sobriety. He was/is a funny man. May we not perceive in the phrase 'before I die' (verse 1787) a jocular reference to the necessarily present sense of the writer's own mortality? Let us consider the textual situation: the poet is obviously very much alive; what we may tend to forget is that Troilus is, too. Chaucer, however, knows that he will be dead within twenty verses. Was his playful response to the rapidly approaching death of his hero, Troilus, that must be recorded in verse 1806, to hope that *he* would last long enough to conclude this conclusion? That is, I take 'er that he dye' to mean 'in the next several weeks or days or hours – if I, unlike my soon-to-be-dead hero, live that long.' In the words of the late, lamented Senator Claghorn, 'That's a joke, son'.

Chaucer, extending his playful literary self-presentation, next (at verse 1789) assumes the humble role of Statius before all-mastering Virgil at the close of the *Thebaid* (see discussion, above). His five classical precursors remind the Italian reader of similar lists in Dante and Boccaccio.[36] Chaucer is, however, a good deal less honest about his debts

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transcending earlier tragedye were suggested to Chaucer by a passage in the Divine Comedy that lies behind Boccaccio's text: Dante's vision from the spheres in Paradiso XXII, 133–138.' For more on Dante and the Troilus, if not as much to the point advanced here as Windeatt's contribution, see, among others, H.H. Schless, Chaucer and Dante: A Revaluation (Norman, OK. Pilgrim Books, 1984), 101–147; R.A. Shoaf, Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word: Money, Images, and Reference in Late Medieval Poetry (Norman, OK, Pilgrim Books, 1983 [postprint: www.luminarium.org/medlit/chaucessays.htm], passim); R. Neuse, Chaucer's Dante: Allegory and Epic Theater in 'The Canterbury Tales' (Berkeley. University of California Press, 1991), esp. 3, 38–39; and see his 'Troilus and Criseyde: Another Dantean Reading', in R.A. Shoaf (ed.), Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde: 'Subgit to alle Poesye' (Binghamton, NY. MRTS, 1992), 199–210.

36. See Tatlock, 631n., for such lists in Dante (Inf. V, 88-90) and Boccaccio (Filocolo V, 97, 4–5; Amorosa Visione V, 7f.). It is difficult to believe that each successor poet was not assembling his authorizing precursors – in Chaucer's case, not a single one of the tre corone, with Boccaccio not present among Chaucer's 'greats' but surely disguised as 'Lollius,' recipient of Horace's second verse epistle (Epistulae I, ii, 1). See Fleming, 179–200, for a review of the history of this identification, beginning with Latham in 1873, 189, and including G.L. Kittredge, The Date of Chaucer's 'Troilus' and Other Chaucer Matters (London. Chaucer Society, 1909), 58–59, whose opinion it is that Chaucer believes Lollius was indeed the author of an epic (rather than offering the occasion for a disguised reference to Boccaccio). Lollius is named

to precursors in 'epic' than the two Italians; for while Dante had good reason to believe himself the first of the moderns, and while Boccaccio pointedly adds Dante to his list of 'greats', Chaucer does not bend to kiss the feet of his two main Italian sources (not to mention such other less significant vernacular ones for his *Troilus* as Benoît, Guido delle Colonne, or Francesco Petrarca). Nonetheless, in 'making in some comedy', he will shortly be more reliant than ever on their previous efforts. The ensuing stanza, with Chaucer's defense of his own London vernacular (vv. 1793–1799), puts an Italian reader in mind of the rather pointedly absent references to his vernacular predecessors. Treating his English as though it had the valence of classical text or the Bible (no tittles or jots to be miswritten here, either),[37] he may also be reflecting Dante's own defense and illustration of *his* vernacular.[38] The rather strange stanza has another effect. It is preceded by the first announcement that the rest of the work will be comic. Whether or not Chaucer knew Dante's formulations that made his vernacular the language of comedy (where Virgil's high style is that of tragedy), he could read exactly such formulaic distinctions embedded in the text of the *Commedia* itself – the very title of the work reinforces the link between comedy and vernacular, at least in its author's mind.[39] If Chaucer entertained similar views, the stanza carries still more weight, no matter how playful it is.

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again at V, 1653; see also Hous of Fame, verse 1468. We may be able to glimpse Chaucer's game – erasing Boccaccio's Dante and Dante's Horace but elsewhere having included Horace's creature, the putative epicist, Lollius, as Boccaccio, 'myn auctour' (I, 394). But now see J. Fyler, Language and the Declining World in Chaucer, Dante, and Jean de Meun (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139, and Hollander, 'Dante's (and Boccaccio's) bella scola' for still further and more appropriate interactions with Dante.

37. See Tatlock, 626n., for such traditional concern for accurate scrivening, classical and biblical (Apoc. 22, 18–19). See also Matthew 5, 18.

38. Even if he did not know the Vita nuova, De vulgari Eloquentia, or the Epistola a Cangrande, he had read with care Dante's Commedia, with its covert but frequently heard insistence that its Italian vernacular be respected as capable of all the expressive possibilities available to the 'regular' poets.

39. Tatlock, 631n.–632n., discusses the classical/vernacular juxtaposition in terms of the dichotomy 'poesie'/'makyng' found in the preceding stanza. See also n. 9, above.

This five-stanza interruption of the concluding action of the *Filostrato*, so closely mirrored in Chaucer's *Troilus*, now yields once again to the Boccaccian source. Verses 1800–1806 kill Troilus off as quickly and brutally as had Boccaccio, whose stanza Chaucer follows closely and to similar effect. And then, as has long been recognized, Chaucer leaps from the *Filostrato* to the *Teseida*. His next three stanzas (vv. 1807–1827) are translations from that other 'epic' of Boccaccio's (*Teseida* XI, 1–3):

Finito Arcita colei nominando
la qual nel mondo più che altro amava
l'anima leve se ne gio volando
ver la concavità del cielo ottava,
degli elementi i convessi lasciando;
quivi le stelle ratiche ammirava,
l'ordina loro e la somma bellezza,
suoni ascoltando pien d'ogni dolcezza.

And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holughnesse of the eighte spere,
In convers letyng everich element.
And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie.

Quindi si volse in giù a rimirare
le cose abandonate, e vide il poco
globo terreno, a cui intorno il mare
girava e l'aere e di sopra il foco,
e ogni cosa da nulla stimare
a rispetto del ciel; ma poi al loco
là dove aveva il suo corpo lasciato
gli occhi fermò alquanto rivoltato.

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erthe, that with the se
Enbraced is, and fully gan despise
This wrecched world, and held al vanite
To respect of the pleyn felicite
That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
Ther he was slayn, his lokyng down he cast.

E seco rise de' pianti dolenti
della turba lernea, la vanitate
forte dannando dell'umane genti,
li quai, da tenebrosa cechitate
mattamente oscurati nelle menti,
seguon del mondo la falsa biltate,
lasciando il cielo, e quindi se ne gio
nel loco che Mercurio li sortio.

And in hym self he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste,
And dampned al oure werk that folweth so
The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste.
And sholden al oure herte on heven caste.
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurye sorted hym to dwelle.

Boccaccio's text, as any *dantista* can affirm, is itself borrowed from his *maestro ed autore*, Dante Alighieri (*Paradiso* XXII, 133–138):

Col viso ritornai per tutte quante
le sette spere, e vidi questo globo

With my eyes I returned through every one
of the seven spheres below, and saw this
globe of ours

tal, ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante;	to be such that I smiled, so mean did it appear.
e quel consiglio per migliore approbo	That opinion which judges it as least
che l'ha per meno; e chi ad altro pensa	I now approve as best, and he whose thoughts
chiamar si puote veramente probo.	are fixed on other things may truly be called just.

In Boccaccio and Dante this vision of our paltry earth, eventually deriving from Macrobius,[40] is attained from the eighth sphere, that of the fixed stars.[41] No one who comes to Chaucer's text via these two necessary avenues can harbor meaningful doubt but that the eighth heaven was the *situs* of Troilus's vision as well, not even if such a reader were to pay close attention to the lengthy squabble in the commentaries.[42] To put that statement more bluntly, there is simply no reason to believe that, given his knowledge of the Italian texts and the closeness of his translation of Boccaccio's description of the ascent of Arcita, Chaucer could have wanted to mean anything else but what he said: The eighth sphere is, as it is in Boccaccio and in Dante before him, the heaven of the fixed stars, the highest material point of the universe that God created in six days, with only the Crystalline sphere and the Empyrean above it.

40. But see G. Velli, 'L'apoteosi di Arcita: ideologia e coscienza storica nel Teseida', Studi e problemi di critica testuale, 5 (1972), 33–66: 37–39, who argues that Lucan and Boethius are more likely to have been in Boccaccio's mind. For Lucan as a source for Chaucer, see Steadman, 4–8

41. That Dante's text is the source of Boccaccio's appears to have been noted first by Tatlock, 626n. See also Garbaty, 301–303, if the latter contrives to convince himself that Dante's vision occurred in the seventh celestial sphere, rather than the eighth. On the many reasons for rejecting the reading 'seventh', found in some editions of Chaucer's text, see the sensible note of Barney, The Riverside Chaucer, p. 1057.

42. See the convincing exposition of Dronke, 47; see also J.W. Conlee, 'The Meaning of Troilus' Ascension to the Eighth Sphere,' Chaucer Review, 7 (1972), 27–36 (with bibliography, 27n.), who is also clear-sighted in his perception that Troilus enjoys only a temporary stay here; and Morgan, 263–265. Steadman, 1–20, argues unconvincingly for the now generally discredited notion that Chaucer – and Boccaccio – probably had the sphere of the Moon in mind. Anyone coming from the crucial texts in Dante and Boccaccio knows that they speak of the eighth sphere, that is, the heaven of the fixed stars. There seems little reason to believe that Chaucer did not understood their texts or that he thought Troilus had soared anywhere else.

A still more curious confusion of some Chaucerians involves them in the belief that Troilus is meant to be conceived as remaining in heaven – and here it little matters whether he is supposed to be considered as tasting eternal joy in the heavenly sphere of the Moon, of Mercury, of Venus, or of the fixed stars. First of all, no Christian tradition holds that the saints dwell in any particular starry sphere – this is emphatically denied, even by Dante; more importantly, both Boccaccio and Chaucer – tacitly but clearly – remove their lover-hero from the heavens after he has had his final vision. If not, theirs would be the first literary instances in which Mercury guided a soul into the peace of God's everlasting love. Mercury, both in Boccaccio and in Chaucer (e.g., at V, 321–322), has his traditional role as psychopomp, that is, as conductor of the dead to Hades. It would seem at the very least unlikely and probably even impossible to build an argument which would convince a reasonable neutral observer that either author intended his reader to understand that Mercury 'sorted' Arcita or Troilus somewhere in heaven.[43] Indeed, Chaucer's very locution (closely echoing Boccaccio's) makes it clear that, since Troilus is now temporarily in heaven (whichever sphere various readers may believe, but heaven, and, if we do our homework, specifically Dante's eighth heaven, that of the fixed stars), and since Mercury's 'sorting' him expressly required removal from his current location ('And forth he went', says Chaucer), hell – the underworld – is the only possibility for his eventual destination. In the *Teseida*, in the scene that is the model for this one, we hear Arcita's dying prayer to Mercury that his soul be allowed a permanent resting place, not in the heavens, but in Eliseum (X, 99, 4), while Palemon assumes that his dead friend is, in fact, destined for deeper and less pleasant parts of the underworld ('or vederà d'Acheronte vicine/le triste ripe'

43. Fisher's note to this verse is revealing in this respect: 'Mercurye, a curious anachronism since Mercury was the classical guide of souls to the underworld' – see J.H. Fisher (ed.), The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer (New York. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977). And see the strong doubt expressed by E. Reiss, 'Troilus and the Failure of Understanding', Modern Language Quarterly, 29 (1968), 131–144, who thinks this unlikely especially in light of his probable inclusion in the pagan gods referred to as 'rascaille' in verse 1853. For the possible allowance of a less pessimistic reading, see S.A. Barney, in Benson (ed.), The Riverside Chaucer, Explanatory Notes, 1057, asserting that 'Boccaccio is equally vague as to where Mercury allots the soul its final resting place.' If Barney has in mind as possibilities Limbo as opposed to the lower levels of hell, he is within the range of possibilities; if he considers a possible heavenly dwelling for the soul of Chaucer's protagonist, he is out of bounds.

[X, 101, 3–4]). It is certain, from Boccaccio's two death scenes, that his heroes are destined for Hades; there is little reason to believe Troilus's otherworldly destination a happier one, unless we are of the opinion that Chaucer (and Boccaccio) were mythographically challenged to the degree that they did not know that Mercury had never been depicted as leading a soul to the Christian heaven. We learn from Boccaccio's earlier gloss in his own *Teseida* (at II, 31, 5): 'fu oppinione degli antichi che ogni anima n'andasse in inferno, fuori quelle di coloro li quali deificavano; e credevano che a ciascuna fosse certo luogo diterminato nel quale si punissero i peccati nella vita commessi, e, puniti quegli, credevano loro andare in un luogo dilettevole, il quale chiamavano Eliseo, e quindi dopo certo tempo poi tornare nel mondo.' As the text (*Teseida* X, 99 and 101) will eventually make clear, Arcita hopes for a better place in Hades (or hell or *inferno*), but has nothing like the hope of heaven. Anyone who would read the ambiguity in Mercury's allotment to include the possiblity of heaven is making an unsupportable representation of Chaucer's (and Boccaccio's) clear strategy: the dead lover hopes, not for heaven, but for a better place in hell (cf. Dante's Limbo), and it seems pretty clear, at least in Boccaccio, that Arcita will not be allowed even that. One may reasonably think the same of the posthumous futurity of Troilus.[44] The same may be said of Boccaccio's text. There we find that Arcita knows that he is not worthy of heaven; he only hopes for Elysium (Limbo?) as the best of a bad lot (X, 99). And his friend Palemone seems utterly certain that Arcita is in fact bound for Acheron and beyond (XI, 101). The point, in both Boccaccio and Chaucer, seems to be that, as his soul leaves his body, Arcita/Troilus is vouchsafed a fleeting glimpse of this world from heaven, only to be led thence by Mercury to hell, his eternal resting place. What he sees and understands posthumously may make for a wonderful poetic moment; in terms of his salvation, however, such knowledge came too late. Arcita and Troilus, in this respect, at least, have an earlier counterpart in Dante's Virgil, their precursor as posthumous convert.

One imagines that few medieval readers were disturbed or surprised by Boccaccio's or Chaucer's view of the eternal whereabouts of their hero, if a number of Chaucer's more recent readers find the notion a painful one.

44. Dronke, 48, while perceiving that Troilus's dwelling place in the afterworld has two 'moments', is adamant in insisting that both are heavenly: 'For Troilus there are two distinct moments: one in which he attains his sphere, another in which Mercury shows him his particular place in it.'

Surely, had Chaucer wanted his readership even to keep the question open, he would have found another way of describing Troilus's final destination. And if Troilus were destined to stay somewhere in heaven – or to go first to Purgatory in order to return there – the anaphora ('Swich fyn . . .') found at the beginning of each of the first five lines of the following stanza would surely lose much of its point.[45] Chaucer outdoes Boccaccio by one repetition ('cotal fine' occurs four times in *Filostrato* VIII, 28) and by making Troilus's 'end' not only earthly but hellish – which he has accomplished by splicing *Teseida* XI, 1–3, between the two final stanzas of Boccaccian narrative in the *Filostrato*. His eventual and climactic outdoing of Boccaccio is accomplished by his becoming Boccaccio's better, as Boccaccio himself would surely concede, that is, by taking on the poetic identity of Dante Alighieri.

As I have mentioned, Chaucer was undoubtedly aware that the vision of Arcita in *Teseida* XI owed its poetic being to *Paradiso* XXII; as I have also suggested, the 'comedye' which Chaucer is now 'making in'[46] reflects his sense of Dante's higher form of cosmic comic resolution. *Il Filostrato* concludes with lively cynical advice to youthful males (VIII, 29–33). It may be summarized as follows: Young men, do not imitate Troiolo; young women are fickle; find yourselves a stable older woman rather than dying for a wicked younger one. Whatever Chaucer made of 'Boccaccio's' advice (since a strong case may be made for *its* Ovidian irony), he evidently decided to treat it as though it were serious and deleterious. In any case, he subverts it with great skill. Boccaccio's *giovinetti* become 'yonge, fressh folkes, he or she'; and the author's advice (which at first sounds conventionally pious in Boccaccio, only to turn on the reader with its nasty and shallow wordly wisdom), wrenched

45. While I vigorously disagree with his interpretation, Dronke, 48, does understand that fyn must refer to Troilus's eventual resting place. For him, it is heaven; for me, it is hell.

46. For the view that this phrase probably points at least as much to the present text as it does to a putative future one, whether the CT or anything else, see Hollander, 'Dante's (and Boccaccio's) bella scola'. And see also W. Wetherbee, Chaucer and the Poets (Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 1984), 225 and n., referencing A. Middleton, 'Chaucer's "New Men"', in Selected Papers from the English Institute [1978], 3 (1980), 15–56: 35–39, 55 [n. 27]), who believes that the passage bespeaks Chaucer's close consideration of the greatest medieval 'comedy', Dante's poem. And see, again, Windeatt's clear exposition of this point in note 35, above.

from its context, now seems, for the first time in the entire poem, utterly (and seriously) Christian. The Chaucerian narrator, who has until now been the English cousin of the apparently cupidinous Certaldese, has evidently been converted through his character's eyes. Verses 1835–1837, the address to the 'yonge, fresshe folkes', are Chaucer's final translation from Boccaccio in the *Troilus* and move across the grain of the text to make Boccaccio into Dante. What was missing from the *Filostrato* was almost supplied by the *Teseida* and could be seen behind (and beyond) that work in Dante's *Paradiso*. Thus does Chaucer move backward through his sources to find his final poetic stance.

The *Troilus* has been given two endings. The first is 'tragic', reflecting the final state of mind of the protagonist (Troilus hates Criseyde and longs to die in combat) as told by a love poet, who still may hope for more successful dalliances for the ladies whom he addresses (vv. 1772–1785). The second, wrought after the entire work pivots on its axis in the fifth stanza from the end, should almost certainly be considered comic. Beginning at verse 1835, Chaucer inverts Boccaccio's similar address to the young (*giovinetti* [VIII, 29, 1]), in which the Boccaccian narrator cynically advises his all-male contingent of 'yonge fresshe folkes' not to turn to Christ but to seek out older women; in that way they may get laid and survive to tell the tale. Coming from Boccaccio's text to Chaucer's forces the reader to see how, finally, Chaucer's narrator, whether in solemn disagreement or in ironic play, distances himself from Boccaccio's. The last five stanzas of the work turn from 'tragic notes' to comic ones,[47] as the narrator treats Troilus's *double sorwe* as transcended by Dantean cosmic joy. To put that idea into schematic terms, after Chaucer's two stanzas of *envoi*, the final ten stanzas of the *Troilus* are divided into two parallel groups. The first five are composed by a poet lollying about in the tragic swamps of Boccaccian *aegritudo amoris*; the last five reflect a comic spirit, one that offers a Dantean view from the heaven of the Fixed Stars in *Paradiso* XXII, 133–138:

47. While I am not suggesting a case of 'influence', it is amusing in this context to consider John Milton's movement in the opposite direction in *Paradise Lost* IX, 5–6: 'I now must change/Those notes to tragic.' For an attempt to reopen the question of Milton's close engagement with Dantean texts, see R. Hollander, 'Milton's Elusive Response to Dante's *Comedy* in *Paradise Lost*,' *Milton Quarterly*, 45 (March 2011), 1–24.

Col viso ritornai per tutte quante
le sette spere, e vidi questo globo
tal, ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante;

e quel consiglio per migliore approbo
che l'ha per meno; e chi ad altro pensa
chiamar si puote veramente probo.

With my eyes I returned through every one
of the seven spheres below, and saw
this our globe
to be such that I smiled, so mean did it appear.
That opinion which judges it as least
I now approve as best, and he
whose thoughts
are fixed on other things may truly be
called just.

In imitation of Boccacico's cruel but masterful stroke, killing off Troiolo in a single verse (VIII, 17, 8),[48] Chaucer spends a barely more expansive two (V, 1805–1806). The three stanzas following that death (V, 1807–1827) represent, as has been frequently observed, a miscellany of literary sightings of our little globe from the heavens, from Macrobius (*Somnium Scipionis*), Dante (*Paradiso* XXII, probably also reflecting Macrobius), but most concertedly from Boccaccio's *Teseida*. His three *ottave* devoted to the ascent and heavenly laughter of Arcita are closely followed by Chaucer for his protagonist's askesis. All that the two heroes have striven for in the two 'epics' that contain them is now seen as paltry, vile, meretricious. Troilus sees mere sexuality, now with the posthumous eyes of a Dante or of Arcita, as the insignificant thing that it truly is. His belated recognition is now commented on by a new authorial voice, which controls the final five stanzas of the work. It is thus no accident that the last of these begins with three verses (1863–1865) that are borrowed in Chaucer's English from Dante's description of the Trinity in *Paradiso* XIV, 28–30:[49]

48. Virgil had not allowed much more space for Achilles' slaying of him; see Aen. I, 474–478. Wetherbee, 245, draws our attention to Virgil's less-than-enthusiastic presentation of Troilus (Aen. I. 474–478), displayed in the panorama in the temple of Juno in Dido's realm dragged in the dust behind his own chariot. Wetherbee argues that this negative (and understandably) anti-Trojan view of him weighs upon Chaucer's attempt to heroicize Troilus. Perhaps that perception is precisely the one that Chaucer hoped his reader would share.

49. See W. Ginsberg, Chaucer's Italian Tradition (Ann Arbor. University of Michigan Press, 2002), 14–17, for discussion of the way in which Dante's lines are filtered through a Boccaccian sensibility. Is Boethius also present here? 'The first three verses of this final stanza are translated by Chaucer from a passage found in theCommedia (Paradiso XIV, 28–30), a passage written by Dante, but sung, among

Thow oon, and two, and thre, eterne on lyve,	Quell'uno e due e tre che sempre vive
That regnest ay in thre, and two, and oon,	e regna sempre in tre e 'n due e 'n uno
Uncircumscript, and al maist circumscrive...	non circunscritto, e tutto circunscrive...

The evident and often addressed Dantean translation in the first three verses of the final stanza is matched with what seems to be a hitherto unobserved final salute to the Florentine poet of ultimate bliss in the final verse of the poem, 'For love of *mayde and mother* thyn benigne.' The first verse of the final canto of *Paradiso*, '*Vergine madre*, figlia del tuo figlio' would seem here to be echoed deliberately by the English poet. And the last word of his final verse, *benigne*, revisits Dante's deployment of the Virgin at the conclusion of his *Commedia*, first redeployed by Chaucer in an ironic visitation of Mary at the central passage of the work, III, 1261–1263: '*Benigne* love, thow holy bond of thynges,/Whoso wol grace and list the nought honouren,/Lo, his desir wol fle withouten wynges.' This, as is routinely understood by all Chaucerians, is a translation of the last two verses of *Paradiso* XXXIII, 13–15: 'Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali,/che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre,/sua disïanza vuol volar sanz' ali.' The next verse in Dante is most suggestive: 'La tua benignità non pur soccorre.' The Italian poet is addressing the Virgin; Chaucer's Troilus, in rapture of a sexual kind, addresses the son of Venus, stealing the Virgin's word for carnal celebration. The word *benignità*, translated by Chaucer from Mary to a venereal recipient, is redistibuted back to her in the last word of the poem: *benigne*. The grace bestowed by Jesus in the name of the Father is sought by Chaucer the poet in the name of His 'benign' mother. The last verse of his epilogue is thus, like the poem's midpoint, Dantean – this time with the ironic screen removed.

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others, by Boethius, in the Fourth Heaven, the Heaven of the Sun.' This formulation is found at the conclusion of an article by N.H. Kaylor, 'Holding the Center: Chaucer's Book of Troilus and Dante's Commedia', Medieval English Studies (Seoul), 8 (2000), 95–114.

The dizzying final stanzas of this great poem are under-standably a puzzle for their readers. Chaucer, a master of allusive poetry, here outdoes himself. His final pages bristle with the names of other *auctores* (Dares, Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Statius, Gower, and even 'philosophical Strode'), still more with translations of other poems, as we have seen. Where he has kept the role – no matter that it has been made intrinsically ridiculous from the opening stanza – of a Boccaccian narrator, himself in league with other lovers throughout the lengthy work, he suddenly, six stanzas from the end, breaks with that role in a brilliant and intentional subversive reading of Boccaccio's cynical advice to young males, and unmasks himself as the Dantean and Christian poet that he has been all along. Whatever motives lie behind Chaucer's choice of tactic in this poem – and this writer is not at all certain how he would address that question, much less formulate an answer – it seems nonetheless clear that such a careful plan exists. Whether or not the conclusion of the *Troilus* was built at once or in many stages of revision,[50] it seems clear that its readers must face its complexities knowing that they are there with cause. The most pressingly insistent new element in the concluding five stanzas is the presence of Jesus Christ, unmentioned in the rest of the poem, but now mentioned and then addressed in four of the concluding five stanzas: The youths in the penultimate apostrophe of the poem, male and female, are enouraged to raise their hearts 'To thilke God that after his ymage/yow made' (V, 1839–1840), loving 'hym the which that right for love/Upon a cross [...]/starf' (1842–1844). Then, after a stanza dealing with the *rascaille* that represent all pagan gods, the poet turns to 'that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode' (1860) and prays for His mercy, borrowing Dante's trinitarian prayer (as we have seen) and concluding with the name of Jesus (1868) in the penultimate verse of the poem, before concluding with his version of the first words of Bernard's prayer to the Virgin from *Paradiso* XXXIII.1.

50. For the question of Chaucer's revisions, see R.K. Root, The Textual Tradition of Chaucer's 'Troilus' (London. Chaucer Society, 1916); Tatlock, 626n.; C.A. Owen, Jr., 'The Significance of Chaucer's Revisions of Troilus and Criseyde', Modern Philology, 55 (1957–1958), 1–5; and Hussey.

Chaucer surely would have enjoyed the ironic twist that the conclusion of his one major finished – and finely finished – major work has drawn the least satisfied and satisfying discussion from his still growing troop of admirers.

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Il Petrarca di Thomas Wyatt: Transizione Epistemica e Traduzione Culturale di un Modello

Francesco Marroni

Nel quadro di una più generale rivisitazione dei meccanismi che regolano il dialogo interattivo fra le culture, una riflessione sul fenomeno del petrarchismo in Inghilterra significa non solo chiamare in causa ampie tematiche di ordine filologico-letterario – tematiche su cui peraltro già esiste una lunga tradizione bibliografica –, ma anche porre l'accento sugli aspetti più prettamente epistemici della ricezione di Petrarca. La prospettiva metodologica che vorrei proporre ambisce a investigare i processi storico-letterari alla base della penetrazione e diffusione dell'opera petrarchesca nella cultura inglese. Infatti, se è vero che ogni cultura è costituita da una molteplicità di linguaggi alla ricerca di un loro terreno comune, se è vero cioè che tale molteplicità tende idealmente a una unicità che, mai realizzata, configura lo spazio inesauribile in cui si incrociano tensioni esterne e interne, voci della continuità e voci dell'innovazione, allora mi pare indubitabile che tutta la storia del rapporto Petrarca/Inghilterra debba essere inserita in un ambito semioticamente dinamico della letteratura inglese, in grado di porre al suo centro la funzione e la genesi della cultura.

Di qui la necessità di non limitare la questione del petrarchismo al solo percorso filologico-traduttologico. Di qui anche la necessità di evitare ogni definizione che muova dall'idea di verificare, rispetto al modello petrarchesco, la fedeltà testuale e interpretativa di autori come Wyatt e Surrey, che, nella prima metà del sedicesimo secolo, introdussero l'opera di Petrarca in Inghilterra, anche se è innegabile

che già Chaucer aveva adattato il sonetto "S'amor non è" nel primo libro (versi 400–420) del *Troilus and Criseyde*, scritto nel periodo 1385–1387. Nel complesso panorama letterario dell'Inghilterra rinascimentale, possiamo assumere l'anno del viaggio in Italia di Wyatt – il 1527 – come un primo riferimento cronologico, mentre un'altra data importante è la pubblicazione delle liriche di Wyatt e Surrey nella *Tottel's Miscellany* nel 1557[1]. Durante i trent'anni che dividono il soggiorno italiano di Wyatt e la pubblicazione dell'antologia, in Inghilterra ad affermarsi non è solo la forma del sonetto, ma anche una nuova sensibilità che, abbandonata definitivamente la visione medievale dell'uomo, abbandonata cioè l'idea di fissità del soggetto all'interno della "great chain of being", postula il primato dell'individualità e la centralità della voce individuale rispetto al quadro immobile delle classi sociali. Giu-stamente Reed Way Dasenbrock ha scritto: "Perhaps the central legacy of Petrarchism for the Elizabethans is the concept of the self first articulated by Petrarch [...] a new type of personality, flexible, protean, wayward, unstable, and transformable, in contrast to the static, and highly formed ideal of character held by the Middle Ages"[2]. In realtà, l'interpretazione di Dasenbrock si muove sulla scia dell'analisi di Thomas M. Greene, che non usa mezzi termini per definire l'impatto di Petrarca sulla cultura europea in quanto a modernità: "The egoism of Petrarch was so monumental and so acute that it was an event in European intellectual history. What troubled Petrarch about himself was precisely the *lack* of continuity in his tangled passions [...]"[3]. Non un Petrarca che, quale autore del *Canzoniere*, è assunto come modello letterario. Non è questo il Petrarca che interessa la transizione da un sistema culturale ad un altro, ma è il Petrarca che non teme di collocare in primo piano le sue più intime istanze proprio perché è nello spazio intimo dell'anima che egli riconosce la sua individualità. Non solo, ma nell'autoindividuarsi in tale nuovo mondo, il poeta scorge anche la sua finitudine, la sua precarietà di cui egli può solo prendere atto, non avendo

1. Cfr. E. Hatch Wilkins, "A General Survey of Renaissance Petrarchism", *Comparative Literature*, 2, 4 (Autumn 1950), pp. 337–339.
2. R. Way Dasenbrock, "The Petrarchan Context of Spenser's *Amoretti*", *PMLA*, 100, 1 (January 1985), p. 38.
3. T.M. Greene, "The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature", in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas M. Greene and Lowry Nelson, Jr., New Haven, Mass., Yale University Press, 1968, p. 246.

più a disposizione le certezze del passato. E in questa percezione dell'essere nel mondo siamo oltre la visione medievale. La sua opera diviene la testualizzazione di una discontinuità che, segnando la fine di un ordine, non sa uscire da se stessa. In ritardo rispetto a quello europeo, il Rinascimento inglese scopre in Petrarca qualcosa di più di un grande letterato che riesce a innovare forma e contenuto della poesia: con Petrarca la cultura inglese compie un passo decisivo verso la modernità. Nella messinscena di un disordine tutto interiore, in realtà, l'opera petrarchesca fornisce nuovi strumenti interpretativi, offre nuovi modelli con cui misurare la complessità del mondo.

Prima di procedere oltre, mi pare risulti illuminante quanto scrive Lotman a proposito dell'incontro/scontro fra i sistemi culturali: "Il caso in cui l'intrusione esterna conduce al prevalere di uno dei sistemi in collisione e alla soppressione dell'altro è lontano dal caratterizzare tutti gli eventi. Abbastanza spesso la collisione genera un terzo sistema, in via di principio nuovo, il quale non è l'evidente conseguenza, logicamente prevedibile, di nessuno dei sistemi in collisione"[4]. Che significa tutto questo per il Rinascimento inglese? Quando Wyatt torna dall'Italia con il convincimento di offrire la traduzione dei sonetti petrarcheschi di cui è diventato un convinto sostenitore, in realtà l'incontro va ben al di là del discorso divulgativo-traduttologico e chiama in causa un dibattito culturale il cui esito è, appunto, la definizione di un sistema che, nella collisione con la cultura inglese, dà origine a qualcos'altro. In altre parole, nasce un terzo sistema (il petrarchismo) che, a partire dallo studio e diffusione europea dell'opera di Petrarca, apre la strada a una radicale revisione del rapporto fra individuo e società, fra istanze private e istanze pubbliche. E, se si vuole, fra il soggetto e il potere. Il petrarchismo inglese prende le mosse da Petrarca e dalla sua modernità ma *non è Petrarca*. Nemmeno quando assumiamo la semplice prospettiva traduttologica, non possiamo fare a meno di rilevare il superamento del modello – non solo sul piano della ricerca linguistico-strutturale, ma anche sul piano storico.

La revisione ha inizio proprio con il suo primo traduttore e imitatore, Thomas Wyatt, il cui ruolo va ben oltre quello di un poeta che si compiace

4. J. M. Lotman, *La cultura e l'esplosione. Prevedibilità e imprevedibilità*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1993, p. 88. Il semiologo russo, nella fattispecie, fa l'esempio della francesizzazione della cultura nobiliare russa fra la fine del Settecento e l'inizio dell'Ottocento.

di tradurre in inglese o di imitare i sonetti petrarcheschi. Il problema non riguarda la fedeltà al modello, ma piuttosto la collocazione in una prospettiva più corretta del concetto di imitazione. Sarebbe, infatti, del tutto errato osservare la pratica dell'*imitatio* come qualcosa che, in ordine alla ricerca di nuovi territori estetici, definisca in assoluto la mancanza di originalità e la piattezza dell'immaginazione poetica di chi è implicato nel processo di ricezione. Osservata con gli occhi della classicità, l'imitazione assume una funzione fondamentale nella trasmissione e nella rielaborazione della cultura. Infatti, nell'ottica dell'umanesimo rinascimentale, la formazione di una coscienza letteraria passava necessariamente attraverso l'imitazione dei modelli. Era inimmaginabile che un letterato potesse formarsi senza essersi misurato con la tradizione proprio mediante la fase imitativa, che era considerata una tappa decisiva nella formazione della propria individuale identità artistica. Lo stesso Petrarca, d'altra parte, nelle sue lettere a più riprese postula questo genere di percorso formativo, esattamente perché crede nella necessità di una sorta di innesto genealogico sul tronco vivo della tradizione letteraria.

Come è possibile leggere nella Lettera 190, Petrarca è un convinto sostenitore del processo imitativo in chiave di genealogia letteraria: "La rassomiglianza non dovrebbe essere quella di un ritratto fatto a una persona – in questo caso più somiglia e meglio è – ma piuttosto la rassomiglianza del figlio al padre [...] Non appena lo vediamo, il figlio deve ricordarci il padre, quantunque se noi misurassimo ogni tratto noteremmo subito che sono differenti". Quindi, dallo stesso Petrarca giunge un suggerimento per meglio focalizzare il rapporto fra la sua opera e la tradizione inglese – la traduzione rientra, almeno nel caso di Wyatt e Surrey, nel più ampio contesto dell'imitazione che, a sua volta, rientra nell'ampia dinamica culturale di trasformazione e assimilazione dei modelli.

A livello epistemico, legittimamente possiamo considerare il contributo dell'opera di Petrarca uno snodo fondamentale della transizione verso l'età moderna, sia perché essa presenta l'immagine di una soggettività del tutto sganciata dalla *Weltanschauung* medievale, sia perché il *Canzoniere* – nel suo dipanarsi diegetico-testuale – diviene il luogo di una ricerca che da Wyatt e Surrey arriva fino a Milton, in una definizione della sensibilità moderna basata sul principio della non-disgiunzione. Non più un universo in cui gli opposti cercano una qualche forma di equilibrio, ma qualcosa di più complesso – il bene e il male non si distinguono più nettamente, il piacere e la pena non si differenziano più in modo marcato,

la luce e il buio non sono più due mondi diversi. Prevale una certa fluidità che, improntata alla figura dell'antitesi, chiama in causa l'ambiguità e la contraddittorietà della natura umana.

Un esempio significativo di tale procedere per antitesi è il sonetto 134 i cui versi sono la perfetta testimonianza del modo in cui Petrarca, più che conciliare gli opposti, ne mostrava la contiguità sul piano tutto interiore della propria persona:

> Pace non trovo, et non ò da far guerra;
> e temo, et spero; et ardo, et son di ghiaccio;
> e volo sopra 'l cielo, et giaccio in terra;
> et nulla stringo, et tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.[5]

Nel primo verso si nota come l'opposizione pace/guerra sia, di fatto, annullata dalla doppia occorrenza di un "non" che accomuna gli antonimi sotto il segno della negatività, del loro non darsi sul piano della prassi. I versi successivi mostrano come nell'animo del poeta alberghino forze contrastanti, le quali, ancorché inconciliabili, sembrano trovare riparo nello spazio interiore della voce poetante. Nella traduzione di Wyatt il sonetto 134, pur riaffermando i campi semici antitetici, mette in scena un "io" che pare del tutto proteso a far sentire la sua voce:

> I fynde no peace, and all my warr is done;
> I fere and hope I burne and freise like yse;
> I fley above the wynde yet can I not arrise;
> And nought I have and all the world I seson[6].

Nella prima quartina il pronome soggetto ricorre ben sette volte. Tutto il sonetto nella traduzione di Wyatt dà grande evidenza a un "I" che, dal punto di vista ontologico, afferma la necessità di essere il perno attorno al quale la parola e il mondo si strutturano. Tuttavia, dal punto di vista della deviazione rispetto all'originale, la traduzione è fra le più attente a seguire il dettato petrarchesco. Vale qui quanto osserva Leonard Forster, uno degli studiosi più attenti del petrarchismo in Europa, parlando appunto della natura dell'amore in Petrarca: "The interpenetration of

5. F. Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, Introduzione di Roberto Antonelli, saggio di Gianfranco Contini, note al testo di Daniele Ponchiroli, Torino, Einaudi, 1992, p. 186.

6. J. D'Amico, ed., *Petrarch in England. An Anthology of Parallel Texts from Wyatt to Milton*, Ravenna, Longo, 1979, p. 88.

pleasure and pain, and the satisfaction which could be derived from holding these two opposites in an uneasy balance, is basic in Petrarch's work and becomes the fundamental theme of the petrarchist convention"[7]. La scoperta di questo equilibrio irrequieto e instabile in effetti corrisponde, da parte dei petrarchisti, alla scoperta di un mondo che non rimane mai immobile.

Il discorso riguarda la condizione dello spirito di chi ama e non si sente riamato. Tuttavia, qui occorre sottolineare che, epistemicamente, i petrarchisti inglesi derivano dal loro modello l'idea di un mondo che è preso nel flusso di un mutamento che mai si ferma. L'equilibrio precario tocca anche lo stesso statuto della parola che, per forza di cose, deve fare i conti con la nuova sensibilità e, ancor più, con la nuova temperie storica. Ed ecco allora che dietro l'imitazione del modello petrarchesco si cela in realtà la lotta con il modello, ovvero la necessità di superarlo perché, con il suo superamento, al poeta imitatore è dato di affermare la propria autonoma identità. Per tornare all'immagine genealogica di Petrarca, è come il figlio che supera definitivamente il padre. E Wyatt va oltre l'esempio petrarchesco proprio perché il suo rapporto con il mondo entra nel processo di testualizzazione orientando la sua voce in senso più realistico; è come se la voce di Petrarca muovesse un ulteriore passo verso il tono autobiografico e personale. Per tale motivo, la sua produzione lirica non è frutto di *imitatio*, ma di una sua riflessione sulla transizione verso un nuovo mondo. Wyatt scrive non già mosso dal binomio *imitatio/aemulatio*, ma, con consapevole strategia autoprotettiva, facendo del testo originale la sua maschera. Dietro la superficie-maschera della traduzione o imitazione del verso petrarchesco, si cela una fisiognomica di estrema complessità. Wyatt sa bene che solo proteggendo con la maschera il suo sguardo, le sue parole potranno evitare di incorrere nelle ire del potere, che, nella fattispecie, è impersonato da Enrico VIII e dalla sua corte.

Per esempio, se leggiamo la prima quartina del sonetto petrarchesco 103, notiamo subito l'istituzione di un parallelismo che nasconde

7. L. Forster, *The Icy Fire. Five Studies in European Petrarchism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 13.

un'esortazione: "Vinse Anibàl, et non seppe usar poi / la vittoriosa sua ventura: / però, signor mio caro, aggiate cura, / che similmente non avegna a voi". Si tratta di un sonetto che rientra nella strategia di eroicizzazione di Stefano Colonna il Vecchio[8], a cui Petrarca l'8 settembre 1348 (o probabilmente 1349) scrisse una lettera (*Fam.*, viii, 1) dedicata alla morte del cardinale Giovanni, che era il figlio primogenito di Stefano.[9] Nel sonetto 103 il poeta invita Stefano Colonna ad andare fino in fondo, a non riporre "l'onorata spada", in quanto se, diversamente da Annibale, compirà la sua opera, onore e fama continueranno oltre la sua vita. Petrarca istituisce un parallelismo Colonna/Annibale che il suo pressante suggerimento vuole trasformare in contrasto. Stefano Colonna non farà l'errore di Annibale. Ebbene, la libera traduzione di Wyatt[10], non solo strutturalmente trasforma il sonetto di Petrarca in uno strambotto di otto versi, ma segue una linea totalmente diversa. Differenziandosi marcatamente dal sonetto 103, il testo di Wyatt non mostra il terzo soggetto scenico a cui rivolgere il discorso – la riflessione riguarda la sua condizione e il dato che lo accomuna ad Annibale è il fallimento: "And I like wise" – "e similmente io". Entrambi hanno fallito nel loro progetto di conquista. Wyatt non aggiunge altro – non chiarisce oltre. La tensione dello strambotto è tutta autobiografica, con due antitesi finali che non sono presenti nel testo originale:

> so hangith in balaunce
> off war my pees / reward of all my payne
> At Mountzon thus I restles rest in Spayne.

8. Stefano Colonna, vittorioso sugli Orsini a San Cesario il 22 maggio 1333.
9. Cfr. Hatch Wilkins, *Vita del Petrarca*, a cura di Carlo Rossi, traduzione di Remo Ceserani, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2003, pp. 96–100. "La lettera vuole anche essere un omaggio alla nobiltà di Stefano, alle grandi doti del suo animo e del suo corpo e alle azioni da lui compiute. Petrarca vi fa inoltre un racconto particolareggiato della conversazione che aveva avuto con Stefano, passeggiando con lui per le vie di Roma nel 1337, quando il Colonna aveva profetizzato che sarebbe stato così sventurato da dover sopravvivere alla morte di tutti i suoi figli" (p. 97).
10. "Off Cartage he, that worthie warrier / Could overcome, but cowld not use his chaunce: / And I, like wise off all my long endever, / The sherpe conquest, tho fortune did avaunce,/ Could not use: the hold that is gyvin over / I unpossest: so hangith in balaunce/ Off warr my pees, reward of all my payne:/ At Mountzon thus I restles rest in Spayne".

Torna l'antitesi pace/guerra, con una precisazione finale riguardo al luogo in cui il poeta "restles rest", cioè a Mountzon, in Spagna, dove nel 1537 era presente come ambasciatore. Il riferimento all'attività diplomatica lascerebbe pensare al suo fallimento in tale missione. Comunque sia, quella che s'impone è una rappresentazione di sé che non ammette nessuna forma di eroicizzazione. Questo atteggiamento vale anche per i sonetti dedicati alla donna amata – nella fattispecie Anna Bolena, allora una delle amanti del re – verso la quale, contrariamente a Petrarca, Wyatt non ha nessun moto idealizzante. Come è stato notato, "Wyatt faithfully translates the personal lamentations in his model, but he reduces or ignores the public, universal aspects of Petrarch's poem"[11]. Qui il riferimento è alla riscrittura di Wyatt del sonetto petrarchesco 269 in cui il poeta piange la morte del cardinale Giovanni Colonna (3 luglio 1348). Mi pare inutile aggiungere che la riduzione del tema da parte di Wyatt a una dimensione privata vale per questo specifico sonetto come per gli altri. Ma si tratta di una sfera privata che è costretta ad essere tale perché la sfera pubblica non ammette spazio di critica e nemmeno di modesto suggerimento. In breve, inscritta nel contesto della transizione rinascimentale, l'opera di Wyatt, come ha notato Stephen Greenblatt, esprime "longings and fears that are deeply embedded in the nation's social and psychological character"[12].

La transizione verso la modernità trova in Wyatt un interprete fondamentale. Pur trattandosi di componimenti improntati a una vicenda sentimentale sfortunata e senza sbocco, credo che l'aspetto autobiografico debba essere collocato in secondo piano. Rispetto al sistema letterario, l'opera di Wyatt introduce il petrarchismo nella consapevolezza che tale operazione culturale non potrà non richiedere una ricodificazione dell'opera di Petrarca. Di qui l'antipetrarchismo presente nel petrarchismo di Wyatt: mentre assume a modello il *Canzoniere*, Wyatt sa bene che il modello va superato. La sua sensibilità si raccorda con quella del poeta italiano e al tempo medesimo – in una temperie politica del tutto sfavorevole al cattolicesimo – egli non può fare a meno di allontanarsene, come il figlio si allontana dal padre. La genealogia del discorso poetico

11. R. Way Dasenbrock, "Wyatt's Transformation of Petrarch", *Comparative Literature*, 40, 2 (Spring 1988), p. 130.
12. S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 157.

in Inghilterra si sviluppa, paradossalmente, contro Petrarca, anche quando poeti come Wyatt, Surrey e poi ancora Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, John Donne e Shakespeare, scrivono le loro liriche avendo dinanzi ai loro occhi i testi petrarcheschi. Se nel rinascimento inglese l'*imitatio* è un esercizio di stile e quindi parte di una più ampia ricerca letteraria, ben comprendiamo come il rapporto con Petrarca non potesse essere di mera accettazione del suo verso e dei suoi contenuti. Sarebbe, questa, una visione del tutto fuorviante oltre che ingenua del fare poesia. Del resto, per Wyatt e gli altri petrarchisti inglesi vale quanto scrive Gian Biagio Conte nel saggio *Memoria dei poeti e sistema letterario*:

> La parola poetica non ha mai vita solitaria ma è sempre all'incrocio di significati convergenti, ne costituisce anzi, in certo modo, il 'luogo' privilegiato [...] Per tale natura composita essa è resa carica di una significatività che è al di qua anche del suo significato proprio, come una seconda voce, o come un'etichetta che s'iscrive in sopralinea e che la situa e la qualifica già prima che essa 'significhi' specificamente qualcosa. Quest'etichetta le è data naturalmente dall'agire storico della tradizione poetica: riusarla, immetterla al centro di un altro intrico di coordinate (che è il nuovo contesto) vuol dire aver fatto i conti con la sua seconda natura, averne accettato la caratterizzazione in sopralinea[13].

Il petrarchismo non basta a definire compiutamente l'opera di Wyatt. I quasi due secoli che lo dividono da Petrarca hanno il loro peso in termini di mutamento epistemico. E, nonostante l'esplicita e continuativa presenza petrarchesca nella sua ricerca, il *Canzoniere* è solo un elemento di un processo di testualizzazione in cui convergono molteplici fattori. Fra questi va ricordato il fattore religioso vissuto in chiave tutta protestante da Wyatt, che, è bene ricordarlo, tradusse i Salmi Penitenziali, in uno strenuo e significativo perseguimento di un equilibrio che, sempre cercato, pareva sempre sottrarsi al suo sguardo desiderante. Anche per la poesia di Wyatt si configura "una significatività che è al di qua del suo significato proprio", e che corrisponde all'esigenza di delineare un terreno intermedio fra due vettori antitetici. Da un lato, la falsità del potere e i linguaggi ambigui e costruiti della corte di Enrico VIII – un contesto con cui quale diplomatico deve fare sempre i conti – e, dall'altro lato, l'anelito verso

13. G.B. Conte, *Memoria di poeti e sistema letterario*, Torino, Einaudi, 1974, pp. 19–20.

un ideale fondato sulla verità, sulla integrità morale e su un legame coerente con la propria coscienza. Il petrarchismo, dicevo, è un modello insufficiente a definire la ricerca compiuta da Wyatt, ma indubbiamente dall'umanesimo petrarchesco deriva l'intensità di un dibattito interiore che lo vede oscillare fra ruolo pubblico e ruolo privato, sempre alla ricerca di una verità che, cercata a più riprese nel suo io, non riesce a riconoscere e a distinguere nel mondo dell'élite culturale che frequenta. In questa sua permanente interrogazione di sé, Wyatt sembra parlare lo stesso linguaggio del *Secretum* di Petrarca, nel quale, sulla linea elettiva di una *meditatio mortis*, assume particolare centralità il tema dell'auto-individuazione spirituale in un mondo che non si sente ancora di abbandonare. Significativo quanto Petrarca scrive nell'ultima pagina del *Secretum*:

> Sarò sempre presente a me stesso quanto più potrò, e raccoglierò gli sparsi frammenti della mia anima e dimorerò in me, con attenzione. Ma ora, mentre parliamo, mi aspettano molte e importanti faccende, benché ancora mortali[14].
>
> Adero michi ipse quanto potero, et sparsa anime fragmenta recolligam, moraborque mecu sedulo. Sane nunc, dum loquimur, multa me magnaque, quamvis adhuc mortalia, negotia expectant[15].

È difficile dire con certezza se Wyatt conoscesse o meno il *Secretum*. L'enorme successo europeo di questo libro, da molti visto come un'autentica sintesi del pensiero petrarchesco, lascia immaginare che un letterato come Wyatt non potesse non averlo letto. A ragione, la tradizione critica ha riconosciuto nel *Secretum* un grande testo dell'io. Quello che s'impone è un io percorso da inquietudini e incertezze, un io sempre sul punto di sdoppiarsi, di farsi quasi frammento – Petrarca, proprio contro questa tendenza ontologicamente disgregatrice, oppone l'istanza del racconto di sé come *locus* in cui definire un ordine possibile. Il poeta cerca cioè di mettere ordine a se stesso, sulla scorta del modello agostiniano – il modello delle *Confessioni*, ove Agostino offre la testimonianza di un percorso culminante nell'incontro con la verità. Non

14. Petrarca, *Secretum – Il mio segreto*, a cura di Enrico Fenzi, Milano, Mursia, 1992, p. 283.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

a caso il *Secretum* è costruito come dialogo con Agostino, "eccelso interlocutore"[16], al quale, a chiusura del libro, il poeta sente di esprimere la propria gratitudine: "Ti ringrazio invece moltissimo, sia per tante altre cose sia per questo colloquio di tre giorni, poiché mi hai ripulito gli occhi offuscati e hai dissipato la densa nebbia d'errore che li circondava"[17]. Più in generale, quale prima coscienza moderna, del tutto pronto a mostrarsi nella sua debolezza di uomo, Petrarca presenta se stesso come uomo dell'errore che vuole essere educato alla verità. Ed è questo il messaggio del Petrarca che, ormai alle soglie della vecchiaia, delinea il disegno della sua vita, cercando di ricostruirne la totalità a partire dai suoi sparsi frammenti. Soprattutto a partire dai suoi errori, che egli osserva dall'alto della sua raggiunta maturità ponendosi il problema del loro superamento. Nel dialogo del *Secretum*, la voce di Agostino gli rimprovera, sul piano della ricerca umanistica, "ruffianeria, per ottenere una gloria inconsistente", adottando l'immagine della "poetica imbarcazione" ("[...] ad Africam poetico quondam navigio transivisti")[18].

Il motivo della nave non può non suggerire un rimando al famoso sonetto 189, ove la nave colma d'oblio procede con cordame intriso di errore e ignoranza. Credo che per concludere questo breve *excursus* valga la pena di leggere l'intero sonetto per poi confrontarlo brevemente con la traduzione di Wyatt:

16. *Ibid.*, p. 99. A proposito del volume delle *Confessioni*, nella citata biografia di Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Vita del Petrarca*, leggiamo: "In gennaio ricevette una lettera del giovane monaco agostiniano Luigi Marsili, che lo ringraziava per le gentilezze ricevute in passato e gli chiedeva, probabilmente in prestito, la copia che il poeta possedeva delle *Confessioni* di Sant'Agostino. Petrarca aveva avuto quel libro in dono, circa cinquant'anni prima, da un altro monaco agostiniano, Dionigi da Borgo di San Sepolcro; ed era diventato per lui uno degli oggetti più cari. Ora sentì l'impulso di regalarlo al suo giovane amico agostiniano; infatti glielo mandò, insieme a una lettera (*Sen.*, XV 7) in cui gli parlava del libro [...] Gli era stato compagno nelle più diverse vicende e in un'occasione era stato con lui in pericolo sul mare. Ora Petrarca era lieto che il libro tornasse nelle mani di un monaco agostiniano e prevedeva che avrebbe accompagnato Luigi nei suoi viaggi" (p. 295).

17. *Secretum*, p. 281.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio
per aspro mare, a mezza notte il verno,
enfra Scilla et Caribdi; et al governo
siede 'l signore, anzi 'l nimico mio.

A ciascun remo un penser pronto et rio
che la tempesta e 'l fin par ch'abbi a scherno;
la vela rompe un vento humido eterno
di sospir', di speranze et di desio.

Pioggia di lagrimar, nebbia di sdegni
bagna et rallenta le già stanche sarte,
che son d'error con ignorantia attorto.

Celansi i duo mei dolci usati segni;
morta fla l'onde è la ragion et l'arte,
tal ch'incomincio a desperar del porto[19].

Non rientra nella linea tematica del mio intervento un'analisi di questo sonetto (analisi già compiuta da svariati studiosi ma che, nella programmazione testuale adibita da Petrarca, prevede ulteriori letture e interpretazioni). Qui vorrei piuttosto fermare brevemente l'attenzione sulla traduzione di Wyatt, che, come si è accennato, aveva posto il paradigma dell'errore in stretta correlazione con quello dell'immagine di un mondo come messinscena della menzogna[20]. Wyatt trasforma il sonetto 189 in chiave realistica, non solo con l'espunzione dell'allusione topo-mitologica del terzo verso ("Twene Rock and Rock", "fra roccia e roccia" e non fra Scilla e Cariddi), ma aggiungendo una più disperata visione del mondo. Per cui il verso "Pioggia di lagrimar, nebbia di sdegni" diventa "A rayn of teris, a clowde of derk disdain", cioè "una pioggia di lacrime e una nuvola di scuro sdegno", come nel verso 13 è espunta la parola positiva "arte" per fare dell'ultima terzina la rappresentazione della sua irredenta disperazione:

19. *Canzoniere*, p. 245. Forse è superfluo ricordare che il sonetto 189 è stato tradotto, fra gli altri, anche da Edmund Spenser (*Amoretti*, xxxiv, "Lyke as a ship through the Ocean wyde"), che, rispetto all'originale petrarchesco, si muove molto più liberamente di Wyatt.
20. Si veda in proposito C.Z. Hobson, "Country Mouse and Towny Mouse: Truth in Wyatt", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 39 (1997), pp. 230–258.

The starres be hid that led me to this pain;
Drowned is reason that should me confort,
And I remain dispering of the port.

Se Petrarca si congeda dichiarando di incominciare "a disperar del porto", Wyatt è più drastico: "rimango a disperare del porto" – la condizione di disperazione è stata già del tutto sperimentata. Per Wyatt non una nave carica d'oblio che si appresta a trovare un porto sicuro come quella petrarchesca, ma la scena è quella di un'imbarcazione condannata all'erranza, che fra le tempeste e sotto un cielo senza luce può solamente drammatizzare la sua disperazione. Se Petrarca, nella sua vecchiaia, ritrova in qualche modo la ragione di un ordine esistenziale nello studio e nella verità, sia pure conquistata attraverso dolorosi passaggi, Wyatt mette in scena una personalità più lacerata e per questo più fortemente legata al dubbio e alla problematizzazione dell'esistenza tipica del rinascimento inglese. Lo scarto temporale fra il *Canzoniere* e la sua diffusione in Inghilterra ad opera di Wyatt e Surrey non può essere sottaciuto. La storia ha il suo peso in termini epistemici. La realtà in cui vive Wyatt è quella di un'Europa in cui tutto viene rimesso in discussione, non solo la centralità del Papato, ma anche il rapporto fra la religione e la soggettività, e più in generale il rapporto fra l'uomo e il potere. Da questo versante la modernità di Wyatt appare straordinaria e, l'intera sua opera, letta in prospettiva culturologica, appare uno snodo fondamentale nella formazione della coscienza dell'uomo moderno.

Università di Pescara

Viaggiatori anglosassoni a Genova e guide di viaggio locali: Thomas Nugent, alcune considerazioni

Giulia Savio

"Che cos'è oggi la città per noi? Penso d'aver scritto qualcosa come un ultimo poema d'amore alle città, nel momento in cui diventa sempre più difficile viverle come città."[1]
Italo Calvino

Introduzione: la città, fonti e contesto

Questo dichiarava Calvino in occasione di una conferenza tenuta presso la Columbia University nel 1983, esplicitando come il libro (*Le città invisibili*) nascesse dalle riflessioni attorno al dato contingente della realtà metropolitana. Conferma di ciò si trova in un'altra dichiarazione dello scrittore che presentando il libro, diceva:

> "E" su questa immagine[2] che il Libro gravita, direi che è il punto di partenza del libro, più che il punto d'arrivo, nel senso che se mi sta tanto a cuore parlare della città è perché la vita urbana è diventata talmente disagevole che si sente il bisogno di interrogarci su che cos'è, e su cosa dovrebbe essere la città per noi.'[3]

1. I.Calvino, Le *città invisibili* (Milano. Mondadori, 1983), IX.
2. Si riferisce all'idea di megalopoli espressa nel testo di riferimento.
3. "Intervista a Italo Calvino, *Nel regno di Calvinia*", *L'Espresso*, (5 novembre 1972), 11. Sull'argomento, nello suo specifico letterario, si veda: R. Ludovico, *Le città*

Si apprende cosi che è proprio un problema pratico, derivante da una istanza concreta. Il punto di partenza di queste "città" che si fanno "invisibili", poi, per effetto della tecnica letteraria attraverso cui sono rese. Il dato reale di partenza si disgrega in una costellazione di immagini spesso eteree ed evanescenti, ed è inserito in una cornice metastorica e meta-letteraria che pare fargli perdere qualunque contatto con la realtà.

Tale premessa può risultare fuorviante ma ben si lega con il concetto che voglio esprimere. Può una città essere descritta in maniera oggettiva, o, per meglio dire, la descrizione che viene fornita di essa può considerarsi una fonte attendibile?

Nel presentare, a chi non la conosce, una città, o, più in generale un luogo, si è soliti individuarne le caratteristiche, provare a definirne l'identità, a questa esigenza risponde un tipo di pubblicazione specifica, mi riferisco alle guide artistiche locali che si propongono come mediatrici fra il visitatore e la città. Nel fare ciò esse svolgono un ruolo fondamentale per la definizione, la visione e la percezione delle città, in questo specifico caso di Genova.

I precedenti delle guide della città vanno cercati, già a partire dal XVI secolo, in due direzioni diverse, ma non del tutto divergenti, che, di fatto, per le date che qui interessano (XVII–XVIII secc.), finiscono per convergere in questa nuova forma di letteratura; da un lato troviamo la storiografia, ovvero, una serie di testi di autori locali o che si inseriscono in una tradizione storica del territorio, dall'altro i resoconti dei viaggiatori.

Il dibattito che traspare da questo primo gruppo di opere dimostra quanto, nonostante le dichiarazioni di rito, l'interesse degli autori, fino al XVIII secolo, resti circoscritta alle vicende storiche o al rapporto mare-città e non si occupi della divulgazione a vantaggio dei viaggiatori. Quest'ultimo processo si modificherà solo quando la tipologia del visitatore, ormai viaggiatore del Grand Tour, necessiterà di una gamma specifica di sussidi informativi.[4]

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invisibili di Italo Calvino: le ragioni dello scrittore, (Department of Italian Studies McGill University Montreal July 1997 A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Masters of Arts).

4. Per un inquadramento generale sull'argomento, in ambito nazionale, si veda: L. Di Mauro, *L'Italia e le guide turistiche dall'Unità ad oggi*, *Storia d'Italia. Annali* 5. Il paesaggio, (Torino. Einaudi, 1982), 369–429.

Una prima linea genealogica deve essere individuata nella lunga serie di testi di autori locali, più o meno noti, che al territorio e alle sue emergenze monumentali, si volgono soprattutto con interesse storico – economico e nell'ambito di un attenzione verso il paesaggio nella sua più peculiare caratteristica di città di scogli.[5]

È il caso del medico Bartolomeo Paschetti che, nel 1583, scrive una sorta di pamphlet sotto forma di dialogo sulla situazione della città di Genova. Egli presenta il territorio nel suo massimo sviluppo architettonico, durante la costruzione dei palazzi di Strada Nuova, principale strada cittadina, e mette in luce, nelle parole del suo interlocutore il marchese Giulio Pallavicino alcune peculiarità della mentalità ligure in merito al rapporto dei genovesi con le arti figurative e la promozione della città.[6]

Di fatto il Paschetti non punta a descrivere vere e proprie emergenze monumentali cittadine (ad eccezione della villa del marchese stesso) ma a riflettere su come queste possano risultare superflue e prive di valore se non nel caso di effettiva manifestazione di potenza economica o di investimento finanziario.

Ciò ci viene confermato anche qualche anno più tardi, nel 1601, attraverso le pagine del diario manoscritto di viaggio dell'alto prelato e fine conoscitore di belle arti Monsignor Giambattista Agucchi[7] che, visitando Genova, non può fare a meno di sottolineare il suo interesse e

5. B. Paschetti, *Le bellezze di Genova, dialogo del Signor Bartolomeo Paschetti nel quale si ragione del sito della città . . .*, Genova, 1583. Sull'argomento si veda anche M. Migliorini , *Tra divulgazione storiografia artistica,* in E. Gavazza (ed.), *Pittura e decorazione a Genova nel Settecento,* (Genova. Banca Carige, Sagep Edizioni, 2000), pp. 389–394.

6. Per un inquadramento generale sull'urbanistica cittadina si veda: E. Poleggi, *L'invenzione dei rolli: Genova, città di palazzi,* (Genova. Skira 2004).

7. G.B. Agucchi, *Diario del viaggio del Card. Pietro Aldobrandino nell'andar Legato Apost.co a Firenze per il sponsalitio della regina di Francia e doppo in Francia per la pace Descritto da Mons. Agucchia morto in Venetia Nuntio Apostolico,* Archivio storico del Comune di Genova. Giovanni Battista, 1570–1632, scrisse il diario in sette copie da donare ai vari componenti della spedizione. Ad oggi non si conosce quale delle sette copie, conservate fra l'Italia e gli Stati Uniti, sia il prototipo. Per completezza sull'argomento si veda: G. Savio, "Genoa: a stage of the Grand Tour, comparing the experiences of George Romney and other travellers", *ROMNEY SOCIETY. Tansactions of the Romney society,* 13 (2008), 24–37, in particolare nota 45. Per approfondimenti si veda anche: G. Savio, *Genova e le sue emergenze monumentali e storico-artistiche attraverso le guide e la letteratura di viaggio,* tesi di dottorato, discussa presso l'Università degli Studi di Genova il 30 marzo 2010.

stupore nel vedere una città tanto splendida seppur ancora così legata ad una antica consuetudine, ovvero il concetto che poco o nulla paiono contare, agli occhi della classe dirigente mercantile locale, le ricchezze dei palazzi, delle ville, delle collezioni quando non ripagate da una forte presenza di potere economico e politico, vera forza della Repubblica dominante. Non stupisce dunque che negli stessi anni inizino a diffondersi sul territorio piccole guide tascabili, più note con il nome di *Saggi cronologici* il cui scopo principale era, da un lato, quello di accompagnare il cittadino, segnalando le opere artistiche più significative conservate nelle chiese e nelle dimore cittadine più importanti ma principalmente quello di rendere pubbliche le principali cariche elettive del potere politico e temporale sempre in quel principio propulsivo di arte come manifestazione di potenza economica. È quindi comprensibile che dalla prima edizione del 1668 per i tipi Benedetto Celle si susseguano varie edizioni (fino all'ultima datata 1743)[8] sostanzialmente immutate per la componente informativa ma assai precise e puntuali sugli aspetti sociali e politici in corso.

Le informazioni "artistiche" per tutto il XVII secolo sono dunque rivolte, in prevalenza, ai cittadini o ai pochi forestieri prevalentemente commercianti anglosassoni (che si faranno tradurre e stampare le stesse) e alle persone di passaggio, mentre le indicazioni specifiche di carattere storico artistico locale vengono fornite ad uso di collezionisti e cultori dalle indicazioni delle *Vite* di Raffaele Soprani.[9]

Nel contempo ritroviamo anche fogli informativi o gazzette, talvolta in lingua inglese, che con diverse denominazioni,[10] illustravano ai lettori

8. L'edizione del 1743 per i Tipi Paolo Scionino, si tratta dell'ultima edizione nella sua edizione tascabile. Il contenuto è tratto da un manoscritto del 1742 ormai noto, si differenzia nel contenuto storico artistico. Il manoscritto, presso la Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova è in fase di redazione da parte di Maurizia Migliorini.
9. *Le vite de pittori, scoltori et architetti genovesi; e de' forestieri che in Genova operarono; con alcuni ritratti de gli stessi opera posthuma dell'Illustre. Signor Rafaele Soprani.* Aggiontavi la vita dell'autore, per opera di Gio. Nicolò Cavana, Genova : Bottaro & Tiboldi, 1674. Si ricorda, in questa sede, che è attualmente in corso di stampa, ad opera di Maurizia Migliorini, la riedizione con nota critica del testo.
10. Fra questi ricordiamo: *Genova,* un foglio informativo pubblicato da diversi stampatori nel corso del primi anni del XVII sec., *Il Sincero* e *Il Botticelli.* Sull'argomento si veda in particolare C. Farinella (ed.), *I periodici dell'ancien regime della Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova (sec. XVI–1800),* (Genova. 1944), 16–18.

la situazione politica, sociale ed economica del territorio, soffermandosi, talvolta, anche se raramente, sugli aspetti più squisitamente culturali.

È dunque il XVIII secolo il momento focale che veda Genova affermarsi come meta di interesse culturale. Interesse fortemente favorito da un dibattito sulle arti, da un contesto culturale caratterizzato da una propensione sia verso la ricerca delle fonti, si pensi all'edizione delle *Antiquitates*[11] del Muratori sia verso una visione più cosmopolita del viaggio e dei luoghi degni di essere visitati.

In questo contesto così vivace assistiamo alla trasformazione dei vecchi fogli informativi, legati ad un ambito locale, in veri e propri prontuari europei di informazioni, noti alle stampe con il nome di *Avvisi di Genova.* Continuazione delle gazzette si differenziano per uno spiccato interesse nei confronti dell'arte, del collezionismo e del mercato artistico locale e forestiero.[12]

Una seconda genealogia della guidistica locale va ricercata nella letteratura di viaggio strettamente intesa in cui si inizia ad identificare uno sguardo di insieme che individua accanto ai *luoghi comuni*[13] dello stereotipo genovese, anche una visione complessiva di elementi separati e che può ben cogliersi prestando attenzione al corredo illustrativo, talvolta assai più significativo e di immediata comprensione rispetto al commento. Per riassumere gli esordi di questo tipo di impostazione è necessario compiere una veloce digressione verso gli esordi della rappresentazione e della conseguente georeferenziazione della città stessa.

Essa fa la propria comparsa già dal Medioevo ma con particolare frequenza durante tutto il XVI secolo, negli atlanti della città, nelle raccolte cartografiche e nelle storie illustrative italiane e straniere come un borgo sul mare la cui caratteristica principale riguarda una singolare struttura verticale.

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11. *Antiquitates Italicae medii aevi, sive Dissertationes de moribus, ritibus, religione, regimine, magistratibus, legibus, studiis literarum, artibus, lingua, militia, nummis, principibus, libertate, servitute, foederibus, aliisque faciem et mores Italici populi referentibus post declinationem Rom. Imp. ad annum usque MD: omnia illustrantur, et confirmantur ingenti copia diplomatum et chartarum veterum, nunc primum ex archivis Italiae depromtarum, additis etiam nummis, chronicis, aliisque monumentis numquam antea editis auctore Ludovico Antonio Muratorio.* – Mediolani 1738–1742.
12. Si faccia riferimento a: *Avvisi di Genova,* anni 1777–1797, per completezza si veda anche M. Migliorini, *Tra divulgazione storiografia artistica,* 390.
13. M.A. Fusco, *Il "luogo comune" paesaggistico nelle immagini di massa,* 753–800.

Dalla prima metà del XVIII secolo, invece, Genova viene rappresentata quasi esclusivamente e, in particolar modo in ambito anglosassone, come importante porto marittimo e, pertanto le sue raffigurazioni riguardano, in prevalenza la struttura portuale priva di orpelli e sovrastrutture.

È dunque in questo contesto culturale in cui il mare e il porto appaiono elementi centrali della città, che dobbiamo operare.[14]

Non stupisce, pertanto che dal mare giungono i visitatori, dal mare analizzano il territorio e, sempre, dal mare i cittadini ricavino quella visibilità e quel potere economico di Repubblica dominante che li caratterizza, di fatto si tratta del vero limite che delinea il territorio e ne uniforma la percezione.

È fondamentale ricordare che l'importanza di Genova, quale porto commerciale fonda le sue radici fra gli abitanti dell'Europa settentrionale, in particolare anglosassoni, già a partire dal XVII secolo; nei principali porti mediterranei, infatti, vi erano gruppi di mercanti nordeuropei, in particolare a Livorno e a Genova, dove erano stati istituiti uffici con a capo un console, scelto fra la borghesia commerciale, che si occupasse delle pratiche burocratiche e dei contenziosi.[15]

La tappa a Genova diviene, in alternativa o in concomitanza a quella livornese, indispensabile non tanto per visitare un ameno luogo culturale ma quale punto di approdo atto alle mercanzie e al commercio. Da qui si inviavano merci, talvolta anche di valore artistico (quadri, arredi ...) verso la terra madre.

Troppo lungo e complicato sarebbe, in questa sede, analizzare le varie descrizioni di Genova elaborate da visitatori e viaggiatori sia di lingua italiana sia di lingua inglese, per i quali rimando a miei contributi precedenti.[16] Utile invece, approfondire una fonte fino ad ora meno indagata che può fornirci adeguate indicazioni sulla percezione della città da parte di un visitatore anglosassone che operò proprio nel contesto

14. Per approfondimenti si veda: G. Savio, *Genova e le sue emergenze monumentali e storico-artistiche attraverso le guide e la letteratura di viaggio*, tesi di dottorato, discussa presso l'Università degli Studi di Genova il 30 marzo 2010.
15. E. Grendi, "I nordici e il traffico nel porto di Genova", *Rivista storica italiana*, 1, LXXXIII, (197)1, 23–71.
16. Per approfondimenti si veda: G. Savio, *Genova e le sue emergenze monumentali e storico-artistiche attraverso le guide e la letteratura di viaggio*, tesi di dottorato, discussa presso l'Università degli Studi di Genova il 30 marzo 2010.

socio economico culturale appena descritto e che sfruttò le fonti locali di cui accennato.

Nugent e il suo Grand Tour, la tappa genovese: architettura e belle arti

Non vi è dubbio che i numerosi viaggiatori, di lingua inglese, che affollavano la Penisola già dai primi anni del Settecento non potesse riportare in toto, in volumi stampati, le proprie impressioni di viaggio.

Con ciò alcuni loro commenti più sagaci sono giunti, comunque, fino a noi attraverso questi volumi a stampa ancora poco noti e, pertanto, capace di dischiudersi a varie interpretazioni conoscitive. Nei numerosi diari e resoconti di viaggio redatti da artisti, viandanti, commercianti e nobili, durante le loro peregrinazioni, alcuni scritti di getto durante il viaggio altri rimaneggiati, in parte, al ritorno dal lungo soggiorno in Italia o in una sua regione, ma comunque caratterizzati dall'immediatezza d'opinione, particolarmente interessante risulta il resoconto di un viaggiatore irlandese Thomas Nugent che nel 1749, in piena temperie di matrice illuminista, pubblica *The grand tour,* fornendoci la più dettagliata descrizione di Genova dell'epoca.

Il nobile irlandese Thomas Nugent del suo viaggio a Genova, durato quattro giorni, durata codificata per le consuete pratiche burocratiche di passaggio,[18] riporta prima una dettagliata lista delle miglia che separano Roma da Genova, poi, in un paragrafo a parte, le peculiarità e le località degne di nota della Riviera di Levante, sottolineando però che egli avrebbe dovuto raggiungere Genova via mare partendo dalle Bocche di Magra ma che, essendo inverno, il viaggio sarebbe risultato troppo pericoloso, preferendo così un percorso via terra altrettanto azzardato attraverso il

17. Per completezza sulla figura di Thomas Nugent, 6th Earl of Westmeath si veda: E. Cokayne; with Vicary Gibbs, H.A. Doubleday, Geoffrey H. White, Duncan Warrand and Lord Howard de Walden, (ed.), *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom,* Extant, Extinct or Dormant, new ed., 13 volumes in 14 (1910–1959; reprint in 6 volumes, Gloucester, U.K.: Alan Sutton Publishing, 2000), volume II, page 185.

18. Medesima durata avevano avuto, a scopo esemplificativo, i soggiorni di G. B. Agucchi, George Romney, cfr. G. Savio, *Genova e le sue emergenze monumentali e storico-artistiche attraverso le guide e la letteratura di viaggio*, tesi di dottorato, discussa presso l'Università degli Studi di Genova il 30 marzo 2010.

passo del Bracco, ovvero una delle principalo direttrici per giungere in città:

> 'Here you may embark for Genoa, but, continuing the journey by land, you pass the river Magra which is very dangerous in winter; and from thence you begin to ascend the rugged mountains of Genoa and, palling through the village of Martarana you come to Bracco the highest mountain in am that country, which is impassable for horses, so that you are obliged to hire mules part of the way, and part to walk it.'

Pur non essendo giunto a Genova dal mare, direttrice privilegiata di ingresso, Nugent, in un lungo e precedente paragrafo, aveva comunque descritto il porto e le fortificazioni locali, focalizzando l'attenzione sugli aspetti geografici e le funzioni di entrambe le zone cittadine:[19]

> 'Genoa is the capital of the republic of that Genoa. name, in E. long. 9 30. lat. 44. 30. Its lands situation: in the form of a theatre, at the bottom of a little gulf upon the ascent of a hill, opening itself to the sea, from whence there is a most delightful prospect, of the city. The harbour is large and deep, but lies exposed to the southwest, the most troublesome wind in those seas. There is harbour, a little harbour, built within the great one for their gullies, and two moles for the security of their ships besides a third mole begun since the French bombardment in 1684, and some new batteries erected towards the sea since the present war, in order to secure them from the insults of an enemy. The town is about six miles in circumference, surrounded with a double fortification, which covers it behind, and reaches on both fides the shore. The nearest. and best of these fortifications properly encompasses the city, and the second includes all the rising grounds that command it. Since the present war and the memorable expulsion of the Austrian in 1746, there have been several new outworks added to the old ones, so as to render it a place of no inconsiderable strength.'

Si concentra poi sull'urbanistica privata e pubblica, sottolineando i gravi problemi di spazio della città ma ricordando altresì, come consuetudine nelle descrizioni cittadine, la grandiosità della decorazione marmorea esterna agli edifici, evidenziando l'idea comune di Genova, in

19. Thomas Nugent, *The Grand Tour,* (London. S. Birt, vol. III), 143. In particolare le parti relative a Genova si trovano a p. 16, 143, 367.

ambiente anglosassone, quale città di marmo di sapore palladiano.[20] Ciò riporta l'attenzione su una tradizione che nega, o meglio non riconosce la consuetudine che collegava il disegno dei principali palazzi cittadini (Strada Nuova) a Galeazzo Alessi:

> 'Since the above-mentioned bombardment this city has been rebuilt to a great advantage, most of the houses being of brick or stone, fix or seven stories high, the roofs flat and the wails generally plastered over and painted. It is divided into the old and new town, containing about 50,000 Inhabitants; the streets of the old are very {trait and uneven, so that being too narrow for coaches, people of distinction are obliged to make use of chairs and litters. In the new Buildings, town the houses are built very high, but as the ascent rises, they are somewhat lower and at a greater distance from one another. The narrowness of the streets, and the loftiness of the houses, produces an obscurity in the lower rooms, which is attended with the convenience on the other hand of defending them from the heat of the sun, which is exceeding violent here in summer. The new street is a double range of palaces from one end to the other, fit for the greatest princes to inhabit. They are all richly adorned with marble, which is lavished as it were thro' every part of this fine city.'

Indugia sulla sontuosità e ricchezza di San Pier D'Arena che ai suoi occhi appare forse più bella di Genova, denotando un occhio attento e mostrandoci un evidente cambiamento di punti di vista e riferimento anche perché l'attuale periferia era allora luogo di villeggiatura di bellezza incomparabile:

> 'There are five or six other streets of a great breadth, filled with magnificent houses, particularly the suburb of S. Pietro d'Arena which is enriched with such a number of sumptuous palaces, as are sufficient to justify the title this city has assumed of Genoa the stately.'

Fornisce anche, a contrario dei suoi conterranei, qualche corretta indicazione numerica:

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20. Ad esempio Lady Mary Montagu, con entusiasmo pari quasi alla noncuranza storica, affermerà: Non basta che io dica che i palazzi, la più parte di essi, sono stati disegnati dal Palladio? Mary Montagu, *Letters and works*, ed. Lord Wharncliffe. (1861), p. 387.

> 'The whole town contains about thirty parish churches, twenty colleges, and as many convents and religious houses.'

A proposito delle emergenze monumentali genovesi riferisce, senza mezzi termini l'inferiorità, rispetto ad altre chiese visitate, della cattedrale di S. Lorenzo ma sottolinea l'importanza del Santo Patrono, delle reliquie ivi contenute e del famoso Catino[21] del quale fornisce una precisa descrizione storica e stilistica che ci rammenta come il resto sacro fosse ancora considerata forgiata da un unico grande smeraldo e non da vile vetro di cui, in realtà è fatto:

> 'The chief structures of Genoa are, the cathedral dedicated to S. Laurence, a large pile of building, but inferior in beauty to several other Italian's churches. The inside is remarkable for the marble pillars, which support the roof, and a marble statue of S. John the Evangelist. The ashes of S. John Baptist are said to be preserved in this church in a silver vessel, which stands upon four porphyry pillars. They preserve likewise a large dim made of one single emerald, which they pretend to have been presented to Solomon by the queen of Sheba, and to be the fame out of which our Saviour eat the paschal lamb.'

Si sofferma poi sulla bellezza della chiesa della Annunziata nella quale crede di identificare, come farà anche, qualche anno più tardi il

21. Molti viaggiatori visitano la cattedrale per poter vedere la preziosa reliquia del Catino che assume agli occhi del visitatore una valenza sia artistica che storico-religiosa e coinvolge anche il pubblico anglosassone così poco interessato alla cultura cattolica, fra questi ricordiamo John Breval in *Remarks on several parts of Europe: relating chiefly to the history, antiquities and geography, of those countries through which the author has travel'd; as France, the Low Countries, Lorrain, Alsatia, Germany, Savoy, Tyrol, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. Illustrated with several maps, plans, and above forty copper plates*, (1726) e John Talman in A. de La Motraye, *Travels through Europe, Asia, and into parts of Africa; with proper Cutts and Maps,* (London. 1723), 60. Su quest'ultimo esempio si veda la recente monografia di C. M. Sicca, *Viaggio nel rito. John Talman e la costruzione di un Museo Sacro Carteceo,* (Firenze. Edifir, 2009). Più genericamente, notizie di carattere storico e culturale su Genova (e pertanto anche legate all'immagine, quasi mitologica, del catino) potevano allora inoltre recuperarsi, in ambito anglosassone, in brevi note apparse, quasi a scopo pubblicitario, sulle pagine de The Gentleman's magazine e su quelle de The Scots magazine.

latinista francese Charles De Brosses[22] affreschi di Rubens, del quale, evidentemente, era un ammiratore come del resto tutti i suoi contemporanei. Tale considerazione riguarda la decorazione a fresco della chiesa che comprendeva dipinti murali, fra i molti, del Carlone, di Giulio Benso e dell'Assereto ma nessuno, a quanto risulta dalla fonti, di Rubens. Tale affermazione indurrebbe a credere ad un errore di valutazione, evento assai raro nei resoconti stilati da Nugent che si rivela, di solito, attento conoscitore d'arte. Non va dimenticato che il nostro, fluente nella lingua italiana, aveva potuto, qualche anno più tardi, tradurre in inglese la Vita di Benvenuto Cellini[23] e ciò era stato possibile proprio in virtù delle sue conoscenze in campo storico artistico inoltre proprio in riferimento a Rubens aveva precedentemente potuto osservare presso la Chiesa di S. Ambrogio del Gesù la Circoncisione, opera dai suoi connazionali raramente citata.[24] La conoscenza di Rubens e della cultura figurativa tardo cinquecentesca non era per il nostro superficiale ma approfondita e legata a studi sviluppati in patria.

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22. Charles De Brosses: Lettres historiques et critiques sur l'Italie. L'Italie il y a cent ans, ou Lettres ecrites d'Italie à quelques amis en 1739–1740, Parigi 1836. Ed. cons.: Viaggio in Italia. Lettere familiari, (Roma/Bari. 1973), 70–72. Per completezza sulla figura di De Brosses e del suo viaggio si veda: G. Savio, 'La percezione della cultura figurativa di Genova nei viaggiatori del XVIII secolo: persistenze e assenze', *Kunstgeschichte. Texte zur Diskussion*, 2010.
23. Vita di Benvenuto di Maestro Giovanni Cellini fiorentino, scritta, per lui medesimo, in Firenze (1558-1566), nota anche come "La Vita". Autobiografia. Pubblicata per la prima volta a Napoli da Antonio Cocchi nel 1728, l'autobiografia di Benvenuto Cellini o Vita di Benvenuto di Maestro Giovanni Cellini fiorentino, scritta, per lui medesimo, in Firenze fu redatta inizialmente dallo stesso Cellini in un periodo di forzata inattività dovuta al poco favore di cui godeva presso il suo ultimo committente, il duca Cosimo dé Medici, ed in seguito venne dettata dall'autore ad un figlio tredicenne di Michele di Goro. La Vita, divisa in 2 libri rispettivamente di 128 e 113 brevi capitoli (il primo libro giunge fino al 1539, il secondo va dal 1540 al 1562), è tutt'altro che un'obiettiva autobiografia: al contrario, in essa il Cellini volle soprattutto celebrare quell'esaltazione dell'individuo e delle sue virtù che fu tipica della società rinascimentale e della maggior parte della letteratura biografica dell'epoca. [first English edition:] *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini.* Thomas Nugent, trans. 2 vols. London: Printed for T. Davies, 1771; [first edition using original manuscript:] Tassi, Francesco, editor.
24. Esclusivamente il pittore George Romney riferisce a proposito dell'opera, citando, a contrario di Nugent che se ne dimentica anche *Il miracolo di San Ignazio che guarisce un'ossessa* anch'esso opera del Rubens.

'The church of the Annunciation is the finest in Genoa, built at the hole expense of the family of Lomellini; the roof is gloriously gilded, the pillars that support it are of marble, arid the walls covered with most exquisite paintings. The altars are magnificent, and adorned with fine pictures done by Rubens, and other great matters.'

Annovera, curiosamente senza specifiche descrizioni storico artistiche, altri noti luoghi di culto, evidentemente la visita estremamente breve e non aveva permesso di ammirare a pieno tutte le emergenze monumentali, ad esempio presso la Chiesa si Santa Maria dell'Assunta a Carignano non cita né artisti del Barocco locale (Piola, De Ferrari, Cambiaso, Carlone) né alcuni maestri maggiormente noti a livello europeo quali Puget e Guercino.[25] Tali edifici sono comunque degni di essere menzionati per i futuri viaggiatori.

'The churches of S. Cyr, La Madonna della Vigna, S. Matthew, S. Mary of Carignan, and the Jesuits[26] are also extremely well worth a traveller's notice.'

L'attenzione all'arte figurativa è comunque molto forte. Dedica, infatti, un intero paragrafo ai dipinti presenti in città e li definisce number of exquisite paintings as some other cities in Italy.

Si sofferma, in particolare, secondo il gusto raffaellesco dell'epoca, nel descrivere presso la Chiesa di Santo Stefano la Lapidazione che, a contrario di molti altri visitatori identifica correttamente come opera di Giulio Romano e non di Raffaello. La tradizione voleva infatti che il

25. Per completezza si veda: G. Algeri, *Basilica dell'Assunta di Carignano*, (Genova. Sagep, 1975).

26. Si riferisce al complesso di S. Ignazio, attuale sede dell'Archivio di Stato cittadino. La visita a tale luogo non era frequente. Esclusivamente Monsignor G.B. Agucchi nel secolo precedente ricorda di aver visto il complesso. Fra i tanti impegni spicca la visita presso le monache della chiesa di San Leonardo, luogo marginale e quasi mai inserito negli itinerari cittadini dell'epoca, della quale riferisce:

'chiesa posta nella più alta parte della città (...) vi fu invitato da loro per sentire la loro musica, in particolare quella di una monaca figlia del Musico Ferabosco ma soprattutto per vedere il corpo et sito della città medesima ed il teatro della superba valle del Betargo.'(c.90 del manoscritto)

dipinto fosse opera sia di Giulio Romano sia di Raffaello. La tradizione dell'opera eseguita su disegno di Raffello si doveva a un passo del Codice Magliabechiano del 14 marzo 1543 che recitava:

> 'Perugia, in bottega di un pittore vidi di mano di Rafaelo da Urbino uno chartone, che è la lapidazione di Santo Stefano e di sopra una apparizione Uno Dio Padre e Jesu; e la tavola d'eso dichano esere in Genova.'[27]

La corretta attribuzione a Giulio Romano conferma ulteriormente l'ampia conoscenza della materia artistica da parte di Nugent a contrario dei suoi contemporanei; di fatto, attribuiscono l'opera a Raffaello ad esempio Charles de Brosses e Edward Gibbon.[28]

Tornando al resoconto di Nugent, il nostro fa riferimento, poche righe più avanti, a un presunto Van Dyck *in the church or oratory of S. John Baptist,* probabilmente accennando alla decentrata chiesa di san Giovanni Battista di Paverano. Va precisato che tale edificio non faceva parte del percorso cittadino tradizionale. Nugent è l'unico viaggiatore anglosassone a visitarlo, evidentemente spinto da curiosità e da alcune letture di guidę locali. L'edifici conservava, infatti, una Madonna con angeli e S. Ignazio, databile attorno al 1600 e di attribuzione incerta: all'epoca riconducibile proprio a Van Dyck o a Giovanni Bernardo Carbone (1616–1683), seguace del fiammingo ed allievo del genovese Giovanni Andrea De Ferrari.

La visita prosegue con la descrizione dei luoghi di potere temporale, con un occhio di riguardo, come consuetudine, ai giardini e agli apparati così ammirati dai visitatori stranieri che rimangono affascinati dalla

27. K. Frey, *Il Codice magliabechiano*, (cl. Xvii), 17, contenente notizie sopra l'arte degli antichi e quella de' fiorentini da Cimabue a Michelangelo Buonarroti, scritte da anonimo fiorentino, (Berlino. Grote, 1892), 133 e F. Hartt, *Giulio Romano*, (New Haven. University press, 1958), 55–56, oltre a M. Migliorini e A. Assini, *Pittori in tribunale*, (Nuoro. Ilisso, 2000), 58-59.

28. G. Savio, "La percezione della cultura figurativa di Genova nei viaggiatori del XVIII secolo: persistenze e assenze", *Kunstgeschichte. Texte zur Diskussion*, 2010.

sontuosità cittadina. Di fatto, gli esterni erano come è noto facilmente osservabili a contrario della collezioni private spesso di difficile accesso:[29]

> 'The doge's palace is a large building, where The doge's there are chambers for the great and little council, and for the colleges, as also lodgings for the doge, and some of the senators and their families; but it is much inferior to the private palaces of the nobility. The duke of Doria's palace makes the of best appearance of any in Genoa, and is deservedly admired for its situation, architecture, tapestry, hangings and other rich furniture, gardens, fountains, statues (and among the rest a fine one of the famous Andrew Doria) busts, basso-relievo's and most beautiful paintings. The other palaces most worthy of notice are those of Durazzo, Pallavicini, Spinola, Baldi, Grimaldi, Lomellini, and (...), which are all magnificent buildings.'

Si lamenta della scarsità di reperti archeologici di valore, così ricercati dai visitatori stranieri, ad eccezione del rostro romano:[30]

> 'The only remarkable piece of antiquity in this city is the rostrum of an old Roman ship, made of iron, and ending in a boar's head, which was found as they were cleaning the harbour of Genoa.'

Dopo una breve descrizione dell'arsenale (*In the arsenal they pretend to have arms for 40,000 men, (. . .)*), l'attenzione si sposta su quello che Nugent definisce ospedale, ma che realtà potrebbe identificarsi sia con la

29. Ch. Montesquieu, a Genova nel 1728, infatti con consueto fare caustico sentenzia: Se nelle case più illustri vedete un paggio, è perché non ci sono domestici. E anche il tedesco Karl Ludwig Pöllnitz afferma: there are no Domestics, and sometimes this a difficult Matter to find the Master of the House. Giovanna Perini (Università degli studi di Urbino), invece, (colloquio orale.) sostiene invece che le dimore fossero aperte e facilmente penetrabili, in realtà ritengo che la facilità di accesso fosse riservata esclusivamente a pochi (fra cui spicca Cochin) ma soprattutto la celeberrima tirchieria genovese facesse si che ad accogliere i visitatori non vi fosse nessun domestico.

30. Nell'anno 1597 tra il Ponte Spinola e la Darsena nel porto di Genova fu pescato un rostro di bronzo di nave romana «a testa di cinghiale», ovvero del tipo più antico. Questo rostro fu depredato dai Savoia quando il Congresso di Vienna deliberò l'annessione della secolare e gloriosa Repubblica di Genova al Regno di Sardegna. Questo rostro è tuttora conservato all'Armeria Reale di Torino, mentre una copia è visibile al Museo Navale di Genova Pegli.

struttura benefica nota come Albergo dei poveri[31] sia con l'ospedale di Pammatone:[32]

> 'The great hospital is a great ornament to this city, making a magnificent appearance without, and being embellished within with fine marble pillars, and some handsome statues of the principal benefactors. It is to capacious, that they say it contains 12000 persons.'

Non dimentica, al contrario di molti altri suoi connazionali (l'attenzione alla cultura storico artistica locale da parte del visitatore anglosassone è assai ridotta), di elencare e commentare i quadri più belli e degni di nota:

> '(...) In the church of S. Francis, there is a picture of S. John baptizing Christ, by Tintoretto. In the Villa Imperiale there are several fine pictures, by the great Titian.'

A questo proposito appare chiaro che il narratore rivolga la sua attenzione ai beni artistici seppur, apparentemente, come nel caso della chiesa dell'Annunziata, con qualche imprecisione. Infatti presso la Chiesa di S. Francesco[33] non risultava esserci nessun quadro opera di Tintoretto, almeno a quanto ci narrano le fonti, in caso contrario Nugent sarebbe, fino ad ora l'unico a riportare una così fondamentale notizia di carattere artistico. È tuttavia possibile che Nugent abbia potuto osservare una copia da Tintoretto o un originale forse posto, come consuetudine del tempo, in chiesa in attesa di un'altra collocazione presso dimore private o luoghi di

31. Sull'argomento esistono numerose monografie e studi, per brevità mi riferirò a quelli più significativi. Per una panoramica storica e sociale si veda: E. Grendi, "Albergo dei Poveri nella Genova del Seicento', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, LXXXVII (1975), 638–644. Per un inquadramento storico artistico si veda: E. Parma, 'Genesi e realizzazione di un reclusorio seicentesco: l'Albergo dei Poveri", *Studi di Storia delle Arti*, Genova, (1977), 103–120.
32. Per approfondimenti: L. Pessa, *Le antiche spezierie degli ospedali genovesi di Pammatone e degli Incurabili a Palazzo Tursi*, (Genova. LOG, 2005).
33. Fa riferimento alla Chiesa di San Francesco di Castelletto, andata distrutta, per un inquadramento generale si veda: M. Bury, "The Grimaldi Chapel of Giambologna in San Francesco di Castelletto, Genoa", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 26. Bd., H. 1 (1982), 85–128.

culto. Di fatto, Nugent aveva potuto osservare durante il suo viaggio molte opere del pittore sia a Venezia sia in altre parti d'Europa, in particolare mi riferiscoa La Resurrezione di Lazzaro presso la Cattedrale di Lubecca,[34] la sua conoscenza artistica relativa alla pittura veneta non era pertanto limitata a stampe, incisioni e copie che aveva potuto studiare in patria ma a una visione diretta delle opere. Ciò induce a credere che Nugent abbia realmente osservato un originale Tintoretto.

In merito alla seconda considerazione, presso Villa Imperiale esisteva invece una ricca quadreria che conservava anche tele di Tiziano, oggi perdute. Non si tratterebbe però della più nota Villa Imperiale di Terralba[35] ma di Villa Imperiale Scassi,[36] imponente palazzo di struttura alessiana. Questo confermerebbe che il nostro si sia spostato anche nella zona di villeggiatura a ponente, San Pier d'Arena.

Nugent si sofferma poi sulla storia antica della Liguria, puntualizzando soprattutto l'importanza economica del Banco di S. Giorgio, vera e propria cattedrale laica cittadina, così simile alle neonate banche di credito londinesi:

> '[...] There is a bank at Genoa known by the name of S. George, which has part of the public duties for its fund, but has suffered much in its credit by the late troubles of the republic.'

Infine, dopo lunghe disquisizioni, ribadisce, come di consueto per qualsiasi resoconto di viaggio, il carattere, i costumi e le abitudini dei genovesi:

> 'The inhabitants are generally a cunning industrious people, and more inured to hardship than the rest of Italians. [...] The people of distinction generally dress in cloaks and black suits, and wear no swords. The people of a middle rank follow some the Spanish modes, and some the French, according as they are affected.'

34. T. Nugent, *The Grand Tour*, 133.
35. AA. VV., *I frutti dell'albero d'oro – Villa Imperiale di Terralba – Studi e restauri 1999–2004*, (Genova. Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici ed il Paesaggio della Liguria, 2005).
36. B. Ciliento, *Sampierdarena: Villa Imperiale-Scassi*, (Genova. Sagep, 1978).

Conclude sottolineando la mancanza di una Università (mentre, in realtà, c'era il collegio dei Gesuiti) e nominando come unica alternativa educativa l'Accademia degli Addormentati,[37] istituzione assai poco nota e mai citata in volumi relativi alla letteratura di viaggio. Suggerendoci forse un suo ingresso presso l'istituzione che, come è noto, era assai selettiva, tale accesso poteva essere stato favorito dalla sua fama di studioso, dalla sua ottima conoscenza della lingua italiana e forse dai suoi rapporti con la famiglia Doria, relazioni che meriterebbe unlteriore indagine.

Infine fornisce alcuni utili consigli pratici agli stranieri, fra cui quello di non imitare il cattivo accento locale:

> 'They have never an university, but an academy of wits called the Addormentati or the Drowsy who spend their time, like the rest of the Italian academies, in composing orations, poems, and other ingenious studies, being unacquainted with the northern amusements of smoking and drinking.Strangers should take care not to imitate the Genoese pronunciation which is very bad, and should mind also to get a license from the secretary, without which they cannot stay above four days in Genoa.'

In ultima analisi, in ambito anglosassone il testo di Nugent appare, per il periodo, il resoconto più dettagliato e meno noto, seppur forse non il più preciso dell'epoca, e ci fornisce utili informazioni sulla città e varie indicazioni di carattere storico artistico ancora da indagare (si pensi all'accenno a opere di Rubens e Tintoretto sino ad ora sconosciute). È utile comunque ricordare l'esistenza di altre tre, di poco precedenti, pubblicazioni simili seppur meno minuziose e ricche di contenuti. La prima è del 1740 del viaggiatore William Arnold *For Genoa, Leghorn, and Naples,* la seconda di Karl Ludwig Pöllnitz (Freiherr von), *The Memoirs Of Charles-lewis, Baron De Pollnitz V2: Being The Observations He Made In His Late Travels From Prussia Through Germany, Italy, France, Flanders, Holland, England* (1740) un curioso resoconto di viaggio scritto in inglese e successivamente tradotto in francese ma non in tedesco, lingua madre

37. Sull'Accademia degli Addormentati, cfr. R. Tommasinelli Gallo, "Anton Giulio Brignole Sale e l'Accademia degli Addormentati", *La Berio*, XIII, 2–3 (1973), 65–74; M. Corradini, *Genova e il Barocco*, studi su Angelo Grillo, Ansaldo Cebà, Anton Giulio Brignole Sale, Milano, (1994), 25.

dell'autore, la terza *A journal of what happened at Genoa, and in its territories* (1747), una traduzione dal francese di un trattatello di autore anonimo. I tre volumi presumibilmente fornirono allo stesso Nugent utili informazioni e che varrebbe la pena indagare ulteriormente in virtù di uno studio comparatistico fra fonti, senza dimenticare quelle locali che Nugent, come è noto, poteva leggere correntemente.

Tali materiali furono, nel contesto della letteratura di viaggio anglosassone rimaneggiati, riutilizzati e, talvolta addirittura pedissequamente copiati permettendoci di individuare anche la diffusione di alcuni testi e, di conseguenza, informazioni nei vari territori di Oltremanica.

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38. W. Arnold, *For Genoa, Leghorn, and Naples, the Defiance, Joseph Edmonds commander. . . . Lying at Iron-Gate, and will depart with all convenient speed, the greatest part of her cargoe being already on board. . . ,* (London, 1740).

"The Pale Magician of the Bow": Leigh Hunt's "Paganini"

Vivienne Suvini-Hand

Although a fine poet in his own right, Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) is mainly remembered for publishing poetry by Keats, Byron and Shelley. Educated at Christ's Hospital in London, he was prevented from attending university because of a speech impediment, and spent most of his teenage years writing poetry in the style of Thomas Gray and William Collins. His early poems, published in 1801 under the title *Juvenilia,* launched him into literary society. In 1808 he left the War Office where he had been working as a clerk, and became editor of the *Examiner,* a newspaper founded by his brother, John, which was mainly concerned with the discussion of politics, but which also contained criticism of the theatre, literature and the fine arts. Keats, who formed part of the literary circle which had gathered around Hunt at his home in Hampstead, approved of the newspaper's unusual political independence, but the boldness with which Hunt expressed his radical political views on, for example, household suffrage, abolition, Catholic Emancipation and the Sovereign, often resulted in libel: in 1812 Hunt suffered a two-year prison sentence and a fine of £1,000 for an attack on the Prince Regent, pronounced, among other things, as a "libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace". From prison he continued to edit his libellous newspaper. Hunt went on to have a sixty-year publishing career not only as a prolific journalist and editor, but also as an essayist, translator, playwright, novelist, and above all, poet.[1] He was, arguably, one of the key

1. For a full bibliography of Leigh Hunt, see R. Morrison and M. Eberle-Sinatra (eds) *Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt* 6 vols. (London. Pickering and Chatto, 2003), "Contents".

figures of the Romantic period, and maintained a very active role in the London literary scene until his death.

Hunt lived with his family for three years in Italy in different locations such as Pisa, Genoa, Lerici, Albaro, Maiano and Florence, but his experience of the country was not a happy one. It was Shelley who in 1818 suggested that he go with him and Byron to Italy in order to set up a quarterly magazine (*Liberal*) in which liberal views could be advocated with more freedom than was possible at home. Impoverished and with three children, Hunt initially dismissed the suggestion, but when Shelly and Byron, both of aristocratic families of means, offered money and a house to live in, Hunt began to find reasons for leaving: his health, his wife's tuberculosis, his waning interest in the *Examiner*, sunshine, cheap living and classical culture. The encounter with Italy seemed doomed from the start: the Hunt family and a milk-producing goat set sail on November 1821, but due to stormy weather, the ship got no further than the English channel. They tried again on 13 May 1822, and this time reached Genoa on 15 June, and Leghorn on 1 July. Within days of Hunt's arrival, however, Shelley drowned at Lerici in a sailing accident, and Byron subsequently lost interest in the *Liberal*. A few editions were produced, but the project failed miserably. Byron went off to Greece in 1824, dying at Missolonghi at the age of 36, and Hunt, now bereft of his two colleagues, would have gladly returned to England, but lacked the money to do so. It was not until September 1825, on receipt of a literary advance, that the family (now comprising 7 children) travelled overland to Calais and boarded a steamboat back to England. Hunt writes in his *Autobiography*

> 'To me, Italy had a certain hard taste in the mouth. Its mountains were too bare, its outlines too sharp, its lanes too stony, its voices too loud, its long summer too dusty. I longed to bathe myself in the grassy balm of my native fields.'[2]

His negative impression of Italy did not however tarnish his love of Italian literature and culture, evident in his own poetry, in his *Dramatic*

2. Hunt's *Autobiography* was first published in 1850. The edition used for this study is *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries* 2 vols. (New York. AMS Press Inc., 1965), 198.

Criticism,[3] and his *Autobiography*. In 1816 he made a mark in English literature with his *Story of Rimini*, a reworking of the tale of Paolo and Francesca as told by Dante in Canto V of the *Inferno*. Hunt's typically optimistic account runs counter to the tragic outcome of Dante's story, and was criticized for its sympathetic treatment of adultery. As well as translating sections from Tasso's *Aminta,* Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, and Francesco Redi's *Bacco in Toscana*,[4] in his essay 'What is Poetry?'[5] he demonstrates a very detailed knowledge of Dante and Ariosto, frequently quoting at length and commenting on passages from *La Divina Commedia* and *Orlando Furioso*. Other Italian authors discussed in his *Autobiography* are Alfieri, Boccaccio, Boiardo, Pulci, Redi, Lorenzo de' Medici and Petrarch.[6] Chapter 3 of his *The Book of the Sonnet* is entitled "Of Guittone d'Arezzo and of the Sonnets", while chapter 7 of *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* concentrates on the Italian and English Pastoral. In Pisa he was struck by the paintings of Andrea Orcagna, Simon Memmi, Giotto and Buffalmacco, and there is detailed discussion of them in the *Autobiography*.[7] The latter also frequently mentions Bellini; volume 5 of his *Poetical Works* contains a poem entitled "Serenade, suggested by the music of Cherubini's trio 'Non mi negate, no'"; and the *Dramatic Criticism* reviews two operas by Rossini: *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and

3. In 1950 Lawrence and Carolyn Huston collected and edited all of the dramatic criticism written by Hunt between 1808 and 1831, which had been originally published in various newspapers and periodicals. It is their edition which has been used for the present study: *Leigh Hunt's Dramatic Criticism 1808–1831* edited by L.H. Houtchens and C.W. Houtchens (Oxford. Oxford U.P., 1950). All further textual references are abbreviated to *DC* and are to this edition.
4. The translations are in *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, a new edition (London. Edward Moxon, 1849): "Ode to the Golden Age ('O bella età dell'oro'). Sung by a Chorus of Shepherds in Tasso's *Amyntas*" (203–205); "Petrarch's Contemplations of Death in the Bower of Laura" (205–207); and "Redi's Bacchus in Tuscany" (209–219). It is this edition which has been used for the present study. "Paganini. A fragment" appears under a section entitled "Blank verse" (180–182).
5. *Imagination and Fancy, or Selections from the English Poets, and an Essay in Answer to the Question "What is Poetry?"*, originally published in 1845. The edition used for this study is the 1875 edition, published by Smith, Elder and Co.
6. Hunt, *Autobiography*. Alfieri: vol. 2, 177, 219, 229; Boccaccio: vol. 2, 187; Boiardo, vol. 2, 229; Pulci: vol. 2, 200; Redi: vol. 2, 192; Lorenzo de' Medici: vol. 2, 200; Petrarch: vol. 2, 97.
7. Hunt, *Autobiography*. Orcagna: vol. 2, 149; Simon Memmi: vol. 2, 146; Giotto: vol. 2, 146, 148; Buffalmacco: vol. 2, 146.

L'Italiana in Algeri. Both of these operas were reviewed in London in March 1818 and January 1819, respectively. It was also in London that Hunt saw Paganini perform in the Kings Theatre on 23, 25 and 27 June, 1831, although the violinist did give concerts in Genoa, as well as in Milan, Venice, Trieste and Rome from 1822–1825, and Hunt undoubtedly first heard of Paganini whilst residing in Italy. Hunt's poem, "Paganini. A fragment" was inspired by the London concerts which he reviewed in three parts for the *Tatler*.[8] The reviews throw much light on the poem itself and indeed may be used to elucidate aspects of the Paganini "fragment", which is reproduced here as an appendix.

The present study provides the first analysis ever to be written of Leigh Hunt's poem on Paganini. It highlights both the virtuoso's reception among the English theatre-going public of the early 1830s, and Hunt's more intellectual, personal view of the violinist, partly influenced by contemporary Parisian reviews, Paganini having just left the French capital before arriving in London on his Grand Tour of Europe. Hunt's poem is placed in the wider perspective of not only the English poet's music criticism, but also his writings on poetry in general, and his knowledge of Italian poetry in particular. It demonstrates Hunt's attempt to assimilate the domains of music and poetry by presenting Paganini's music as a poetically visual language, and by drawing attention to the innovative and idiosyncratic aspects of the Italian's playing which it is the aim of the English poem to imitate on a linguistic and stylistic level. The poem, whilst being, as I shall show, quintessentially English, particularly in its Miltonic structure, achieves a successful blending of the English and Italian poetic traditions through its inter-textual references to key texts in the Italian medieval literary tradition.

Paganini arrived in London around the middle of May 1831, and immediately met with controversy by doubling the usual prices for his first planned concert in the King's Theatre, so that journalists for *The Times* became inarticulate with rage that so much should be demanded for pleasurable pursuits whilst thousands starved on the London streets: "There can be nothing in his art, a mere instrumental performer, so great a prodigy, as to deserve such a price."[9] Paganini bowed to the public

8. "The Play-Goer", *Tatler*, II (23 June, 1831), 1003–1004; "The Play-Goer", *Tatler*, II (25 June, 1831), 1011; "The Play-Goer", *Tatler* III (7 July, 1831), 23–24. The three reviews are now in *Leigh Hunt's Dramatic Criticism, 1808–1831*, 270–279.

9. *The Times*, 19 May, 1831, 6.

outcry, cancelled his first concert on the grounds of illness, and in an apologetic letter to *The Times*, agreed to play at the "old" prices, "imploring" also "the favour of the English nation which honours the arts as much as I respect it".[10] When Paganini actually gave his first London performance on 3 June, *The Times* and other newspapers conceded that all of the high expectations formed of the violinist before his arrival had fallen very short of the reality. As *The Athenaeum*, a contemporary literary magazine, put it "The arrival of this magician was enough to make the greater part of the fiddler tribe commit suicide."[11]

The main focus of Hunt's poem is a description of Paganini's ability to conjure up all conceivable moods and imagery. It is announced at the very beginning of the poem (the italics here and elsewhere are mine): "So play'd of late to *every passing thought* / With finest *change* [. . .] the pale magician of the bow", and it is the focal point for the long fourth section, to be dealt with later – a monumental unit of expression (77 lines out of a total of 97 in the poem as a whole) which has something of the epic grandeur of Milton's blank verse. In the initial section, however, Hunt is mainly concerned with introducing Paganini from two points of view: there is a subtle mixture of the layman's perspective and that of Hunt himself, the educated poet. Most laymen in the audience would be there out of curiosity – to witness the exotic foreigner ('Who brought *from Italy* the tales, made true') whose playing was so extraordinary that it was believed he had supernatural abilities and was in league with the devil. This was a suspicion reinforced by Paganini's extraordinary appearance: his pale, skeletal face was framed by long, black hair, giving him a fiendish air (as well portrayed in Delacroix's *Portrait of Paganini*, painted in 1831, the same year as Hunt's poem was written). Hunt neatly encapsulates these associations with magic and sickliness in his effectively simple expression, "the pale magician of the bow". The associations are reinforced in the third section with the reference to Paganini's "mournful", "dreary" and "gaunt" "look"; and the innocuous "magician" by then even assumes more sinister overtones in Hunt's indirect reference to the sad Faustian figure who has sold his soul to the devil in return for his prodigious gift:[12]

10. *The Times*, 2 June, 1831, 5.

11. *The Athenaeum*, 4 June, 1831, 12.

12. The reference is highly reminiscent of Aloysius Bloch's short story entitled "Les deux notes" published in *L'Artiste*, 1 (1831), 116–119. Bloch describes howduring a concert

'[...] hanging his pallid face
'Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seem'd,
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable secret liv'd forlorn.' (lines 16–20).

Hunt's references to wizardry and devilry formed part of the popular mythology surrounding Paganini by the time of his arrival in England, but embedded within the first section there are also references to the poet's own specific interest in Paganini. Throughout his *Autobiography* Hunt displays his deep love of Greek literature, mythology and culture (a love he shared with Shelley and Keats) and Paganini has "brought from Italy the tales, made true,/Of Grecian lyres". The reference is elucidated in Hunt's review of Paganini's concert of 25 June:

> 'To hear Paganini, and to see him playing on that bit of wood with a bit of catgut, is to convince us that the Greeks might really have done the wonders attributed to them with their shells and their quills [...]. From this moment our faith is confirmed in the wonders recorded of Aeolic and Doric modulations; and we owe a gratitude to Paganini, if only for confirming it and doubling the pleasure with which we read of the Timotheuses and Terpanders.' (*DC*, 275).

By putting Paganini on a par with Timotheus (B.C. 446–357), a celebrated Greek musician and poet; indeed with Terpander (B.C. 700–650), the founder of the first musical school or system in Greece, he is attempting to elevate him onto a more respectable plane than that conferred by popular culture: Paganini is more than a "magician" or a "devil"; he is a genius with a "serious" "skill". The two latter terms are, importantly, repeated in the poem: "and clinging to the *serious* chords" (line 8); "That

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performance a terrified Paganini is seen to scour the audience for the presence of the devil in disguise, seated beside the narrator. To the devil to whom he owes his genius, he must dedicate "two notes" per performance: "Il [Paganini] promena ses regards tout autour de la salle. [...] Là, près de moi, était la condamnation perpétuelle de Paganini; [...] It vit mon sanglier, mon inconnu, qui, jaloux de se montrer aussi à sa victime, s'était avancé de tout son corps en dehors de notre loge, vous savez! [...] Leurs yeux se rencontrèrent. L'artiste fut effrayé comme un paon par un habit rouge, et je crus le voir chanceler, défaillir, effaré [...]. Sa figure pâlit comme de la craie. Mon homme rit beaucoup. [...] 'Les donnera-t-il, ses deux notes!' " (119).

skill dwelt in him *serious* with its joy" (line 22); "And then with show of *skill* mechanical" (line 49). It is for this reason that Hunt's reference to Faust was, on close inspection, a guarded one: Paganini would "*appear*" to be a soul possessed by the devil only to those with "feeble" or "melancholy" eyes. His rightful place among the "serious" and the "classical" is further underscored by the reference to Jupiter, the chief god of the Romans, and his wife, Juno (lines 12–13); his playing with "godlike ravishment" (line 9); and the repeated reference to Paganini 'smiting' the strings (lines 8 and 23), the classical implications of which are explained in the review of 23 June: "he [Paganini] struck them [the strings] as you might imagine a Greek to have done when he used his plectrum and 'smote the sounding shell'." (*DC*, 272).

Also emphasizing the esteem and veneration which Hunt believed Paganini deserved for his skill is the atmospheric reference to a "nation's breath" "suspended" on Paganini's "sphery hand", "loading the air with dumb expectancy". Hunt's "sphery" aptly describes the rounded wrist of the bow-hold, particularly noticeable when the bow-arm is raised before landing on a string (as presumably is the case here, as Paganini prepares to start performing), whilst also suggesting the continual circular movements made by the bow-arm itself when playing. The antithesis of the silent auditorium, which seemed, nevertheless, heavy and charged with expectancy captures the electric atmosphere amongst the audience, whose 'dumbness' suggests not just how it sits hushed and with bated-breath, but also highlights how, in opposition to Paganini, it is "inarticulate" and "without voice", thereby setting up a further antithesis between the genius and the commonplace. Both these things – audience expectancy, and the sense of witnessing an extraordinary talent which makes ordinary men feel inferior, and all previous violinists sound "crude" and "uninformed" – are emphasized in Hunt's reviews of the 23 and 25 June. In the former he relates how the auditorium was packed to bursting hours before the concert was due to start, so that Hunt and his companions thought they would literally only hear and not see the great player, having found seats only on the lowest of the pit stairs. He describes with amusement the different reactions of members of the public as they entered the theatre expecting to find a seat when there was none: some gaped in amazement at the sea of expectant faces; some looked angry; some embarrassed; some gallantly smiled. Many exclaimed in astonishment: there were unsophisticated pronouncements of "Christ Jesus!" and,

from an Italian, "Oh Dio!" and all this prior to the performance. Similar articulations of disbelief occurred at its conclusion. Hunt writes:

> 'His playing is indeed marvellous. What other players can do well, he does a hundred times better. We never heard such playing before; nor had we imagined it. [...] The people sit astonished, venting themselves in whispers of 'Wonderful!', 'Good God!', and other unusual symptoms of English amazement.' (23 June) (*DC*, 273).

> 'After what we have heard, how are we to endure hereafter our old violins and their players? How can we consent to hear them? How crude they will sound, how uninformed, how like a cheat! When the Italian goes away, violin-playing goes with him.' (25 June) (*DC*, 276).

But whereas in his poem and in his reviews Hunt hints at the disparity between Paganini's genius and the ordinariness of the ordinary man (his "dumb expectancy"), the "fragment" seems also to allude to a similarity between himself, the poet, and the Italian musician. It is first referred to parenthetically and with tongue-in-cheek modesty: "(might I but half as well/So write!)"; it is then reinforced in line 9 with the reference to Paganini's bow drawing forth a "breath" from his chords; and alluded to again in lines 28–29 where he describes Paganini "carving out his thoughts like prose/After his poetry". Hunt is likening Paganini's music-making to writing, and more specifically to the writing of poetry. In the review of 23 June he remarks: "His bow perfectly talks. It remonstrates, supplicates, answers, holds a dialogue. It would be the easiest thing in the world to put words to his music [. . .] We are sure that with a given subject, or even without it, Paganini's best playing could be construed into discourse." (*DC*, 272). This is exactly what Hunt aims to do in the main body of his poem: he "puts words to" Paganini's music; he "construes" it into "discourse".

The diversity and variety of moods and sentiments which Paganini managed to evoke and which was one of the hallmarks of his concert performances and an area of note in many of the French reviews which appeared in *L'Artiste*[13] is what Hunt proceeds to orchestrate with his

13. As, for example, in the aforemetioned Bloch's "Les deux notes", *ibid.*, 12: "Son violon, c'est maintenant une femme qu'on n'aime plus, un bal éteint, une indigestion de fête, un mépris pour la femme! C'est un mari qui gronde, un dogue qui aboie

poem: one moment the notes produced by Paganini's violin resembled marching soldiers; the next, the atmosphere would become flippant, coquettish, loving; then merry and playful, or serious and sober-minded. The use of repetition (on "now") and anaphora (on "And") conveys these quick-changing and multifarious moods:

> 'For noble now he smote the exulting strings,
> And bade them march before his stately will;
> And now he lov'd them like a cheek, and laid
> Endearment on them, and took pity sweet;
> And now he was all mirth, or all for sense
> And reason, carving out his thoughts like prose
> After his poetry.' (lines 23–29).

Then in a passage where Hunt seems to anticipate a modern method of interpreting music with the aid of visual imagery (a method employed, interestingly, in master classes by some of the great violin virtuosi of the twenty-first century)[14] the poet makes Paganini's music "plain as sight", and presents the reader with a number of descriptive interpretations of the music being played: sometimes it could be compared to a pleading lover; at other times to a saint, shackled by earthly love, vehemently praying to God to be set free:

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derrière la porte. Et cet air, toujours le même, devient, par rapport au même état de passion et de satiété, une déclaration d'amour sous les arbres, une brouille après l'adultère, une réconciliation à table, un soufflet dans le monde, des reproches au lit, un assassinat dans la rue" (118). Also see Fétis, "Concert de Paganini", *L'Artiste*, 2 (1831), 75–77: "Il donne, quand il le veut, à la plus grave les qualités d'une voix formidable, ou lui fait produire les sons les plus doux et les plus moelleux; mais au milieu de la mélodie la plus suave ou la plus pénétrante, son génie fantastique lui fait jeter quelque débauche d'esprit, quelque trait inattendu qui semble insulter au sentiment qui vient d'être excité dans l'auditoire" (76).

14. Notably by the young Russian, Maxim Vengerov, reputed to be the world's finest, living violinist. See, in particular, his masterclass in Amsterdam, where Vengerov evokes the image of a "fat cook" in the kitchen of a busy Chinese restaurant and uses it as a visual stimulus in the teaching of Kreisler's "Tambourin chinois" http://maximvengerovfans.co.uk, Sonja Barend TV programme); and his masterclass with the 11 year old Chloe Hanslip where he employs circus imagery to reinforce the style appropriate for the execution of certain passages from Pablo Sarasate's "Caprice Basque", Op. 24 (http://youtube.com. Chloe Hanslip and Maxim Vengerov).

'[...]; or else he laid
His own soul prostrate at the feet of love,
And with a full and trembling fervour deep,
In kneeling and close-creeping urgency,
Implor'd some mistress with hot tears; which past,
And after patience had brought right of peace,
He drew, as if from thoughts finer than hope,
Comfort around him in ear-soothing strains
And elegant composure; or he turn'd
To heaven instead of earth, and rais'd a pray'r
So earnest vehement, yet so lowly sad,
Mighty with want and all poor human tears,
That never saint, wrestling with earthly love,
And in mid-age unable to get free,
Tore down from heav'n such pity.' (lines 29–43).

It evokes an assembly of witches, cackling and dancing; a shower of hail; joisting swords; warbling birds; farmyard animals; the voices of a choir and an organ; a triumphant conqueror; a Spanish guitarist; a raining down of pearls or of sugared confectionary on lute-players; or the waters of a pebbly stream, glistening in the sunlight:

'Or he would fly as if from all the world
To be alone and happy, and you should hear
His instrument become a tree far off,
A nest of birds and sunbeams, sparkling both,
A cottage-bow'r; or he would condescend,
In playful wisdom which knows no contempt,
To bring to laughing memory, plain as sight,
A farm-yard with its inmates, ox and lamb,
The whistle and the whip, with feeding hens
In household fidget muttering evermore,
And, rising as in scorn, crown'd Chanticleer,
Ordaining silence with his sovereign crow.
Then from one chord of his amazing shell
Would he fetch out the voice of quires, and weigh
Of the built organ; or some two-fold strain
Moving before him in sweet-going yoke,
Ride like an Eastern conqueror, round whose state
Some light Morisco leaps with his guitar;

And ever and anon o'er these he'd throw
Jets of small notes like pearl, or like the pelt
Of lovers' sweetmeats on Italian lutes
From windows on a feast-day; or the leaps
Of pebbled water, sprinkled in the sun,
One chord effecting all.' (lines 58–81).

One notes the predominance of semi-colons in the last 3 sections quoted above (9 uses in all), and the use of 'or" (8 uses). These grammatical and verbal features and their repetition are used to reinforce the shifts and modulations in the style and mood of Paganini's playing. They also serve to prevent the reader from relaxing at intermediate stopping places. There is an avoidance of finality, and just as Paganini's music carries the listener for ever forwards on waves of contrasting sound, so too Hunt propels the reader on through his catalogue of kaleidoscopic imagery with a forward impetus which is supported by the frequency of enjambement. The range and variety of the imagery itself reinforces Hunt's concept of poetry (expounded in the essay "What is poetry?") as having to display "variety in uniformity" and "the charm of diversity",[15] his own poem moving from gothic witch-dances, to idyllic cottage bowers and noisy farmyards. Hunt furnishes each image with a special music: the thin assonance of the witches' wailing ("ghastly with wh*in*ings thin/And pals*i*ed nods"); the warm plosives of the lyrical landscape ("A nest of *b*irds and sunbeams . . .]/A cottage-*b*ow'r"); and the unrestrained alliteration of the noisy farmyard ("The w*h*istle and the *wh*ip, with feeding *h*ens/In *h*ousehold fidget *m*uttering ever*m*ore'].

Indeed all three of these images contain within them unspoken references to specific pieces of music composed and performed by Paganini, thereby demonstrating an aspect of the "suggestiveness" and the "wealth and range" of poetry for which qualities, in Hunt's view, poetry "far surpasses the other divine arts".[16] Inspired by the solo oboe which accompanied the appearance of the old witches in the ballet *Il Noce di Benevento* by Süssmayer, Paganini composed his famous variations entitled *Le Streghe* (1851) (Hunt comments on Paganini's

15. Hunt, *Imagination and Fantasy,* 1, 3.
16. Hunt, *Imagination and Fantasy*, 3.

rendering of this piece on the evening of 25 June, 1831),[17] thereby adding to his diabolical repertoire which started with Caprice no 13 in B flat major, subtitled *La risata del diavolo* (1818). His first public performance on 26 May, 1794 during Mass in the Church of S. Filippo Neri in Genoa at the age of 12 also gained notoriety for the manner in which it, some said, sacrilegiously, imitated all manner of lyrical bird song, and Paganini's "farmyard imitations", which he often inserted in his programme as a humorous encore, formed part of the composition entitled *Fandango Spagnolo variato e capriccio.*[18] Whereas in Italy in the 1830s all types of vaudevillian posturings and extrovert displays of comedy on stage were entirely acceptable, even among instrumental virtuosos,[19] this was not the case abroad, and Paganini's barnyard imitations gave rise to much criticism. Hunt, however, seems only to view them in a positive light, and indeed they are used to reinforce the earlier distinction made between Paganini's genius and the audiences' more humble intelligence: Paganini "condescends" to entertain the public with the imitations, but with playfulness and humour: "or he would condescend,/In playful wisdom which knows no contempt,/To bring to laughing memory [. . .]/A farmyard with its inmates".

17. Hunt, *Dramatic Criticism*, 274: "His performances the other night concluded with a *Dance of the Witches*; and here he left nothing to desire. The author of the music in *Macbeth* would have hugged him for it. Levity, gravity, the homely, the supernatural, the odd, the graceful, figured in strange combination; and every now and then a voice was heard as of some fearful old beldam venting herself in a strain of feeble mystery, at once humorous and alarming. You imagined a pale old woman, dancing and whining, with a sort of ghastly affectation of the ridiculous."
18. No manuscript for this piece survives, but it is known that Paganini played it at his "last" London concert at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden in 1832 for which the concert programme still exists. John Sugden reproduces the programme in his *Niccolò Paganini. Supreme Violinist or Devil's Fiddler?* (Kent. Midas Books, 1980), 51.
19. As Henry Roth explains "It was an age which spawned many an eccentric instrumental virtuoso and vocalist", and soloists were capable of "ludicrous antics". Roth provides the examples of Anthony Boucher (1778–1861), "a player of acrobatic virtuosity who often entertained by performing with his bow held the wrong way around, under the bridge, or with the violin behind his back"; and of Franz Clement (1780–1842) who premiered the Beethoven violin concerto in 1806 and in the same programme "played a set of variations with the violin held upside down". H. Roth, *Violin Virtuosos. From Paganini to the 21st Century* (Los Angeles, California. California Classics Books, 1997), 12.

As well as the intertextual references to specific pieces of music, there seems also to be a literary echo in the lines describing Paganini play like a saint begging heaven to be released of his earthly love (lines 37–43). The antithesis in the line "So earnest vehement, yet so lowly sad" is reminiscent of Petrarch and taken together with the reference to "earthly love" seems to bear an allusion to the confessional sonnets of the *Canzoniere* where Petrarch recognizes his love for Laura as love for a "cosa mortale" (Sonnet 365), and begs God to release him of this love so he can turn his thoughts toward more "worthy" pursuits: "Miserere del mio non degno affanno;/reduce i pensier' vaghi a miglior luogo;/ramenta lor come oggi fusti in croce." (Sonnet 62).[20] The echo is reinforced later by the suggestion of troubadour love poetry in the lines "or like the pelt/ Of lovers' sweetmeats on Italian lutes/From windows on a feast-day" (lines 77–78). However, at one and the same time, the allusion to a sense of moral turmoil, coupled with the specification "in mid-age" ("Mighty with want and all poor human tears,/That never saint, wrestling with earthly love,/And in mid-age unable to get free") cannot fail to evoke the beginning of Dante's mid-age crisis in the soul at the beginning of the *Inferno*, and his turning to God for help in pursuing a more worthy way of life. The literary allusions may want to underscore the aforementioned poetical dimension to Paganini's playing, and it is indeed typical of Hunt's eccentricity that he should want to surround this audaciously modern imitator of birds, beasts and witches with veiled references to the best in the Italian medieval literary tradition.

Indeed, the innovative aspects of Paganini's playing – his "sudden mixtures of all difficult things/never yet heard" (lines 52–53) – are complemented in the poem by Hunt's typical stylistic experimentations: his neologisms: "diviner" (line 12), "uprolling" (line 96); the creation of gerundive-compounds: "close-creeping" (line 32), "ear-soothing" (line 36), "sweet-going" (line 73); his use of adjectives as adverbs: "so *earnest* vehement" (line 39), "so *fervid* thick with love" (line 10); and adverbs to accompany adjectives: "yet so *lowly* sad" (line 39); adjectives in the comparative degree used as nouns: "he stepp'd into a *higher* and *higher*/ On viewless points" (lines 56–57); and nouns used as adjectives: "In *household* fidget" (line 67). These innovative stylistic features occur within a structure which seems deliberately to recall the epic grandeur of Milton's

20. Petrarch, *Canzoniere* (Turin. Einaudi, 1964), 454, 84.

Paradise Lost in its use both of the iambic pentameter and the long architectural structure of the verse paragraph (section 4), where in addition to the previously noted avoidance of finality, there is the Latin syntax of the periodic sentence, protracted by lists and parentheses (there are 3 uses of parentheses in the poem as a whole). A key to the reason for this amalgamation of old and new styles is provided by Hunt's notes added to the *Feast of the Poets* in 1814 when it was republished from the *Reflector* of 1812. They express the hope that the imitation of the best work of Milton (presumably *Paradise Lost*), as well as Dryden and Spenser "might lead the poets of the present age to a proper mixture of sweetness and strength, of modern finish and ancient variety."[21]

It is precisely this stylistic combination of the modern and the ancient in the Paganini "fragment" which creates a feeling of contrariety, and this feeling in turn reinforces one of the overriding impressions of Paganini recorded in reviews of his concert performances. Even Hunt himself in his account of the concerts of 23 and 25 June, 1831, describes the violinist in terms of contrasts. He is both "uncouth" and "masterly" in his gait and mannerisms:

> 'He made divers uncouth obeisances, and then put himself in a masterly attitude for his work, his manner being as firm and full of conscious power when he puts the bow to the instrument as it is otherwise when he is not playing.' (23 June) (*DC*, 271).

He is old-fashioned in his appearance and seems out of tune with the contemporary world:

> 'He wears his black hair flowing on his neck like an enthusiast, has a coat of ancient cut which astonishes Fop's Alley [...] He is a great old boy, who has done nothing but play the violin all his life, and knows as much about that as he does little of conventional manners.' (23 June) (*DC*, 272).

Yet his playing and his technique are ahead of their time: "For now that we see what such instruments can do, there is no knowing how much they can do beyond it" (25 June, *DC*, 276). His countenance moves between the sad and the dreary: "At first it [his face] seemed little better

21. As explained by Barnette Miller in *Leigh Hunt's Relations with Byron, Shelley and Keats* (Columbia. Columbia U.P., 1910), 27.

than a mask; with a fastidious, dreary expression, as if inclined to despise his music and go to sleep" (23 June, *DC*, 272); and the happy and slightly comical: "When he makes his acknowledgements, he bows like a camel, and grins like a goblin or a mountain-goat" (23 June, *DC*, 272). This last antithesis is highlighted at various points in the poem, and it is applied both to the man and to his music:

'With his *mournful* look,
Dreary and *gaunt*' (lines 15–16)

'[. . .] Or behold,
In his *despair*, (for such, from what he spoke
Of *grief* before it, or of love, 'twould seem)' (lines 43–45)

'Then would his bow lie down again *in tears*' (line 84)

'[...] all too *happily*
That skill dwelt in him serious with its *joy*;
For noble now he smote the *exulting* strings' (lines 21–23)

'And now he was all *mirth*' (line 27)

'[...] or he would condescend,
[...]
To bring to *laughing* memory' (lines 62–64)

'Or he would talk as of some secret *bliss*' (line 87).

Often the "happy/sad" registers are directly juxtaposed: as in the "mystery of the loveliness" which "*sadden'd delight*" (lines 14–15), and the audience's "bliss that *laugh'd for pain*" (line 95); and border on the oxymoronic, as in the "*sad*" "*mirth*" of the *Witches' Dance* music (line 48).

The devilish and the holy is another antithetical motif running throughout. The previously noted Faustian reference is contrasted with allusions to prayers, souls and saints: "rais'd a pray'r" (line 38), "pray'r of love" (line 85), "twenty prayers" (line 11), "no diviner soul" (line 12), "soul prostrate" (line 30), "saint" (line 41) – a range of terminology which clashes with other descriptions highlighting the sensuality and eroticism inherent in Paganini's playing:

'[...] a breath
So deep, so strong, so fervid thick with love' (lines 9–10)

'[...] near and more near would come
Into the inmost ear, and whisper there
Breathings so soft, so low, so full of life,
Touch'd beyond sense, and only to be borne
By pauses which made each less bearable' (lines 89–93).

The last description forms past of the poem's conclusion which effectively describes, what Hunt calls in his review of 27 June, 1831, a passage of "delicate execution" which Paganini chooses to introduce "when the transports of the audience have produced a dead silence" (*DC*, 277). The feeling of contrariety therefore also operates on the level of the musical content of Paganini's performances. On the one hand there are extravagant firework displays involving such things as a "throwing of handfuls of staccatoed notes, in distinct and repeated showers over his violin, small and pungent as the tips of pins"; or "a flashing down in a set of headlong harmonies, sharp and brilliant as the edges of swords"; or "a leaping to a height beyond all height, with notes of desperate minuteness" (all 23 June, *DC*, 273): three musical gestures evoked, respectively, in Hunt's poem in the following passages:

'Jets of small notes lie pearl, or like the pelt
Of lovers' sweetmeats on Italian lutes
From windows on a feast-day; or the leaps
Of pebbled water, sprinkled in the sun' (lines 77–80)

'[...] flashing the sharp tones now,
In downward leaps like swords' (lines 53–54)

'[...] now rising fine
into some utmost tip of minute sound,
From whence he stepp'd into a higher and higher
On viewless points, till laugh took leave of him' (54–57).

However, on the other hand, there were, as Hunt explains in his review, "intervals of silence" as if Paganini "were preparing his charm like a sorcerer. Now he comes down with his flashing harmonies – and then is silent. He then gives us some of his showers – and is again silent"

(27 June, *DC*, 278). One such prominent interval of silence is reproduced with effect in the poem by a heavy mid-sentence caesura in line 81, followed by the previously quoted description of Paganini's playing as if into the inmost ear of each individual in the audience with an intimacy verging on the erotic. As a consequence, the joy of the audience reaches almost orgasmic heights (Fétis fittingly describes this audience-pleasure as a "jouissance")[22] which finds release in applause so thunderous that it forces a smile from the "mournful" violinist who "bows" beneath it. The structure of the final section well expresses the content, where the climactic sentence of 17 lines following the caesura finds a point of release and an ultimate point of rest only in the last line with the coincidence of line-end and sentence-end. And this final sentence ends on the word "smiles". The word reflects the philanthropic and positive nature of the poet who, like Shelley, refused to recognize the existence of evil, and thought everything finally good and beautiful in nature.[23] Indeed, more than anything else, Hunt's "fragment" supports the poet's theory that universal happiness could come about through individual excellence. The initial silence and expectancy of the audience that is, importantly, made representative of the English "nation" (lines 6–7), has, by the end of the poem, been transformed by the skilful excellence of this Italian violinist into noisy approval and a state of exuberant joy.

In her anthology, *Desiring Italy* (1997), Susan Cahill brings together writings by thirty-one women of letters celebrating the culture and traditions of Italy. She does so largely to correct and complement the

22. Fétis, 77: "O vous, qui n'avez point goûté le délire d'entendre Paganini, triomphez des obstacles qui s'opposeront à ce que vous connaissiez cette jouissance, à nulle autre comparable: alors, peut-être, vous comprendrez de quoi je veux parler".

23. This theory is presented at the end of Hunt's *Autobiography*, where he says: " 'Behold I give unto you a new commandment, Love one another.' 'In this ye fulfill the law and the prophets.' [...] 'God is Love'. Such and such only, are the texts upon which sermons will be preached, to the exclusion of whatsoever is infernal and unintelligible. No hell. No unfatherliness. No monstrous exactions of assent to the incredible. [...] No creed of any kind but such as proves its divineness by wish of all good hearts to believe it if they might, and by the encouragement that would be given them to believe it, in the acclamations of the earth." (303). For this reason he also, as he puts it, attacks "the infernal opinions of Dante; a task which no respect for his genius, or false considerations for the times in which he lived [...] can ever make me regard but as a duty and a glory." Hunt even goes so far as to claim that if evil does exist, "there is always good of some kind in evil". (293).

attention received by "male authors" who have been "declaring their love of Italian cities, art and people for centuries: Goethe, Stendhal, Byron, Shelley, Dickens, Robert Browning, Ruskin, Henry James and D.H. Lawrence".[24] One notes the absence of Leigh Hunt's name from Cahill's list. Similarly, Hunt's name is nowhere given a mention in William Edward Mead's comprehensive study "Italy in English poetry",[25] neither among the "pre-eminent" poets, nor the "lesser-known names" of the nineteenth century, of which he lists seventeen in all. One wonders how much these and other conspicuous oversights could be due to that frequently quoted "hard taste" which the actual encounter with Italy left in Hunt's mouth. However, the strong emotional and intellectual engagement which Hunt felt with Italian culture, and which this study has attempted to elucidate in its analysis of one small "fragment" of the English poet's literary output, justifies the need to recognize Hunt's voice as a prominent one, worthy of further, detailed study[26] ever growing body of research on Anglo-Italian cultural and artistic relations in the nineteenth century.[27]

24. S. Cahill (ed.), *Desiring Italy* (New York, Fawcett Columbine, 1997), p. xi.
25. W.E. Mead, "Italy in English Poetry", *Modern Language Association*, 23, 3 (1908), 421–470.
26. There has been, to date, no book-length study devoted exclusively to Leigh Hunt and Italy and Italian culture. Articles on the subject include: N. Roe, "Leigh Hunt in Italy, 1822–1825", *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies*, 8 (2006), 87–97; and M. Schoina, "Leigh Hunt's 'Letters from Abroad' and the 'Anglo-Italian' Discourse of *The Liberal*", *Romanticism*, 12.2 (2006), 115–125. There is a section on "Leigh Hunt's 'Letters from abroad'" in M. Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 152–163. The most significant biographies on Hunt are R. Brimley Johnson, *Leigh Hunt* (London, New York: Macmillan, 1896); N. Roe, *Leigh Hunt: Life, Poetics, Politics* (London: Routledge, 2003); N. Roe, *Fiery Heart: The First Life of Leigh Hunt* (Pimlico: Random House, 2005); and A. Holden, *The Wit in the Dungeon: A Life of Leigh Hunt* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006). For studies of Leigh Hunt and his music and theatre criticism, see P.M. Young, "Leigh Hunt – Music Critic", *Music and Letters*, XXV, 2 (1944), 86–94; T. Fenner, "The Making of an Opera Critic: Leigh Hunt", *The Musical Quarterly*, LV 4 (1969), 439–463; T. Fenner, *Leigh Hunt and Opera Criticism: The "Examiner" Years, 1808–1821* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1972); M. Eberle-Sinatra, "Introducing 'Critical Essays': Leigh Hunt and Theatrical Criticism in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 50 (2001), 100–123.
27. For a comprehensive bibliography of Anglo-Italian cultural relations in the nineteenth century, see M. Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians*, pp. 170–180.

Appendix

'Paganini'.
'A Fragment' by Leigh Hunt.

So play'd of late to every passing thought
With finest change (might I but half as well
So write!) the pale magician of the bow,
Who brought from Italy the tales, made true,
Of Grecian lyres; and on his sphery hand,
Loading the air with dumb expectancy,
Suspended, ere it fell, a nation's breath.

He smote, – and clinging to the serious chords
With godlike ravishment, drew forth a breath,
So deep, so strong, so fervid thick with love,
Blissful, yet laden as with twenty prayers,
That Juno yearn'd with no deviner soul
To the first burthen of the lips of Jove.

The exceeding mystery of the loveliness
Sadden'd delight; and with his mournful look,
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face
'Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seem'd,
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable secret liv'd forlorn.

But true and earnest, all too happily
That skill dwelt in him serious with its joy;
For noble now he smote the exulting strings,
And bade them march before his stately will;
And now he lov'd them like a cheek, and laid
Endearment on them, and took pity sweet;
And now he was all mirth, or all for sense
And reason, carving out his thoughts like prose
After his poetry; or else he laid
His own soul prostrate at the feet of love,
And with a full and trembling fervour deep,
In kneeling and close-creeping urgency,
Implor'd some mistress with hot tears; which past,
And after patience had brought right of peace,

He drew, as if from thoughts finer than hope,
Comfort around him in ear-soothing strains
And elegant composure; or he turn'd
To heaven instead of earth, and rais'd a pray'r
So earnest vehement, yet so lowly sad,
Mighty with want and all poor human tears,
That never saint, wrestling with earthly love,
And in mid-age unable to get free,
Tore down from heav'n such pity. Or behold,
In his despair, (for such, from what he spoke
Of grief before it, or of love, 'twould seem)
Jump would he into some strange wail uncouth
Of witches' dance, ghastly with whinings thin
And palsied nods – mirth wicked, sad, and weak.
And then with show of skill mechanical,
Marvellous as witchcraft, he would overthrow
That vision with a show'r of notes like hail,
Or sudden mixtures of all difficult things
Never yet heard; flashing the sharp tones now,
In downward leaps like swords; now rising fine
  Into some utmost tip of minute sound,
From whence he stepp'd into a higher and higher
On viewless points, till laugh took leave of him:
Or he would fly as if from all the world
To be alone and happy, and you should hear
His instrument become a tree far off,
A nest of birds and sunbeams, sparkling both,
A cottage-bow'r; or he would condescend,
In playful wisdom with knows no contempt,
To bring to laughing memory, plain as sight,
A farm-yard with its inmates, ox and lamb,
The whistle and the whip, with feeding hens
In household fidget muttering evermore,
And, rising as in scorn, crown'd Chanticleer,
Ordaining silence with his sovereign crow.
Then from one chord of his amazing shell
Would he fetch out the voice of quires, and weight
Of the built organ; or some two-fold strain
Moving before him in sweet-going yoke,
Ride like an Eastern conqueror, round whose state
Some light Morisco leaps with his guitar;
And ever and anon o'er these he'd throw

Jets of small notes like pearl, or like the pelt
Of lovers' sweetmeats on Italian lutes
From windows on a feast-day, or the leaps
Of pebbled water, sprinkled in the sun,
One chord effecting all: - and when the ear
Felt there was nothing present but himself
And silence, and the wonder drew deep sighs,
Then would his bow lie down again in tears,
And speak to someone in a pray'r of love,
Endless, and never from his heart to go:
Or he would talk as of some secret bliss,
And at the close of all the wonderment
(Which himself shar'd) near and more near would come
Into the inmost ear, and whisper there
Breathings so soft, so low, so full of life,
Touch'd beyond sense, and only to be borne
By pauses which made each less bearable,
That out of pure necessity for relief
From that heap'd joy, and bliss that laugh'd for pain,
The thunder of th'uprolling house came down
And bow'd the breathing sorcerer into smiles.

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The sense of an Italian love song: A reading of *Persuasion*

Sylvia Greenup

'Towards the close of [the first act], in the interval succeeding an Italian song, she explained the words of the song to Mr. Elliot. – They had a concert bill between them.

"This," she said, "is nearly the sense, or rather the meaning of the words, for certainly the sense of an Italian love-song must not be talked of – but it is as near the meaning as I can give; for I do not pretend to understand the language. I am a very poor Italian scholar."

"Yes, yes, I see you are. I see you know nothing of the matter. You have only knowledge enough of the language, to translate at sight these inverted, transposed, curtailed Italian lines, into clear, comprehensible, elegant English. You need not say anything more of your ignorance. – Here is complete proof." '[1]

Nearing the end of volume II of *Persuasion* we come across one of Jane Austen's great set pieces. It contains the only depiction of a professional concert in her novels. The action, beautifully woven around the music, culminates in a series of exchanges surrounding an Italian song, and focuses on the heroine Anne Elliot's ability to translate for her cousin Mr Elliot its "inverted, transposed, curtailed lines", into "clear, comprehensible, elegant English". Of all the accomplished "fine ladies"

1. Jane Austen, *Persuasion* J. Kinsley (ed.) (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2004), 151. All references are to this edition and will be indicated parenthetically in the text.

(60) in their party, only Anne is truly proficient in Italian and it is this proficiency that Mr Elliot cunningly exploits, first in an attempt to flatter Anne into accepting his marriage proposal and then to disrupt her conversation with Captain Frederick Wentworth, her true love, and drive a wedge between them. Eight years before the action starts, Anne Elliot was persuaded for reasons of prudence to forgo her engagement to Wentworth, then a young naval officer. When they meet again, first in Somerset and later in Bath, their relations are polite, restrained, and exceedingly painful for Anne. Wentworth, now wealthy and bathed in military glory, is apparently interested in pretty Louisa Musgrove, while Anne is admired by her cousin Mr Elliot, later to be unmasked as a scheming Machiavellian villain. Gradually, however, they discover they are still in love, and the love-song scene is crucial in helping them to achieve their belated happy ending.

Mirroring the layout of the Octagon Room in Bath, where this narrative segment commences, this reading opens out in various directions to examine some of the social, cultural and aesthetic issues at play in the Italian love-song scene. Envisaged by its designer John Wood the Younger as the centre, the beating heart of the New Assembly Rooms, which had opened in 1771, the Octagon Room led on to the card-room, the ballroom, the tea-room (which doubled as a concert-room), and the vestibule, thus offering different possibilities for social entertainment, a suitable architectural metaphor, Austen may have felt, for different possible narrative outcomes. The Italian love song, whose words, importantly, are never told, functions first of all as the traditional narrative impediment which must be overcome before hero and heroine can, in the familiar phrase, "come to an understanding" (understanding being of course a form of translation, of negotiation between different visions). The sophisticated motif of sound and sense which Austen weaves around the Italian song also calls attention to the act of translating from the Italian as a means whereby the heroine acquires the self-knowledge necessary to her own happiness, marking the exact textual moment in which her freedom to choose begins.

An unwilling resident in Bath between 1801 and 1806, Austen was extremely reticent in her letters to her sister Cassandra on the subject of the rich musical entertainment the city offered. Numerous passages in her correspondence open up uncomfortable vistas for music lovers. Writing in her famously clipped tones about a concert she

attended, she muses: "you were very right in supposing that I wore my crape sleeves to the Concert, I had them put in on the occasion; on my hair I wore my crape & flowers, but I do not think it looked particularly well".[2] The bill for this concert has survived and we know that on this occasion she saw the exquisite soprano Mrs Billington give her last public performance. She sang an *aria bravura* from J.C. Bach's *La Clemenza di Scipione*. Jane Austen merely notes that "the room was very full and very hot".[3] More explicitly disconcerting than these deflections towards fashion or these (possibly understandable) complaints about physical discomfiture, are the words with which she anticipates a Gala evening in Sydney Gardens: "The concert will have more than its usual charm with me, as the Gardens are large enough for me to get pretty well beyond the reach of its sound".[4] Despite Austen's often scathing comments, however, the variety and extent of her music collection points in another direction: eight music books owned by her have survived and are currently housed in the Jane Austen Memorial Trust at Chawton. The painstakingly copied out material they contain, among which are numerous songs, both from Italian opera and from more "popular" sources, testify not only her love of music but also the variety and extent of her interests.[5] As for many women of her time, singing in a foreign language would have offered Austen an opportunity of expressing normally repressed emotions: whether or not they were performed in front of an audience and whether or not the audience could understand the sense of these songs, singing them undoubtedly enabled, albeit linguistically, a certain erotic freedom.

2. D. La Faye, (ed.) *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford and New York. Oxford University Press, 1997), 154.
3. Quoted in D. Nokes, *Jane Austen: A Life* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London. University of California Press, 1998), 299. G. Holbert Tucker reminds us that Jane's letters may have been written bearing in mind Cassandra's well-known lack of interest in music and that the detail of the crape sleeves may also be read as a dutiful notation of the fact that she was still in half-mourning for their father's death, *Jane Austen The Woman: Some Biographical Insights* (New York. St. Martin's press, 1994), 105.
4. La Faye, 43.
5. D. McCulloch and I. Gammie, *Jane Austen's Music. The Musical World of Jane Austen* (St. Albans, Herts. Corda Music, 1996); see also, G. D'Arcy, "Austen's Accomplishment; Music and the Modern Heroine", in C.L. Johnson and C. Tuite (eds), *A Companion to Jane Austen* (Oxford. Blackwell, 2009), 367.

In Bath, "a pleasure ground for old people and a place for husband-hunting",[6] the Wednesday subscription concerts organized by Signor Rauzzini, a soprano castrato and friend of Mozart, formed, together with the famous balls (whose intricate social rituals Austen describes in *Northanger Abbey*), the backbone of the city's entertainment season. After Rauzzini's death, the winter concerts were taken over by the virtuoso flautist Andrew Ashe, who in 1814 managed to add to his more than creditable list of performers the great Angelica Catalani.[7] Following Chapman's internal dating of Austen's novels, which dates the scene in *Persuasion* as taking place on 22 February 1815, Patrick Pigott has reconstructed that particular evening's musical programme, convincingly suggesting that, after a "Grand Sinfonia", a glee, a duet and a solo, all for male voices, the first act Austen had in mind concluded with an Italian terzetto entitled *Cheve par.*[8] In the second act of the concert, "an introductory Overture and a selection of glees, solo songs and duets, were followed – astonishingly – by the whole of Beethoven's Grand Fantasia for Piano Forte solo with an accompaniment for full band and chorus".[9] The concert, obviously catering for both highbrow and more popular tastes, ended with more glees and songs, including an Italian Quartetto, which is most likely the song Anne refers to when, having districated herself from Mr Elliot, she attempts to soothe Frederick's jealousy. The realization that Captain Wentworth may be jealous, and that he may have every right to be, comes gradually to Anne. For the first time in the novel she visualizes appearances correctly through *his* eyes, realizing that from Wentworth's point of view she and Mr Elliot must appear as a handsome couple deep in conversation. Anne does in fact gradually manage to soothe Frederick's jealousy: she first attempts a feminine ruse which

6. C. Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life*, (Harmondsworth. Penguin, 2003), 174.
7. P. Piggot, *The Innocent Diversion: A Study of Music in the Life and Writings of Jane Austen* (London. Douglas Cleverdon, 1979), 123–124.
8. In her recent *A Revolution almost Beyond Expression: Jane Austen's Persuasion* (Cranbury, NJ. Associated University Presses. 2007), 246, Jocelyn Harris also states her belief that in this passage Austen may be reworking "live" material, so to say, and thinking of a Rauzzini *aria bravura*, to which she may refer the adjective "scientific" (150): the same word was later used by Richard Warner in his *Literary Recollections* (1830) to describe Rauzzini's compositions, more remarkable for 'science and taste' than for 'genius and originality'.
9. Piggot, 125.

carries interesting literary implications, re-positioning herself at the very end of the bench so as to "catch him" as he passes by. This, she is well aware of, is the trick practiced by "the inimitable Miss Larolles" at the Italian Opera (where notoriously nothing was heard and what was heard was not understood) in Fanny Burney's novel *Cecilia.*[10] By very small degrees he has at last come close enough and it is through an initially stilted, later more animated, discussion of the music that they manage a conversation:

> "The change was indubitable. The difference between his present air and what it had been in the octagon room was strikingly great. – What was it? She thought of her father – of Lady Russell. Could there have been any unpleasant glances? He began by speaking of the concert, gravely; more like the Captain Wentworth of Uppercross; owned himself disappointed, had expected better singing; and, in short, must confess that he should not be sorry when it was over. Anne replied, and spoke in defence of the performance so well, and yet in allowance for his feelings, so pleasantly, that his countenance improved, and he replied again with almost a smile. (153)

But once again her knowledge of Italian works against her because

> 'At that moment, a touch on her shoulder obliged Anne to turn round. – It came from Mr. Elliot. He begged her pardon, but she must be applied to, to explain Italian again. Miss Carteret was very anxious to have a general idea of what was next to be sung. Anne could not refuse; but never had she sacrificed to politeness with a more suffering spirit.
>
> A few minutes, though as few as possible, were inevitably consumed; and when her own mistress again, when able to turn and look as she had done before, she found herself accosted by Captain Wentworth, in a reserved yet hurried sort of farewell. "He must wish her goodnight. He was going – He should get home as fast as he could."
>
> "Is not this song worth staying for?" said Anne, suddenly struck by an idea which made her more anxious to be encouraging.
>
> "No!" he replied impressively, "there is nothing worth my staying for;" and he was gone directly' (154).

10. Fanny Burney, *Cecilia* M.A. Doody and P. Sabor (eds.) (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1998), 286.

Music, one feels, acquires such resonance in this scene because *Persuasion* is overall a novel of silence, born out of silence. After completing the drafts of three outstanding novels (*First Impressions* which would become *Pride and Prejudice*, *Elinor and Marianne*, the future *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Susan*, later *Northanger Abbey*) Jane Austen lost her voice for almost ten years. Significantly, the beginning of this silence can be dated to her parents' decision to move to Bath in December 1800 (she apparently fainted when told).[11] She started writing again when she was 35 in 1809, composing first *Mansfield Park*, then *Emma*, and finally *Persuasion*, which was finished in July 1816. Exactly a year later she died.

Anne Elliot, we are told, is an accomplished pianist, but "having no voice, her performance was little thought of"(42). During family parties she offers her services as piano player to the dancers, music working as a gag to her emotions, her only comfort that of being unobserved. Interestingly, the sounds Anne produces through her music are somehow silent, unheard:

> 'She knew that when she played she was giving pleasure only to herself [...] she had never [...] known the happiness of being listened to, or encouraged by any just appreciation or real taste'. (42)

When Captain Wentworth is reintroduced into Anne's circle of friends we are immediately made aware that direct communication is impossible. In her last, and most romantic book, Austen's famously attuned dialogues are sparse and inwardness, the voice in the head, becomes the main protagonist. Between Frederick and Anne indirectness of emotion is mirrored by indirect speech: "they had no conversation together, no intercourse but what the commonest civility required" (55). Rather than "non-verbal communication", the hero and heroine's interactions at this

11. Nokes, 220–221. There may of course well be an autobiographical subtext to the narrator's comment on Anne's reaction when told the family would be moving to Bath: "the usual fate of Anne attended her, on having something very opposite to her inclination fixed on. She disliked Bath, and did not think it agreed with her – and Bath was to be her home" (17). By the time Austen arrived, Bath's appeal was beginning to wane and other resorts such as Brighton, Weymouth and Lyme Regis (where another crucial prolonged scene in the novel takes place) were preferred.

stage are often best described as "non-verbal non-communications",[12] as systematic misunderstandings, refusals, on both parts, to *see*. Throughout the first part of the novel the "wordless dramas of Anne's inner life"[13] is expressed through what may be termed "auditory emotions". The first time she meets Wentworth after eight years of silence, she cannot meet his eye; instead, she "hears" his voice as he speaks to others in a room which seems "full – full of [. . .] voices" (52); when he leaves after a few brief moments, her importunate sister insistently "talk[s]" but "she c[annot] attend. She had *seen* him" (italics mine). She broods on Wentworth's mortifying assertion, cruelly repeated by her sister Mary that " 'You were so altered he should not have known you again' ". His vision of her has so changed that she now appears " 'Altered beyond his knowledge!' Anne fully submitted, in silent, deep mortification." (53). The relentless interplay of visual and auditory steadily takes off when Captain Wentworth returns to Kellynch triumphant from the war, a visual declaration of Britain's superiority over France and all things foreign and fraudulent. Though Anne is extremely intelligent and sensitive, and repeatedly described as an "attentive listener" (26), her habitual modesty forces her to systematically misinterpret her auditory emotions: the only sense she can make of the sounds which penetrate her silence is that her chance at happiness is lost. There are many instances of this ability to misinterpret words; the best is, however, the beautifully paced long walk to Winthrop (Vol. I, Chapter X) when Anne is forced by circumstances to sit motionless and listen while Wentworth and Louisa gather nuts in a nearby hedge-row and come dangerously near to making a mutual declaration of love. The auditory then suddenly gives way to the visual when in Lyme Regis Anne is first seen and admired by her cousin Mr Elliot, heir to her father's Somerset estate (87). His erotic gaze suddenly rouses Wentworth, who has been so far silent and distant, and at the same time awakens Anne, transforming her into more of a visual creature. This moment is usefully contrasted with an earlier one in the Musgroves' parlour when Wentworth unexpectedly fixes his eyes on Anne:

12. P. Byrne, among others, has drawn attention to the centrality of non-verbal moments in Austen in her essay *Emma* in Harold Bloom (ed.) *Jane Austen* (New York. Infobase Publishing, 2009), 199.

13. The expression is Deidre Shauna Lynch's from her *Introduction* to the edition of *Persuasion* I am quoting from (viii).

> 'she felt he was looking at herself – observing her altered features, perhaps, trying to trace in them the ruins of the face which had once charmed him; and once she knew he must have spoken to her; – she was hardly aware of it, till she heard the answer.' (62)

The movement from auditory to visual perception, which now becomes insistent in Austen's prose, figures Anne's transformation from purely passive victim of her emotions to more active participant in the action. Now Wentworth's "eyes", his "gaze", see Anne differently, his "look" almost insensibly improving hers: she appears now more beautiful, her "bloom", which for Austen means her sex appeal, returns.[14] This change also serves to modulate the earlier contrasting concepts of sound and sense in Anne's world, which can be seen as "horizontal", and, as it were, "aesthetic", with a new set of concepts, appearance and truth, which may be viewed as "vertical" and "epistemological". In the intricately designed and triumphantly successful Italian love-song scene, these two sets – sound/sense and appearance/reality – interact to exquisite effect. "In spite of all the various noises of the room, the almost ceaseless slam of the door, and ceaseless buzz" (148), Anne is able to distinguish Frederick's every word. Again very little is spoken or said directly, but an operatic quality is evident not merely in the intensity of the emotions – the "exquisite, though agitated sensations" Austen's supremely well-chosen words convey (149) – but also in the way the scene is structured. After the suppressed erotic charge of the dialogue, in which the truth of Frederick's and Anne's feelings becomes clear to themselves (though not yet to each other), there are temporary separations. The first of these, significantly, is heralded by an auditory interruption which forces them to stop talking and looking at each other:

> 'the entrance door opened again, and the very party appeared for whom they were waiting. "Lady Darymple, Lady Darymple," was the rejoicing sound; and with all the eagerness compatible with anxious elegance, Sir Walter and his two ladies stepped forward to meet them. Lady Darymple and Miss Carteret, escorted by Mr. Elliot and Colonel Wallis, who had happened to arrive nearly at the same instant, advanced into the room. The

14. Contrast, for example, the description of Anne on pages 11, 28 and 53 with that on page 87.

> others joined them, and it was a group in which Anne found herself necessarily included. She was divided from Captain Wentworth.' (149)

The ironically hymnal "rejoicing sound" with reference to the vacuous Lady Darymple, the leader of the "old set" from which Anne is wishing to detach herself, compounds our growing suspicions towards the auditory. Frederick's and Anne's movements are now determined by the movement of their respective parties, the crowds in the room, the commencement and the interval in the music programme, and during these spaces, these "little interval[s] for recollection" (149), as in Italian opera, the tempestuous is followed by the *pensoso*. When Mr Elliot accosts Anne with the Italian verses, she is happy enough to allow herself the single instance of flirting we may accuse her of. She lets down her guard. He homes in for the kill. The words he chooses are interesting. "Inverted" and "transposed" are at first glance musical terms; Austen is, I believe, playing with the musical concept of sight transposition (Mr Elliot says "translate at sight"), which occurs when a musician is asked to read music in one key while playing it in another. With reference to the Italian language, however, the carefully chosen and somewhat perplexing adjectives assume a different meaning: Lord Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* opposes a natural style to one "where transposition or inversion prevails".[15] Italian passionate poetry versus English natural (rationalizing) prose. What is Austen additionally suggesting? Narrative or generic improbability versus credibility? Romance, fantasy, versus the novel? It is more credible, from Austen's point of view, that two people who have been apart for eight years should gradually fall in love again, than that her heroine should fall for the "long lost heir", a plot legacy of Restoration plays.

"Curtailed" here refers purely to the *visual* layout of the page over which Anne's and her cousin's heads meet: the short, interrupted verses contrast with the continuous prose of her translation. However, it is likely Austen had in mind here those pages from Samuel Richardson's sequel to *Pamela* (Richardson was her literary hero) in which the heroine condemns the English practice of "mutilat[ing], curtail[ing], and patch[ing]

15. In Chapter 18, "Beauty of Language"; Henry Home Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (1762) in 2 Volumes (London. Vernor and Hood, 1805, the eighth edition), II, 38.

up a drama in Italian, in order to introduce favourite airs, selected from different authors [. . .] so that [the result is] incongruous nonsense". Pamela pertly observes that "once sound is preferred to sense, we shall depart from all our own worthiness, and at best, be but the apes, yea, the dupes, of those we may strive to imitate, but never can reach, much less excel" and passes judgment in favour of 'the manly nervous sense' which distinguishes English drama (she is obviously thinking of the castrati) from the "action not extraordinary, the language unintelligible, and, for these reasons – the instruction none at all" of Italian opera. "If [. . .] one were all ear, and lost to every sense but that of Harmony, surely, the Italian opera would be a transporting thing!" but as it stands "what a mere temporary delight does it afford! For what does one carry home, but the remembrance of having been pleased so many hours by the mere vibration of air, which, being but sound, you cannot bring away with you."[16]

This scene in *Persuasion* thus participates in the familiar anti-operatic discourse of eighteenth-century British prose, which pitted narrative and national good sense against the lack of realism and excessive emotionality of Italian opera. Since the famous Cuzzoni/ Bordoni dispute in the 1720s Italian singers, the divas, as they were commonly referred to, were seen as creatures of exquisite voice, unfettered caprice and often uncontrollable greed, headstrong (unpersuadable, one might say) and morally corrupt, a veneer of affected royalty thinly disguising their vulgarity.[17] The cultural anomaly of English passion for opera is voiced in Austen's *Emma* by the ingénue Harriet Smith: "I hate Italian singing", she says, "there is no understanding a word of it";[18] in the same novel the beautiful and somewhat tragic Jane Fairfax, who enchants with her Italian arias, is a highly ambiguous character. Joseph Addison and Richard Steel despised the genre and vigorously castigated Italian opera, viewing its

16. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* Vol 2 (1742) (Teddington, Middlesex. The Echo Library, 2007), 231–232.

17. A useful overview of this very public dispute and the satirical literature which spawned from it can be found in the catalogue for the exhibition "Handel and the Divas" (Handel House Museum 30 April–16 November 2008) HYPERLINK "http://www.handelhouse.org/news-and-events/news-archive/handelandthedivas"http://www.handelhouse.org/news-and-events/news-archive/handelandthedivas

18. Jane Austen, *Emma* F. Stafford (ed.) (Harmondsworth. Penguin, 2010), 216.

plots as fabulous and unreal and establishing as a critical topos the very same opposition between sound (vapidly Italian) and sense (intrinsically English) which Austen rekindles in this scene. In Steele's immensely successful *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), the virtuous heroine Indiana complains that because of the language barrier, "All the Pleasure the best Opera gives us, is but mere Sensation. – Methinks it's a Pity the Mind can't have a little more Share in the Entertainment."[19] Enjoying Italian music becomes synonymous with cultural affectation, the pleasures it yields are worryingly, disturbingly vague. Addison had been particularly resentful on the subject in his Prologue to Edmund Smith's *Phaedra and Hippolytus* (1707), mercilessly castigating the public's fashionable fascination with what they could not understand:

> 'Long has a race of heroes filled the stage
> That rant by note and through the gamut rage
> In songs and airs express their martial fire
> Combat in trills and in a fugue expire
> While lulled by sound and undisturbed by wit
> Calm and serene you indolently sit
> And from the full fatigue of thinking free
> Hear the facetious fiddle's repartee.'

In particular Addison found disturbing the improbability and the stylistic aberration of the "mixed" mode, when, for the sake of listening to the angelic sound of a castrato's voice, the British public would endure exchanges with a female heroine singing in English:

> 'Had Valentini, musically coy,
> Shunned Phaedra's arms, and scorn'd the proffer'd joy,
> It had not moved your wonder to have seen
> An eunuch fly from an enamour'd queen:
> How would it please, should she in English speak,
> And could Hippolytus reply in Greek?
> But he, a stranger to your modish way,
> By your old rules must stand or fall today,

19. Act II, sc. ii, *The Dramatic Works of Sir Richard Steele* (London. Tonson, Crowder, Calson, Lownds *et al*, 1761), 39.

> And hopes you will your foreign task command,
> To bear, for once, with what you understand.'[20]

A few years later, in *The Spectator* N.18, Addison would comment ironically on the taste of the town which had established the rule "That nothing is capable of being well set to music that is not nonsense". Therefore "we immediately fell to translating the Italian Operas", often making up new words with no regard for the original context, the "chief care being to make the numbers of the English verse answer to those of the Italian, that both might go to the same tune". This, Addison explains, offered great opportunities for social comedy as one often observed

> 'The most refined persons of the British Nation dying away and languishing to notes that were filled with a spirit of rage and indignation. It happened also very frequently, where the sense was rightly translated, the necessary transposition of words, which were drawn out of the phrase of one tongue into that of another, made the music appear very absurd in one tongue that was very natural in another.'[21]

When this anti-Italian extra-novelistic discourse was later remobilized as part of the social criticism voiced by novel of manners and the "sentimental" novel, it assumed a more sinister air and was often interestingly gendered. It is frequent to encounter male villains in eighteenth-century novels casually "humming an Italian air". This stylistic shorthand for affected indifference to cover up their sins is a trait shared, for example, by Julia Grenville's cruel, wife-selling husband, Lord Stanley, in Georgiana Devonshire's 1770 novel, *The Sylph*, and the Hon. Captain L—, in John Corry's *The Miseries of Seduction* (1815), who, after making Mary Fenton pregnant, leaves to spend the summer in Brighton, giving her a kiss a five guineas

20. *The Works of Joseph Addison Complete in Three Volumes* (New York. Harper Brothers, 1864), III, 433.
21. *The Works of Joseph Addison Complete in Three Volumes* (New York. Harper Brothers, 1837), I, 42.

> 'and when Mary pressed his hand, while her bosom convulsed with sobs, and her eyes overflowed with the honest tears of true love, he turned from her with a fashionable shrug, and humming an Italian air as he walked down stairs [...] mounted his horse and rode off, without bestowing another thought on his abandoned victim.'[22]

The flexibility of the Italian music motif as a character enforcer is visible also in the immensely popular 1796 novel *The Children of the Abbey*, by Regina Maria Roche – a book we know Jane Austen was familiar with as it is on the list of those admired by Harriet Smith, who warmly recommends it to her lover Robert Martin in *Emma*.[23] Here the motif is used with reference to female characters. In a long scene which bears some resemblances to Elizabeth's Bennett's "failed audition" with Lady Catherine De Bourgh, the wronged heroine Amanda Fitzalan is baited by a small assembly of "fine ladies". The rather masculine and aggressive Lady Euphrasia, is "much surprised and mortified by the unembarrassed elegance of Amanda's air and manner", and

> When Amanda drew a chair near the sofa on which she sat, or rather reclined, she continued staring in her face, and alternately humming an Italian air and caressing the little dog which she had brought with her.

On a slightly later occasion, this time reminiscent of both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, Amanda is "quizzed" by Lady Euphrasia and Miss Malcolm (who seem a pattern for the Bingley sisters) and by the supercilious rake Freelove. They force her to play, certain that she will embarrass herself, but their effort spectacularly backfires. They first, mockingly, offer her some "songs", which, they suggest, "will answer you better than the Italian music before you". Amanda, however, tackles the more difficult Italian music with such elegant mastery that she attracts the attention of "some gentlemen, who either were, or pretended to be, musical connoisseurs" and who "entreated her to sing":

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22. Georgiana Spenser Cavendish Devonshire, *The Sylph: A Novel* (London. T. Lowndes, 1779), 62; and John Corry, *The Gardener's Daughter of Worcester; Or, The Miseries of Seduction,* in *A Satirical View of London: Free Strictures on the Manners and Amusements of the Inhabitants of the English Metropolis* (London, 1815), 66.
23. *Emma*, 29.

> 'She chose a plaintive Italian air; and the exquisite taste and sweetness with which she sung, equally astonished and delighted. Nor was admiration confined to the accomplishments she displayed; the soft expression of her countenance, which *seemed* (italics mine) according to the harmonious sounds which issued from her lips, was viewed with pleasure, and praised with energy; and she rose from the harpsichord covered with blushes, from the applause which stole around her.'

Amanda is unwittingly eroticized by her singing and the vagueness of her male viewers' knowledge of Italian only serves to compound this effect. Not only does it work against her in attracting unwanted male attention, but in her female rivals at the assembly, her linguistic and musical talent, like that of Jane Fairfax, merely unleashes social contempt as they viciously insinuate that only a career on the stage (with the obvious subtext of prostitution) may justify such a waste of education:

> '"I declare I never knew anything so monstrously absurd", exclaimed Lady Euphrasia, "as to let a girl in her situation learn such things; except, indeed, it was to qualify her for a governess, or an opera-singer". – "Ay, I suppose", said Miss Malcom, "we shall soon hear her quavering away at one of the theatres; for no person of fashion would really intrust her children to so confident a creature".'[24]

We are now in a better position to understand what Anne Elliot's sudden, elegant display of linguistic bravura signify from a cultural point of view. Readers of *Persuasion* might initially share Mr Elliot's surprise, though for different reasons. Anne's quiet appearance and modest demeanour initially enlist her among those young women whom conduct manuals have taught to justly regulate their passion. "Glad to have any thing marked out as a duty" (32), she possesses "gentleness, modesty, taste and feeling" (26). Nevertheless, she has an elegance of mind which recoils from display.[25] As a baronet's daughter, Anne would have received

24. All three quotations are from the sixth edition of *The Children of the Abbey, a Tale* (London. George Vertue, 1825), 259, 267.

25. See C.P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: The Italian Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1957), 36–37, 42.

the best possible education both privately and at school. Knowledge of Italian, which had not yet become the requisite talent for the poet and the gentleman it would be by the 1830s, was almost exclusively the province of young ladies of genteel (or aspiring genteel) status, whose "superficial, fashionable" understanding of the language is often satirized in contemporary literature. As such, it is normally treated with contempt by Austen as an example of those frothy accomplishments which distinguish modern "fine ladies"; it is particularly to be condemned as part of that gendered type of performative education which is best shown off in society and used as bait in the marriage market. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, that notorious harpy, Caroline Bingley, includes Italian in her list of those acquirements which define a "truly accomplished woman": "a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages".[26] By tacitly including herself in the ranks of those who know Italian, Caroline is obviously manoeuvring for Darcy's attention. An earlier, quietly feminist and reforming novel by Mary Ann Hanway, *Ellinor; or the World as it is*, which as with so many titles of the 1790s clearly signals its concern with social actualities, makes short shrift of young ladies' fashionable accomplishments, curiously nuancing the Italian portion of their education in particular as strictly musical and loud:

> 'they are to totter a minuet, rattle the keys of a piano forte, twang the strings of a harp, scream an Italian song, daub a work basket, or make a fillagree tea caddy.'[27]

In Austen's personal correspondence to Cassandra, a young lady's often perfunctory knowledge of the language is treated humorously as an in-joke between the sisters, but, importantly, it is linked with vivaciousness, "liveliness", a necessary attribute in husband-hunting. Preparing her sister to meet the affected yet not entirely disagreeable Miss Holden, Jane writes:

26. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* V. Jones (ed.), (Harmondsworth. Penguin, 2009), 39.

27. *Ellinor; or the World as it is in 4 Vols* (London. William Lane, 1798), II, 56.

> 'She has an idea of you being remarkably lively, therefore get ready the proper selection of adverbs and due scraps of Italian and French.'[28]

The villainess of the youthful novel *Lady Susan*, on the other hand, while advocating the study of music for her daughter, with aristocratic *sprezzatura* dismisses the "prevailing fashion of acquiring a perfect knowledge in all the languages' [. . .] to be mistress of French, Italian, German, etc. will gain a woman some applause, but will not add one lover to her list".[29] Interestingly, Lady Susan prides herself on her rhetorical accomplishments in her *own* language. Again, in *Emma*, the deliciously repugnant Mrs Elton (who incidentally comes from Bath), in referring to her newlywed as her *caro sposo*, combines Austen's criticism of a certain type of female education with a horror for the pretentiousness and vacuity of Italian opera.[30] So within the more general framework of Austen's "pervasive alertness to affectation",[31] Italian usually signifies under-bred finery or pernicious artfulness, a language of surface, whose beautiful sounds conceal deceit.[32] In using it to flatter and coil himself, serpent-like, around Anne, Mr Elliot makes a grave mistake. With perfect sureness of touch Austen associates him with the idea cluster she has developed around the

28. *Letters*, 90.

29. Jane Austen, *Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* M. Drabble (ed.) (Harmondsworth. Penguin, 1975), 51.

30. *Emma*, 333. See, on Mrs Elton's by then hopelessly unfashionable and grammatically volatile use of this phrase, P. Rogers "Caro Sposo: Mrs Elton, Burneys, Thrales, and Noels", *R.E.S.* 45, 177 (1994), 70–75. On the taste for Italian opera in the latter half of the century see C. Price, J. Milhouse, R.D. Hume, *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London* (Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1995), Vol. I.

31. J. Todd (ed.), *Jane Austen in Context* (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2005), 316.

32. We know that at Abbey School, after tea or cocoa in the mornings Jane Austen and her fellow students "sat an hour or two at lessons in needlework, English and French, with some Italian and History", P. Honan, *Jane Austen: Her Life* (New York. St. Martin's Press, 1987), 33. Her nephew James Austen-Leigh famously stated that "it was her pleasure to boast of greater ignorance than she had any just claim to. She knew more than her mother tongue, for she knew a good deal of French and a little of Italian'; *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (London. Wordsworth, 2007), 95. Austen may well have taught herself the language and one path through which she would have acquired this knowledge, of course, was through her love of music.

sound/sense opposition. When, with an insinuating whisper, he slips in his marriage proposal, his words indicate that he would never wish Anne's name to change, would never wish it to be translated:

> '"The name of Anne Elliot", he says, "has long had an interesting sound to me. Very long has it possessed a charm over my fancy, and, if I dared, I would breath my wishes that the name might never change". Such she believed were his words; but scarcely had she received their sound, than her attention was caught by other sounds immediately behind her, which rendered every thing else trivial.' (152)

Anne's father and Lady Dalrymple, she realizes, are speaking of Captain Wentworth, whose good looks and noble manners draw everyone's attention: "A well-looking man", they comment, "a very well-looking man". Anne loses all interest in "empty sound". She is enraptured by the visual, "her eyes are caught" . . . they "fall on him" . . . she "dare[s] observe" . . . she "give[s] another glance". . . "he does not look again". When the performance recommences "she was forced to seem to restore her attention to the orchestra, and look straight forward"(152).

On the surface, the Italian verses Anne translates function as erotically binding: we are not told the words of the song, but Mr Elliot clearly thinks that simply speaking them aloud has suitably inflamed Anne, that her knowledge of Italian substantiates a latent flame and that she will accept him. In truth, however, they merely mask, they hide the reality of Anne's feelings from Wentworth's eyes: they are a layer through which he must cut to reach the truth. *He* is transformed, through the Italian song, from manly English naval hero into despairing Italianate lover.[33] Anne sees "from his looks" that *he* now labours under an "unfortunate persuasion" (178). Talking of the concert to her friend Mrs Smith, Anne concedes that she has not hitherto seen as far

33. Penny Gay sees a similar transformation in Austen's rewriting of the declaration scene in Chapter X. The original scene (*Appendix A* in the Oxford edition of *Persuasion* I have been quoting from) figured a passive and silent Anne mutely accepting Frederick's torrential declaration of love. The extended (and masterly) rewriting of the *éclaircissement* at the White Hart Inn instead shows the now confident Anne talking and Frederick silently listening and later writing, *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146–148.

as she might have into her heart: 'we were exceedingly well placed – that is for hearing; I must not say for seeing, because I appear to have seen very little' (156) . For her, however, the act of translating has been liberating: she is no longer hesitant or depressed in her dealings with Frederick; she has, finally, established sense over sound, and by translating as nearly as possible "the sense of the Italian love song", she has become, in a very eighteenth century fashion, co-author. The same happens for her lover: when Frederick finally declares his love (which, he claims, had never changed, never died) he does so through the written not the spoken word, through a letter, significantly saturated with rhetorical "inversions", which he composes while listening to her talk to another man and which she "devours with her eyes":

> 'I can listen no longer in silence [...] have you not seen?' he writes, 'Tell me not that I am too late' [...] 'Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman' [...] 'Unjust I may have been' [...] 'Have not you seen this? Can you fail to understand my wishes? [...] I can hardly write. I am every instant hearing something which overpowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice, when they would be lost on others'. (191).

And, as we read Frederick's letter over Anne's shoulder, we too are somehow brought to acknowledge the quiet superiority of the visual (the novelistic) over the auditory.

As a coda to this reading of the Italian love song scene I wish to comment briefly on another text in which the Italian language enables erotic freedom through music. In the anecdotes (*Thraliana*) of Hester Thrale Piozzi, whose scandalous second marriage with her daughter's Italian music teacher, Gabriel Mario Piozzi, still echoed in Bath at the time in which Austen wrote her novel, numerous "translation scenes" are recorded, some of which can be quoted as an interesting parallel to the associated sound/sense, Italian/English opposition, which Austen so finely develops in *Persuasion*.[34] "Forced", like Anne, "into prudence in her youth", Hester too, "had learned romance as she grew older".[35] She was extremely proficient in Italian and Giuseppe Baretti frequented

34. As Hester and Piozzi spent their winters in Bath until his death from gout in 1809, they were certainly known and talked about in the town during the Austens' sojourn.
35. *Persuasion*, 30.

her house as Italian teacher extraordinaire. When her first husband, the rich brewer Henry Thrale, died, London society expected her to marry her mentor and close family friend Samuel Johnson, but Hester had gradually fallen in love with Piozzi, who wooed her through music and sonnets she "cannot help translating", songs she "instantly translates" and then makes "him sing . . . in English thus all'improvviso". Hester looks to "her Italian", as she calls Piozzi, as a safe haven where the auditory sense predominates giving both pain and pleasure: "his singing surpasses every body's for Taste, Tenderness and True Elegance [. . .] I made him sing yesterday, & tho' he says his Voice is gone, I cannot somehow or other get it out of my Ears'; on another occasion she talks of 'his voice dissipating the cloud of care which gathers round me".[36] The price of her second romance was the severance of many of her closest friendships and often crude and very public misrepresentation.[37] Hester was accused of being an amorous widow and Piozzi a fortune hunter (incidentally these two character types are represented in *Persuasion* by Mrs Clay and Mr Elliot).[38] Fanny Burney never forgave her "for shewing so great an ascendance of passion over Reason"; later, catching sight of her in London after her Italian honeymoon, Burney sees Hester as somehow transformed, transubstantiated almost, into "the painted foreigner . . . whose glare was high enough for the Opera stage".[39] When her daughter forbids the marriage Hester oscillates between Austenian irony ("I married the first time to please my mother; I must marry the second to please my daughter! [. . .] To what am I guardian: to their Pride and Prejudice") and operatic effect ("Adieu to all that's dear, to all that's lovely. I am parted from my Life,

36. Quotations are from *Autobiography, Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale), in Two Volumes* (2nd edition, London. Longmans, 1861), I, 161, 154, 178.

37. W. McCarthy, *Hester Thrale Piozzi: Portrait of a Literary Woman* (Chapel Hill. North Carolina University Press, 1985), 34-39.

38. I. McIntyre reproduces Samuel Collings' vicious 1784 engraving, *Signor Piozzi ravishing Mrs Thrale*, which shows Piozzi and Hester sharing a sofa. Her words are: "Your Music has ravished me and your Instrument is large and delightful"; Piozzi, who is depicted playing the cello replies: "And me like de Muzeek of your Guineas'. Johnson and the by then deceased Thrale look on disapprovingly, the former commenting on the senseless lust behind Hester's move: "She has quitted Literature for a Fiddlestick", the latter remarking on the inappropriateness of Piozzi's foreignness: "She had better have stuck to home-brewed"; *Hester: The Remarkable Life of Dr Johnson's 'Dear Mistress'* (London. Constable and Robinson, 2008), Pl. 17.

39. Frances Burney, *Journals and Letters* P. Sabor and L.E. Troide (eds) (Harmondsworth. Penguin, 2001), 203, 300.

my Soul! My Piozzi: Sposo promesso! Amante adorato! Amico senza equale".[40] Despite all opposition, Hester, however, remained unpersuadable, and indeed her marriage to Piozzi turned out to be a long and happy one. During her honeymoon in Italy, she too rediscovered her voice and her literary production from this period assured her continued position within London literary society as Piozzi was gradually recontextualised as an English gentleman. James Boswell, however, never forgave her and vowed he would "trim her *recitativo* and all her *airs*".[41] In a virulently crass attack in the *Public Advertiser* he too calls on the familiar sound/sense opposition:

> 'If *Hester* had chosen to wed mighty SAM
> Who it seems, drove full at her his BATTERING RAM
> A wonder indeed, then, the world would have found
> A woman who truly prefer'd SENSE to *sound.*'[42]

Anne, unlike Hester, rejects the negative implications of the Italian language, the "mere sensation" of empty sound as Steele had described it, in favour of the "manly English sense" of her naval officer. However, in the essentially static *Persuasion,* the translation scene powerfully symbolizes movement and positive change. Because of its closeness, its contiguity almost with Austen's death (dying being, in John Donne's beautiful words, merely a translation into a better language), *Persuasion* has often been investigated both in the light of its apparent interest in themes of retrospection and as a work which departs in new directions, exploring more modern forms of expression. The act of translating, that is of keeping faith with and yet departing from the past, of releasing the buried potentialities of something whose form appeared to be sealed, is central to the dénouement of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth's second romance, in which, as any good translator knows, prudence, after years of practice, may yield to freedom and romance. (30)

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40. *Autobiography*, 173, 194.
41. *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of his Life of Johnson* M. Waingrow and Marshall (ed.) (New Haven. Yale University Press, 1970), 143.
42. Quoted in McIntyre, 257.

The Fairest Words on Truest Lips: The Italian Translations of Elizabeth Siddal's Pre-Raphaelite Poems

Eleonora Sasso

"One of the most fervent passions is the genius's love of truth."[1] The meditation by Pierre-Simon Laplace, employed as the epigraph to Julia Kristeva's *Hannah Arendt*, aptly summarises the brilliance of Elizabeth Siddal's genius, always striving to achieve artistic truth and originality. Like Christina Rossetti, Siddal is a minor Pre-Raphaelite woman artist who distinguished herself for reclaiming a veritable place for women within a patriarchal tradition of poetry. Her painterly and lyrical works which, in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's words, disclose "a real genius [. . .] in conception and colour",[2] are imbued with a certain truth of feminine experience. *Pippa Passes* (1854), *The Ladies' Lament from the Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens* (1856), *Clerk Saunders* (1857), *Lady Clare* (1857), *Lady Affixing a Pennant to a Knight's Spear* (1858) are only a few pictorial examples of how Siddal tried to document the truth of women's condition or women's experiences to oppose the falsehood of sexist stereotypes of women.

1. Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt* R. Guberman (trans.), (New York. Columbia University Press, 2001), ix.
2. Letter of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham, 29 November 1860, O. Douhgty, and J.R. Wahl, (eds.) *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* 4 vols. (Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1965–1967), I, 209.

This Pre-Raphaelite woman poet of "unusual capacities",[3] and "without parallel for many a long year",[4] was fatally wounded in the search of true love. Her literary production – a body of fifteen poems and some fragments, all of uncertain date or sequence – reveals a female genius in experimenting with feminine stereotypes through what Christina Rossetti defines as "deceptively simple forms".[5] Despite the small number of poems, Siddal uses a wide range of lyrical modes, demonstrating her expertise in the art of poetry, thereby confirming Kristeva's idea that poetic language is especially suited to women.

Siddal's poetic gift is well described by Jan Marsh, who emphasises the simplicity of style as opposed to the intricacies of the text: "simple-seeming lyrics dramatizing a mood or emotion, or telling a tale. The style is unsophisticated, the content often unexpectedly layered and complex".[6] Also very relevant in this sense are the words of Constance W. Hassett who ascribes Siddal's originality to the use of indeterminacy and variety of style: "Siddal's originality lies in locating her heroine in a somewhat more indeterminate position. [. . .] [Her] poetry ranges from the perfectly realized ballad narrative, to its opposite, the overheard lyric, and to something in between, the made-to-be heard monologue".[7]

Ballad and lyric forms determine the dimension of Siddal's texts, of what Kristeva calls *genotext*, i.e. the transfer of drive energy that can be detected through the rhythm and melody of a spoken or written text. The activities of Siddal's female unconscious emanate from repetitive arrangements and manifestations of rhythm whose function is to reclaim women's socio-cultural identities, as well as their artistic genius. This phonosymbolic musicality does indeed embody what Kristeva refers to as the "semiotic" and is even more perceptible in the Italian translations of Siddal's Pre-Raphaelite poems. If the Italian language is known for its musicality, then the actual quantity of the drive energy stored in melodic

3. Qt. in Jan Marsh, *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal* (London. Quartets Books, 1992), 62.
4. *Ibidem*, 59.
5. *Ibidem*, 210.
6. Marsh, 198.
7. C.W. Hassett, "Elizabeth Siddal's Poetry: A Problem and Some Suggestions", *Victorian Poetry*, 35, 4 (1997), 464.

device rhythm would naturally increase in the Italian translations which make the impalpable palpable.

As is well known, British women writers were particularly fascinated by the musicality of the Italian language. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot, Christina Rossetti, Margaret Oliphant, Vernon Lee were all seduced by the wonderful rhythmic quality of Italian, and in particular by the Tuscan dialect of Dante. But the most extensive interpreter of the sensuality and fluidity of the Italian language was Mary F. Robinson, scholar, translator, biographer, poet and close friend to Vernon Lee. Elizabeth Siddal, whose face[8] and destiny were identified with Beatrice of Dante's *Vita Nova*, was not immune to the appeal of the Italian language, whose appreciation she acquired through D.G. Rossetti's translations[9] of 60 Italian poets such as Dante and Guido Cavalcanti (*The Early Italian Poets*, 1861).

For this reason, I have chosen to concentrate on a linguistic analysis of the Italian translations of Siddal's poems from a phono-prosodic perspective, because it allows me to demonstrate the indisputable qualities of this Pre-Raphaelite woman artist,[10] who is emblematic of Kristeva's female genius. My point is that such poems as "A Year and a Day", "Dead Love", and "At Last", just to mention a few, are what Kristeva calls genotexts, i.e. textual articulations of Siddal's unconscious, discernible in rhythm, prosody and word-plays. Siddal's artistic production sublimates the drive energy of her feelings and sensations related to her constant sickness, her husband's numerous betrayals, the tragedy of her still-born children, and all of the odds that were against her emerging as an artist.

In the sections that follow, then, I undertake an avowedly revisionary reading of Siddal's poems investigated through the Italian translations by Zaira Vitale (1904), Conny Stockhausen (2006), and Stefania Arcara

8. See L. Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: Face of the Pre-Raphaelites* (Walker & Co., Gordonsville, 2006) and also V. Surtees, *Rossetti's Portraits of Elizabeth Siddal: A Catalogue of the Drawings and Watercolours* (Aldershot. Scolar Press, 1991).

9. On D.G. Rossetti as translator of Italian poets see F. Marucci, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti traduttore e tradotto", *I Rossetti e l'Italia*, G. Oliva and M. Menna (eds), (Lanciano. Carabba, 2010), 193–212.

10. See J. Marsh, and P. Gerrish Nunn, (eds.) *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* (London. Thames and Hudson, 1998).

(2009) – a reading that views gender[11] and translation as tropes to describe Siddal as a rediscovered proto-feminist while invoking a Kristevian approach that takes its cue from Siddal's expertise in phono-prosody. In my account, the Pre-Raphaelite poetess is neither an imitator of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetry nor a follower of other established male poets such as Tennyson and Browning. Rather, this "ineffable genius",[12] as Ruskin calls her, employs an original poetic language that speaks for women and makes the feminine visible in her poems.

The reception of the myth of Elizabeth Siddal in Italy is part of a wider artistic influence exerted by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood on nineteenth-century Italian writers such as Enrico Nencioni, Giulio Aristide Sartorio, Carlo Placci, and Gabriele D'Annunzio.[13] Primarily known as the woman who modelled for Rossetti and his fellow painters (Walter Deverell, Holman Hunt, and John Everet Millais), Siddal became notorious to the Italian public because of a bizarre event that occurred after her death. In 1862 at Siddal's funeral rite in Highgate Cemetery, Dante Gabriel Rossetti placed in her coffin a little red-edged manuscript that was wrapped in the tresses of her flowing hair. Seven years later, Rossetti wrote to his friend Charles Howell, authorising him to exhume and retrieve his unpublished poems. This macabre act of dispossessing contributed to increase the legend of the unfortunate woman artist.

In 1900 Arthur Symons discussed the exhumation of Rossetti's poems with Eleonora Duse, who said to him passionately: "All Rossetti is in that story of the manuscript buried in his wife's coffin. He could do it; He could repent of it; but he should have gone and taken it back himself; he sent his friends."[14] It is highly significant that an Italian

11. On gender and translation see S. Simon, *Gender in Translation. Culture and Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London-New York. Routledge, 1996), L. von Flotow, *Translation and Gender* (Manchester. St. Jerome's Publishing, 1997) and O. Palusci, (ed.) *Traduttrici. Questioni di gender nelle letterature in lingua inglese* (Napoli. Liguori, 2010).

12. Letter of John Ruskin to Ellen Heaton, 1855, V. Surtees, (ed.) *Sublime and Instructive. Letters from John Ruskin to Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, Anna Blunden and Ellen Heaton* (London. Joseph, 1972), 157.

13. See Giuliana Pieri, *The Influence of Pre-Raphaelitism on Fin-de-Siècle Italy: Art, Beauty, and Culture* (London. Maney Publishing, 2007).

14. A. Symons, *Dramatis Personae* (New York. Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 119.

woman artist, a mentor for many young actresses in her theatrical company, was so concerned with Siddal's tragic destiny. Eleonora Duse, who maintained that the meaning of art is "to help, to continually help and share, that is the sum of all knowledge",[15] reclaims the truth about this abuse of male power. Behind Duses's words there lies a criticism against one of the most disturbing images of Pre-Raphaelite masculinity.

Another influential Italian woman who revisited the myth of the Rossettian muse to restore the image of Siddal as a very talented poetess is Zaira Vitale, whose critical essay with translations of the Siddalian poems appeared in the journal *Emporium* in 1904. This valuable publication had not only the merit of popularising the poetical achievements of "the bird in the cage",[16] as Walter Deverell used to call Siddal, but also of extending and developing the intention of the original texts. As a translatress Vitale draws attention to the creative process of this Pre-Raphaelite woman artist, characterised by *"[una] rara indipendenza e freschezza d'ispirazione"*.[17]

In the activity of language transfer, Vitale continues the process of meaning enacted by Siddall's feminist lyrics, while admitting the impossibility of rendering *"la scioltezza elegante e la melodiosità limpidissima del verso"*.[18] The sonorous liaisons produced by the Pre-Raphaelite poetess with the intent of transmitting her feminine discourse are inevitably lost in translation. Vitale regrettably laments that *"un raro pregio sfugge nella traduzione"*,[19] referring to the magic of a clear melody that Kristeva identifies as the genotext. The musical elements of Siddal's language – ballad rhythm, rhyming couplets, alliterations, acoustic metonyms, phonosymbolisms, and so forth – are to be seen as that part of the text which stems from the drive energy emanating from the female unconscious.

15. E. Duse, *The Story of her Life* (London. Hutchinson and Company, 1924), 34.
16. See E. Shefer, "Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal, and 'The Bird in the Cage'", *The Art Bulletin*, 67, 3 (1985), 437–448.
17. Z. Vitale, "Eleonora Siddal Rossetti", *Emporium*, 114 (1904), 433. (This rare article is supplied by courtesy of the Marciana National Library of Venice). All references to Vitale's Italian translations are taken from this edition and hereafter are cited parenthetically in the text.
18. *Ibidem.*
19. *Ibidem.*

A valuable example of Siddal's genotextuality is provided by the lyric "A Year and a Day"[20] (1855–1857), the first poem to be published in William Michael Rossetti's *Family Letters* (1895) that underwent severe editing because of the unacceptable allusion to a non-monogamous relationship. Praised by Algernon Swinburne for "the independence and freshness of inspiration",[21] and acclaimed by Oscar Wilde as an "A1 poem",[22] "A Year and a Day" is rife with anaphoric repetitions of sounds ("Slow days have passed that make a year, / Slow hours that make a day", ll. 1–2), iterative structures ("Shall bring to me a sadder dream / When this sad dream is dead." ll. 40–41, my emphasis) and phono-symbolic alliterations ("The river ever running down", l. 36, my emphasis). All these melodic devices are employed in strategic lines to convey the melancholic attitude of the female lyrical "I" in relation to the loss of her "first dear love" (l. 3).

Like Shakespeare's Ophelia,[23] whose death occurred in the muddy depths of the river, Siddal invokes a death by water, a contact with the moistened earth: 'I lie among the tall green grass / That bends above my head / [...] And folds me in its bed / Tenderly and lovingly / Like grass above the dead.' (ll. 8–9, 11–13) The emphasis laid on such words as *grass*, *bed* and *dead* as exemplified by the iterative use of the plosive consonants /g/, /b/, and /d/ reveals the feminine death drive towards self-destruction and the return to the inorganic. The use of such harsh sounds confirms William Michael's description of Siddal's verses as being imbued

20. R.C. Lewis and M.S. Lasner, (eds) *Poems and Drawings of Elizabeth Siddal* (Nova Scotia. The Wombat Press, 1978), 16–17. All references to Siddal's poems are taken from this edition and hereafter are cited parenthetically in the text by line numbers.
21. A. Swinburne, *The Swinburne Letters* C.Y. Lang (ed.), (New Haven. Yale University Press, 1959–1962), VI, 94.
22. R. Jackson, I. Small, (eds) *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde: De Profundis, "Epistola"* (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2005), 322.
23. Siddal seemed to suffer from what Bachelard calls the "Ophelia complex". For an analysis of Siddal's melancholy from a Bachelardian perspective see Eleonora Sasso, "'darkness that can be felt': la poetica della malinconia di Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal Rossetti", *Scritture femminili: da Mary Wollstonecraft a Virginia Woolf*, A. Mariani, F. Marroni, M. Verzella (eds.), (Rome. Aracne, 2009), 241–256.

with an "excessive and seldom-relieved melancholy – a darkness that can be felt".[24]

Despite the wide phonetic differences between English and Italian, Vitale's translation succeeds in evoking some of Siddal's phono-symbolisms by adopting a female-oriented strategy. The use of gender-marked nouns (*erba*, *vita*, *guancia*, *pioggia*, *spiga*, and so forth) compensates the phenomena of sound substitution and vowel insertion. The Italian rendition "*Io giaccio fra la verde erba rigogliosa*" (l. 8) not only preserves the uvular sound /g/ evoking the word "grass", but also emphasises the repetition of the fricative /r/ that calls to mind the Italian word "*riposo*" as synonym of death. Also very relevant from this perspective is Vitale's choice of the labial consonant /m/ reiterated in the lines "*E mi avvolge nel suo letto teneramente / Come l'erba che copre le tombe*" (ll. 10–11) that suggests the dichotomic association "*morte-madre*".[25] Like a tender motherly embrace, green grass enfolds the lyrical "I" who establishes a contact with mother earth. Vitale's reinterpretation of sound seems to convey the Kristevian desire "to turn toward the mother, to reconcile [Siddal] herself with her always somewhat humiliated femininity."[26]

But the fourth and fifth stanzas best represent Siddal's feminist poetry and the emergence of her unconscious energy. The female speaker is haunted by ghostly visions and in particular by a new male face. This scabrous reference was not accepted by William Michael and Dante Gabriel who exerted their censorship power:

24. W.M. Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences* 2 vols. (London. Brown-Langham and Co., 1906) I, 196. Rossetti's memoir first appeared in Italian in *Ricordi*, G. Oliva (ed.), E. Sasso (trans.), (Lanciano. Carabba, 2006).

25. On the function of /m/ as a motherly sound see R. Jakobson, "Why 'Mama' and 'Papa'", *On Language*, L.R. Waugh and M. Monville-Burston (eds), (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1990).

26. J. Kristeva, *Colette* J.M. Todd (trans.), (New York. Columbia University Press, 2005), 320.

Dim phantoms of an unknown ill	dɪm fæntəms əv ən ʌn'noʊn ɪl
Float through my tired brain;	floʊt θru maɪ taɪerd breɪn
The unformed visions of my life	ði ʌn'fɔ:md 'vɪʒənz əv maɪ laɪf
Pass by in ghostly train;	pæs baɪ 'goʊstli treɪn
Some pause to touch me on the cheek,	sʌm pɔz tu tʌtʃ mi ɔ:n ðə tʃik
Some scatter tears like rain.	sʌm 'skætər tɪers laɪk reɪn
A shadow falls along the grass	eɪ 'ʃædoʊ fɔl ə'lɔ:ŋ ðə græs
And lingers at my feet;	ænd 'lɪŋgərs æt maɪ fit
A new face lies between my hands –	eɪ nu feɪs laɪs bɪ'twi:n maɪ hænds
Dear Christ, if I could weep	dɪər kraɪst ɪf aɪ kʊd wip
Tears to shut out the summer leaves	tɪers tu ʃʌt aʊt ðə sʌmər livs
When this new face I greet. (ll. 15–27)	wen ðɪs nu feɪs aɪ grit

The first chunk of verses (ll. 15-6), rhyming abcbdb musically manifest the presence of phantoms, of Siddal's unconscious memories through the alliterative repetitions of the sounds/f/, /n/, and /m/ that phonetically compose the word /'fæntəm/. To some extent, this supernatural image suggests Siddal's mental exhaustion and hysteria, a feminine discourse that her male censors were not willing to legitimate. Like Dickens's editorial alterations[27] of Gaskell's novels[28] serialised in *Household Worlds*, William Michael intervenes to alter Siddal's expressions of feminine independence. This distortion of truth was aimed at preserving the literary reputation of Dante Gabriel, the most prominent cause of Siddal's mental illness. Probably induced by the abuse of laudanum, this ghostly vision introduces the possibility of Siddal's sentimental involvement with another man: "A new face lies between my hands –" (l. 4). Of course the memorialist of the Rossettis operated this significant censoring in order to silence Siddal's feminine voice that declares her truth about the submissive condition of women in the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood.

27. On Dickens as editor of Gaskell's works see L.K. Hughes, M. Lund, *Victorian Publishing and Mrs. Gaskell's Work* (Charlottesville and London. University of Virginia Press, 1999). On Dickens and intersemiotic translation see Gloria Lauri-Lucente, "David Lean's *Great Expectations*: Transfiguration or Transformation?", F. Marroni, (ed.) *"Great Expenctations". Nel laboratorio di Charles Dickens* (Rome. Aracne, 2006), 243–263.

28. On the influence of the Italian culture on Elizabeth Gaskell's novels see F. Marroni "The Shadow of Dante: Elizabeth Gaskell and The Divine Comedy", *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 10 (1996), 9–13.

Unfortunately, Vitale's translations are drawn from William Michael's censored transcriptions and do not foreground Siddal's female revolt against male domination. This textual gap is filled by another female critic and translator, Stefania Arcara, who recovers Siddal's original poems from the manuscripts exhibited in the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford. Aracara's paratextual apparatus, introduction, letters, translations and notes to the text are exclusively aimed at achieving a feminist solidarity. Following Aphrah Behn's and Barbara Godard's notion of femininity of translation, Arcara seems to support the role of women in the creative act of reproducing a female author's text. Her introductive essay on Siddal's proto-feminism and her notes on the process of translation itself must be considered as continuations of meaning creation, of the circulation of feminine meaning within a contingent network of texts and social discourses.

From this perspective, Arcara's faithful rendition of Siddal's phono-prosody is a mode through which the translatress's position[29] can be spoken. The Italian verses "*Foschi fantasmi di un male ignoto / Fluttuano nella mia menta stanca; / Informi visioni della mia vita / Sfilano in spettrale corteo; / Alcuni si fermano a sfiorarmi la guancia, / Altri spargono lacrime come pioggia*" (ll. 15–20), carefully reconstruct the sonorous repetitions of the fricative and nasal consonants /f/, /n/, and /m/ aimed at reproducing Siddal's phantasmal language. Like a Kristevian dissident,[30] Siddal breaks the rules of canonical Pre-Raphaelite poetry according to which the emotional interaction occurs between two poles, the male and the female. In stanza V another ghostly male presence emerging from her unconscious is introduced in what Arcara defines as a "Pre-Raphaelite stream of consciousness."[31] This male shadow materialises in a face that she takes tenderly between her hands with the hope of renewing her love.

The metonymic description of this male rival of Rossetti's is included in verses that signal the supernatural event with a change of rhythm and melody. Jan Marsh defines it as a "broken rhythm and double hiatus

29. On the responsibility of the translator see F. Marroni, "Tradurre, interpretare, comunicare: la cultura e le responsabilità del traduttore", *Traduttologia*, 1 (2005), 5–12. See also by the same author "La Grande Macchina della Traduzione: l'uno e il molteplice della cultura", *Traduttologia*, 1, 1 (1999), 7–14.

30. J. Kristeva, "Un nouveau type d'intellectuel: le dissident", *Tel Quel* 74 (1977), 4.

31. E. Siddal, *"Di rivi e gigli". Poesie e Lettere* S. Arcara, (ed.), (Bari. Palomar, 2009), 43.

that reaches out towards the unconscious."[32] The interruption of the ballad rhyme is exemplified by the shifting from a descriptive mode to an invocative one. The paratactic linear balance of verse 21–23 is perturbed by a brusque, unexpected invocation addressed to Christ for helping her to forget her bygone lover: "Dear Christ, if I could weep / Tears [. . .]" (ll. 25–26). Vocalic juxtapositions (/i:/, and /i/), and enjambements produce a rhythmic slowing that is transferred into Italian through an redundant translation of the original: "*Mio Signore, se solo potessi con le mie lacrime / Allontanare* [. . .]" (ll. 25–26). From this example of interlinguistic transfer, according to which English monophthongs and diphthongs are substituted in Italian by the repetition of the male vowel / o/, it is clear that translation, as Godard asserts, is "an art of approach".[33] There are only approximations to be actualised within the conditions of different melodic sounds. But Siddal's genotexts, here actualised in the accumulation of phonemes, facilitate the advent of the semiotic. As Godard points out, "These are the sonorous liaisons confounding two words, linking one sound after another in the spiral which turns around and around on itself."

"A Year and a Day" appears to be a "song of experience",[34] a ballad of feminine resistance that subverts the canonical structure of Pre-Raphaelite poetry. By adopting a gender marking in sounds and reversing the structural elements of romance, Siddal operates a "revolution in poetic language".[35] Apart from ghostly hauntings, and immoral love triangles, one motif that carries even greater weight in this anti-masculine perspective is the negative function of the singing bird. Romantic thought does not, in general, acknowledge any destructive connotation related to bird-songs. On the contrary, Siddal assigns great value to the deadly message transmitted by "The voice of a thousand birds" (l. 33) that "bring to [her] a sadder dream / When this sadder dread is dead" (ll. 35–36). The tendency to assimilate a romantic trope to a dysphoric death motif takes on an even deeper and more subverting significance

32. Marsh, 206.
33. B. Godard, "A Translator's Diary", S. Simon, *Culture in Transit: Translation and the Changing Identities Of Quebec Literature* (Montreal. Véhicule Press, 1995), 81.
34. Hassett, 462.
35. See J. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York. Columbia University Press, 1984).

when we consider that it was perpetuated by a poetess whose nickname was "dear dove divine".[36]

Another meaningful example of Siddal's feminist revolt can be found in "Dead Love" (1859), the poem that Christina Rossetti defined as "piquant as it is with cool bitter sarcasm".[37] Addressing words of disillusionment to a non-identified auditor, Siddal emerges as a vital contributor to Kristeva's poetic revolt. Against the rules of courtship, against the conformity of love poems, the poetess depicts a disenchanted image of love, as summarised in the lapidary verse "Since love is seldom true" (l. 2). She continues expressing vexation at the male lover whose "fairest words on truest lips / Pass on and surely dies" (ll. 9–10). This bitter, dramatic monologue denouncing the falsity of men and the impossibility of love on earth is characterised by a lucid sarcasm and witty irony that are quite unprecedented in female poetics. If it is true, as Kristeva asserts, that the political revolution comes about through poetic revolution, then Siddal's revolutionary approach to poetry must be interpreted as an attack against androcentrism.

This verbal-ideological decentring is clearly manifested when a male translator transfers Siddal's feminine poetics into an engendered translation. Conny Stockhausen offers a masculinised translation of "Dead Love" by addressing the female speaker's words to a false male lover and not to a grieving female self. Gender marked nouns and adjectives as exemplified in such lines as "*E tu resterai solo, mio caro / Quando i venti invernali si avvicineranno*" (l. 11), and "*Invece è solo la terra, mio caro, / dove il vero amore non ci è concesso*"[38] (ll. 17–18) convey the image of a vindictive Siddal who casts a malediction on her male lover. From this perspective, the terms of endearment – "my dear" (*caro*), "Sweet" (*tesoro*), "sweet" (*amore*) – appear all the more sarcastic because they are expressed by a rancorous woman.

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36. In a Valentine poem that Rossetti wrote for Siddal ca. 1855, he calls her his "dear dove divine",: "Yesterday was St. Valentine. / Thought you at all, dear dove divine, / Upon the beard in sorry trim / And rueful countenance of him, / That Orson who's your valentine? [. . .]." W.M. Rossetti, (ed.) *Ruskin, Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelitism: Papers 1854 to 1862* (London. G. Allen, 1899), 54.
37. W.M. Rossetti, (ed.) *Rossetti Papers, 1862–1870* (London. Sands and Co., 1903), 76.
38. Conny Stockhausen, (ed.) *"Il vero amore non ci è concesso". Le poesie di Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal* (Padova. Panda Edizioni, 2006), p. 22. All references to Stockhausen's Italian translations are taken from this edition and hereafter are cited parenthetically in the text by line numbers.

Stockhausen's inter-linguistic transfer which manifests an overall decrease in the use of female words and sounds employs a mode of transgressive appropriation. Though ambiguously constructed the speech-acts[39] in "Dead Love" are not addressed to a male lover as Stockhausen maintains, but to a female addressee who is weeping for her lost love. The speech acts vary in tone as they include consolations, suggestions, and warnings and they are aimed at saving the Lady's soul. What is involved here is a radical revolution in the destinies of female roles in poetry: the imperative mode of verbalisation – "Oh never weep [. . .]" (l. 1), "Then harbour no smile" (l. 7), "Sweet, never weep" (l. 13) – has always the function of increasing awareness in the naïve female addressee. For this reason, Stockhausen's strategy of translation consisting in substituting feminine sounds like /s/ ("Since love is seldom true"; "the fairest words on truest lips") with masculine sounds like /r/, /b/, and /p/ (/r/ "*Poichè l'amore raramente è vero*"; /p/, /b/ "*Le più belle parole sulle più sincere labbra*"), must be interpreted as an abuse of male power in the practice of translation. The sinuosity of the female body epitomised by the alliterative emphasis on the sound /s/ is replaced by the powerful words expressed by a beautiful male lover. To a certain extent, Stockhausen figures as the male usurper of Siddal's role as mother of the text, a usurpation which takes place at the level of lexical and phonological gender.

Another variant of the drive energy released by Siddal's phonoprosody is exemplified by the poem "At Last" (1861) that dramatises the fusion and separation of mother and daughter. Like Kristeva, the melancholy theorist longing for the lost mother, Siddal invokes the help of her mother to trespass the threshold that separates the world of the living from the realm of the dead. Written to exorcisise the death of her still-born child, "At Last" deals with the feminine issues of pregnancy and maternity. As attested to by a letter sent to Dante Gabriel in July 1861, Siddal was literally shocked by the death of Joanna Boyce Wells which occurred on 15 July 1861 while she was giving birth to her second child:

39. For an interesting article on D.G. Rossetti's speech acts see Ernest Fontana, "Exercitive Speech Acts in the Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti", *Victorian Poetry*, 47.2 (2009), 449–458.

> My dearest Gug
> It is indeed a dreadful thing about poor Mrs Wells. All people who are at all happy or useful seem to be taken away. It will be a fearful blow to her husband for she must have been the head of the firm and most useful to him.[40]

This letter, reported in the paratextual sections of Arcara's translation, is part of what Godard defines as "metonymic or contingent"[41] elements of the translations process. By including this meaningful document, Arcara reconstructs to some extent the thought process behind Siddal's writing. Arcara's tracking of Siddal's emotional footsteps restores the reality of translation as a truly associative process, an ongoing appeal to memory and to a private thesaurus. According to Godard translation is a "reworking of meaning",[42] the circulation of meaning within a contingent network of texts and social discourses.

From this perspective, the attention paid to Mrs Wells's death reveals Siddal's anxiety about the women's conditions and the resulting sense of hopelessness which pervades her mind. The lyric "At Last" well exemplifies this maternal melancholy that Kristeva described with the metaphor of the "black sun".[43] Siddal leaves revolution and collapses in depression, by addressing these words to her mother: "O mother, open the window wide / And let the daylight in; / The hills grow darker to my sight / And thoughts begin to swim." (ll. 1–4) Like a Kristevian woman, Siddal is blinded by a black sun since she is not able to see clearly and luminous darkness pervades her mind. In a room enlightened by the sun of melancholy, the Pre-Raphaelite poetess repeatedly invokes the help of her dear mother as exemplified by the use of repetitive paratactic patterns.

"At Last" follows the "adding" style of the ballad, for it adds new narrative ideas in each line starting with the co-ordinating conjunction "and". A list of commanding instructions emerges from Siddal's gloomy monologue focusing upon arcane modalities for her burial. Action verbs

40. J.C. Troxell, (ed.) *Three Rossettis: Unpublished Letters to and from Dante Gabriel, Christina, William* (Cambridge. Harvard University Press, 1937), 8.
41. Godard, 73.
42. *Ibidem.*
43. J. Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* Leon S. Roudiez (trans.), (New York. Columbia University Press, 1992).

such as *wash*, *bind*, *take*, *lay*, *find*, *pluck*, *burn*, *break*, *carry*, and *hide* suggest the idea of some kind of magic that should facilitate the transition to the world of the dead. Like a threnody performed as a preparation to death, "At Last" is characterised by a rhythmic structure that is, as Kristeva asserts, "the enunciation of the pain that serves the 'self', the body and each organ."[44] What is specific to Kristeva's model is that the semiotic rhythm denotes a feminine space, inextricably linked to the maternal body.

The relationship of the male translator to a language conceived as the expression of the feminine is not faithful – it is always found in a state of movement and oscillation. Stockhausen exaggerates now strongly, now weakly, one or another aspect of the feminine language, sometimes abruptly exposing his inadequacy to translate it and sometimes, on the contrary, maintaining an almost imperceptible distance. From the phono-prosodic perspective, Stockhausen is able to recreate the same rhythmic cadence formula of Siddal's ballad, by employing the anaphoric repetition of the transitional word "e": "*E cara madre, prendi un ramoscello / E dell'erba verde appena falciata, / E adagiali sul mio letto vuoto / Che la mia tristezza resti sconosciuta*". Of particular interest and value is the last line whose alliterative appellation, which was lacking in the original, acoustically emphasises the melancholic spirit of Siddal's poetry. This kind of phonetic overtranslation is employed widely in the Italian version, as if to compensate the use of masculine naming. See for example the sixth stanza, line 22, "And if the sap be even" whose monosyllabic unrhymed words are turned in bi- and poly- syllabic words: "*E se lA linfA sarÀ abbastanzA*". Not only does Stockhausen enrich the verse with the repetition of the sound of /s/, but he also employs the phonic iteration of the final vowel /a/. In Stockhausen's overtranslation, alliteration and assonance are aimed at emphasising his masculine reading of the feminine source text.

Also very relevant in this sense is the phenomenon of gender marking utilised to destroy Siddal's sexualised poetical vision. Such metaphorical gender words as *sguardo*, *tramonto*, and *sepolcro* render masculine an experience which is originally feminine. In the last stanza of "At

44. J. Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* L.S. Roudiez (New York. Columbia University Press,1980), 184.

Last", Stockhausen reveals his violent dispossession of Siddal's female identity:

And mother dear, when the sun has set	*E cara madre, giunto il tramonto*
And the pale kirk grass waves,	All'ondeggiare della pallida erba della chiesa,
Then carry me through the dim twilight	E conducimi attraverso la soglia
And hide me among the graves.	*E nascondimi tra i sepolcri*

Stockhausen's strategy of reformulation, as evident in semantic shifts (sun → *tramonto*; waves → *ondeggiare*; twilight → *soglia*), manifests a distancing of the male translator from the real author. This failed interaction, this tension between two languages and two beliefs systems, permits phallocentric intentions to be realised in such a way that the reader can acutely sense their presence at every point in the translation. The male usurper of feminine authorial role makes use of verbal and nominal give-and-take in order that he himself might remain apparently neutral with regard to language. All forms involving a female narrator or a posited female author are destabilised with the intent of appropriating a discourse which otherwise would be free to circulate and spread its revolutionary message.

The greatness of Siddal's poetry is eminently expressed by the Italian words of Zaira Vitale, her first female translator who found the linguistic modes through which the poetess's position could be spoken:

> *Se il possedere un'anima aperta alla luce di pure idealità, che ad un soffio gentile che la sfiori risponda con un canto; se il poter esprimere in versi di squisita purezza l'angoscia di una lontananza, di un triste presagio, o di un abbandono; se il sapersi ripiegare sul proprio spirito e trarne note di sublime melanconia; se l'adorazione spontanea della bellezza, se il sentimento dell'armonia, se la limpidezza della immagini, sono le doti di un poeta, la storia della poesia inglese potrebbe annoverare Miss Siddal fra le sue poetesse.*[45]

Only recently included in the canon of Victorian poetry as attested to by The Oxford anthology of *Nineteenth-Century Women Poets* (1998), as

45. Vitale, 433.
46. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 81.

well as by Caroline Blyth's *Decadent Verse: An Anthology of Late-Victorian Poetry, 1872–1900* (2009), Siddal's poems operate a feminist revolution in the patriarchal reign of Pre-Raphaelite poetry, creating a feminine concept of the semiotic, the rhythmic, and the tonal language. The signifying aspects of Siddal's language, that Kristeva calls "signifying differentials", are acutely perceived by Italian translators whose musical aptitude facilitated their task as interpreters of Siddal's genotexts.

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Un nocchiero celeste: Dante nella narrativa di E.M. Forster

Raffaella Antinucci

"Only connect" – per circa un secolo l'epigrafe di *Howards End*[1] (1910) ha fornito un utile compendio alla vita e all'opera di Edward Morgan Forster. Oltre a distinguersi per l'epigrammatica intensità di un manifesto, la celebre formula denota il principio compositivo di un'arte informata di riferimenti e citazioni intertestuali, sviluppatasi lungo sentieri dialogici che, spaziando da Pope a Whitman, da Platone a Shakespeare, conducono a Shelley e soprattutto a Dante, designandoli come interlocutori privilegiati.[2] Meno esplicita rispetto a quella di altri modelli, la presenza del Sommo Poeta si offre quale discreto *basso continuo*, per usare una delle metafore musicali tanto care a Forster, al suo universo finzionale; va cercata tra le pieghe di una scrittura in bilico tra il diletto della finzione e l'ansia di teorizzazione, negli interstizi in cui la diegesi ambisce a farsi visione.

Avvolta nelle atmosfere crepuscolari del periodo edoardiano, la produzione di Forster assorbe solo in parte la tradizione dantesca lasciata in eredità dai Vittoriani, affascinati e quasi ossessionati dalla *Commedia* e dalla sua prima cantica, la cui forza icastica ben si prestava a divenire

1. E.M. Forster, *Howards End*, ed. David Lodge, New York-London, Penguin, 2000, 2 (per le successive citazioni si farà riferimento a questa edizione).
2. Come ricordato da Judith Scherer Herz, "he frequently recurred to him [Dante] in his *Commonplace Book* and in his essays. Indeed, among the writers and writings of the past that he often invoked [...] only Shakespeare and the Bible appear more often and more variously" (*The Short Narratives of E.M. Forster*, London, Macmillan, 1988, 136).

potente metafora per i tempi moderni, in cui il vortice urbano, fagocitando al suo interno paesaggi umani e naturali secolari, assumeva di sovente connotazioni infernali.[3] Lo stereotipo, non solo inglese, circa la maggiore poeticità dell'*Inferno* è evocato da Forster nel primo dei suoi romanzi, non a caso ambientato in Italia, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905). A farsene portavoce è il toscano Gino, che, dopo aver cortesemente elogiato la grandezza dell'Inghilterra, con orgoglio assicura all'inglese Philip Herrinton come

> "'Italy too [...] is a great country. She has produced many famous men – for example Garibaldi and Dante. The latter wrote the 'Inferno', the 'Purgatorio', the 'Paradiso'. *The 'Inferno' is the most beautiful*". And with the complacent tone of one who has received a solid education, he quoted the opening lines
>
> Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
> Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
> Che la diritta via era smarrita' (corsivi miei)[4]

Con sottile ironia lo scrittore sembra ammiccare ad un primato ratificato anche in Italia sotto la spinta ermeneutica di Francesco De Sanctis prima e di Benedetto Croce poi: il tono compiacente e la sicumera del giovane ma incolto italiano sortiscono un effetto comico al cospetto del raffinato Philip, che solo qualche pagina prima aveva elogiato il potere catartico e nobilitante della nostra penisola,[5] salutando il viaggio intrapreso della cognata Lilia come l'inizio di una "Vita Nuova".[6] Il bersaglio di

3. Sulla ricezione "vittoriana" di Dante si consulti lo studio di Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998; per le traduzioni ottocentesche in lingua inglese, invece, William de Sua, *Dante into English*, Chaper Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1964.
4. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, London, Penguin, 2007, 24 (le successive citazioni faranno riferimento a questa edizione, il numero di pagina sarà indicato tra parentesi nel testo).
5. "Italy really purifies and ennobles all who visit her. She is the school as well as the playground of the world. It is really to Lilia's credit that she wants to go there" (*ivi*, 6).
6. L'opera giovanile di Dante conobbe vasta popolarità in Inghilterra nel corso dell'Ottocento, a partire dalla traduzione di Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Dante's New Life", inclusa in *The Early Italian Poets* (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1861). Sul tema si consulti lo studio di Fabio Camilletti, *Dante's Book of Youth:* The Vita Nova *and the Nineteenth Century (1840–1907)*, in corso di pubblicazione.

Forster non sembra essere tanto lo studio canonizzato di Dante, quanto la sua ricezione letteraria sclerotizzata dall'autorevole giudizio dei profeti vittoriani, Carlyle in testa.[7] Nell'inscenare l'incontro e lo scontro tra due culture antitetiche – l'inglese e l'italiana –, tra due modi differenti, ma complementari, di interpretare l'umana avventura, e nell'auspicarne una benefica sintesi, Forster si serve del dantismo per denunciare le stereotipie sottese all'*italomania* dilagante in terra d'Albione. La sua lente letteraria si piega a stigmatizzare la natura "virtuale" dell'immagine idealizzata e colorita assegnata all'Italia dai tempi del Grand Tour: pur senza abdicare all'aura misteriosa e magica che emana dai suoi luoghi, Forster sceglie di ambientare la sfortunata e dolorosa vicenda narrata nel romanzo in un paese immaginario, Monteriano, antico borgo senese probabilmente ricalcato sulle cittadine di Monticiano o di Monte Pulciano, toponimo che funge anche da titolo provvisorio dell'opera. La successiva sostituzione con il celebre verso tratto dall'*Essay on Criticism* (1711) di Alexander Pope – "fools rush in where angels fear to tread"[8] –, giocando sul *pun* derivante dall'assonanza tra i lessemi "Angels"/angeli e "Angles"/Angli, non inficia tuttavia la centralità del luogo, accentuata sin dalle prime pagine con un espediente di *myse en abyme* che chiama direttamente in causa la cultura letteraria italiana ed il suo massimo esponente. Sfogliando il volume riguardante l'Italia Centrale del Baedeker, autentica Bibbia per ogni turista inglese, alla voce Monteriano i protagonisti, ed il lettore con loro, ne apprendono le antiche origini:

> 'History: Monteriano, the Mons Rianus of Antiquity, whose Ghibelline tendencies are noted by Dante (Purg. xx), definitely emancipated itself from Poggibonsi in 1261. Hence the distich, "Poggibonzi, faui in là, che Monteriano si fa città!" till recently enscribed over the Siena gate' (12).

7. Come è noto, in *The Stones of Venice* Ruskin definisce Dante "the central man of all the world" (*The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols, London, 1903–12, 11, 187), mentre Carlyle, dal canto suo, assegna al Sommo Poeta il primato della letteratura mondiale, nella sezione "Hero as Poet" dello studio *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, pubblicato nel 1841. Su questi temi, si rimanda ai contributi di C.P. Brand, *Thomas Carlyle and Dante*, Occasional Papers, 11 (Lecture Delivered to the Carlyle Society: Session 1984–85), 10–11, e di Francesco Marroni, "The Shadow of Dante: Elizabeth Gaskell and *The Divine Comedy*", *The Gaskell Society Journal*, 10 (1996), 1–13.
8. Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 1.625.

Il riferimento dantesco, gratuitamente escogitato da Forster, lascia trasparire lo strabismo culturale di una guida che, in luogo di pratiche e dettagliate indicazioni, offre vaghi riferimenti letterari, svilendo la poesia dantesca a mero suggello di garanzia per suggestivi itinerari turistici.[9] In effetti la scelta del XX canto del *Purgatorio* non pare priva di significato, se si considera quale ruolo i peccati scontati da Ugo Capeto nella quinta cornice – l'avarizia e "l'antica lupa", la cupidigia –, rivestano nella tessitura diegetica del romanzo. Anche il terremoto che scuote il monte del Purgatorio, accompagnato dal coro delle anime che intonano il *Gloria*, sul cui oscuro significato si chiude il canto dantesco, sembra presagire, in una riscrittura semi-seria, l'epifania esperita da Philip e Caroline all'ombra di una montagna tutta etimologica, il forsteriano "Mons Rianus", e similmente propiziata dalla musica di Donizetti. In entrambi i casi ha luogo una liberazione: dall'espiazione della pena per le anime del Purgatorio, dalla gabbia emotiva dell'educazione "nordica" per i giovani protagonisti del romanzo.

Espressione di una scrittura ancora esitante, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* racchiude *in nuce* i motivi di una narrativa che si configura secondo marcate coordinate spaziali, opponendo Sud a Nord, Italia a Inghilterra, e, in termini danteschi, Paradiso ad Inferno. È la torre di Monteriano a stagliarsi quale correlativo oggettivo della verticalità immanente nei mondi di carta costruiti da Forster:

> "'It reaches *up to heaven*," said Philip, "and *down to the other place*". The summit of the tower was radiant in the sun, while its base was in shadow and pasted over with advertisements. "Is it to be a symbol of the town?"' (83).

9. Anche in *A Room with a View* Miss Levin, ammirando con Lucy il Ponte alle Grazie, commenta: "particularly interesting, mentioned by Dante" (ed. Malcolm Bradbury, London, Penguin, 2000, 16. Per le successive citazioni si farà riferimento a questa edizione, il numero di pagina sarà indicato tra parentesi nel testo). Come ricordato da E.K. Helsinger, lo stesso Ruskin nelle sue visite italiane utilizzava la *Commedia* a mo' di guida, unitamente all'immancabile Murray (*Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, 1982, 143).

Di certo i microcosmi forsteriani sono innervati di simboli, ma, come notato da Virginia Woolf,[10] il livello metaforico non ne incrina il realismo: attraverso "eternal moments", la realtà viene trasfigurata, ma non annullata. Nel dispiegarsi di un procedimento che con Erich Auerbach non esiteremmo a definire "figurale", risiede uno dei punti di convergenza più profondi con la *Commedia*, la lezione più duratura impartita dal Sommo Poeta.

Non deve meravigliare, dunque, la rilevanza accordata ai luoghi nella narrativa di Forster, desumibile, d'altronde, da una veloce scorsa ai titoli della sua produzione: preconizzando Pavese e la sua luna, nel saggio *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1946) egli sosterrà "in them also I believe".[11] Che si tratti di Monteriano, delle guglie e dei giardini di Cambridge, della vista sulla città di Firenze dalla camera della pensione Bertolini, di casa Howard o delle montagne indiane, i territori, assurti a paesaggi interiori, vengono ammantati di un alone mistico e magico. Ad essere riesumato è il *genius loci* della classicità, che l'attualizzazione forsteriana condensa nella poetica del "sense of place", ben esposta da Margaret Schlegel in *Howards End*.[12] Ne consegue che per lo scrittore inglese la figura di Dante non evoca soltanto la sua patria, ma coincide con essa: Dante *è* l'Italia, e nel mito del sud Forster pare rintracciare la possibilità di un'esistenza alternativa, di una "via media" capace di coniugare passione e razionalità, istinti primigeni e tensione ascetica, in ultima istanza natura e cultura. In tale asintotico sforzo Forster non sembra sfuggire al dantismo di matrice ruskiniana che declinava la sublimazione letteraria, ma anche civile e politica, del poeta fiorentino alle esigenze assiologiche di un paese, come l'Inghilterra, in rapida trasformazione, votato alla ricerca di nuovi ancoraggi etici e artistici; a ragione Marroni parla di "un *Dante vittoriano*".[13] Nondimeno, a differenza dei suoi

10. Cfr. Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of E. M. Forster", in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*, London, Hogarth Press, 1942.
11. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy*, London, Edward Arnold & Co., 1951, 7.
12. "She recaptured the sense of space, which is the basis of all earthly beauty, and, starting from Howards End, she attempted to realize England" (174). Anche in *A Passage to India* Adela osserva come "in space things touch, in time things part" (ed. Oliver Stallybrass, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1985, 199).
13. "Carlyle, Ruskin e la 'lampada' dantesca: note su Dante e la □cultura inglese dell'Ottocento", in F. Ciompi (a cura di), *One of Us. Studi inglesi e conradiani offerti a Mario Curreli*, Pisa, ETS, □2009, 243.

predecessori è dalla terza cantica della *Commedia* che Forster attinge immagini e stilemi forieri di un rinnovamento spirituale. Se in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* anche ad un lettore distratto non potrà sfuggire il frequente occorrimento del lessema "heaven" e di tutta un'isotopia angelica e "paradisiaca", allusa sin dal titolo,[14] è con *A Room with a View* (1908) che i richiami all'ultimo regno assumono una preminenza strutturale.

Allestendo un nuovo confronto italo-inglese, il racconto segue le svolte della crescita spirituale della giovane Lucy Honeychurch, divisa tra l'impegno nei confronti del raffinato Cecil Vyse e l'attrazione per l'anticonvenzionale George Emerson. Il suo itinerario interiore configura un movimento che letteralmente procede dall'oscurità alla luce, dagli abissi infernali[15] alla pienezza di una visione paradisiaca.[16] Come nel *Paradiso* dantesco, in cui la luce è "emblemata" della verità, figurazione visiva di una beatitudine che ha il suo fondamento nell'atto di vedere Dio, il concetto di "vision" costituisce uno dei *leitmotiv* del romanzo di Forster: dalla veduta di Firenze, "magic city" per antonomasia cui si fa accenno nel titolo, al panorama inglese della dimora famigliare di Windy Corner, "a beacon in the roaring tides of darkness" (177), la protagonista avanza nel suo cammino gnoseologico che è "ascesa", progressivo disvelamento della luce interiore, "the light within" per dirla con Forster, e lenta conquista di uno sguardo aereo – come notato da Mr Beebe, "she had found wings, and meant to use them" (87). Non a caso la figura di Dante emerge nel confronto dialettico sulle bellezze paesaggistiche della campagna inglese che Lucy intrattiene nel giardino di Windy Corner con Cecil e con il suo rivale, George Emerson, latore di un importante insegnamento paterno:

14. "'[...] after all, love-marriages are made in heaven' 'Yes, Miss Abbott, I know. But I am anxious to hear heaven's choice. You arouse my curiosity. Is my sister-in-law to marry an angel?'" (20); "This admirable change in Philip proceeds from nothing admirable, and may therefore provoke the gibes of the cynical. But angels and other practical people will accept it reverently, and write it down as good".
15. "'A baby is worth a dozen saints. And my baby's worth the whole of Paradise, and as far as I can see he lives in Hell'" (24), "They hurried home through a world of black and grey".
16. "Satisfactory that Mr. Emerson had not been told of the Florence escapade; yet Lucy's spirits should not have leapt up as if she had sighted the ramparts of heaven" (143).

> "'My father [...] says that there is only one perfect view – the view of the sky straight over our heads, and that all these views on earth are but bungled copies of it". "I expect your father has been reading Dante", said Cecil' (147).

Esibendo la matrice platonica dell'opera dantesca, che la critica più recente non ha mancato di mettere in luce,[17] al padre di George, Mr Emerson, Forster assegna il compito di fasi interprete privilegiato della voce autoriale. Al pari di un novello Virgilio, è l'anziano giornalista a guidare Lucy tra le nebbie delle sue contrastanti e impenetrabili pulsioni emotive, ad insegnarle che l'amore per George può essere soppresso ma non estirpato, poiché "love is eternal" (189), e, più di ogni altra cosa, a ricordarle il valore di una vita autentica:

> "'Your soul, dear Lucy! I hate the word now, because of all the cant with which superstition has wrapped it round. But we have souls. I cannot say how they came nor whither they go, but we have them, and I see you ruining yours. I cannot bear it. It is again the darkness creeping in; it is hell.'" (189)

> "[...] 'Now it is all dark. Now Beauty and Passion seem never to have existed. I know. But remember the mountains over Florence and the view.'" (190–1)

La raggiunta consapevolezza della protagonista è illuminazione, sincronica percezione dell'esistente in un "momento eterno" – "It was as if he had made her see *the whole of everything at once*" (191) –, ovvero, in termini danteschi, visuale realmente "paradisiaca": "Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,/legato con amore in un volume,/ciò che per l'universo si squaderna:/sustanze ed accidenti e lor costume/quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo/che ciò ch'i" dico è un semplice lume' (*Par.*, XXXIII, vv. 85–90).

Massima dilatazione dello spirito, tale visione può dischiudersi agli occhi umani solo attraverso il recupero della Natura e il riconoscimento e l'accettazione della corporeità, elementi, questi, che Forster vede connaturati al mito del sud. Contro il "medievalismo"

17. Mi riferisco ai contributi di Marguerite Mills Chiarenza, Joseph Anthony Mazzeo, Anna Longoni e John Woodhouse, solo per citarne alcuni.

idealizzante di Carlyle e di Ruskin,[18] che scorgevano nell'Età di Mezzo l'apicale espressione di un rapporto armonico tra Dio, l'uomo e il *corpus* sociale, lo scrittore edoardiano sembra accogliere il magistero di Walter Pater nel vagheggiare il ritorno ad un Nuovo Rinascimento, invocato sotto spoglie dantesche nell'insistente appello ad una "Vita Nuova". Se tale moderna *renovatio mundi* trae energia vitale dalla cultura del Meridione, in essa tuttavia non si esaurisce. Non deve stupire, pertanto, la caratterizzazione "medievale" di un personaggio come Cecil Vyse, colto e ben educato, la cui passione per l'Italia, che egli cerca di infondere nell'animo di Lucy attraverso l'insegnamento della sua lingua, si rivela simulacro di una morte interiore. Abile nello stabilire "connections" tra opere d'arte o tra teorie estetiche, Cecil si dimostra incapace a instaurare autentiche relazioni con i propri simili – sintomaticamente Lucy lega l'immagine mentale del giovane ad un luogo chiuso, figurandoselo in un salotto "with no view" (99) – ; nondimeno, il suo peccato più grave risiede in quell'ascetismo di stampo medievale che del rifiuto del corpo fece il suo assioma costitutivo. Figura centrale del Medio Evo, Dante sembra lontano. Eppure, ancora una volta Mr Emerson, *alter ego* forsteriano, accorre in aiuto del lettore a chiarire i termini della questione: "I only wish poets would say this, too: love is of the body; *not the body, but of the body*" (189, corsivi miei). L'amore origina dal corpo, le sue vesti sensibili non possono essere deposte: a riecheggiare è la voce di Beatrice, luminosa e ridente di letizia celeste, che nel IV Canto del *Paradiso* riassume la teoria, di matrice scolastica e aristotelica,[19] che celebrava la nobilitazione dei sensi: "Così parlar convensi a vostro ingegno,/però che solo da sensato apprende/ciò che fa poscia l'intelletto degno" (*Par.*, IV, vv. 40–42). Gli strali di Forster, dunque, non sono indirizzati al Medioevo, bensì all'estetizzante "medievalismo"

18. La portata dell'autorità del giudizio di Ruskin emerge con intensa ironia nella scena in cui Lucy vaga nella chiesa di Santa Croce senza Baedeker, né guida umana, alla ricerca dei tesori in essa custoditi e resi celebri dal profeta vittoriano nello studio "Mornings in Florence": "There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was *the one that was really beautiful, the one that had been most praised by Mr. Ruskin*" (19, corsivi miei).

19. Nella tradizionale formulazione aristotelica, "Nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu".

vittoriano: la rottura del fidanzamento tra Cecil e Lucy e il nuovo legame con George Emerson segnano "The End of the Middle Ages", così come recita il titolo dell'ultimo capitolo del romanzo.

Figlio dell'Età di Mezzo è anche Mr Bons, personaggio del racconto "The Celestial Omnibus" (1911), in cui Forster, per primo, dona statuto finzionale a Dante, facendone il "celestial nocchiero" che traghetta nel suo secondo viaggio su un omnibus celeste il giovane protagonista e il suo adulto compagno. Oltre che arguta risposta al viaggio in treno verso la Città Celeste partorito dalla penna di Nathaniel Hawthorne con il racconto "The Celestial Railroad" (1843), la narrazione di Forster si dà, altresì, come moderna riscrittura della parabola onirica di John Bunyan, e, più di ogni altra cosa, supremo omaggio alla poesia dantesca. Incuriosito dall'indicazione "To Heaven",[20] affissa al limitare di un vicolo cieco, l'anonimo ragazzino del racconto viene condotto da un misterioso omnibus alla scoperta di un laico elisio letterario, popolato dai suoi demiurghi e dalle immortali creature partorite dalla loro prorompente fantasia.[21] Da Achille alle fanciulle del Reno, da Tom Jones alla dickensiana Mrs Gamp, il cocchio di Forster ripercorre le rotte del canone letterario occidentale, facendosi degno scranno per il Sommo Poeta. Bellissimo ed elegante nella sua struttura, alle sue pareti i toponimi metropolitani hanno ceduto il posto ai poderosi ma inquietanti versi danteschi, *Lasciate*

20. Anche in *The Longest Journey* (1907), il primo romanzo forsteriano, Rickie, il giovane protagonista, immagina di apporre il cartello "This way to Heaven" all'entrata di un giardino di Cambridge, che nella rappresentazione finzionale riveste la funzione sacrale di *hortus conclusus*: 'A little this side of Madingley, to the left of the road, there is a secluded dell, paved with grass and planted with fir-trees. [...] Rickie had discovered it in his second term, when the January snows had melted and left fiords and lagoons of clearest water between the inequalities of the floor. [...] the dell became for him a kind of a church – a church where indeed you could do anything you liked, but where anything you did would be transfigured. Like the ancient Greeks, he could even laugh at his holy place and leave it no less holy. [...] If the dell was to bear any inscription, he would have liked it to be "This way to Heaven", painted on a signpost by the high-road, and he did not realize till later years that the number of visitors would not therby have sensibly increased' (Forster, *The Longest Journey*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973, 23–24).

21. Cfr. introduzione di Carlo Pagetti a E.M. Forster, *La macchina si ferma. L'omnibus celeste* (con testo inglese a fronte), Milano, Editrice Nord, 1985.

ogni baldanza o voi ch'intrate.[22] In effetti, come già suggeriva Hawthorne, lo spazio euforico della città celeste è precluso a chi non abbia conservato puro il proprio spirito, le sue delizie si palesano soltanto dinanzi allo sguardo stupito e innocente dell'infanzia. Accompagnata dalle note de *L'oro del Reno*, in continua dissolvenza musicale, anche in questo caso la rivelazione prima di farsi sguardo è "udita". Al contrario, sordo alla musica di Wagner e cieco alle visioni paradisiache è Mr Bons, il cui aereo tragitto delinea un viaggio mortifero ed infernale. Votato ad una sterile erudizione e ad un falso spiritualismo, adombrati nell'invertita onomastica che lega specularmente "Bons" e "snob", nel tentativo di tornare indietro l'uomo si appella a Dante, le cui uniche parole ci conducono al cuore della riflessione di Forster:

> "'I am the means and not the end. I am the food and not the life. [...] For poetry is a spirit; and they that would worship it must worship in spirit and in truth'".[23]

Si tratta di un passo che ricalca da vicino il discorso su Dante tenuto da Forster qualche anno prima ai membri della Working Men College Literary Society. In quell'occasione lo scrittore spiegava come Dante considerasse le persone non in loro stesse, ma come mezzi attraverso cui entrare in contatto con una realtà spirituale superiore, "as means to something else [...] as windows in the sordid world, through which I may get a glimpse of Heaven".[24] Al paradiso gravitante intorno a Dio della terza cantica Forster sostituisce un empireo dell'immaginazione, similmente ordinato ed immortale, sebbene "man centered". Ponendo l'umana creatività a suo nucleo irradiatore, lo scrittore inglese sembra restare fedele a quanto sostenuto in "Pessimism in Literature" (1907), uno dei suoi primi saggi: "In life we seek what is gracious and noble, even if it's transitory; in books we seek what is permanent".[25] Se l'arte invera un sogno d'ordine contro una realtà

22. Forster, "The Celestial Omnibus", in *Selected Stories*, ed. David Leavitt and Mark Mitchell, New York and London, Penguin, 2001, 42.
23. *Ivi*, 45.
24. Forster, "Dante", in *Albergo Empedocle and Other Writings*, ed. George H. Thomson, New York, Liverlight, 1971, 149–150.
25. Forster, "Pessimism in Literature", *ivi*, 145.

confusa e complessa, nondimeno, come avverte Dante, essa è soltanto un mezzo e non la vita, da sola non basta a unire "prosa" e "passione", a costruire il "ponte d'arcobaleno" che, calcato dall'omnibus celeste, Forster promuove ad emblema della sua ricerca personale e professionale. Altrettanto importante è l'universo relazionale, il quotidiano dipanarsi dell'esistenza sull'incessante intrecciarsi e sciogliersi dei legami tra le cose e tra le persone. Già titolo di una novella giovanile, fino alle pagine finali di *A Passage to India* (1924), il concetto di "co-ordination" plasma il macrotesto forsteriano, legandolo indissolubilmente a quello dantesco: "This universe is supposed to rest on co-ordination, all creatures co-ordinating according to their powers".[26] Le parole di Forster costituiscono una lunga parafrasi al primo canto del *Paradiso*: "Le cose tutte quante/hanno ordine tra loro, e questo è forma/che l'universo a Dio fa somigliante" (*Par.*, I, vv. 103–105); "onde si muovon a diversi porti/per lo gran mar de l'essere, e ciascuna/con istinto a lei dato che la porti" (*Par.*, I, vv. 12–14). Malgrado le differenti ideologie sociali e politiche, e visioni del mondo distanti se non inconciliabili, si può concordare con Rose Maculay quando definiva Dante e Forster come "mistici", poiché "both believe in the eternal meanings of human choices, the eternal value of men's relationships with their fellows, and with something that, quite differently envisaged, may for brevity's sake be called God".[27]

"Only connect" – al termine della sua carriera è ancora il motto di *Howards End* ad avvicinare Forster al Sommo Poeta ed a proporsi quale estrema riscrittura dantesca.

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26. Forster, 'Co-ordination', in *Selected Stories*, cit., 152.
27. Rose Macaulay, *The Writings of E.M. Forster*, London, Hogarth Press, 1938, 74.

Carlo Linati e la recezione italiana delle opere di J.M. Synge

George Talbot

Carlo Linati (1878–1949) rimane una figura di relievo nella storia della ricezione italiana del teatro nazionale irlandese, l'Irish National Theatre.[1] Tradusse tutte le opere teatrali di W.B. Yeats, di Lady Gregory e di J.M. Synge, nonché gli *Esuli* di James Joyce. Quest'amore evidente che provava per la cultura letteraria d'Irlanda non era un'infatuazione di breve durata; ben quaranta anni dopo le prime letture del canone moderno irlandese, parecchi mesi prima della sua scomparsa (11 dicembre 1949), scrisse in un articolo sul *Corriere d' Informazione* della sua 'affinità spirituale profonda' per l'Irlanda.[2] Frutto della lunga esperienza nella traduzione delle opere di Yeats, di Synge, di Lady Gregory e più tardi di Sean O'Casey, Linati si sentiva 'colpito dalla strana affinità che corre nei loro scritti con gli spiriti e le fantasie della nostra terra lombarda'. Queste affinità sono attribute ad un patrimonio celtico condiviso dall'Irlanda e dalla Lombardia, un patrimonio responsabile per 'un egual sedimento di finezza e di spiritualità, e forse un certo modo di sentire'. Questo patrimonio consiste in una serie di caratteristiche geografiche che determinano il contesto socio-economico delle comunità e foggiano le scelte di carriere e mestieri, per esempio, 'L'Irlanda è del tutto un mondo di campagne, di solitudini, di praterie, di foreste e di paludi, dove domina

1. A. Della Torre, *Carlo Linati* (Como. Cairoli, 1972), p. 170.
2. C. Linati, "Irlanda e Lombardia sorelle senza saperlo", *Il Corriere d'Informazione*, 12–13 aprile, 1949, 2. Ringrazio Maurizio Pasquero per avermi fornito una copia dell'articolo.

la cultura del bestiame e della pesca'.[3] Da queste realtà fisiche e quotidiane, secondo Linati, derivano ciò che egli denomina i 'ritmi malinconici e terrieri dei suoi poeti' ovvero le affinità spirituali che egli prova da artista e scrittore. Cita poi O'Casey come controesempio, nei cui scritti insiste una veemenza politica del tutto diversa dalla tradizione italiana – almeno secondo Linati – che si manifesta in un 'certo linguaggio beffardamente popolaresco'. In questa breve relazione vorrei esaminare queste affinità e considerare il ruolo di Linati nella ricezione degli scritti di John Millington Synge in Italia nella prima metà del novecento, in particolare la traduzione e la promozione della prima opera teatrale di Synge, *Cavalcata al mare*, una traduzione che Linati pubblicò tre volte, nel 1917, nel 1940 e ancora nel 1944.

La Cavalcata al mare, Riders to the Sea è una tragedia in atto unico, ambientata alle isole Aran all'ovest della costa irlandese. L'opera rappresenta il frutto di un attento studio da parte di Synge del folklore irlandese e della sua conoscenza dottissima dei miti greci e della tragedia shakespeariana. Si apre con la notizia dell'annegamento in mare aperto di Michele, il figlio maggiore di Maurya , l'unico suo rimasto. L'opera si conclude con il celebre lamento di Maurya per l'ultimo figlio Bartley, e richiama il destino della famiglia di Niobe descritto da Omero nell'*Illiade*.[4] Lo studioso irlandese Declan Kiberd osserva che in *Cavalcata al mare* la conclusione tragica è annunciata quasi dall'inizio tramite le varie premonizioni di catastrofe.[5] Secondo Kiberd, Synge trasse materiali da fonti diverse per poi tessere una trama e un dialogo sottili e cita la tesi dello stesso Synge – pubblicata in francese nel 1904, l'anno in cui scrisse *Cavalcata al mare* – sull'affinità spirituale tra la letteratura della tradizione irlandese mediovale e quella della Grecia antica:

3. La sensibilità di Linati rispetto alla natura si trova in tutti i suoi libri ma soprattutto in *Il tribunale verde* (1906) e *Sinfonia alpestre* (1937), come osserva Giorgio Guzzetta, "Linati between Ireland, Milan and Europe", nel suo *Nation and Narration. British Modernism in Italy in the First Half of the 20th Century* (Ravenna. Longo, 2004), 99–135 (in particolare pp. 109–112).
4. Omero, *Iliade*, xxiv, 599–620.
5. D. Kiberd, *Synge and the Irish Language* (Basingstoke. Macmillan, 1979), p. 163.

> Rien, par example, dans la littérature n'est aussi primitive que cette foi commune aux Grecs et Irlandais, foi en un autre monde où les morts continuent une vie semblable à l'existence terrestre sans espoir d'être recompenses pour leurs virtus ni l'appréhension d'être punis pour leurs méfaits.[6]

Una tale concezione dell'aldilà sarebbe stata estranea ad un pubblico italiano del primo novecento formato e educato nella tradizione cattolica e dalla lettura dantesca e manzoniana.

Linati scoprì il teatro irlandese nel 1910, un anno dopo la scomparsa precoce del quarantenne Synge. Nel 1913 Linati viaggiò a Londra dove conobbe Yeats. Date le sue predilezioni linguistiche e culturali si può facilmente capire le preferenze che enuncia nell'articolo del 1949 per Yeats e George Moore, i cui scritti rispetto all'Irlanda gli ricordano immagini della Lombardia: "certi *bogs* descritti dal Moore o cantati dallo Yeats mi richiamarono nella loro malinconia musicale i laghetti della mia Lombardia". Questo punto ricapitola un altro, proposto trenta cinque anni prima nella prefazione al libro *Tragedie irlandesi*, un testo steso durante la prima guerra mondiale, tre o quattro anni dopo la visita di Linati a Coole Park, la dimora di Lady Gregory, dove avrebbe avuto la possibilità di ammirare i cigni selvaggi sul laghetto, quelli che avevano ispirato il giovane Yeats.[7] Linati, ormai vecchio, nel 1949, sposta abilmente l'attenzione dal paesaggio a quello che più gli interessa, cioè la vita umana dei campi e delle paludi:

> certi scorci di vecchi, di vagabondi, di cantastorie, di osti che vivono nelle commedie di Synge o di Padraic Colum mi ricordano stranamente figure contadinesche delle mie campagne d'una volta: lo stesso amore per le fiabe e la canzone, quel piacere della facezia e della chiacchiera, quella *wisdom out of old days*, che forma il substrato della passione poetica dell'Irlandese del Connaught la possediamo anche noi, ancorchè in modo meno intenso, poichè l'Irlanda è una delle regioni più ricche di energia imaginativa che siano in Europa.

6. J. M. Synge, *Prose*, p. 354, citato in Kiberd, p. 168.
7. Linati, "William Butler Yeats: sua lirica, suoi drammi, e la rinascenza celtico-irlandese", in W. B. Yeats, *Tragedie irlandesi*, tradotto da C. Linati (Milano. Studio editoriale lombardo, 1914), pp. ix–xxxix (xxxvii–xxxix).

Da queste affinità, vere o presunte, Linati passa alla storia politica del colonialismo e alla lotta per l'indipendenza ("decenni di serviggio da cui ci liberammo attraverso odissee di dolori e di sacrifici") e alla percezione di una comune religione – "il gagliardo spirito cattolico" – che lega la Lombardia all'ovest dell'Irlanda.

Il lettore critico rimane un pò deluso dall'analisi di queste descrizioni che sono alquanto superficiali, generiche e stereotipate, data la reputazione di Linati come scrittore, traduttore e critico. Questo articolo sulla Lombardia e l'Irlanda, anche se interessante, non è certo fra i suoi migliori. In altre stagioni, nelle sue riflessioni più incisive però, Linati si era dimostrato commentatore attento, originale e importante della letteratura straniera durante gli anni venti e gli anni trenta. Il suo libro *Scrittori anglo-americani d'oggi* (1932) raccoglie articoli pubblicati su giornali e riviste e dimostra ampiezza di letture e esperienze culturali. In "Voci della nuova Irlanda", per esempio, esamina attentamente le opere recenti di scrittori poco conosciuti in Italia come James Stephens, Sean O'Casey e Liam O Flaherty. Distingue queste voci nuove e soprattutto cosmopolitane dai primi *leader* del teatro nazionale irlandese: "Synge rendeva la vita dell'Ovest e delle Isole Aran in libri pieni di un incisivo pittoresco o in drammi, come *The Playboy of the Western World* sapidi di umorismo vernacolo che rimarranno fra le produzioni più belle ed esatte del verismo terriero".[8] "Verismo" è un termine significativo per quanto riguarda il teatro di Synge, in un contesto italiano che ricorda ovviamente l'opera di Verga. In modo superficiale i pescatori delle isole Aran, cari a Synge, vivono un'esperienza paragonabile a quella dei pescatori siciliani descritti da Verga – un accostamento affascinante ma, credo, marginale.

Il contributo storico di Linati traduttore e critico alla diffusione della cultura dell'Abbey Theatre presso il pubblico italiano rimane fondamentale, ma di un successo modesto. Il suo biografo, Arturo Della Torre osserva:

> I tentativi di far conoscere ed apprezzare le opere teatrali di Synge in Italia furono poco fortunati: una rappresentazione del *Play Boy* al *Niccolini* di Firenze fallì miseramente, e i progetti per una grandiosa

8. Linati, *Scrittori anglo-americani d'oggi* (1932), p. 43.

rappresentazione di *Deirdre* a Milano, con Lyda Borelli e scenari di Gordon Graig, non ebbero successo e furono in seguito abbandonati.[9]

L'evidenza delle recensioni contemporanee conferma questo giudizio. Il critico Renato Simoni assiste ad una rappresentazione de *Il furfantello dell'Ovest* a Milano durante l'autunno del 1923, e scrive: "Il pubblico del Manzoni fu apertamente contrario alla commedia di John M. Synge". Continua:

> Rappresentata davanti ad un pubblico irlandese, collegata a tutto un movimento di rinascita artistica nazionale, circondata dalla calda atmosfera che altre commedie e drammi e tragedie, scritti con lo stesso spirito innovatore, avevano creato, essa trovava condizioni di comprensione favorevoli che da noi sono completamente mancate.[10]

L'ironia di questo giudizio del critico è che la prima dublinese del *Furfantello* nel 1907, invece di trovare "condizioni di comprensione favorevoli", provocò un tumulto a causa della percezione da parte del pubblico dublinese di una sfida di Synge alla castità e al decoro delle comunità rurali. W. B. Yeats, nel suo ruolo di direttore artistico dell'Abbey Theatre, dovette sospendere la rappresentazione e chiamare la polizia. Sedici anni più tardi, nel 1923, *Il Furfantello* faceva parte del repertorio dell'Abbey, entrato nel canone del novecento irlandese, magari più lodato che compreso.

Il parere di Simoni è più pertinente a proposito delle difficoltà estreme di tradurre l'idioma syngiano in italiano. Sdegnoso dei coraggiosi tentativi di Linati, Simoni scrive:

> Nessuna traduzione poteva darci la fresca asprezza di questa parlata agreste, antica, rozza, il verbo nel quale si è infuso lo spirito di un popolo così originale. Nessun attore, avvezzo a parlare, tutte le sere, una lingua letteraria, poteva farci apprezzare il dialogo modellato sui pittoreschi discorsi di una gente superstiziosa e querula, nella quale coesistono una grande paura religiosa e una mordente irriverenza per le cose stesse che più teme.[11]

9. Della Torre, p. 90.
10. Simoni, pp. 722–723.
11. Simoni, p. 723.

Queste sono osservazioni valide e valgono anche per la prima opera teatrale di Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, scritta nel 1904, e mostrata in manoscritto all'appena laureato James Joyce a Parigi nella primavera di quello stesso anno. Joyce criticava l'opera perché a suo parere non concordava con la concezione aristotelica della tragedia, ma l'ammirava come 'poema tragico' e imparò a memoria il lamento della vecchia Maurya. A dire il vero il linguaggio sviluppato da Synge in *Cavalcata al mare* lo affascinava. La novità del linguaggio syngiano era il frutto maturo di un lungo studio della lingua irlandese – il gaelico – sulle basi della tradizione letteraria testuale e del volgare contemporaneo delle isole Aran. Secondo Kiberd:

> Il dialetto in cui trovò finalmente l'idioma adatto era quello bilingue prodotto [. . .] dal manovrare fra due lingue. [. . .] Ogni opera di Synge è un atto di traduzione suprema. Quest'osservazione vale tanto a livello linguistico quanto a quello tematico. [. . .] il linguaggio del suo teatro è una traduzione, basato sulla variante d'inglese parlata nei *Gaeltacht* [cioè le comunità all'ovest d'Irlanda in cui si parla il gaelico come madrelingua]. Questa variante d'inglese è una traduzione istantanea e letterale dal gaelico.[12]

Il linguaggio di Synge quindi è un esempio complesso di *plurilinguismo*, il forgiare di un idioma sulla base di erudizione e osservazione, in modo diverso dalla pratica di Joyce anni più tardi in *Finnegans Wake*.

A proposito, Linati non è stato il primo a rendere in italiano *Riders to the Sea*. La prima traduzione italiana, infatti, è opera di Joyce e di un suo ex-studente, Nicolò Vidacovich. Mesi dopo la scomparsa di Synge nel 1909 Joyce si trovava a Dublino, per l'apertura di *The Volta*, il primo cinema della capitale irlandese, e provò ad acquisire i diritti alla traduzione di *Cavalcata al mare*. Gli eredi rifiutarono e Joyce perse subito interesse nel progetto. La traduzione uscì solo venti anni dopo in *Solaria*. Quella di Linati, uscita presso lo Studio editoriale Lombardo nel 1917, è stata quindi la prima traduzione italiana pubblicata, e, per quanto ne sappia, la sola traduzione mai allestita su un palcoscenico italiano.

12. Kiberd, p. 88.

La fortuna della traduzione Joyce-Vidacovich tra i critici risulta ricca e ampia; quella di Linati invece viene trascurata o accantonata. Per esempio, Joan Fitzgerald caratterizza "audace ma sbagliata" la sua decisione di tradurre in toscano l'idioma anglo-irlandese di Synge.[13] La FitzGerald respinge la teoria di Dario Calimani secondo cui Linati avrebbe dovuto tradurre i dialoghi di Synge in siciliano o in genovese, dialetti di comunità marittime, ma dialetti che sarebbero stati incomprensibili per un pubblico italiano.[14] È vero che le strategie linguistiche di Linati sembrano a volte poco convincenti, però bisogna tenere conto del fatto che lavorava senza la possibilità di studiare altri modelli. La traduzione di Joyce-Vidacovich è più agile e esile. Torce il collo alla vecchia eloquenza della lingua aulica – secondo la formula mallarmeana usata a buon fine da Montale – per rendere le cadenze dei personaggi syngiani. Nel gergo delle teorie contemporanee della traduzione, la versione Joyce-Vidacovich è un esempio della strategia definita *foreignizing*, che rende cioè straniera a se stessa la lingua, mentre la strategia adottata da Linati è all'insegna della domesticazione ovvero di una italianizzazione del testo di partenza. La strategia di italianizzare risulta carente di fronte a certi aspetti dell'ambiguità che anima l'ingenuità linguistica di Synge. Cito un esempio per illustrare questo punto: nel testo la parola *destroyed* viene usata due volte. La prima volta – "And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up" – l'espressione di Nora a proposito di Bartley che esce di casa senza portare con sé il pane cotto per lui dalle due sorelle, ha un significato gaelico, si tratta cioè di un vocabolo inglese con un'accezione irlandese, e vuol dire "affamato". Joyce tradusse questo passo con: "Poveretto! Come farà nella notte scura: non ha mangiato niente dall'alba". La versione di Linati invece è del tutto letterale, fedele alla parola inglese: "Morirà, morirà di certo, con questa nottaccia così buia; e non ha mangiato nulla dal levare del sole!". Più letterale ma anche un pò impreciso rispetto alla sfumatura anglo-irlandese della parola.

13. Joan FitzGerald, Joan, "James Joyce's translation of *Riders to the Sea*", in *Joyce Studies in Italy*, vol. 2, a cura di C. De Petris (Roma. Bulzoni, 1988), pp. 149–159 (153).

14. Joan FitzGerald, p. 153, a proposito di Dario Calimani, *Riders to the Sea. I problemi di una traduzione letteraria* (Venezia. Libreria editrice Cafoscarina, 1982).

Ovviamente, nell'originale, si tratta qui di una premonizione importante, di un presagio infausto. La soluzione di Linati è troppo enfatica in questo contesto.

L'anedotto più affascinante dell'articolo di cui abbiamo parlato, pubblicato nel 1949, cioè "Irlanda e Lombardia sorelle senza saperlo", riguarda un telegramma ricevuto da Eleanora Duse dopo l'uscita della traduzione linatiana, in cui la Duse esprime il desiderio di rappresentare la parte della vecchia Maurya. L'attrice invitava Linati ad andare a trovarla all'Albergo Cavour di Milano per discutere una possibile collaborazione. Secondo Linati: "mi confessò che l'idea di rappresentare quel personaggio l'aveva tenuta desta per tutta una notte, che già ne sapeva a memoria interi brani".[15] Purtroppo la Duse non rappresentò mai la parte di Maurya e non sono riuscito a trovare notizie di una produzione italiana prima di una rappresentazione– sempre con la traduzione di Linati – del 1940 di cui parlerò di seguito.

Ma vale la pena a questo punto chiederci cosa intendeva Linati con l'espressione "verismo terriero" e qui bisogna considerare la sua traduzione del libro di Synge a proposito delle isole Aran nel contesto dei contributi originali di Linati al genere del *travel writing*. L'origine di *Cavalcata al mare* si trova nella terza parte del libro *Le isole Aran*. Nella traduzione di Linati:

> Poichè qui non vi son prati da pasture durante l'estate, tutti i cavalli dell'isola, da giugno alla fine di settembre, vengono mandate a pascolare sulle colline di Connemara.
>
> Il loro imbarco e trasporto è anche più difficile di quello dei manzi. Molti di essi sono de' ponies selvaggi di Connemara, di una straordinaria forza e ombrosità, onde riesce impresa assai dura maneggiarli sullo stretto pontile, e, pure calati dentro il battello, non è facile cosa tenerli in sesto in quel breve spazio della stiva. Nell'imbarcarli li trattano all'istesso modo dei manzi di cui ho parlato, senonchè qui l'eccitamento degli uomini e delle bestie diventa oltremodo più intenso, ed è

15. Vedi anche Linati, *Malacarne. Racconti* (Firenze. Bemporad, 1922), nel quale il personaggio Isabella Malacarne assomiglia molto l'attrice famosa, pp. 14–15: "Ora cinque anni erano trascorsi dalla sera in cui Isabella s'era prodotta nella sua ultima creazione, la vecchia Maurya dei *Cavalcatori a Mare* di Synge. Quantunque il dramma marinesco fosse poco piaciuto al buon pubblico di Milano, ella aveva fatto della Niobe irlandese una creazione inarrivabile per potenza di verità e maestà di atteggiamenti eschilei".

> indescrivibile l'esplosione ed il fermento di voci gaeliche che si scatenano dalla folla al momento che il cavallo è spinto giù dal pontile per calarlo sano e salvo dentro il battello.[16]

In questa scena breve il dado è tratto e diviene inevitable la tragica fine di Bartley, l'ultimo figlio della vecchia Maurya, e l'ultimo maschio della sua famiglia, affogato come tutti gli altri. Se la traduzione di Linati merita una critica sostanziale mi sembra che sia l'omissione del commento sprezzante della vecchia Maurya a proposito della rassicurazione offerta dal giovane prete ("pretino" nella versione di Joyce-Vidacovich) – "It's little the like of him knows of the sea . . .". È questa l'osservazione quasi casuale ma in realtà la più forte dell'opera nei termini della tensione sentita da Synge fra la consolazione per lui equivoca della civiltà cattolica e d'altra parte la fede secolare delle comunità isolane nel fato, rappresentato dal mare. L'omissione non mi sembra molto in carattere con il tenore degli scritti dello stesso Linati, che scrive in *Decadenza del vizio* (1941):

> ormai s'è convinto a non credere né sperare più in nessuna apocalisse, a non aspettare nessuna palingenesi, a lasciar che le cose vadano come han voglia, che tanto una legge ferrea, celata da Dio entro il processo delle cose umane, impedirà sempre all'uomo di sovvertire radicalmente il proprio stato, di capovolgere le sorti del mondo.[17]

Anche se Linati fosse più sensibile di Synge alla cultura e tradizione cattolica, non erano né l'uno né l'altro di una fede che si potrebbe descrivere come ortodossa.

La traduzione linatiana della prosa di Synge ci riporta a un tipo di letteratura del viaggio molto particolare, un sottogenere coltivato da Linati in un libro su Portovenere, e che si potrebbe definire come una ricerca etnografica delle origini, una ricerca che lo spinge più tardi ad un viaggio in Bretagna, sempre sulla linea celtica. Ma subito dopo una descrizione minuta dei pescatori di Portovenere, fa una pausa per riflettere sul fato:

16. Synge, "Impressioni sulle Isole Aran", tradotto da C. Linati, *Il Convegno*, 1 (1920), luglio, 25–26.
17. Linati, *Decadenza del vizio*, p. 66, citato in Della Torre, p. 194.

> È strano come in questo soggiorno la natura mi inclini all'amore delle cose povere e neglette! Perchè mai? In esse forse io scorgo espresso con maggior forza il senso della vita? o forse è quel loro abbandono estremo che per contrasto suscita in me la nostalgia e la coscenza di tutto quanto v'è di energico e di sensuale in sulla terra? Ma, sia come si sia, a Porto Venere le visioni che più mi commuovono e che intuisco più affini allo spirito dalla razza che le rivive, sono appunto quelle che più mi appaiono intimamente rischiarate da una luce di umiltà rassegnata, da una sorta di *amor fati*. Si direbbe anzi che soltanto per essere umili esistano queste contrade infertili e belle.[18]

Non c'è dubbio che Portovenere e le isole Aran siano posti diversissimi, con diverse lingue e tradizioni, esiste nonostanteciò un'affinità lampante; in un libro scritto parecchi anni prima dell'incontro di Linati con le opere di Synge.

Linati traduceva il libro di Synge sulle isole Aran ben dieci anni dopo, ormai noto come esperto del genere. Quest'esperienza lo lasciò 'il ricordo della più tenera amicizia' per Synge, un uomo mai conosciuto. Secondo Della Torre:

> Infatti nella vita tormentata e selvatica dell'irlandese, che cantava la sua fiducia in un'esistenza libera ed appassionata, Linati doveva ritrovare un po' se stesso, i suoi ideali, il suo attaccamento ai doni della terra progenitrice e i modelli di uno stile lungamente sofferto e ricalcato su stampi dialettali.[19]

Un'affinità intensa del genere sarà nota a traduttori e scrittori, e può foggiare la futura capacità produttiva di uno scrittore. A mio avviso quest'affinità si manifesta esplicitamente nel resoconto di Linati del suo viaggio in Bretagna, avvenuto nei tardi anni trenta.

A Parigi alla fine dell'ottocento Synge aveva studiato la lingua bretone per poter leggere la letteratura della regione e approfondire la sua conoscenza della cultura celtica. L'impegno di Linati era più modesto ma la sua visita riattizzò il suo interesse per gli scritti di Synge. Il brano seguente, tratto da *A vento e sole*, contiene echi delle

18. Linati, Carlo, *Porto Venere. Imagini e fantasie maritime* [1910], a cura di Antonio Zollino (Cuneo. Nerosubianco, 2009), p. 25.
19. Della Torre, p. 82.

sue osservazioni su Portovenere, di trent'anni prima, ma gli echi prendono un'inflessione che deriva molto probabilmente da *Cavalcata al mare*:

> Un pò per tutta la Bretagna io ebbi il senso di questa cupa ombra che la morte gitta sopra i paesi da lei prediletti. Dappertutto sulle coste essa mi parve sembra penetrata dal senso del divino accettamento della morte. Se n'è fatta come una sorta di veste naturale, e non è l'ultimo motivo della sua cara e dolorosa bellezza. Il mare che la flagella da tutte le coste di continuo le ruba vite preziose, annulla gli eroismi, spopola i paesi, gitta la desolazione nelle famiglie fiorenti: la ricopre d'ombre luttuose. Ma dal mare le viene pure la vita, dal mare la richezza: e veramente si può dire che poche regioni vivono come la Bretagna più tragicamente bilicate tra morte e vita. Di qui, forse, quella gran fede che anima le sue popolazioni, quel loro bisogno di aggrapparsi ad un al di là, e quella forma di misticismo che sembra lassù come un anelito ad una salvazione nell'assoluto.[20]

Può darsi che si tratti di una coincidenza, ma non credo. *A vento e sole* esce nel 1939; nell' inverno di quell'anno la *Cavalcata al mare* era allestita al Teatro delle arti di Roma, in una produzione diretta da Anton Giulio Bragaglia. Quasi per caso abbiamo una ricca testimonianza documentaria che ci aiuta a cogliere l'importanza della produzione alla tesi che sto proponendo. Il numero del febbraio 1940 di *Il dramma: rivista mensile di commedie di gran successo* ripubblica il testo della traduzione linatiana, uscita già 23 prima.[21] Da questa fonte preziosa sappiamo anche l'identità del complesso di attori fra cui: Giovanna Scotto (1895–1985), Diana Torrieri (1913–2007), e Renata Negri. Un riassunto della trama pone l'accento sulle affinità al teatro antico:

> *Cavalcata al mare* dietro un misterioso velo, tra luci suggestive d'incubo e voci paurose dell'oceano intorno ad un'isola, rappresenta l'ultima spoliazione d'una Niobe nordica e costiere alla quale il mare strappa ad uno ad uno tutti i suoi figli. L'atmosfera poetica delle cose più

20. Linati, *Campeggiano in Bretagna. Pagine di vagabondaggio*, a cura di Paolo Mathlouthi e Maurizio Pasquero (Varese. Associazione culturale Terra Insubre, 2009), una sezione di *A vento e sole* (1939), p. 24.

21. *Il dramma: rivista mensile di commedie di gran successo*, 16 (1940), n. 323, 1 febbraio, 10–23.

> grandi degli uomini è creata dal poeta irlandese con sintetici tratti di lirismo soffusi di muta e immobile tragicità. Alla voce della madre che invoca pietà solo la più forte voce del sordo mare risponde. Il colloquio, a brandelli di parole, tra la madre mutilata e l'indifferente ed avido oceano è di una maestosa tragicità tutta in grandi silenzi e in cupe penombre.

Ma il contributo più affascinante offerto da questa rivista è una fotografia dell'allestimento. Da quella fotografia si può desumere che questa produzione era ambientata non alle isole Aran ma in Bretagna. Le donne e gli uomini portano costumi caratterteristici della Bretagna.

Vale la pena paragonare la fotografia di Giovanna Scotto (Maurya) in costume con la descrizione linatiana delle vecchie bretoni:

> Direi che la più gloriosa cosa vivente che abbia la Bretagna è la magnificenza delle sue vecchie. Hanno un che d'augusto di greco. Le vedi andar in giro per i paesi, passar da una chiesa all'altra, da un campo all'altro e porre dappertutto una specie d'attività furtiva e corrucciata di antiche burbere fate. Incorniciati dalle bianche cuffie i loro visi son capolavori. Non si può immaginare volto umano dove gli anni, le tragiche esperienze e il presentimento dell'Aldilà si siano congiunti in un'espressione di più disperato vigore.[22]

Siamo testimoni di un processo complesso di creatività che risulta in un fraintendimento intenzionale del testo di Synge da parte di Linati utile alla sua valorazione di comunità costiere pre-moderne in bilico tra la vita e la morte, godendo una vita autentica e anti-moderna, caratterizzata dalla tensione vitale tra la superstizione e la lotta quotidiana contro la povertà.

La produzione di Bragaglia a Rome riportava il nome di Synge ad un pubblico italiano pochi mesi prima dell'entrata in guerra. Magari contro tutte le aspettative, i teatri rimanevano aperti durante la guerra e le case editrici continuanavo a pubblicare testi delle opere teatrali. Di relievo particolare sono le serie curate da Paolo Grassi e pubblicate da Rosa e Ballo, una ditta stabilita a Milano nel luglio 1944, al tempo della Repubblica Sociale Italiana. Uno studio recente descrive con un *understatement* delizioso quest'impresa commerciale come "tutt'altro

22. Linati, *Campeggiano in Bretagna*, p. 34.

che dominato dalla prudenza".[23] In circostanze difficili Grassi tentava di formare e educare un pubblico italiano ad una tradizione teatrale. A questo fine curava le due serie di testi, la 'serie grigia' che consisteva in testi stranieri dell' ottocento e la serie più ampia di *Teatro Moderno* che presentava al pubblico testi del novecento. Linati contribuì a tutte e due le serie come traduttore; il primo testo della serie *Teatro Moderno* era una ripubblicazione di *Esuli* di Joyce, tradotto da Linati 25 anni prima. Le sue traduzioni di Synge, di Yeats e di O'Casey uscirono per una seconda o terza volta in quella serie. Marco Fumagalli cita un commentatore contemporaneo milanese che subito dopo la guerra avvanzava l'ipotesi che:

> Dalla liberazione di Roma in avanti [. . .] il pubblico nostro è stato di una eccezionale coerenza (eccezionale proprio trattandosi di pubblico italiano) con le proprie simpatie e con i propri atteggiamenti elettoriali. Dal vento di libertà che è cominciato a spirare su tutta Italia con la liberazione della capitale, sono state anche le vele del teatro cui una eventuale inerzia sembrava aver precluso le vie d'una sana navigazione. Con la scoperta della libertà il pubblico italiano è arrivato alla scoperta del teatro straniero [. . .]. persino al di qua della linea gotica [...] lo stato di euforia del pubblico teatrale dell'Italia settentrionale trovava motivi di soddisfazione e di appagamento nella collana di opere teatrali di Rosa e Ballo a cura di Grassi ed in alcuni spettacoli di prosa [. . .]. La tanto sbandierata e deprecata crisi del teatro italiano, che aveva assunto preoccupanti caratteri di stato cronico, sembrava avviata ad una risoluzione nel senso della più completa libertà.[24]

L'impresa di Rosa e Ballo continuò fino al 1948 quando la serie *Teatro Moderno* passa alla casa editrice *La Fiaccola*, anch' essa milanese. Sempre secondo Fumagalli l'importanza della serie non si limita alla pubblicazione di testi ma addiritura trasmette lo spirito animatore che sbocca nella fondazione del *Piccolo Teatro di Milano*, il teatro sperimentale associato con Giorgio Strehler e lo stesso Paolo Grassi.[25] Quindi mi sembra legittimo dare credito a Linati per il suo contributo intellettuale all'esordio del *Piccolo Teatro*.

23. M. Fumagalli, "La collana *Teatro* degli editori Rosa e Ballo", *Stratagemmi. Prospettive teatrali*, 5 (2008), 63–102 (68).
24. Citato in Fumagalli, 89–90.
25. Fumagalli, 94.

La storia del teatro italiano durante il ventennio però è una storia complessa. Fra gli elenchi dei testi nelle serie Rosa e Ballo si trovano tante ripubblicazioni di testi già in circolazione, anche se forse fuori commercio. Nel caso di Synge, abbiamo visto che le sue opere teatrali, promosse da Linati, hanno ricevuto una tiepida accoglienza in Italia durante gli anni venti. Linati rimase fedele alla passione per le opere di Synge, ma in circostanze sempre più difficili. Una legge del 1929 censurò ogni rappresentazione teatrale "che faccia l'apologia di un vizio o di un delitto" o "che offenda, anche con allusione, la sacra persona del Re Imperatore, il Sommo Pontefice, il capo del governo [. . .]" ecc. Il capolavoro di Synge, *Il furfantello dell'ovest*, in apparenza la storia di un parricidio, era quindi di reputazione ambigua. D'altra parte, l'Irlanda affermò la sua neutralità quando la Società delle Nazioni impose sanzioni contro il governo fascista nel 1935 e una consequenza culturale imprevedibile della politica estera del duce fu che gli autori irlandesi vennero esclusi dagli elenchi di scrittori censurati. In quel periodo, gli impresari teatrali tiravano un pò la corda e venivano presentati al pubblico opere non solo di Shaw, di Wilde, di Synge, di Yeats e di O'Casey ma anche di americani come Wilder e O'Neill a causa delle loro presunte origini irlandesi.[26] Quindi una rimessa in scena di *Cavalcata al mare* a Roma nel 1940 è spiegabile nel contesto della storia politica e culturale. Mario Verdone sostiene che "Mussolini mostrava ripetutamente la sua stima per Anton Giulio Bragaglia, dava sovvenzioni pubbliche al suo *Teatro degli Indipendenti* e, tramite la Confederazione Artisti e Professionisti, forniva assistanza finanziaria per la costruzione del Teatro delle Arti in Via Sicilia a Rome".[27] Quest'ultimo è l'ubicazione precisa della produzione *Cavalcata al mare* di cui abbiamo esaminato la fotografia.

Dunque, nonostante che fra le due versioni italiane la traduzione Joyce-Vidacovich di *Cavalcata al mare* abbia attirato la maggiore parte dell'attenzione e dell'approvazione critica, quella di Linati è l'unica mai rappresentata nei teatri italiani, almeno a quanto ne sappia. Veniva lodato da Eleonora Duse, che per quanto riguarda un copione efficace probabilmente aveva un'intuizione più attendibile della

26. M. Verdone, "Mussolini's 'Theatre of the Masses'", in *Fascism and Theatre*, a cura di G. Berghaus (Oxford. Berg, 1996), pp. 133–139 (134).
27. Verdone, p. 134.

maggioranza della comunità critica. Linati fornì al pubblico italiano colto traduzioni di tutte le opere creative di Synge. L'incontro con Synge ebbe un effetto duraturo per la creatività dello stesso Linati. Già noto come scrittore del viaggio per il suo libro dannunziano su Portovenere (1909), la disciplina del tradurre il libro di Synge sulle isole Aran convalidò le sue esperienze ma anche foggiò la sua visione, un processo sottile che abbiamo visto di sfuggita in *A vento e sole* (1939), dove la descrizione delle vecchie bretoni fonde con la figura della vecchia Maurya. Lavorando con Anton Giulio Bragaglia portava alla luce questa visione sul palcoscenico romano nel 1940 con una rappresentazione bretone di *Cavalcata al mare* e le sue traduzioni, nelle serie teatrali di Rosa e Ballo legarono la tradizione sperimentale dal Teatro delli Arti romana di Bragaglia al *Piccolo Teatro di Milano* di Strehler. Contributi importanti che meritano un riconoscimento non sempre concesso a Carlo Linati e che forniscono un esempio del processo misterioso della creazione letteraria mediata dall'esercizio della traduzione.

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The Fatal Allure of Sicily in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* Trilogy

Gloria Lauri-Lucente

The following study on the fatal allure of Sicily in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy takes its cue from Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* in which Jameson argues that a cultural artefact is to be apprehended not merely as an objective structure in its immanence, but rather as a symbolic practice whose function is to invent formal or imaginary solutions to unresolvable social contradictions. Jameson argues that '[i]t is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity.'[1] This doctrine lies at the heart of Jameson's reading of the latent political signification underlying the manifest content of such American works of mass culture as Coppola's *The Godfather I* (1972) and *The Godfather II* (1974), whose function he describes as being simultaneously ideological and Utopian.[2] Jameson writes:

1. F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca NY. Cornell University Press, 1981), 20.
2. Jameson's commentary on American works of mass culture includes a reading of *The Godfather I* (1972) and *The Godfather II* (1974) but not the third part of the trilogy. *The Godfather III* was released in 1990, over a decade after Jameson first published his 1979 essay entitled 'Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture', which was later reproduced in *Signatures of the Visible* (New York and London. Routledge, 1990), 9–34.

> Works of mass culture cannot be ideological without at one and th same time being implicitly or explicitly Utopian as well: they cann manipulate unless they offer some genuine shred of content as a fantas bribe to the public about to be so manipulated.[3]

To cast the reading of Coppola's 'Mafia narrative' within th dynamic proposed by Jameson could therefore yield the widest scop for unearthing its invisible subtext and for grasping the Utopian ap peal of its 'fantasy bribe.'[4] But what exactly is the ideological func tion of Coppola's narrative? And what is the Utopian fantasy i projects? In short, what is the political unconscious of the myth o the Mafia as portrayed by Coppola? In his 1979 essay entitle 'Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,' Jameson argues that a genu ine critique of *The Godfather I* and its sequel should be driven by th need to unmask its false consciousness, or its unconscious narrative which lies in its substitution of the myth of the Mafia for Americar business, or big business, whereby criticism of the economic systen is strategically displaced by judgments of an ethical nature in ar ideological manoeuvre whose intent is to mystify its public.[5] Through this manoeuvre, the ensuing obfuscation of Business as Crime pro motes the conviction that America's malaise is not so much ar economic problem brought about by late industrial capitalism, bu rather an ethical one.[6] As a result of this displacement, *The Godfather I* and *The Godfather II* awaken the viewers' deepest fantasies of a Utopian or transcendent nature by manipulating them into desiring such imaginary solutions as order, control, honour, loyalty, respect

3. *Ibid.*, 29.
4. *Ibid.*, 30–34. I will be borrowing Jameson's term 'Mafia narrative' in my discussion of Coppola's trilogy. For an earlier treatment of Jameson's critique of *The Godfather I* and *The Godfather II*, in which I focus on the rapport between Mafia narratives and noir films, see G. Lauri-Lucente, *'Style in Film Noir and Mafia Narratives'*, *Lo stile cinematografico. Film Style. XIII Convegno Internazionale di Studi sul Cinema. 27–30 marzo 2006* (Udine. Forum, 2007), 177–185.
5. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 32. For an excellent critique of Jameson's reading of *The Godfather I* and *II*, see C. Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture. How the Corleones became 'our Gang'* (Albany. State University of New York Press, 2002), 44–47.
6. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 32.

and, perhaps most importantly, the bonds and solidarity that the Sicilian-American family and, by extension, Sicily itself can provide.[7]

Clearly, the 'fantasy bribe' of Coppola's Mafia narrative is imbued with nostalgic sentiment. Drawing on the distinction between 'private nostalgia' and 'collective nostalgia' made by Fred Davis, whose notions are somewhat akin to Jameson's observations on nostalgia, one can define the nostalgic feeling nurtured by Coppola's filmic texts as a sentiment 'which has more to do with the symbolic and imaginary *content* of nostalgia than with nostalgic experience itself.'[8] This type of nostalgia is one of the means employed by Coppola in his portrayal of Sicily as an imaginary construct which functions synecdochically since the power it wields in the formation of the characters' identities, both individually and collectively, exceeds its real presence. Rather than being constituted through a simple nostalgic appeal to a geographical landscape that really exists, mythologically and symbolically Sicily awakens a feeling of 'false nostalgia' which is produced by a sense of loss of something that originally never existed.[9]

What occasions the viewer to feel this type of nostalgic sentiment which draws on symbolic resources that are shared by a large public is not simply one's awareness of the past but also present experience. It is in fact nostalgia's unique ability to simultaneously glorify the past, to simplify and purify it, and to transform it into a means for engaging the present, that qualifies it as a sentiment which can actually tell us less about 'past realities' than 'present moods.'[10] Within this framework, as Jameson suggests, the underlying impulse of Coppola's filmic texts is to be construed not only as the dramatization of the unquenchable yearning for a pre-capitalist past which takes on the cast of an 'ineradicable drive towards collectivity', but also as a desperate retreat from the malaise created by the 'privatized and pyschologizing society of late capitalism'[11] and its concomitant 'social

7. *Ibid.*
8. F. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology for Nostalgia* (New York. Free Press, 1979), 122.
9. In defining the nostalgia Sicily awakens as the desire to possess something which never really existed, I am drawing on Dean MacCannell and his study of noir films. See. D. MacCannell, 'Democracy's Turn: On Homeless *Noir*', J. Copjec (ed.), *Shades of Noir* (London and New York. Verso, 1993), 280.
10. Davis, 45; 12.
11. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible,* 34.

fragmentation and atomization.'[12] What transforms any 'genuine shred of content' in Coppola's narrative into a 'fantasy bribe', capable of simultaneously addressing ideological function and Utopian fantasy, is precisely this beguiling tension on which nostalgia thrives between a yearning for past realities embodied in a distant and idealized Sicily, the discontent with present moods, and a desire to achieve future aspirations. As Jameson puts it, '[t]he drawing power of a mass cultural artefact like *The Godfather* may thus be measured by its twin capacity to perform an urgent ideological function at the same time that it provides the vehicle for the investment of a desperate Utopian fantasy.'[13]

It should by now be quite evident that the notion of collectivity is key to Jameson's reading of *The Godfather I* and its sequel. It is also key to our understanding of the trilogy's distinctive features and to what sets it apart from several gangster films shot in the noir style, which draw on or allude to Mafia material. For our present purposes, what is particularly telling is not so much the undeniable echoes and intertextual reminiscences which link Coppola's trilogy with the gangster genre, but rather the aesthetic conventions and the patterns that distinguish it from its forebearer. Indeed, if the family in the gangster genre is based on a loosely-knit structure, the Corleone family embraces a nostalgic message which manipulates the viewer into desiring the bonds and protection of the solidarity of a collective group, be that group the Mafia family or the biological family.[14] Whereas noir films project an image of the individual hard-boiled detective operating in a world of isolation and moral chaos by filtering the reaction to this world through the perspective of one character,[15] the individual trajectory of the heroes in *The Godfather* unfolds within the protection of the family.[16] As Robert Phillip Kolker observes,

12. *Ibid.*, 33.
13. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 33.
14. *Ibid.*, 32–33. In comparing film noir and *The Godfather* trilogy, I am also drawing on my earlier treatment of noir films already referred to. See G. Lauri-Lucente, *'Style in Film Noir and Mafia Narratives'*, 177–185.
15. R.P. Kolker, *A Cinema of Loneliness. Penn, Kubrick, Coppola, Scorsese, Altman* (New York and Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1980), 24.
16. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 147.

despite the violence and the feeling of entrapment which such films as *The Godfather* convey, their heroes 'escape the total bleakness of *noir*' and 'they do not evidence the loneliness, dread, and anxiety manifested in *film noir*' because of their underlying 'sense of community.'[17] As Phoebe Poon writes, if the sole aim of such gangsters as Rico in *Little Caesar* or Tom Powers in *The Public Enemy* (1932) is *individual* mobility and wealth, Don Vito Corleone is driven by the desire to protect the *collective* interests of the family for whom he would like to fulfill a dream of legitimacy.[18] While paying tribute to the older gangster paradigms particularly through a number of stylistic features, Coppola therefore recasts the narrative content of the Mafia material in a new mould which distinguishes itself from prior conventions because of its collective nature – a mould described by Jameson as 'a kind of saga or family material analogous to that of the medieval *chansons de geste*, with its recurrent episodes and legendary figures returning again and again in different perspectives and contexts.'[19]

Clearly, any consideration of the family in *The Godfather* trilogy cannot overlook the underlying Freudian impulses of attraction and repulsion. Jameson states that the 'transcendent or Utopian function' encapsulated within the narrative of *The Godfather* is actually to be sought 'in the family itself, seen as a figure of collectivity and as the object of a Utopian longing, if not a Utopian envy.'[20] Although it can be argued that the older gangster genre also alludes to the family, because of its loose structure it does not trigger the same intimately related impulses of yearning and rejection as *The Godfather* narrative in which the 'Sicilianness' of this ethnic group provides a shelter to individual fears, and builds on the imaginary construct of Vito Corleone as an alternate law provider, whose 'honourable' code of conduct takes on a nostalgic and romanticized quality that tempers his patriarchal impulse and the heinousness of the family's crimes.

The perception of the family and, by extension, of Sicily as a source of both nostalgic yearning and contemptuous rejection is an attitude that lies at the core of immigrant narratives in which nostalgia plays a

17. Kolker, 223.
18. P. Poon, 'The Corleone Chronicles', *Journal of Popular Film and Television* (Winter 2006, 33, 4), 190.
19. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 31.
20. *Ibid.*, 32.

fundamental role in the construction of an ethnic group's identity. Jameson's particularly incisive analysis of this ambivalent attitude deserves to be quoted at some length. Jameson writes:

> The dominant white middle-class groups – already given over to *anomie* and social fragmentation and atomization – find in the ethnic and racial groups which are the object of their social repression and status contempt at one and the same time the image of some older collective ghetto or ethnic neighbourhood solidarity; they feel the envy and *ressentiment* of the *Gesellschaft* for the older *Gemeinschaft* which it is simultaneously exploiting and liquidating.[21]

Though immigrant narratives typically awaken this set of conflictual feelings, what gives the Corleone saga its distinctive cast is the reversal of the patterns of immigration itself.[22] Indeed, when taken in its entirety, the spatial and temporal framework of the trajectory undertaken in *The Godfather* trilogy describes a journey from Sicily to the United States and finally back to Sicily once again in a movement which establishes a series of contrasting but also interconnected hierarchies between inside-outside, isolation-collectivity, detachment-identification, female-male, art-reality, Sicilian-Italian, and finally Sicilian-Italian-American.[23] At every step of the way, this set of oppositions triggers in the viewers a deeply ambivalent emotional charge and controls their perception of Sicily which functions as the Other. As with any other construction of Otherness onto which the Self projects its darker fantasies and its repressed desires, Coppola's construction of Sicily is not merely an individual construct but rather the expression of shared assumptions, conceptions, stereotypes and prejudices. Messenger draws an interesting parallel between the shared fantasies that Sicily as the Other conjures into existence and those triggered by the American South in mainstream America when he writes:

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21. *Ibid.*, 33.
22. Messenger, 240.
23. For the analysis of identity formation in *The Godfather* trilogy, I am heavily indebted to the following article to which I will be making several references: Gregory L. Lucente, '"Because we are Gods": The Identity of Sicily and the Culture of Dependency in Verga's *House by the Medlar Tree*, Lampedusa's *The Leopard*, and Coppola's *The Godfather (I–III)*', *Italian Culture* (XVII, I, 1999), 1–7.

> If the Mafia and Sicily become convenient Others in American culture, a colorful lawless peasant population of violence and repressed passion within mainstream America, it appears that as literary or narrative subjects, these very Southern Italians now function as American southerners in the popular imagination, and Sicily perhaps becomes a geographical annex akin to signifiers such as Alabama or Mississippi. Sicily is symbolically akin to the American Deep South, a region traditionally scapegoated but also rendered earthier, more dramatic, and alive in its melodramatic representation. [...] In literary terms, the Sicilians are positively Faulknerian in their mythic intransigence, patriarchal domination, and tragic, unyielding sense of honor.[24]

Even as the general arc of representation moves to and fro from an Italian to an American frame of consciousness, this 'Faulknerian' perception does not cease to colour Coppola's portrayal of Sicily, a 'land blessed by God and cursed by man', as the old saying goes – a land which will continue to determine the identity and the destiny of its inhabitants and their Italian-American descendants.[25] To a great extent, the depiction of Sicily in *The Godfather* trilogy encompasses two of the three distinctive categories discussed by Leonardo Sciascia in his highly influential 1963 essay 'La Sicilia nel cinema', which is to say, 'Sicily as an "offended world"' and 'Sicily as a land of beauty and truth' ('[l]a Sicilia come "mondo offeso" [...] la Sicilia come luogo di bellezza e di verità').[26] The fatal allure of this mythic and 'offended' land of beauty permeates every part of the trilogy. In Part I, Michael's journey to a pastoral Sicily where he flees after having murdered Sollozzo and McClusky is introduced through a dissolve which creates the illusion that what we are seeing is a dream-like vision filtered through the perspective of the bedridden Vito Corleone, whose imagination is transporting him to his past.[27] However, rather than taking us back to Vito's past through a flashback, the dissolve introduces Michael's ritualistic journey to Sicily, where he will relive the violence of his father's past and begin to understand the origins of the

24. Messenger, 111.
25. Lucente, 2.
26. L. Sciascia, 'La Sicilia nel cinema', *La corda pazza. Scrittori e cose della Sicilia* (Milano. Adelphi, 1991), 275. Alongside the themes of Sicily as an 'offended world', and Sicily as a 'land of beauty and truth', Sciascia identifies a third theme, namely 'Sicily as the theatre of erotic comedy.'
27. On the use of the dissolve in this particular sequence, see Kolker, 174.

unyielding bloody feuds that have shaped and will continue to shape the identity of his family. In fact, when Mafia violence claims the life of Michael's first wife Apollonia, Sicily's idyllic setting soon turns into a backward and lawless land of vendetta, or to draw on Sciascia once again, Sicily as the 'land of beauty and truth' is soon turned into 'an offended world.' In Part II, an extended flashback traces the origins of this vendetta to Vito Corleone's childhood who is forced to escape from Sicily after he loses his entire family to a bloody Mafia feud. In the culminating sequences of Part III, it is in Sicily that Michael once again loses what is most dear to him when his daughter Mary is murdered on the steps of the opera house in Palermo. Thus, if Sicily is the land where all stories of revenge begin, it is also the land where such stories are destined to end, though whether or not these stories really end is arguably a question of some dispute. Indeed, as we shall see, even though in terms of plot Mary's death imparts a sense of closure to the story of the Corleone family, on a more symbolic level violence in Sicily seems to give rise to endemic and self-perpetuating stories, with neither a real beginning nor a real end.[28]

As I mentioned earlier on, there are obvious Freudian elements in the characters' conflictual relationship to Sicily and to the family's ethnic roots. Gregory L. Lucente argues that alongside the psychoanalytic lens, consideration of essentialist and contingent concepts studied in conjunction with notions of exchange could perhaps pave the way for an equally productive line of inquiry towards such a combination of apparently contradictory feelings.[29] More specifically, Lucente studies the relationship between 'the essentialism of identity and the contingency of identification.'[30] If Sicily's identity is established through the lens of contingency, which is to say, through the lens of Otherness, its perception is more likely to undergo a series of modifications in accordance with the temporally specific elements found outside of it. If, on the other hand, Sicily's identity is filtered

28. For the analysis of the concluding opera house sequences which lead to Mary's death, I am drawing on an earlier treatment of the subject in which I discuss metatextual references in *The Godfather III*. See Gloria Lauri-Lucente, '*Cavalleria Rusticana* and Metatextuality in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather III*', www.britishcouncil.org/14gloria_lauri-lucente_cavalleria_rusticana_the_godfather_iii.doc, accessed 28 May, 2011.
29. Lucente, 2; 5.
30. *Ibid.*, 5.

through the lens of essentialism, it then takes on the cast of a timeless and unchanging land. Within this general framework, Lucente argues that in the first and second part of *The Godfather* trilogy, the perception of Sicily and Sicilian identity seems to begin primarily in essentialism and then to move toward contingency, that is, toward the conviction that it is possible for a Sicilian peasant to exchange his identity for a better one by first becoming a Sicilian/American Mafioso, and then by fulfilling his dream of legitimacy as he eventually rises to the stature of an American businessman cleansed of the bloody legacy of his Italian roots.[31] Lucente goes on to say that if, however, in the first half of *The Godfather III* the progression away from an essentialist position toward a contingent one is maintained, in the concluding sequences it is mitigated by the family's nostalgic return to Sicily, to the very site of 'Cavalleria rusticana', Giovanni Verga's story and Pietro Mascagni's opera, which is to say, to a mythic land where the individual stories of honour, betrayal and vendetta transcend a purely personal dimension and turn into timeless and universal narratives.[32]

In the concluding part of my paper, I have chosen to concentrate on the culminating opera house sequences of *The Godfather III,* more specifically on the moment in which the truth of identity moves away from contingent positions to essentialist ones. Now elevated to the stature of a dynasty after having exchanged its original humble identity for that of a powerful business organization, Michael Corleone's family returns for the last time to Sicily for the debut of Anthony, Michael and Kay's son, as a tenor in the part of Turridu in Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo. As Marcia J. Citron writes, '[b]y choosing this particular opera, set in Sicily, Coppola reinforces the ethnic-origins theme of the saga and brings it home to the literal place of origin.'[33] As we shall see, it is through the technique of the mise en abyme which Coppola deploys so magisterially in the opera house sequences that the family self-reflexively works its way back in time to its own ethnic origins.

Before turning to the phenomenon that the mise en abyme brings to light, it might be useful to briefly recall the trajectory undertaken by

31. *Ibid.*, 6.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Marcia J. Citron, 'Operatic Style and Structure in Coppola's *Godfather Trilogy*', *The Musical Quarterly*, (Autumn, 2004. Vol. 87, No. 3), 446.

'Cavalleria rusticana' from its inception in 1880 as a short story by Verga, through its transformation first into a play by Verga himself four years later, then into an opera by Pietro Mascagni in 1890, and eventually into a long series of filmic adaptations, the first three of which were made by Raymond Agnel (1910), Ugo Falena (1916) and Ubaldo Maria del Colle (1916) during Verga's own lifetime.[34] Finally, as we shall see, 'Cavalleria rusticana' is reworked by Coppola into the fabric of a filmic text in the culminating opera house sequences in *The Godfather III*.[35] Sciascia's observations on the importance of 'Cavalleria rusticana' in shaping future cinematic representations of Sicily are particularly germane. Sciascia writes:

> [...] è attraverso Verga, nella realizzazione della 'Cavalleria rusticana' diretta da Ugo Falena, che la Sicilia entra nell'occhio del cinema: la terra siciliana, il paesaggio. Un giornale dell'epoca dice che gli interni sono 'una fedele ricostruzione dell'ambiente' e gli esterni siciliani di 'incomparabile bellezza'. Noi abbiamo qualche dubbio sul fatto che gli esterni siano stati effettivamente girati in Sicilia: ma tant'è che apparvero e significarono Sicilia. Del resto la Sicilia è, come la Spagna, un luogo, un modo di essere, uno stato d'animo di cui si può avere intuizione [...] anche senza una diretta visione e conoscenza.[36]

> [...] it is through Verga, and the rendition of *Cavalleria rusticana* directed by Ugo Falena, that Sicily catches the eye of cinema: the Sicilian land, its landscape. A newspaper of the time says that the interior scenes are 'a faithful reconstruction of the environment' and the exterior Sicilian scenes are of 'incomparable beauty'. We have some doubts as to whether the exterior scenes were really shot in Sicily: but that is what they looked like and so they signified Sicily. After all Sicily is like Spain, a place, a way of being, a mood which one can sense [...] even without first-hand experience or knowledge. (my translation)

34. On the various filmic adaptations of *Cavalleria rusticana*, see N. Genovese, 'Per una storia di *'Cavalleria rusticana'*. Dalla novella ai film', N. Genovese e Sebastiano Gesù (eds) *Verga e il Cinema. Con una sceneggiatura verghiana inedita di 'Cavalleria rusticana'* (Catania. Giuseppe Maimone Editore, 1996), 89–97.
35. For the trajectory undertaken by Verga's 'Cavalleria rusticana' I have drawn on my article *'Cavalleria rusticana* and Metatextuality in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather III*', 1–11.
36. Sciascia, 269.

According to Sciascia, therefore, rather than a 'faithful' rendition of the Sicilian landscape, what Ugo Falena strives to create is that certain 'aura' of 'Sicilitudine' or 'Sicilianness' which can be grasped on a purely intuitive level, and which can somehow still be conveyed as the organizing intelligence immanent in the narration of the story as it is metamorphosed from one artistic genre to another. As 'Cavalleria rusticana' moves from the written page to the theatre, and then to the opera house and finally to the filmic screen, structurally the plot remains stable, moving in one single direction: death and expiation. Violence and religion, honour and betrayal, unbridled passion and social control are all intertwined in Verga's story of Turridu who is stabbed to death by Alfio in a duel on Easter Sunday after Alfio finds out that his wife Lola is having a relationship with Turridu. In his reworking of 'Cavalleria rusticana' into the narrative structure of *The Godfather III*, what interests Coppola is not so much the plotline or the portrayal of the individual characters, but rather the *pre-narrative* oppositions that move in the same direction as Verga's short story. Or to put it differently, Coppola is interested in what D.H. Lawrence defines as Verga's fascination with 'the spontaneous passion of life, that spurts beyond all convention or even law.'[37] Because of the story's setting within the specific context of Easter Sunday, this unbridled spontaneity whose resolution is usually murder, takes on a deeply ritualistic and sacred cast which adds a particularly sinister timbre to violence.

The final resolution in *The Godfather III*, which is reached with the murder of Michael's daughter Mary, sheds light on the way in which Verga's story takes on the reflective properties of a mirror, whose specific function is to create a constant oscillation between the 'real' story of the Corleone family and the 'mythical' narrative by Verga within which it is embedded.[38] As the fluctuation between the

37. D.H. Lawrence, 'Translator's Preface', in *'Cavalleria rusticana' and Other Stories'*, by G. Verga (1928, reprint ed., Westport, Connecticut. Greenwood Press, 1975), 16–17.

38. My disagreement with a host of reviewers of *The Godfather III* among whom Peter Cowie, Pauline Kael and Michael Wilmington who describe the opera house sequences as confusing and lacking in narrative flow is explained in some length in my essay *'Cavalleria Rusticana* and Metatextuality in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather III*' cited earlier. More recently, these negative reviews have been echoed by

two narrative lines progressively increases, and as artifice and reality blend seamlessly, any distinction between the two stories which are mirroring one another disappears. Within this timeless space where past and present, myth and reality, co-exist, and where the tragic events of Sicily's mythical figures foreshadow the destiny that will soon befall the Corleone family, Michael and Kay, who have just seen their son Anthony playing the part of Turridu being killed onstage within the realm of "artifice" will be forced to witness the murder of their daughter Mary offstage, this time within the realm of 'reality.' When the curtain falls on *Cavalleria rusticana*, Verga's self-perpetuating story of death and expiation does not end but is refracted on the steps of the opera house, where a new cast of characters now made up of the members of the Corleone family is ushered in. The two stories have become intimately linked and the final act of expiation culminating in the death of Turridu in *Cavalleria rusticana* will be mimetically reproduced when Mary is sacrificed on the steps of the opera house for the sins of the Corleone dynasty. It is a scream of anguish which will unequivocally link these two acts of expiation: the scream of anguish announcing Turridu's death in both Verga's and Mascagni's story which is heard onstage at the end of the opera: ('hanno ammazzato compare Turridu' – 'Compare Turridu has been killed'); and the desperate cry heard a few minutes later on the steps of the opera house, this time announcing Mary's death ('Hanno ammazzato la signorina Mary' – 'Miss Mary has been killed').

With the death of Mary, the myth of the Mafia is finally dismantled and the family falls apart. The underlying demystifying process through which this disintegration occurs takes us once again to Jameson's reading of *The Godfather* with which I started. Jameson compares the function of the twin concepts of ideological manipulation and Utopian gratification in *The Godfather I* with that of *The Godfather II* by drawing on the thesis set forth by Pierre Macherey whereby a work of art first endows ideology with aesthetic

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John Paul Russo, 'Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather: Part III*,' D. Renga (ed.) *Mafia Movies: A Reader* (Toronto, Buffalo London. University of Toronto Press, 2011). Russo writes that 'the opera plot does not sufficiently mirror the film, and so cannot comment upon it in a compelling fashion' and that Coppola's use of Eisensteinian collision montage 'turns into concatenated confusion.' See in particular p. 154.

representation and figuration and then proceeds to virtually unmask that very same ideological content through an operation of self-criticism.[39] With this precept in mind, Jameson argues that if in the first *Godfather* the ideological and Utopian impulses are held together within a single structure, in the second *Godfather* these narrative impulses become disengaged and actually reverse one another. Thus, the Utopian desire awakened by the ideological myth of the first *Godfather* ends up by 'betray[ing] its roots [...] in the pre-capitalist social formation of a backward and feudal Sicily', and is then unmasked 'as the survival of more archaic forms of repression and sexism and violence' in *The Godfather II*.[40]

Though I concur with Jameson's theory that *The Godfather II* sets in motion a process of 'demythologization' and self-criticism with respect to the preceding *Godfather*, the consolidation of the power of the Corleone dynasty with which the *Godfather II* ends does not really diminish the allure of the family. True, in defence of Jameson's reading, one can argue that his groundbreaking essay dates back to more than a decade before *The Godfather III* was released. Therefore, his critique is undeniably correct as far as it goes. However, the actually unmasking of the myth of the Mafia can be pursued to its extreme limits only in Sicily, the land where the process of mythologization originated. To draw once again on Jameson's notion of the political unconscious, the 'repressed and buried reality' of Coppola's Mafia narrative can be restored to the surface of the text only when the Corleone family, originally perceived as a source of protection and solidarity disintegrates following the murder of Mary. That the culminating moment of anagnorisis takes place not in America but in Sicily through the revelatory power of the mise en abyme, which enables the Corleone family to self-reflexively turn to its own past and recognise as mere illusions the values it has been projecting all along, is what ultimately will demythologise the Mafia material.

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39. Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 33.
40. *Ibid.*, 34.

representation and figuration and then proceeds to virtually unmake that very same ideology [illegible] through an operation of self-critique. With this precept in mind, Jameson argues that if in the first *Godfather* the ideological and Utopian impulses are held together within a single structure, in the second *Godfather* these narrative impulses become disengaged and actually reverse one another. Thus, the Utopian desire manifested by the ideological myth of the first *Godfather* ends up by 'rediscovering its roots [...] in the pre-capitalist social formation of a feudal and rural Sicily', and is then unmasked as the survival of more archaic forms of repression and sexism and violence in *The Godfather II*.

Though I concur with Jameson's reading that *The Godfather II* sets in motion a process of 'demythologization' and 'self-criticism' with respect to the ideology of *The Godfather*, the 'consolidation of the myth' of the Corleone dynasty, with which *The Godfather II* ends, does not really diminish the allure of the family. True, in defence of Jameson's reading, one must remember that his groundbreaking essay dates back to [illegible], a decade before *The Godfather III* was released. Therefore, his critique is undoubtedly correct as far as it goes. However, [illegible] the Mafia [illegible] in Sicily, the land where the process of mythologization originated. In this sense, I argue that Jameson's notion of the political unconscious and the 'represented and Utopian unity' of Coppola's Mafia narrative can be restored to the advantage of the first only when the Corleone family, [illegible] a series of [illegible] in *The Godfather III*, [illegible] in Sicily, that the culminating moment of change takes place not in America but in Sicily, through the [illegible] which enables the Corleone family to self-critically [illegible] past and [illegible] all along [illegible] the Mafia [illegible].

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[illegible]

Jameson, Signatures of the Visible, 34.

Ibid., 34.

JAIS Reviews

Anglo-Italian Studies: A Survey of Recent Books

Peter Vassallo

John E. Law and Lene Ostermark-Johansen, *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
ISBN 0 7546 5057 X (hbk)

The book is a collection of thirteen essays on Victorian visions of the Italian Renaissance by Ruskin, Pater, John Addington Symonds, Vernon Lee, Bernard Berenson, Julia Cartwright and Herbert Horne, writers who preeminently shaped our understanding and appreciation of Italian Renaissance cultural history. Most of the essays in this splendid volume survey and explore the Italian Renaissance through the minds and perspective of the Victorians and Edwardians throwing light on the complexity of this phenomenon and the different and controversial responses of art critics and historians who influenced a whole generation of scholars and readers. The essays present an interesting variety of perspectives, some at odds with each other, in their attempt to define the central features of Renaissance art and civilization. Ruskin's intense dislike of the Renaissance spirit is counteracted by the enthusiasm for the Renaissance in the inspired writings of Pater and Symonds which exalted the supremacy of Florence for its intellectual and artistic monuments. One essay in particular stands out for its scholarship and originality. This is John Easton Law's appraisal of J.A. Symonds's remarkable output on Italy and the Italian Renaissance and which reinforces the view that Symonds's assessment of Italy and Italian history was also shaped by contemporary or near contemporary writers.Like Burckhardt, Symonds believed that unfettered individualism and 'free emergence of personal passions' were at the bottom of despotic rule in Renaissance Italy. This assessment led to a wider appreciation of the late Renaissance in late Victorian Britain. A distinguishing feature of Symonds's style is the poetical power of his prose which, accprding to Law, has its roots

in the interpretative writing of Pater especially the spell of 'Paterian picture making'.

Most of the essays in this collection reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the contributors' approaches to the later reception of the Italian Renaissance namely, nineteenth century historiography concentrating in the main on works of art, and documents, purchased by British and American buyers and the rivalry over discoveries.

Alessandra Petrina, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: two early modern translations of* The 'Prince' (London: Ashgate, 2009).
ISBN 9780754666974 (hbk)

This book is an excellent scholarly analysis of the impact of Machiavelli's *The Prince* in England and Scotland in the sixteenth century and focuses in particular on two extant sixteenth century versions: William Fowler's Scottish translation and The Queen's College (Oxford) English translation. Alessandra Petrina's study focuses on the history of the eight surviving manuscripts of *The Prince* and diligently reconstructs each manuscript's history and gives an account of the the afterlife of the translations and in particular on William Fowler's translation which throws light on the extent of Machiavellian influence on early modern British political thought. Dr Petrina skillfully traces the intricate web of the dissemination of Machiavelli's influential works in England and Scotland in an effort to reconcile the 'tyrannical' Machiavelli of *The Prince* with the republican Machiavelli of the *Discourses.* She also throws light on Machiavelli's moral neutrality showing in the process how this was often misinterpreted as immorality. The text is well-annotated throughout and the book contains an exhaustive bibliography. It is a fine contribution to the new Ashgate Renaissance Studies Series.

Donatella Abbate Badin, *Lady Morgan's Italy: Anglo-Irish Sensibilities and Italian Realities* (Academica Press,Bethesda, (2007) ISBN

This is a fine study of Lady Morgan's partly autobiographical travel book containing her penetrating observations on Italian manners and customs from the point of view of an Irish woman with strong liberal sympathies

asserting her right to shape public opinion in favour of Italy a beautiful country shackled by foreign oppression and occupation. The book combines travel writing with political ideology in that while it penetratingly describes the Italians and their country it is openly critical of all forms of tyranny or foreign hegemony which seek to subordinate a country in ferment in the process of discovering its sense of national identity. Donatella Abbate Badin's study contains illuminating sections on Lady Morgan's perceptions of Italian history and culture and her frequent comparisons to Ireland's history of foreign domination and her reflections on monarchy, oligarchy and despotism. Lady Morgan's observations are set against the expected reactions of the Grand Tour traveler as a 'picturesque traveller' enthusing on the natural scenery but as in intelligent observer who engages with the historical and political realities of contemporary Italy. Dr Abbate Badin's chapter on 'The Grand Tour and the genres of travel writing 'is particularly illuminating and well-illustrated with copious quotations from the original text. In a later Chapter entitled 'The Italian Other' she makes some very perceptive observations on the character of Italian women animated by a feminist ideology. This scholarly study contains an Appendix which conveniently reproduces central excerpts from Lady Morgan's text as well as informative end-notes to each chapter.

Maria Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians. Configurations of identity in Byron, the Shelleys, and the Pisan Circle* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).
ISBN 978-0-7546-6292-1

In this penetrating study of configurations of identity of some of the important British expatriates in post Napoleonic Italy Dr Schoina ably demonstrates how the concept of the Anglo-Italian, as Mary Shelley defined it, was linked to the social economic and cultural conditions of the age. This is a book about self-representation – the Anglo and the Italian hyphenated, as Mary Shelley conceptualized it, in her construction of Anglo-Italianness, mapping a community of sophisticated, erudite emigrant British in Italy with a shared vision of cultural reform in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The Italian experience for the Pisan circle, a group of Romantic British intellectuals concerned with political reform. The Anglo-Italian, Dr Schoina cogently argues throughout this study, evolved from an eccentric self-representation and emerges as a complex mode of alliance

with Italy and Italianness in the intricate process of acculturation as seen in the attitudes of Byron, Percy Shelley Leigh Hunt and Mary Shelley herself who was to call herself *Anglo-Italicus* when she wrote her observations about the English in Italy in the *Westminster Review.*

Alessandro Vescovi, Luisa Villa and Paul Vita, eds. *The Victorians and Italy: Literature, Travel, Politics and Art* (Polimetrica Publisher: Italy, 2009). ISBN 978-88-7699-163-9

This volume, the first in the new series entitled *English Library: the Literature Bookshelf* brings together a number of papers presented at an International Symposium on Victorian Literature and Culture convened at the University of Genoa in 2007. The common factor is the perception of Italy and the reception of Italian Culture by English writers during the Victorian period. Most of the papers focus on the complex relationship between English and Italian Literature, Victorian cultural values and the Italian Risorgimento and the mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion which Italy and the Italian way of life exerted on Victorian writers and travelers. The first section deals with some of the significant ways in which writers reformulated the picturesque. Of particular interest here is Annemarie McAllister's overview on Victorian discourses on Italy which also focuses on Dickens's lively *Pictures from Italy* which deliberately discredits accepted wisdom and conventional attitudes in the interests of 'authenticity' giving a a contrasting view of the places he visited during his Italian sojourn contrasting the beautiful scenery with the degradation of the inhabitants as in the case of his observations on Naples. This is followed by two lively essays – one on the Italy of Dickens (Eleanor McNees) and one on the picturesque in Ouida's Italy.

Subsequent sections deal interestingly with Victorian responses to the Italian Risorgimento and a later section on the English in Italy which focuses on Ruskin, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot and Edward Lear. These essays offer an opportunity to form new perspectives and to perceive connections across cultures and periods which throw significant light on the age's interest in and construction of Italy and itself as they cross national boundaries and prejudices. The volume is an important contribution to Anglo-Italian literary and cultural relations.

Joseph Luzzi, *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009). ISBN 978-0-300-12355-5 (hbk).

This pioneer study is concerned with Italian Romanticism and the modern myth of Italy and Dr Luzzi diligently explores various themes relating to the emergence of Italy as 'the world's university, the influence of Dante's *Divina Commedia* on Romantic autobiography and the perception of Italy as mother of arts from the Romantic period onwards, in a comparative European context. The Italian Romantics, as Dr Luzzi cogently demonstrates, viewed classical literature as a harmonizing influence which established a link with themselves and their illustrious classical origins and this was particularly the case with the neo classicism of Ugo Foscolo and Giacomo Leopardi who wrote in a self-consciously neo-classical vein. Dr Luzzi perceptively focuses on formative aspects of Europe's Romantic which were based on readings and interpretations of Dante that contributed to notions of Italian nationalism and the question of patriotism. Two Chapters in particular are of absorbing interest: the second, on 'Italy without the Italians' and a subsequent chapter on Dante and autobiography both of which analyze foreign interpretations of Dante's *Commedia* in the light of Italian patriotic fervour. One shortcoming, however, is that there is hardly any mention of Byron's projection of Dante in his *Prophecy of Dante* which was actually written at the behest of his mistress Countess Guiccioli to emphasize the Florentine poets's patriotism which contemporary writers had impugned. As a consequence, Byron's contribution to Italian romanticism is not fully explored in this study.

All in all, this is an impressive and erudite study which adds a significant new dimension to our understanding of the cultural and literary formation of modern Italy.

Thomas Adolphus Trollope, *Tuscany in 1849 and in 1859.* Gigliola Sacerdoti Mariani (ed.) (Firenze, Regione Toscana, 2009).

This volume (Edizione dell'Assemblea no.33) reproduces the original text of Thomas Adolphus Trollope's book on Tuscany as printed by Chapman and Hall (London, 1839). In her scholarly introduction (in Italian) Professor Sacerdoti Mariani focuses on Trollope's penetrating observations on Tuscan political and social scene at the time of the Risorgimento. The critical

introduction is divided into headings taken from Trollope's work ('the writing on the wall'; 'old wine in new bottles'; 'a pickle-herring farce' etc) and proceeds to give a full account of Trollope's sojourn in Florence, the circumstances in which his observations were written, and Trollope's abiding interest in the Tuscan people and their struggle to free themselves from Austrian domination.

Marrapodi, Michele (ed.), *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literary Theories* [Anglo-Italian Renaissance Series], (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).
ISBN 9781409421498 (hbk).

The volume, expertly edited by Michele Marrapodi, is a collection of sixteen papers by established scholars in the field, some of which were presented at the Fourth International Shakespeare Conference held at the University of Palermo in June 2006. The contributors discuss various aspects of Italian literary theories in the light of the emerging Elizabethan theatrical convention. In a learned introductory Section Professor Marrapodi authoritatively discusses the variety of dramatic modes available to playwrights in Elizabethan times (as cataloged by Polonius in his enumeration of the generic hybridity available at the time) and the appropriation of Italian dramatic conventions at the time. One interesting aspect of this appropriation is the impact of *commedia dell'arte* dramatic companies and their improvisation techniques which may have, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced the early English stage.

Among the essays which stand out for their incisiveness and erudition are Stephen Orgel's 'Shakespeare and the Art of Forgetting' which, inter alia, discusses the surprising 'resolution' of King Lear. Maria Angla Tempera discusses the scenes of horror and violence in *Titus Andronicus* in the light of Italian Renaissance Tragedy and its outdoing of the Senecan plays as well as contemporary Italian tragic modes. Frances K. Barasch interestingly discusses *Hamlet* in the light of commedia dell'arte mode prevalent in Shakespeare's day especially in the Pantalone aspect of Polonius's character. The Machiavellian aspect of *Julius Caesar* is discussed by Hugh Grady who sees the play as influenced by Machiavelli's detached secular humanist discourse in the sphere of political behaviour. Michaele Marrapodi's fine essay on 'The Woman as Wonder' focuses on Shakespeare's representation of women in *Pericles* and the Last Plays in

which 'Italian vices' are set against English virtues with the focus in these plays on the constancy and endurance of the female characters. In an interesting essay Keir Elam discusses the role of the courtesan in early modern Italian and English drama and focuses on the intimate association between courtesanship and performativity in England by comparison with Venetian mores. Michael Wyatt's final essay in this valuable collection considers Italianate spectacle in James VI/I political writings and public apparitions.

Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies
Editor: Peter Vassallo

The *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* is an interdisciplinary Journal published by the Institute of Anglo-Italian Studies of the University of Malta. It is devoted to current research in the history of cultural relations between England and Italy from 1300 to the present.

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The Journal welcomes submissions in the form of articles up to 10,000 words. The editors are sympathetic to a broad range of critical and theoretical approaches.

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