# Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies

## 2015-2016

## Volume 15

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General Editor: **Peter Vassallo**
Volume Editor: **Gloria Lauri-Lucente**

# JOURNAL OF ANGLO-ITALIAN STUDIES

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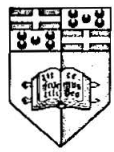

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# "A woman of infinite wit, and agreeable conversation, always entertained me:" The Countess of Pomfret and Italian hospitality[1]

*Anne M. McKim*

On 20th December, 1740 Henrietta Louisa Fermor, Countess of Pomfret, marked the anniversary of her arrival in Florence by composing a narrative poem which she sent on Christmas Day to her friend, the minor poet, Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford. In her poetical review of the previous year she exalts Florence as her "happy safe retreat" after being "forc'd from friends" and home in England by the need for the family to retrench.[2] Throughout her three years abroad, Lady Pomfret maintained a regular correspondence with Lady Hertford in which she recorded the impact her travels, particularly her residence in Italy, made on her. Like other travellers, in her letters home Lady Pomfret documents the sites visited, the new experiences enjoyed, and the people encountered, including British tourists and other residents abroad.[3] A striking feature of her letters to her friend, however, is her repeated acknowledgements of the warm hospitality she everywhere received in Italy. Nevertheless, fearing she may not adequately have

1. *Correspondence Between Frances, Countess of Hartford, (afterwards Duchess of Somerset,) and Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret, Between the Years 1738 and 1741*, 3 vols, R. Phillips (ed.), London, 1805. I use the modern spelling, "Hertford", throughout this article.
2. "The visitor [to Italy] found living cheap and the climate generally attractive and beneficial." J. Ingamells, "Discovering Italy: British Travellers in the Eighteenth Century" in *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (ed.), A. Wilton and I. Bignanini, London, Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996, p. 21.
3. She also kept a travel diary for the years 1739 to 1741 in which she recorded her experiences under two main headings: "Incidents and Occurrences" and "Where and what company." Finch MSS, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DG7/D1/i.

conveyed her appreciation of Italian hospitality, she wrote in the poem for her friend: "My letters scarce have told you how I've liv'd,/What converse held, what favours I've receiv'd."[4] The poem from Florence, and her letters from the various Italian cities, including Genoa, Siena, Bologna, Rome and Venice, as well as Florence, offer a valuable personal record of her experience of Italian hospitality to a foreigner, as well as a fascinating insight into the friendship which was essentially forged through this correspondence.

Studies have shown that letters between friends at home and abroad provide evidence of "elite women, acting as cultural mediators", strengthening the "circle of aristocratic ladies who were bound together in a distinctive culture of friendship."[5] The correspondence between the Countess of Pomfret (1698–1761) and the Countess of Hertford (1699–1754) provides a "rich portrait of epistolary intimacy", to borrow a phrase used recently of the Walpole-Mann correspondence.[6] The letters, prompted by Lady Pomfret's travel to Europe with her husband and her two eldest daughters, Sophia (born 1721) and Charlotte (born 1724), between September 1738 and October 1741, attest a friendship that developed and deepened as they shared thoughts on literature, people, plays, opera, topical events, the education of children, house renovations and gardening. Their private correspondence has been recognised as an important source of social history, what Bruce

4. To The Countess of Hartford, Florence, Palazzo Ridolfi, Christmas-day N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, p. 205.

5. I. Brown, "Domesticity, Feminism, and Friendship: Female Aristocratic Culture and Marriage in England, 1660–1760", *Journal of Family History* 7:4 (December 1982), p. 407. For a study of the Hertford-Pomfret correspondence as a carefully tended epistolary space in which aristocratic values were fostered and guarded, see J. How, "An epistolary redoubt: the correspondence between the Countesses of Hertford and Pomfret (1738-41)", *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa*, Aldershot, Hants, Ashgate, 2003, pp. 107–143.

6. G.E. Haggert, *Horace Walpole's Letters: Masculinity and Friendship in the Eighteenth Century*, Lewisburg, Pa, Bucknell U.P., 2011, p. 114. Horace Walpole and his relative, Horace Mann, corresponded for over forty years. Robert Walpole had appointed Mann to the Florence ministry, and regarded him as a close friend as well as a relative. Horace Walpole first met Mann in Florence.

Redford has called "telegraphic social reportage."[7] Both had retired as ladies of the bedchamber when Caroline, Queen Consort to George II, died in November 1737. During the twelve years they were both in the royal service, they were not close;[8] they only became so afterwards, through the regular correspondence they began and maintained during the three years the Pomfrets spent abroad, as part of an economy drive.[9] Letter-writing afforded the opportunity to become intimate friends. Lady Pomfret explicitly acknowledged as much four months into her trip when she wrote: "Now, though parted, we may in peace communicate our thoughts; we may reason, reflect, and become as much acquainted with each other's hearts as we please."[10]

While Lady Pomfret spent the majority of the family's continental residence in Italy, from 12th June 1739–20th June 1741, sightseeing and socialising, Lady Hertford led an increasingly secluded life at her family's country retreat at St Leonard's Hill, near Windsor, then, from May 1740, at Richkings Park in Buckinghamshire. Differently situated as they were, through their letters each supplied what the other needed: news from home for the one, stimulating accounts of foreign travel for the other. Lady Pomfret did not disappoint. Her first letter from Italy invites her friend to visualise her dramatic voyage from Marseilles to Genoa:

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7. B. Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, Chicago and London, Chicago U.P., 1986, p. 6.
8. Lady Hertford was appointed as lady of the bedchamber to Caroline, then princess of Wales, in 1723, Lady Pomfret in 1725. Early in their correspondence they acknowledge that during their employment at court they were too guarded with one another to become friends (*Correspondence* vol. I, pp. 30–31, 39–40, 43–44).
9. R. Quaintance, "Fermor, Henrietta Louisa, countess of Pomfret (1698–1761)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2004; online edn., May 2015. [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/view/article/ 9343], accessed 3rd March 2016]. Lord Pomfret was also employed at Court, as Queen Caroline's Master of the Horse. The combined loss of salaries when husband and wife lost their Court positions in 1737, amounted to £1,500 per annum according to I. Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment*, Oxford, New York: Oxford U.P., 1999, p. 385.
10. To the Countess of Hartford, Monts, January 10 N.S., 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 44.

> Imagine me embarked, in bad weather, on board a small tottering boat (for such is a felucca), the Mediterranean raging, and the mariners frightened out of their wits; with great difficulty getting to shore at Savona, where we stayed three days for want of a wind, with *stinking* victuals, no wine, and beds worse than none: after this, setting out in a storm, with the sea coming into the boat all the way, and arriving at last at Genoa.[11]

Lady Hertford, on the other hand, reported on progress with house renovations, landscape gardening, the latest book and other publications, politics and society news.

Each was aware of the very different lives they were leading during this period, and this very consciousness contributed to the reciprocal goodwill that, according to Aristotle's influential definition, characterises the "best friendships."[12] Ample evidence of this mutual goodwill can be found throughout the Hertford-Pomfret correspondence. For example, shortly after the Pomfrets arrived in Italy Lady Hertford wrote to her roaming friend:

> I receive a double pleasure from every beautiful country you visit: both from your accounts, which make me see them perfectly in my imagination; and from a sympathetic feeling of the satisfaction that you enjoy, while you are observing all the

11. To the Countess of Hartford, Sienna, July 28, N.S, 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p.106. Sacheverell Stevens recorded a similarly wild sea journey to Genoa just a week earlier. He took the precaution of stocking up on provisions of food and wine for the voyage, aware that "in these feluccas it is uncertain where you may be drove to, which was my case." *Miscellaneous Remarks Made on the Spot in a Late Seven Years Tour through France, Italy, Germany and Holland* (c. 1756), quoted in Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand* Tour, Yale U.P., 2003, p.15.

12. "The 'best friendship', according to Aristotle, is between equals in virtue who 'wish well to each other' and bear each other 'goodwill' because of their moral goodness." From J.O. Grunebaum, *Friendship: Liberty, Equality, and Utility*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 9, with footnote reference to *Aristotle's Complete Works*, J. Barnes (ed.), Princeton U.P., 1984, 1156a3. See also N. Sherma, "Aristotle on the Shared Life" in N. Kapur Badhwar (ed.), *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*, Cornell U.P., 1993, p. 99.

> beauties with which art or nature can present you, in the finest part of Europe.[13]

In her next letter she explained why she valued Pomfret's letters so much:

> I spend many hours alone, either in my garden or closet, every day; and reading over your letters, and thinking of you, form a great part of my entertainment: so that it is natural for me to wish to converse sometimes in reality with one that I frequently do it with in imagination.[14]

Each imagined, and frequently asked the other to imagine, that they were engaged in a conversation.[15] In an early letter, Lady Pomfret imagines Lady Hertford is physically present with her in her dressing-room (in the house the family has rented at Monts), and they are having a conversation as close friends might in this private space.[16]

While Lady Hertford feared her letters lacked sufficient interest for her travelling friend, Lady Pomfret, for her part, expressly appreciated Hertford's letters as "frequent testimonies of generosity, and constancy of a friendship."[17] She gently admonishes Lady

13. To the Countess of Pomfret, Marlborough, June 10/21, 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p.103.
14. To the Countess of Pomfret, Marlborough, June 24, O.S, 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 111.
15. "In writing to your ladyship, I am so accustomed to set down just what at the time occurs to my thoughts" (To the Countess of Pomfret, Richkings, October 23, O.S, 1740, p. 171). In the course of the eighteenth century letter-writing came to be codified by the literary critic Hugh Blair as a "conversation carried on upon paper, between two friends at a distance", Redford, p. 5.
16. As well as being a domestic space associated with "solitary cerebral activities" such as reading and writing, a lady's dressing-room was often used for conversations with family and close friends. K. Lipsedge, *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels*, Basingstoke U.K., Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 35, 37–38. See also T. Chico, *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-century English Literature and Culture*, Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 2005. Dr Samuel Johnson identified imagination as a requirement for good conversation: "Talking of conversation, he said, 'There must be [...] imagination, to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in.'" *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, quoted by Redford, p.3.
17. To the Countess of Hartford, Sienna, Aug. 19, N.S, 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p.115.

Hertford for making 'excuses because your letters are not written in the hurry of business, or the noise of town amusements.'[18] More than a year later she reiterates her continuing appreciation of Hertford's letters as a testament of their friendship:

> The constant pleasure I receive from your agreeable and friendly correspondence, is alone necessary to recompense me for the want of conversation which I might sometimes enjoy were I at home; for though no persons in their senses would reject the good they have in their power, only to lament the better which is out of it, yet it is impossible to find the same satisfaction in general conversation and civilities (though ever so great) as in particular intimacies with people of merit. But, as a few months may now restore me to England, I will in the mean time endeavour to extract out of my present pilgrimage as much variety and discourse as I can.[19]

Hertford's letters serve as a substitute for the face-to-face conversation that distance makes impossible, and afford Lady Pomfret even greater pleasure than the "general conversation and civilities (though ever so great)" she enjoys in her travels. The extent of the compliment to her friend is clear in the parenthetical addition here, which would not have been lost on Lady Hertford. Much of Lady Pomfret's entertainment abroad, and frequently communicated in her letters to her friend, derives from the Italians she meets in Florence and the other Italian cities she visits, and especially the Italian ladies who become her guides in each place and facilitate her entry to local society. As Rosemary Sweet points out, an "important aspect of travel was the opportunities it afforded for sociability."[20] Although her letters describe places and their famous attractions for the grand tourist, Lady Pomfret reserves her greatest praises for the Italian noblewomen who everywhere welcome her so congenially to their cities.

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18. *Ibid.*
19. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, Palazzo Ridolfi. Nov. 13, N.S, 1740, vol. I, p. 168.
20. R. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour. The British in Italy c.1690–1820*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2012, p. 38.

For Early Modern English commentators the "good entertainment" of strangers was both "an obligation binding in the natural ethical code" and "an excellent Christian Practice."[21] Like friendship, the host-guest relationship was reciprocal and, according to Maurice Hammington, inherent in the word's origins:

> The Latin *hostis* indicates a reciprocal relationship marked by sharing and exchange. However, the etymology of hospitality also poses *postis* as a root which signifies both a notion of personal identity and power. The complexity of hospitality is found in the very basis of the term as the constituent elements of reciprocity, power, and identity vie for centrality in its various historical and cultural manifestations.[22]

For Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality is culture itself."[23] In the history of hospitality gender has played a significant role. While the "host traditionally [is] 'almost invariably male'," women "have historically been responsible for the logistics and delivery of hospitality, although they do not always receive the status or credit of 'host.'"[24] Luce Irigaray conceives of another space for hospitality, a "special third, which does not belong to one gender or the other but happens through the between two, without it being possible for this third to be appropriated by or to the other gender" and one "beyond the space defined by any culture."[25] Irigaray repeatedly defines the hospitality offered by and within this space as explicitly "reciprocal."[26]

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21. George Wheler (1698) and Christopher Wandesford (1636) quoted in F. Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *Past and Present* 102:1 (1984), pp. 66, 73. doi:10.1093/past/102.1.66. See also Heal's *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
22. M. Hammington (ed.), *Feminism and Hospitality*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2010, p. xii.
23. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. M. Dooley and M. Hughes, New York: Routledge, 2001, p.16. See also T. Claviez (ed.) *The Conditions of Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Aesthetics on the Threshold of the Possible*, New York, Fordham U.P., 2013.
24. Hammington, citing Tracy McNulty, pp. xi, xv.
25. L. Irigaray, "Toward a Mutual Hospitality" in *The Conditions of Hospitality*, pp. 44–45.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Lady Pomfret's appreciation of Italian hospitality imbues her initial impressions of the country on first arriving there:

> I found nothing in France but what might be described as a fine and well-governed country: whilst here, description must fail; being unequal to the noble beauty, the magnificence, the politeness, of Genoa ... The day after I landed, the principal ladies of the place did me the honour of a visit.... la signora Brignola devoted all her time to my amusement; taking me in the morning to the principal buildings, and in the afternoon making assemblies (which they call *conversations*), or introducing me to those of her friends. Nothing could be more agreeable than these. All the beau-monde met together; the apartments were large, finely lighted, and furnished with all that art, or nature, could produce to please the senses. And as I did not like play, la signora Durazzi, a woman of infinite wit, and agreeable conversation, always entertained me; for it is not here as in France (that you must pay the lady of the house, or never get into it), but all are at liberty to do what they please. After a fortnight spent in this manner, lord Aubrey Beau-clerk was so obliging as to carry us in his ship to Leghorn.[27]

The key role played by the "principal ladies of the place" in the hospitality Lady Pomfret enjoys in Italy becomes something of a leitmotif in her letters to her friend. She never fails to name the particular noblewomen who "honour" her by devoting themselves to entertaining her by showing her the chief sights and facilitating her entry to social assemblies, or *conversazioni*, as she notes here.[28] In these "conversational assemblies and female Salons [...] aristocratic and bourgeois Italian women would regularly entertain Italian and

27. To the Countess of Hartford, Sienna, July 28, N.S, 1739, *Correspondence,* vol. I, pp.105–107. The Pomfrets' son, William, who was serving as a seaman under Lord Aubrey Beau-Clerk's command at the time, also records this passage to Leghorn in his diary. "The Diary or rather Account of the different Voyages of the Hon.$^{ble}$ William Farmor Esq." Finch Family Papers, 1627–1744. Microfilm. 1939. 10 reels, Yale University Library, reel 7.

28. In her diary for 12$^{th}$ June, 1739 Lady Pomfret described signora Brignola and the two ladies who accompanied her on the first visit, signoras Durazzi and Balbi, as "some of the most considerable Ladies of the Republick, for Family, Riches, Beauty, Wit and Politeness", Diary, f.47.

foreign guests in their salons with enlightened conversation."[29] The most illustrious of these "cross-cultural female salons" were "led by a learned woman."[30] It is noteworthy that Lady Pomfret appreciates the social rather than the intellectual nature of these assemblies and in a later letter describes one of her Genoese hosts as "la signora Durazzi (a woman that I could really have loved extremely) never said an entertaining thing, but I wished you to hear it, or myself capable of transmitting it to you."[31] By her own account, Lady Pomfret's command of Italian was not fluent; she could understand the language but could not speak it well.[32] Horace Walpole, whom she met in Florence, remarked in his typically scathing style that "she applied extremely to Italian, but never spoke beyond the consistency of a parrot's Portuguese."[33]

She enjoyed such a busy social life between arriving in Genoa and settling in Siena that two months passed before she found time to write again and assure her friend that:

> You are every day in my thoughts; and I either want to share what I find agreeable with you, or to fly to you from what is not so. This way of thinking made you my constant companion at Genoa, though I could not find a moment to tell you so.[34]

29. M. D'Ezio, *Readers, Writers, Salonnieres*, Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien, Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 12–13. D'Ezio observes that "*conversazione*, rather than *salotto*, was the word Italian *salonnières* used in order to describe their assemblies, thus emphasising the social mechanism of the exchange of ideas", p.18.
30. *Ibid.*, p.17.
31. To the Countess of Hartford, Sienna, September 23, N.S, 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 127.
32. *Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 285.
33. *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence,* Appendix 5. All references to Walpole's letters are to this digitised edition. Her ability to read Italian is well attested: She was given a number of books by Italian gentlemen such as Sig Ugoccini and Dr Beccaria (a History of the Medici, and of Bologna). Lady Hertford assumes she can read Algarotti in Italian (*Correspondence*, vol. I, p.121), and she actually translates the story of Bianca Capello into English for her friend.
34. To the Countess of Hartford, Sienna, September 23, N.S, 1739, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 127.

The family remained in Siena for five months.[35] She has plenty to say about Sienese society:

> The people are vastly civil; and their manner of life is what pleases me, for I have all the day, till sun-set, to myself: I then go in my carriage to a large open piece of ground, called the Lizza; where the coaches draw up by the side of each other, and the ladies talk together (the gentlemen walking from coach to coach, as their fancy leads them) for about an hour. After this I go to the comedy, or some *conversation*, where there are always refreshments of sherbet and ice; and, about eleven o'clock, all retire to their respective homes.[36]

Nevertheless, the pleasures of Siena apparently paled in comparison with those she found in Florence, where the family took up residence. Shortly after she arrived there (on 21st December, 1739, four days after Horace Walpole), she declared that: "Sienna was dull, dear, and void of all conveniences. Here we have *conversations*, amusements of many kinds, and great plenty, without much expense."[37] Even so, in the midst of her busy social schedule, Lady Pomfret continued to write from Florence that Lady Hertford's letters "are the most agreeable amusement of my life."[38] Just as reading over Lady Pomfret's letters in her closet or garden "and thinking of you, form a great part of [Lady Hertford's] entertainment", Hertford's letters enhance Lady Pomfret's life abroad, elevating her mood, informing her about current affairs in

35. From 20th July–20th December, 1739. They stayed here longer than anywhere else, except for Florence (21st December, 1739–13th March, 1741). They spent two months in Rome (17th March–18th May, 1741, two to three weeks in Genoa, Leghorn and Venice, and only nine days in Bologna, in J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800*, New Haven, Conn, Yale U.P., 1997, p. 780.
36. To the Countess of Hartford, Sienna, July 28, N.S, 1739, *Correspondence* vol. I, p.109.
37. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, January 3, N.S, 1740, *Correspondence* vol. I, p. 174. Her husband also grew tired of Siena and he wrote to an acquaintance on 10th January1740: "We have passed five months disagreeably enough at Siena, a place much commended by most travellers and as little deserving of it in all respects.[...] We are now got to a place in every sense the reverse of Siena. I mean Florence full of good conversation and magnificent objects and amusements." West Papers, British Library, Add MS 34741.
38. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, July 30 N.S, 1740, *Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 10.

Britain, and thereby contributing to her ability to participate in social assemblies: "The receipt of a letter from your ladyship always makes me better company during the whole day after; since it gives me fresh spirits, and an addition of knowledge."[39]

Florence was a favourite destination with British grand tourists and a recommended base for those seeking a longer residence.[40] The Pomfrets stayed there for fifteen months, initially in an apartment provided by Horace Mann, the British diplomatic resident in Florence, and later rented the Palazzo Ridolfi. It was through Mann that the family met Horace Walpole and his travelling companion, the poet Thomas Gray, both of whom became their frequent visitors. Among the other young Englishmen in Florence at the time were Lord Lincoln (who became besotted with the Pomfrets' eldest daughter, Sophia), Mr George Pitt (who was smitten by the younger Pomfret daughter, Charlotte), Lord Hartington, Lord Elcho, Mr Dashwood, Mr Naylor, Mr Worsley, Mr Frankland, all of whom became frequent visitors to the Pomfrets.[41] "They are all very civil, and most of them agreeable" Lady Pomfret informed Lady Hertford, although she was generally of the opinion that "most of our travelling youth neither improve themselves, nor credit their country."[42] In the same letter she goes on: "Besides these English, Lady Walpole is settled here, who is very well-bred and entertaining. She has shewn me great civilities."[43] The scandalous behaviour of the British Prime Minister's daughter-in-law (and Horace Walpole's sister-in-law), who had eloped to Italy with one lover, the Reverend Samuel Sturgis, and had since embarked on a liaison with another, Count Richcourt, minister at Florence for the Great Duke Francis II, is never mentioned in her letters, nor in her

39. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, August 14 N.S., 1740, *Correspondence,* vol. II, p. 56.
40. R. Sweet, "British Perceptions of Florence in the Long Eighteenth Century", *The Historical Journal* 50: 4 (2007), pp. 837–859. See also Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, pp. 65–98 and B. Moloney, *Florence and England*, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1969.
41. Ingamells, *Dictionary*, p. 781; To The Countess of Hartford, Rome, March 1741, *Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 291. see also Diary, ff. 89, 91, 92.
42. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, January 3 N.S., 1740, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 175; vol. II, p. 6.
43. *Correspondence*, vol. I, p.175.

diary.[44] They often exchanged visits, and it was Lady Walpole who recommended the Palazzo Ridolfi as a residence for the family.[45]

As in the other Italian cities, the principal ladies were amongst the first to welcome the family to Florence. Lady Pomfret told Lady Hertford that a Signora Suares "has taken me under her protection, and conducted me to my audience of the dowager electress palatine."[46] Assuming her friend's likely interest in Signora Suares's association with the Florentine royal court, Lady Pomfret adds in a later letter:

> She was bred up in the court of the great-duke; having been lady of honour to the princess Violante of Bavaria, married to prince Ferdinand, eldest son of duke Cosmo, and elder brother to John Gaston. Her birth was Venetian, of the first nobility, and her beauty (though now not young) is still superior to that of almost any person I have seen. Her disposition is perfectly good, as well as her manners; and there is nothing on her part omitted to make Florence as agreeable as possible to us.[47]

Signora Suares played the prime role in introducing the family to other Florentine patricians, including Senator and Signora Guadagni, Count Roberto Pandolfini and another senator, Giovanni Battista Uguccioni, who soon became one of Lady Sophia's admirers.[48]

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44. Horace Walpole later described Lady Walpole as someone who "seems to have chosen to brave all decorums". Letter to Mann, 6th February 1781, *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* vol. 25, p. 122.
45. Diary, f.77.
46. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, January 3 N.S., 1740, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 176. Maria Anna di Valvasone (1697–1773), wife of Baldassare Suares de la Concha. Their son, Francesco Suares de la Concha, travelled with Horace Walpole from Florence to Venice according to Lady Sophia in a letter to her brother on 5th June 1741 printed in Slava Klima (ed.), *Joseph Spence: Letters from The Grand Tour*, Montreal and London, McGill-Queen's U.P., p.390.
47. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, August 14 N.S., 1740, vol. II, pp. 58–59. According to Walpole, on the other hand, "Madame Suarez had in her, all the great characteristics of a woman; was talkative, busy, superstitious, silly, lewd, and prodigal of her favours." Walpole's MS *Commonplace Book of Verses*, pp. 29–30, quoted in the Yale edition of his Correspondence vol.17, p. 39, n.24). She brought her two daughters to visit Lady Pomfret as well.
48. Lady Pomfret noted in her diary that Signora Suares brought the invitation to a ball at the house of the Senator and Signora Guadagni (f.78). She also noted on 2nd February

Uguccioni came to be regarded as a family friend, assisting them in many ways, not only in his native city, but afterwards when the family visited Bologna and Venice. Lady Pomfret revealed her view of the relationship between such civil consideration towards travellers and friendship when some time later she wrote to Lady Hertford: "I need not tell you that we are very glad to see a person from whom we have received so many civilities, and with whom we have lived so long in friendship."[49]

Florence appealed particularly to Lady Pomfret and her daughters as it offered to female travellers "a congenial atmosphere" and opportunities to enjoy "polite sociability in the conversazione, the theatres, and the opera houses."[50] They were soon attending *conversazioni* hosted by prominent Florentine noblewomen, including the Marchesa Rinucciani and Signora Riccardi.[51] Signora Suares' hospitality included taking Lady Pomfret, Sophia and Charlotte to masques and balls. They also adopted the Florentine fashion of dressing in masks to stroll around town and regularly attended theatre performances, concerts and operas.[52] If the majority of British visitors preferred "the company of other British tourists", Lady's Pomfret's penchant for mingling with Italian society is certainly noteworthy.[53]

On 8th March 1740 the family moved from their lodgings to their house, Palazzo Ridolfi, in via della Scala.[54] Lady Hertford said she was delighted to be able to visualise Lady Pomfret's new abode

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that Signor Roberto Pandolfini visited her with Signor Suares and that the party went in the evening to the Suares' home (f. 86). The Pandolfinis were one of the oldest Florentine families.

49. To the Countess of Hartford, Bologna, May 25 N.S., 1741, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 79.
50. Sweet, "British Perceptions", p. 846. Sophia Fermor gives an account of some of these in a letter to her brother from Florence, Finch MSS., Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DG7/ Bundle 37/3.
51. Diary ff.89, 90. According to D'Ezio, "The presence of foreign guests, especially British, in Italian salons was considered a sign of distinction", p. 15. The Pomfrets attended *conversazioni* and balls twice weekly, Black, p. 45.
52. Diary, ff.83, 115.
53. Black, p. 203.
54. Diary, f.88. Details of the house and large gardens were sent to Lady Hertford in a letters on 29th May.

from her friend's vivid description, one that enabled her to imagine joining her in the extensive garden there:

> I am sincerely obliged by your goodness, in giving me the description of your house and garden. I have (in imagination) sat with you by your fountain, and walked with you under your orange-trees; have examined your grotto, and confessed that it much exceeds mine at Marlborough. I am become so perfectly acquainted with Florence, from the lively picture you have given me of it, that I am sure I could almost draw a plan of the situation of its walls, gardens, and the mountains that surround it.[55]

Gratified by her friend's evident interest, Lady Pomfret sent her a history of the Medici family, one of whom had once owned the Palazzo Ridolfi, and a map of Florence which Hertford treasured.[56]

Once installed at their palazzo, Lady Pomfret prepared to entertain visitors and, like other British women in the major Italian cities, she established her own weekly salon during the summer of 1740.[57] She saw it as her a duty to receive British travellers who were in Florence at the time, although the prospect of entertaining the many adolescents among them did not thrill her.[58] What did appeal to her was the opportunity that holding her own salon gave to reciprocate Italian hospitality, as she told her friend: "Every Friday I shall have the pleasure of seeing all the Florentine nobility, whose hospitality and politeness I can never enough commend."[59] For her final

55. To the Countess of Pomfret, Richkings, June 18, O.S., 1740, vol. II, pp. 13–14.

56. To the Countess of Hartford, Palazzo Ridolfi, August 7, N.S., 1740, vol. II, p.41. In April the following year she wrote to Lady Pomfret: "When I am set peacefully down at my farm I shall often read over your letters, survey the map of Florence, and trace your road from thence to Rome." To the Countess of Pomfret, London, April 13, O.S., 1741, vol. III, 100.

57. D'Ezio, pp. 14, 15. She says that female salons were something of "a cultural phenomenon that, in fact, only came into fashion at the end of the eighteenth century", p. 22.

58. "Could you see the inundation of poor creatures from all three kingdoms, that, at the regular seasons, overrun the different parts of France and Italy, you would, with me, lament the approaching month of July, in which I am destined to receive them here. To provide against this inconvenience, and at the same time not incur the displeasure of my countryfolks, I shall be at home every Friday evening and at no other time." To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, June 29 N.S., 1740, vol. II, p. 7.

59. *Ibid.*

Florentine salon on 30th September, Lady Pomfret hosted one of her finest assembles at the Palazzo Ridolfi, and wrote to her friend the following day:

> all the nobility of Florence are preparing for their *villegiature*, which generally lasts till Christmas. A great number of them took leave of me on Friday, being the last day on which I intended to receive company. I gave them music in my great hall, and they danced till two in the morning; when we parted, with equal content on both sides, – they thanking me for having given them an assembly all summer, and I thanking them for coming to me once a week.[60]

With the season over, Lady Pomfret lamented that "the town is very empty, and no diversion of any sort is going forward amongst the Florentines."[61] Florence still offered a social life with other British visitors.[62] She was grateful to Horace Mann who continued to host a "select set" on Monday evenings at his residence, the Palazzo Masnetti.[63] Mann considered it was part of his role as the British Resident to entertain British travellers and to introduce them to Florentines.[64] The British in Florence, including Lady Walpole, Thomas Gray and Horace Walpole, continued to be regular visitors to the Pomfrets during the autumn and winter of 1740. Lady Pomfret had also had the company of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as a guest of the family from 15th August until 16th October.[65] As well as

60. To the Countess of Hartford, Palazzo Ridolfi, October 2, 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, p.115. Her diary entry for 30th September 1740 records: "This day our last Conversation concluded with a Dancing", f.115.
61. To the Countess of Hartford, Palazzo Ridolfi, November 20 N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, p. 176. Lady Pomfret exaggerated: in her diary she continued to record an active social life, including *conversazioni* at the homes of Signora Suares, Signora Guadigni, Signora Castelli, Marchese Vitelli and Martelli.
62. Black, p.45.
63. To Countess of Hartford, Palazzo Ridolfi, November 20, N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, p. 176.
64. C. de Seta, "Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century" in *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy*, p. 18; Sweet, "British Perceptions", p. 847.
65. Wortley Montagu's long-anticipated arrival from Venice is noted in her letter to Lady Hertford on August 28 N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, p. 82. Walpole infamously wrote about the arrival of Montagu to his friend Richard West:

participating in the various *conversazioni* held during her two months in the city, Lady Mary accompanied Lady Pomfret and her daughters to galleries, concerts, balls, a regatta, and an Italian wedding.[66] Her behaviour at Lady Pomfret's last salon at home was venomously described by Walpole in a letter home to a friend. He accused her of making a spectacle of herself as she "competed over a young man with her fellow predator Lady Walpole 'to get him from the mouth of her antagonist'."[67]

The Pomfrets finally left Florence on 13th March 1741 and spent their last three months in Italy visiting Rome, Bologna and Venice. In all three cities Florentine nobles continued to play a role in effecting introductions to local society. On arriving in Rome they were greeted by two noblemen they had come to know in Florence, abate Niccolini and abate Martelli, while the Roman noblewoman, the contessa Bolognetti, immediately assumed the role of Lady Pomfret's "protectress", treating her as guest of honour at her own regular Sunday salon, taking her sightseeing and to many other *conversazioni*.[68] Social activities kept her so busy that her letters

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On Wednesday we expect a third she-meteor Those learned luminaries, the Ladies P[omfret] and W[alpole] are to be joined by the Lady M[ary] W[ortley] M[ontagu]. You have not been witness to the rhapsody of mystic nonsense which these two fair ones debate incessantly and consequently cannot figure what must be the issue of this triple alliance.

*Yale Edition*, vol. 13, p. 227.

66. To Countess of Hartford, Palazzo Ridolfi, October 2, N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, p115. The wedding is also recorded in her diary on 29th September 1740, f.115. Her biographer notes that Lady Pomfret's diary is the "most detailed source for her stay" in Florence. Grundy, p. 415. Grundy notes, "Lady Pomfret had put off visiting the Uffizi and Pitti galleries until Lady Mary arrived – they often made a party with Lady Walpole", p. 416.
67. Grundy, p.419. As Grundy points out, his attacks on both women in letters home to his male friends, "illuminate the pathology of sexual hatred", p. 420.
68. Lady Pomfret later expressed her deep gratitude to the abate Niccolini, "who, from an accidental meeting at the marchesa Bichi's, when we lived at Sienna, has since studied to do everything to make this country agreeable to us; and, not contented with all his civilities in Tuscany and Rome, has further offered us a house that lies on the road to Loretto, instead of an inn, and given us a letter of recommendation to one of the noble Venetians." To Countess of Hartford, Rome, May 11 N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. III, p. 36.

Faustina Acciaioli Bolognetti (c.1702–1776) was a friend of Sir Horace Mann. In Rome, a city renowned for its salon culture, the most brilliant *conversazioni* were held by the marchises Bolognetti and Patrizi, B. Dooley, "The salon" in J.A. Marino (ed.), *Early*

increasingly resemble a journal, each describing people and places of interest.

On the journey to Bologna and Venice the Florentine senator, Signor Uguccioni, who, as already noted, had become a family friend, escorted the Pomfrets, then assisted them in finding accommodation and initiated their entry to society. Once again female dignitaries assumed the role of Lady Pomfret's "protectress". In Bologna, Signora Gozzadini, "a Florentine; married in Bologna" came to visit on the family's first day in the city,[69] and made it her business to introduce Lady Pomfret to several other Bolognese aristocrats, including Princess Emelia of Modena, Contessa Rossi, and the marchese Bechatelli, Ranuzzi and Ratta.[70] Signora Gozzadini and the contessa Orsi (whom she had already met in Florence) accompanied Lady Pomfret "to the house of the famous doctress signora Laura Bassi."[71] Knowing of her friend's keen interest in Bassi from their earlier correspondence on the subject of learned women, Lady Pomfret described the visit to Bassi's home:

> Signora Gozzadini, who is herself very clever and prodigiously obliging, had got two doctors to meet us here. With the first, called Beccaria, she [Bassi] discoursed in Latin upon light (for which I was not much the better): but afterwards doctor Zanotti, with an infinite

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*Modern Italy 1150–1796*, Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2002, p. 225; M.P. Donato, "Female Self-Affirmation of the Roman Salon of the Grand Tour", in P. Findlen, W. Wassyng Roworth, C.M. Sama, (eds), *Italy's Eighteenth Century*, Stanford, California: Stanford U.P., 2009, p. 62.

69. To Countess of Hartford, Bologna, June 2 N.S., 1741, *Correspondence* vol. III, p. 80. Signora Teresa Margherita Gozzadini (1712–1759), wife of senator Alessandro Gozzadini (1674–1746) of Bologna.

70. Contessa Maria Ranuzzi, at one stage an attendant on the Pretender's Queen Clementina in Bologna, was one of Laura Bassi's two companions on the day she gave her first public presentation as a doctor of the University of Bologna in April 1732. The other was the marchesa Ratta, "amica e protettrice di Francesco Maria Zanotti e del suogiovanissimo allievo Algarotti" according to M. Cavazza, "Dalle biblioteche dei dotti alle tolette delle dame. La conversazione filosofica e scientifica nell'Italia dei lumi", *I Castelli di Yale*, XII (12), pp. 87–102. ISSN 1591–2353, p. 100. See also Cavazza, "The Institute of Science of Bologna and the Royal Society in the Eighteenth Century", *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 56:1 (January, 2002), pp.3–25. *I Castelli di Yale*, XII (12). pp. 87–102. ISSN 1591–2353, p. 100.

71. To Countess of Hartford, Bologna, June 2 N.S., 1741, *Correspondence* vol. III, pp. 89–90.

> deal of wit, started a question in Italian, 'whether we were not in some danger of losing the benefit of the moon, since the English had affirmed that the sun attracted all planets to itself?' He desired her therefore not to compliment the English, but free him from the fears which their assertions justly caused him. I wish I was capable of translating the dialogue; for I flatter myself that our tastes are so much alike that you would be no more tired of reading, than I was of hearing it.[72]

The following day she and Signora Gozzadini enjoy a guided tour by Dr Beccari, "a fellow of the Royal Society of London", of the Istituto delle Scienze, in the Palazzo Poggi, and both accompanied her on a visit to the anatomy hall in the Archigimnasio a few days later.[73]

In Venice, still attended by Uguccioni, the Pomfrets were obliged to procuratessa Foscarini, who, responding to a letter of recommendation from Princess Borghese, promptly visited and invited Lady Pomfret to her salon that same evening.[74] When Signora Foscarini had to leave town, she arranged for "two new ladies", her nieces, signora Bianca Moceningo and signora Elena Contarini, to entertain the Pomfrets and take them sightseeing.[75] They also took them to visit the celebrated portrait artist, Rosalba Carriera.[76] At a masque they met another Florentine, Francesco Suares, the son of the lady who had been so attentive during their stay in Florence, and who had accompanied Horace Walpole to Venice.[77]

From Venice the family started their homeward journey and, after making their way through Frankfurt and Brussels, arrived in England on 9th October, 1741. Nearly three-quarters of their continental residence was spent in Italy. Lady Pomfret's experience,

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72. *Ibid.*, p. 91. Laura Bassi was appointed a fellow of the Academy of Bologna in 1732. As a woman, Bassi was ineligible to become a Fellow of the Royal Society. Francesco Maria Zanotti, Secretary of the Academy of Bologna, was appointed F.R.S. in 1741.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 96. Jacopo Bartolomeo Beccari, a leading Bolognese scientist, had been elected an FRS in 1728.
74. To Countess of Hartford, Venice, June 9 N.S., 1741, *Correspondence* vol. III, p.121.
75. To Countess of Hartford, Venice, June N.S., 1741, *Correspondence* vol. III, p.133.
76. *Ibid.*, p.136.
77. *Ibid.*, p.144. Her daughter, Sophia, also mentions this in a letter to her brother Lord Lempster on June 5 N.S., 1741, Klima, p. 390.

and thorough appreciation, of Italian hospitality were frequently noted in her letters home to Lady Hertford, from her first arrival in the country. But it was in Florence, after a year's residence, that she looked back and, concerned that she had not fully conveyed to her friend how much this hospitality meant to her, she composed her poetical tribute to Italian hospitality:

> What hospitable rites th'Italians pay
> To foreigners, and gratefully make known
> How much this country differs from our own;
> Where if a stranger lady chance to come,
> She unregarded stays whole days at home:
> No feasts, no masks, no friendly guide they see;
> As 'tis the practice through all Italy,
> To ev'ry traveller of quality.
> In right of this, a lady great and fair,
> Bred in the court, extremely debonair,
> At my first coming took me to her care.
> By her conducted – well receiv'd by all,
> I heard each concert, and I saw each ball;
> At all assemblies was th'invited guest,
> And more than once have shar'd a country feast.[78]

The welcome she everywhere received from Italians is contrasted with her own country's failure to extend a similar hospitality to foreign travellers in Britain. Neglect of women travellers (the "stranger lady [...] unregarded stays whole days at home") strikes her as particularly reprehensible. While she recognises that " 'tis the practice through all Italy" to extend "hospitable rites ... /To every traveller of quality", she reserves her greatest praise for the ladies who became her "friendly guide" in each city, in particular the Florentine noblewoman, Signora Suares, who "At my first coming took me to her care."

Lady Pomfret attempted to rectify this lamentable lack of reciprocity on her return home by emulating the Italian practice of

78. To the Countess of Hartford, Florence, Palazzo Ridolfi, Christmas-day N.S., 1740, *Correspondence* vol. II, pp. 213–214.

"hospitable rites". In opening herself up "to another or foreigner", Lady Pomfret embraced one of the central tenets of hospitality.[79] Horace Walpole may have mocked her initiative but he nevertheless identified her motivation as a wish to reciprocate the hospitality she had received: "because people were civil to her in Italy, she makes it a rule to visit all strangers in general", and, perhaps, "stranger" ladies – her social peers – in particular.[80] As a female member of Britain's aristocratic elite, she lived by certain rules of conduct, as evidenced, for example, by the "roster of the 230 ladies on her visiting list, ordered by rank".[81] Inspired by the Italian noblewomen who had welcomed her to their cities, she set about repaying their hospitality in kind, thus extending the role of cultural mediator assumed by women of her class.

Once back in London, she also exchanged visits with Lady Hertford whenever the latter came to town, and continued to write to her when she did not.[82] She also furnished Lady Hertford's son, George, Viscount Beauchamp (1725–1744) with letters of introduction to Italian friends and connections she had made during her stay there, when he undertook his own grand tour in 1742–1744.[83] While letters of introduction were the usual practice among British travellers at home and abroad, Hertford regarded these personal recommendations from Lady Pomfret as tokens of their close friendship.[84] Sadly, Beauchamp, who was known in Bologna as the "*Angelo Inglese*" died there of smallpox in September 1744.[85]

The impact of Italy on grand tourists has been the subject of a number of studies.[86] The impact of Italy on Lady Pomfret is

79. P. Cheah, "To Open: Hospitality and Alienation", *The Conditions of Hospitality*, p. 57.
80. Letter to Horace Mann, London, 7th January 1742 O.S., vol. 17, p. 277.
81. Grundy, p. 385.
82. Lady Hertford to Lord Beauchamp, June 9 O.S. 1744 in H.S. Hughes, *The Gentle Hertford*, New York, Macmillan Company, 1940, p. 323.
83. Lord Beauchamp to Lady Hertford, Lyons, 13th December 1742 in Hughes, *The Gentle Hertford*, p. 227. For example, Signora Gozzadini was his guide in Bologna and Lady Hertford wrote to thank her friend for facilitating the introduction. Lady Hertford to Lord Beauchamp, August 18 O.S., 1744, Hughes, p. 333.
84 *Ibid.*
85 Hughes, p. 346. Ingamells, *Dictionary*, p. 63.
86 Notably by Black, Hornby, Ingamells, and Sweet.

recorded in her richly detailed letters to her friend Lady Hertford, and in the travel diary she clearly used as an *aide-memoire*, especially when several weeks or months passed before she was able to resume her letter-writing. While she may represent a trend that saw an increasing number of women and family groups travel to Italy from around 1740, her wholly positive response to the experience of living abroad distinguishes her from the majority of her compatriots who "appear to have returned home with confused memories and relief, strengthened in the conviction that their country was superior in every way."[87] Lady Pomfret, on the other hand, had learned through her travels that London fell short where hospitality to foreigners was concerned, and desired to do the right thing by making others welcome in her place, her country. Given her social status, she had the power as well as the inclination to do so.

Her letters home to her friend, like those of other travellers, describe the sites, the physical spaces and places visited: the cities, buildings, opera and concert halls, and the salons and casini to which she was invited. So evocative are her accounts that Lady Hertford said she could transport herself there in her imagination, illustrating that the best place for each of them was the one they shared through their letter-writing, the intimate epistolary space in which they freely expressed themselves.[88]

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87. Sweet, Perceptions, p. 839. Ingamells, "Discovering Italy", p. 29.
88. In his chapter on the Hertford-Pomfret correspondence, How describes this as their "sanctuary of epistolary space", in which they were able to foster their "aristocratic values", *Epistolary* Spaces, p. 117.

# "veder quel che tutt'i ciechi non veggono:" Gabriele Rossetti e il materialismo esoterico della *Commedia* nel carteggio con Charles Lyell

*Raffaella Antinucci*

1. In ogni tempo e luogo, confrontarsi con l'opera di Dante ha significato addentrarsi nel labirinto semiotico di un joyciano *chaosmos*, un universo finzionale che possiede l'organicità di un cosmo ordinato, ma la cui discendenza esegetica si staglia di fronte al critico nelle forme irregolari e disorientanti di un caos. Il macrotesto dantesco, per dimensioni e complessità, costituisce una sfida ermeneutica che spesso conduce alla rinuncia, assecondando un orientamento che trascura in parte o *in toto* l'anteriore tradizione, per dare luogo a interpretazioni improntate al più completo soggettivismo. Tale non può dirsi il percorso intrapreso dall'abruzzese Gabriele Rossetti (1783-1854), che consacrò la sua intera vicenda biografica e professionale allo studio, e al culto, del Sommo Poeta. Giunto in Inghilterra nel 1824 come esule politico, Rossetti si rivelò instancabile nel promuovere la conoscenza e la diffusione di Dante in terra d'Albione, dando l'avvio ad una tradizione famigliare che nel corso dell'Ottocento ha rappresentato la più laboriosa "officina" dantesca, nelle parole di Alison Milbank, "the home-grown Dante industry."[1] Se Maria Francesca, Dante Gabriel, William Michael e Christina assorbirono in diversa misura e con differenti modalità gli

1. Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 5.

insegnamenti paterni, Dante costituì per la famiglia Rossetti un potente collante emotivo, una figura capace di plasmare le personalità e gli itinerari artistici dei suoi componenti.[2]

La dibattuta e controversa linea "dissidente" seguita da Gabriele Rossetti va situata nell'ambito di un più ampio processo di rivalutazione dell'opera dantesca, iniziato in Inghilterra a partire dal Settecento, sotto la spinta delle nuove teorie estetiche concernenti il sublime e il pittoresco e favorito dalle prime traduzioni di Rogers e Boyd (1802). L'interesse di Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Hunt e Foscolo, e soprattutto la prima completa traduzione della *Divina Commedia* ad opera di Henry Francis Cary (1814), determinò l'affermarsi di un "Dante romantico" ed europeo, spesso correlato a Milton – "twin spirits" li definì Henry Hallam[3] –, in quanto emblema di una nascente cultura nazionale. Nel corso del secolo Dante diventa il centro catalizzatore di diversi discorsi, poetici ed estetici, ma anche civili e politici, che ne faranno, nella celebre definizione di John Ruskin, "the central man of all the world."[4] Al pari di ogni altro mito vittoriano, anche quello dantesco presenta numerose aporie: l'appropriazione del testo e della figura di Dante va ricondotta al processo di *self-fashioning* di una cultura che prediligeva alcuni aspetti, rifiutandone apertamente altri, sorretta da un'indiscussa identificazione tra uomo e poeta, consacrata da Carlyle nell'indicare Dante quale esempio massimo del "poet as hero."[5] Se tale ambivalenza è riscontrabile nella popolarità dell'*Inferno*, in particolare gli episodi di Paolo e Francesca e del conte Ugolino, essa appare ancora più evidente nell'atteggiamento ostile riservato alle teorie di Gabriele Rossetti, nel cui specchio esoterico e deformante l'Inghilterra vittoriana non si riconosce.

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2. Si vedano, tra gli altri, Stanley Weintraub, *Four Rossettis: A Victorian Biography*, London, W.H. Allen, 1978, e Dinah Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland: A Victorian Family History*, London, Haus Pub., 2011.
3. Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. IV, London, John Murray, 1839, p. 421.
4. John Ruskin, *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition, edited by E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols, London, 1903-1912, vol. 11, p. 187.
5. Cfr. Thomas Carlyle, "The Hero as Poet", in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, London, James Fraser, 1841.

Inizialmente rivolto alla sola *Commedia*, il progetto ermeneutico di Rossetti prevedeva la pubblicazione di sei volumi, intesi quale commentari all'intero macrotesto di Dante,[6] a partire dalle tre cantiche fino a comprendere la *Vita Nuova*, il *Convivio*, il *De Vulgari Eloquentia* e la *Monarchia*, offrendosi quale "teoria del tutto", in cui le opere minori, in particolare *La Vita Nuova*, sono interpretate come commento e "chiavi" per "dissigillare" il significato della *Commedia*.[7] Dopo aver pubblicato i primi due volumi del *Comento Analitico all'Inferno*, nel 1826 e nel 1827,[8] e terminata la revisione del *Comento al Purgatorio*, Rossetti decise di compilare il saggio di natura politico-letteraria *Sullo Spirito Antipapale che produsse la riforma*, edito nel 1832, che nelle intenzioni dell'autore doveva fungere da introduzione teorica alla sua nuova, e pertanto ardita, ipotesi esoterico-massonica.[9] La ricezione non favorevole del saggio, che, se in Inghilterra gli procurò recensioni positive, scatenò contro Rossetti gli strali di Schlegel e Okanam, gli fece abbandonare il progetto, ma non gli studi danteschi, che confluirono ne *Il mistero dell'amor platonico*

6. Come Rossetti stesso ricorda nella lettera a Charles Lyell dell'11 dicembre 1827, l'*opera omnia* di Dante era stata edita solo da Zatta (Venezia, 1760), sebbene mancante di diversi componimenti. Nella stessa lettera Rossetti descrive il piano della sua opera (Gabriele Rossetti, *Carteggi*, Volume secondo (1826-1831), a cura di P.R. Horne, Tobia R. Toscano, J.R. Woodhouse, Napoli, Loffredo, 1988, n. 163, pp. 73-74, da ora in poi *Carteggi*).
7. Rossetti si dice convinto del fatto che *La Vita Nuova* sia successiva o contemporanea alla composizione della *Commedia*, poiché "altro non è la Vita Nuova che la chiave della Commedia, come anche i monocoli di mente vedranno" (*Carteggi*, II, n. 191, p. 175). Successivamente Rossetti approfondisce le simmetrie ermeneutiche del *Convivio*: "La *Vita nuova* tratta della *Divina commedia* in ordine diretto, e [il *Convito*] ne tratta in ordine inverso; cioè la terza canzone col comento parla dell'*Inferno*; la seconda col comento parla del *Purgatorio*; e la prima col comento parla del *Paradiso*; e Dante stesso lo avverte, ma in modo assai misterioso" (*ibid.*, n. 223, p. 241).
8. Gabriele Rossetti, *La* Divina Commedia *di Dante Alighieri con comento analitico di Gabriele Rossetti in sei volumi*, vol. I e II, Londra, John Murray, 1826 e 1827 rispettivamente. Un'edizione elettronica del *Comento analitico all'Inferno* è consultabile sul sito del Dartmouth Dante Project, a cura di Margherita Frankel e Robert Hollander (htttp://dante.dartmouth.edu).
9. Il volume fu tradotto in inglese da Caroline Ward e pubblicato due anni dopo con il titolo *Disquisitions on the Antipapal Spirit which produced the Reformation, its secret influence on the literature of Europe in general and of Italy in particolar*, London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1834.

(1840) e *La Beatrice di Dante* (1842). L'interruzione del commento alla *Commedia* e la morte di Rossetti nel 1854 ne sancirono l'oblio, relegando la sua intera produzione, poetica e critica, ai margini del dibattito, riacceso solo a partire dalla seconda metà del Novecento grazie ai contributi di Pompeo Giannantonio,[10] a cui si deve la pubblicazione postuma del *Comento al Purgatorio* nel 1967.[11]

2. Concentrandosi unicamente sulla validità delle tesi rossettiane, gli interventi critici dei contemporanei sembrano aver completamente trascurato la questione della loro origine. Giannantonio fa risalire la lettura di Dante al triennio maltese (1821-1824) e, in Inghilterra, allo stimolo di due "Filo-Danti" come Gaetano Polidori, noto italianista e futuro suocero di Rossetti, e l'editore John Murray. Gianni Oliva, in tempi più recenti, ha segnalato l'influenza del maestro vastese di Rossetti, Benedetto Maria Betti, in direzione "esoterica", la cui portata andrebbe approfondita.[12] In tale prospettiva, i carteggi rossettiani si offrono quale osservatorio privilegiato per scrutare il nascere e lo svilupparsi

10. Cfr. Pompeo Giannantonio, "Gabriele Rossetti dantista", in Gianni Oliva (a cura di), *I Rossetti tra Italia e Inghilterra*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Vasto, 23-25 settembre 1982), Roma, Bulzoni, 1984, pp. 21-59. In tempi recenti gli studi sull'esegesi dantesca di Gabriele Rossetti si sono arricchiti significativamente grazie alle numerose iniziative organizzate dal Centro di Studi Rossettiani di Vasto diretto da Gianni Oliva, e alle pubblicazioni che ne sono seguite. Tra queste, si vedano Paolo De Ventura, "Gabriele Rossetti e il *codice di Dante*", in *Gabriele Rossetti a 150 anni dalla morte*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Vasto, 29-30 aprile 2004), *Studi Medievali e Moderni* (numero monografico a cura di Gianni Oliva), vol. II, 2004, pp. 124-136; Raffaele Giglio, "Appunti sugli studi danteschi di Gabriele Rossetti", in *I Rossetti e l'Italia*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Vasto, 10-12 dicembre 2009), a cura di Gianni Oliva e Mirko Menna, Lanciano, Carabba, 2010, pp. 69-87; Tobia R. Toscano, "Gli 'Anni di Galera' Londinesi: dal fallimento del *Comento analitico* alla cattedra di King's College", in *I Rossetti e l'Italia*, pp. 48-52; Mario Cimini, "Il dantismo di Gabriele Rossetti nel dibattito critico tra Ottocento e Novecento", in *Dantis Amor. Dante e i Rossetti*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Chieti-Vasto, 18-21 novembre 2015, *Studi Medievali e Moderni* (numero monografico a cura di Mirko Menna e Gianni Oliva), vol. I, 2016, pp. 29-42; Maria Petrella, 'Gabriele Rossetti, Beatrice e il "gran segreto" del Medioveo', in *Dantis Amor*, pp. 57-68.

11. Gabriele Rossetti, *Comento analitico al Purgatorio*, a cura di Pompeo Giannantonio, Firenze, Olschki Editore, 1967.

12. Introduzione a G. Rossetti, *La vita mia e Il testamento*, a cura di Gianni Oliva, Lanciano, Carabba, 2004, p. 12.

della linea massonica. Nel presente contributo mi propongo di mettere in luce le diverse fasi dell'elaborazione del *Comento* e dello *Spirito Antipapale* attraverso la corrispondenza degli anni che vanno dal 1824 al 1831, ben oltre l'indicazione di Giannantonio che ipotizzava il 1826 quale termine *ad quem* per il definitivo assetto teorico, poiché, come risulterà chiaro, il dantismo esoterico, anche dopo la pubblicazione del *Comento all'Inferno*, può dirsi ancora *in fieri*. Tra i corrispondenti di Gabriele Rossetti, Charles Lyell (1767-1849)[13] si rivela attento lettore e instancabile sostenitore dell'esule; il voluminoso carteggio con il mecenate inglese ci consente di tracciare quasi quotidianamente il progredire di Rossetti nella "foresta di simboli" dell'universo dantesco, scandito dall'alternarsi di compiacimento e sconforto di fronte alle contrastanti recensioni o agli scarsi profitti ottenuti dalla vendita del primo volume.

La teoria di Rossetti prende le mosse dalla convinzione che il poema, "tutto morale in apparenza, sia tutto politico in sostanza, *iura monarchiae cecini*."[14] Da tali parole si evince la crescente "radicalizzazione" della posizione di Rossetti, che nel *Comento all'Inferno*, molto più cautamente, aveva affermato che "il poema è assai più politico che teologico, anzi è una miscela dell'uno e dell'altro."[15] Seguendo questo assunto, Virgilio rappresenta la guida politica, mentre Beatrice viene spogliata degli orpelli teologici per incarnare la Filosofia: nel suo nome sta inscritto il principio che conduce Dante alla visione dell'impero riformato, adombrato nel Paradiso, presieduto dal "divino Arrigo" quale Dio allegorico. Nel

13. Padre del più noto geologo Charles Lyell, autore dei *Principles of Geology* (3 voll.,1830-1833), Lyell fu botanico e dantista scozzese. I suoi studi sul Canzoniere (che per primo tradusse in inglese) e sulle opere minori di Dante, sostenuti dall'amicizia con Gabriele Rossetti, confluirono nella pubblicazione dei *Lyrical Poems of Dante Alighieri* (London, W. Smith, 1845). Sul suo rapporto con Gabriele Rossetti e la sua famiglia, si vedano John Purves, "Dante Rossetti and his Godfather, Charles Lyell of Kinnordy", *University of Edinburgh Journal*, IV, n. 2, 1931, pp. 110-118; Ross D. Waller, *The Rossetti Family, 1824-1854*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1932; Philip R. Horne and John R. Woodhouse, "Gabriele Rossetti and Charles Lyell: New Light on an Old Friendship", *Italian Studies*, vol. 38, n. 1, 1983, pp. 70-86.

14. *Carteggi*, II, p. 216.

15. Rossetti, *Comento analitico all'Inferno*, vol. I, p. 334.

suo *Comento*, Rossetti presenta l'Inferno come allegoria dell'Italia nell'età di Dante, corrotta dalla supremazia guelfa e soggiogata da Satana, figura del Papa stesso e dominatore incontrastato della città di Dite, ovvero Firenze. Il IX canto, in particolare, è il primo a prestarsi a una radicale re-interpretazione in chiave politica. In esso Rossetti individua nella celebre ventesima terzina l'esortazione dello stesso Dante a procedere nel proprio cammino di "disvelamento" ermeneutico:

> O voi che avete gl'intelletti sani,
> Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde
> Sotto il velame degli versi strani! (*Inf.* IX, vv. 58-60)

Il primo momento della teoria di Rossetti consta, pertanto, nella scoperta dell'esistenza di un "gergo ghibellinesco" che informa l'intero poema.

Anche nel caso di Rossetti, dunque, l'esegesi dantesca prende avvio dall'annoso problema dell'allegoria, vero spartiacque del dantismo contemporaneo, all'origine della divaricazione tra la linea figurale di Auerbach e Singleton, da un lato, e l'approccio decostruttivo di de Man e del New Historicism, dall'altro.[16] Rispetto a queste due scuole, Rossetti si muove in uno spazio liminare: tutto il suo sistema esegetico si fonda sull'allegoria, e l'*Epistola a Can Grande*[17] è di sovente citata per avallare le sue ipotesi, abbracciando senza riserve la supposizione della paternità dantesca; nel contempo, va riconosciuto all'esule abruzzese il merito di aver posto l'attenzione, tra i primi, sul "contesto" socio-politico e culturale in cui la *Commedia* venne scritta, aprendo una strada seguita dal neostoricismo. In tale aspetto risiede l'originalità del metodo rossettiano rispetto all'interpretazione romantica e pre-vittoriana del

16. Per una rassegna critica si vedano, tra i numerosi contributi, Jeremy Tambling, "Introduction: Dante and Modern Criticism", in Jeremy Tambling (ed.), *Dante*, London and New York, Longman, 1999, pp. 1-16; Thomas Klinkert e Alice Malzacher (a cura di), *Dante e la critica letteraria. Una riflessione epistemologica*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Rombach Verlag, 2015.

17. Cfr. Lettera a Charles Lyell del 4 marzo 1829, in *Carteggi*, II, n. 277, p. 411.

poema dantesco come "vision"[18] (questo era anche il titolo della traduzione di Cary), termine che, mentre avvolge l'artista nell'alone messianico del *vate*, decreta la divaricazione tra realtà fattuale e dimensione poetico-spirituale. Nondimeno, di fronte alla polisemia che in tempi recenti Freccero ha ravvisato quale caratteristica endogena della *Commedia*,[19] il modello di Rossetti, nei suoi sviluppi, si dimostra tristemente "unisemico".

3. Dopo la pubblicazione del secondo volume del *Comento all'Inferno*, le teorie di Rossetti si ampliano ulteriormente sulla scorta di nuove letture. Nelle epistole, in filigrana, emerge l'erudizione rossettiana, rilevata dai suoi primi recensori, sia italiani che inglesi,[20] e condensata da Cary, nella lettera del 18 novembre 1827, nella triade encomiastica di "ingenuity, labour and eloquence."[21] Stupisce, altresì, l'approfondita conoscenza che Rossetti aveva della quasi totalità dei commentari danteschi, dalla scuola contemporanea fino agli studiosi dell'Ottocento. Tra questi ultimi, in particolare, si distingue l'influenza di Foscolo e delle due recensioni da lui scritte nel 1818 sulla *Edinburgh Review*,[22] in cui lo scrittore italiano aveva avanzato l'ipotesi di un "sistema occulto", un mirato discorso politico e "protestante" soggiacente alla *Commedia* e approfondito nel *Discorso*.[23] Rimodellando in chiave britannica il mito dantesco, Foscolo forniva al pubblico inglese l'immagine rassicurante di un Dante riformatore e anti-papale, castigatore di una Chiesa allontanatasi dai suoi fondamenti spirituali. Nelle parole di

18. Cfr. il capitolo dedicato a Cary da V. Tinkler Villani, "The Poetry of Vision", in *Visions of Dante in English Poetry*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1989, pp. 173-234.
19. Cfr. John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, (ed.) Rachel Jacoff, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986.
20. Cfr. Pompeo Giannantonio, Introduzione al *Comento al Purgatorio*, p. VII, nota 4.
21. *Carteggi*, II, n. 160, p. 66.
22. *Edinburgh Review*, XXIX, February 1818, p. 469 e recensione a F. Cancellieri, "Osservazioni intorno alla questione sopra l'originalità del poema di Dante" (Roma, 1814), *Edinburgh Review*, XXX, September 1818, pp. 317-351. Cfr. Ugo Foscolo, *Studi su Dante* (*Edizione Nazionale delle Opere*, IX, I), a cura di G. Da Pozzo, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1979.
23. Scrive Lyell a Rossetti riguardo al *Discorso* foscoliano: "at page 84 Foscolo clearly pronounces Dante a *Protestant*" (*Carteggi*, II, n. 179, p. 131).

Rossetti, egli "avea traveduta la verità, ma non aveva assai elementi a dimostrarla."[24] A differenza del compatriota, Rossetti dilata la diffusione del linguaggio in cifra dal solo Dante e dalla setta a cui anche Foscolo presupponeva che appartenesse, fino a incorporare tutta la letteratura medievale, sia provenzale che italiana. Secondo Rossetti, in altre parole, tutta la poesia d'amore del Medioevo era espressa in un "gergo convenzionale" che celava dietro il manto del sentimento interessi di natura mistica, politica e religiosa. Gli iniziati alla lingua occulta erano chiamati "Fedeli d'Amore", una loggia che includeva Daniel e i provenzali, l'autore del *Roman de la Rose*, i siciliani e lo stesso Federico II, fino agli *stilnovisti*, Dante, Cavalcanti, Guinizelli, Barberino, Cino, Cecco d'Ascoli, Petrarca e Boccaccio e, oltremanica, Chaucer. La donna cantata dagli adepti, trasfigurata di volta in volta sotto il nome di Rosa, come la chiamavano i siciliani, o di Giovanna, Beatrice, Laura, incarnava la dottrina stessa o mistica Sapienza. Rossetti fa risalire l'uso di velare il senso iniziatico sotto le formule convenzionali dell'amore al mondo orientale, successivamente importato in Occidente attraverso i movimenti eretici dei Catari e degli Albigesi, a cui egli ricollega i "Fedeli d'Amore". Come scrive in una lettera a Lyell del 4 febbraio del 1828: "Dante e tutt'i suoi consettaiuoli erano Albigensi, e forse potrò provare che Dante era un segreto *Barba* o sia un prete di quella perseguitata setta."[25] Parallelamente, Rossetti si appresta a decodificare il gergo della *Commedia* secondo un metodo letteralmente traduttivo: basti da esempio la resa dei verbi "vivere" e "morire", e dei lessemi "vivo" e "morto", con l'essere ghibellino o guelfo.[26] La sistematicità con cui lo studioso tenta di decifrare anagrammi e giochi di parole, inserendoli con coerenza nel proprio sistema, sconcerta lo stesso Lyell, che di fronte all'interpretazione rossettiana della parola *Comedia* come "poema sulla monarchia", esclama: "What a curious, thrice curious, history you gave me of the

24. *Ibid.*, n. 212, p. 224.
25. *Ibid.*, n. 178, p. 128.
26. Rossetti ne parla nel capitolo IX, "Delle principali industrie impiegate da Dante nel gergo della sua commedia", della "Disamina del sistema allegorico", *Comento analitico al Purgatorio*, pp. 228-231.

etymology of *Commedia*!!! It will never be believed, *all'alta fantasia manca possa.*"[27]

4. Il 1830 può considerarsi l'anno di svolta delle tesi rossettiane. Già nel biennio 1828-1829 la lettura di McCrie,[28] del gesuita Jean Hardouin e di Condorcet lo avevano portato a estendere l'idea di una precisa tradizione iniziatica in senso bi-direzionale, seguendo una traiettoria che dall'antichità, ovvero dalle sette egizie, passando per i Templari, giungeva sino al Rinascimento – nascosta nelle opere di Pulci, Ariosto, Boiardo e Giordano Bruno. Il progetto assunse proporzioni titaniche, e lo stesso Rossetti ne percepì il carattere "sovrumano"; nondimeno esso trovava ancora in Dante e nel Medioevo il suo epicentro, come attesta la seguente *reading list* compilata nell'estate del 1828:

> [...] non ho tempo bastante per leggere tutt'i libri che mi son necessari. Mi conviene aver fra le mani le opere tenebrose de' trovatori provenzali, e massimamente di Arnaldo Daniello, pubblicato da Sainte Palaye e da Renoard; e son cose difficilissime. Mi convien leggere tutt'i libri che trattano della persecuzione e della eresia degli Albigensi; mi conviene leggere tutti gli storici che han trattato delle cose pubbliche innanzi a Dante; e principalmente amerei di scorrere le opere del vostro inglese Matteo Paris.[29]

L'itinerario esegetico di Rossetti prende un indirizzo definitivamente "massonico" a partire dalla lettura di *Light on Masonry* (1829), volume dell'americano Hamming, e delle *Mémoires du Jacobinisme* dell'abate Barruel (1798-1799), a cui vanno aggiunti gli scritti di James Anderson e dello scozzese Robison, di Hutchinson, Preston e Calcott. Sebbene Vincent neghi un autentico sviluppo nell'esegesi rossettiana, in favore di un processo di mera "amplificazione",[30] di certo la letteratura

27. *Carteggi*, II, n. 189, p. 172.
28. Thomas McCrie, *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy in the Sixteenth Century*, Edinburgh, Blackwood, 1827.
29. *Carteggi*, II, n. 234, pp. 268-269.
30. Cfr. Eric R. Vincent, *Gabriele Rossetti in England*, Oxford, Claredon Press, 1936.

"massonica" determina la revisione di alcuni concetti basilari espressi nel *Comento all'Inferno*, riguardanti anzitutto la natura della mistica Sapienza. Nel dicembre del 1828 Rossetti si diceva ancora convinto della presenza di uno spirito di cristiana *renovatio* che accompagnava e dava stimolo al settarismo antipapale: "La Donna, ch'essi dicean d'*amare*, dee intendersi in due sensi: Gesù Cristo riguardo alla religione, e l'Imperadore riguardo alla politica."[31] Nel 1830 la parabola massonica conduce Rossetti sulla strada dello gnosticismo e del materialismo, portandolo a concludere che il *parlar doppio* non solo fosse espressione di un sentimento anti-curiale, ma intervenisse soprattutto in senso anti-cristiano: "Tutto sembra cristiano, ed è tutto anticristiano, anzi *materialista*",[32] o ancora:

> Tutti gli emblemi, tutt'i simboli, tutt'il linguaggio *è* dottrina biblica, o cristiana; tutti gl'interni significati di quelle cose, tutte le spiegazioni orali, e in parte scritte, che se ne danno, tutte *sono* antibibliche ed anticristiane![33]

Quale corollario all'interpretazione ateista del gergo convenzionale Rossetti giungeva a postulare la sua continuità nel tempo, ovvero la sua presenza nella contemporaneità, confidata a Lyell, con i toni visionari di una rivelazione, nell'epistola del 25 febbraio 1830:

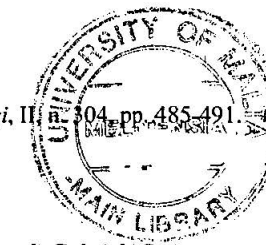
> Dal tempo in cui non vi ho scritto, non ho fatto altro che ingoiar libri, antichi e moderni: ed oh, qual luce meravigliosa mi ha colpito l'occhio della mente! Lo credereste? La setta dantesca *dura ancora*; e quel ch'è più, si pubblicano ancora libri in gergo con lo *stessissimo linguaggio dantesco*.[34]

I testi a cui Rossetti fa riferimento sono *The Epicurean* (1827), romanzo dell'irlandese Thomas Moore, e le controverse opere del filosofo svedese Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), da lui giudicato

31. *Carteggi*, II, n. 249, p. 305, corsivi nel testo.
32. *Ibid.*, n. 296, p. 451, corsivi nel testo.
33. *Ibid.*, n. 310, p. 518, corsivi nel testo.
34. *Ibid.*, n. 296, p. 450, corsivi nel testo.

il più autentico erede del Sommo Poeta.[35] Tali riflessioni, purgate dei loro esiti manichei e atei, costituiscono il germe del saggio *Sullo Spirito Antipapale*, a cui si fa accenno in una lettera del marzo 1830.[36] Rossetti, e Lyell con lui, è combattuto tra entusiasmo e repulsione cristiana; è consapevole dell'inaccettabilità delle proprie scoperte, la cui diffusione potrebbe precludergli per sempre il rientro in patria: se l'Inghilterra sembrava pronta ad accogliere la figura di un Dante paladino delle libertà laiche e nazionaliste, riformatore anti-papista, non poteva esserlo altrettanto di fronte all'idea di un Dante, o di un Milton, massone, ateo e blasfemo.

Da più parti si è voluta spiegare l'origine delle speculazioni rossettiane adducendo a giustificazione l'astio antipapale e l'appartenenza dell'esule alle società segrete della Carboneria e della Massoneria,[37] peraltro apertamente dichiarata a Lyell.[38] L'epistolario mostra, al contrario, non tanto un disegno aprioristicamente determinato, quanto il dipanarsi di un percorso tutto letterario, certo inconsapevolmente alimentato dal *transfert* autobiografico, come si desume dai toni patriottici e dai riferimenti alla politica italiana che costellano i due volumi del *Comento all'Inferno*. L'eloquio profetico e la metafora "matematica" utilizzata in più luoghi del carteggio a indicare il carattere di "verità algebrica", "dimostrazione euclidea" e oggettività attribuito alle sue scoperte "meravigliose e inaspettate"[39] sono chiari segnali di un'investitura mistica che Rossetti sentiva di avere nei confronti della critica dantesca e di Dante stesso, all'interno di una complessa dinamica identificativa. Non è un caso che nel poemetto autobiografico *Il veggente in solitudine* egli si definisca "esul bardo",[40] protagonista di un itinerario destinale che corre parallelo a quello del "ghibellin fuggiasco", evocato di sovente




35. Cfr. la lettera a Charles Lyell dell'11 marzo 1830, in *Carteggi*, II, n. 304, pp. 485-491.
36. *Ibid.*, n. 307, p. 502.
37. Vincent, p. 73.
38. *Carteggi*, II, n. 310, p. 516.
39. *Ibid.*, n. 155, p. 56.
40. Gabriele Rossetti, *Il Veggente in solitudine. Poema polimetro di Gabriele Rossetti con prefazione di G. Ricciardi*, Parigi, Francois, 1846, pp. 153, 156, 161.

anche nella produzione poetica di Rossetti.[41] L'immagine del pioniere incompreso accomuna i diversi modelli del *self-fashioning* rossettiano, che nell'epistolario prendono forma negli auto-appellativi di "novello Colombo, Copernico, Galileo", esploratori di nuovi mondi.

5. L'enfasi posta sull'aspetto messianico dell'attività di critico rischia di sconfinare nell'autocompiacimento e nell'ossessione, nondimeno essa dà la misura della tenacia e della coerenza morale che hanno contraddistinto l'impegno trentennale con cui Rossetti si è misurato con il testo dantesco. Se numerose ed evidenti sono le debolezze del sistema rossettiano, che Umberto Eco impietosamente inserisce tra i "velamisti" nel filone dell'"interpretazione del sospetto",[42] è innegabile che gli scritti dell'esule vastese abbiano aperto una nuova strada nell'esegesi dantesca, diversamente percorsa, sia in Italia da Perez, Pascoli e Valli,[43] che in Francia da Aroux, Guenon e Guiberteau.[44]

Al di là di ogni successivo *aftermath*, il primo e maggiore centro di irradiazione del dantismo di Rossetti ha sede nella sua famiglia, i cui componenti, proprio perché cresciuti sotto l'egida del culto di Dante, si dimostrano perplessi se non apertamente critici nei

41. Cfr. Gabriele Rossetti, *Poesie – ordinate da Giosuè Carducci*, a cura di Mario Cimini, Lanciano, Carabba, 2004.

42. Cfr. Umberto Eco, "La semiotica ermetica e il 'paradigma del velame'", introduzione a *L'idea deforme: interpretazioni esoteriche di Dante*, a cura di Maria Pia Pozzato, Introduzione di U. Eco, Postfazione di A. Asor Rosa, Milano, Bompiani, 1989, p. 16 e seguenti. Si rinvia a questo volume per una panoramica sull'esegesi esoterica di Dante, così come ad Adriano Lanza, "Rassegna di studi sull'esoterismo di Dante", in *Dante e la Gnosi: Esoterismo del 'Convivio'*, Roma, Edizioni Mediterranee, 1990, pp. 17-44.

43. Francesco P. Perez, *La Beatrice svelata*, Palermo: Stab. Tip. Di F. Lao, 1865; Giovanni Pascoli, *La mirabile visione. Abbozzo d'una storia della* Divina Commedia, Messina, Muglia, 1902; Luigi Valli, *Il linguaggio segreto di Dante e dei Fedeli d'Amore*, Roma, Optima, 1928. L'influenza fondamentale di Rossetti nell'approccio di Valli è riconosciuto nel recente studio di Stefano Salzani, *Luigi Valli e l'esoterismo di Dante*, Rimini, Il Cerchio, 2014.

44. Eugène Aroux, *Dante héretique, revolutionnaire et socialiste*, Paris, Renouard, 1854; Réné Guenon, *L'esoterismo di Dante*, Milano, Adelphi, 2005; Philippe Guiberteau, *L'énigme de Dante*, Vienne, Desclée de Brouwer, 1973 (pur esprimendo identiche convinzioni sull'"enigma" dantesco, Guiberteau cita esclusivamente Guenon e i critici successivi, omettendo completamente Rossetti).

confronti delle teorie paterne. Ciò non esclude, tuttavia, forme di rielaborazione personale che ne segnalano l'impronta durevole. Dichiaratamente "rossettiana" pare la denominazione che Dante Gabriel assegna al gruppo pre-raffaellita, optando per il massonico *brotherhood*. All'ascendenza paterna – via i "Fedeli d'Amore" – può ricondursi, altresì, l'idea di rappresentare l'anima sotto sembianze femminili. Ribadita di sovente nel carteggio,[45] essa trova icastica figurazione nell'opera pittorica di Dante Gabriel, imbevuta delle dottrine di Swedenborg, e ancor più nel racconto *Hand and Soul*, presente nel primo numero di *The Germ*, in cui il pittore medievale Chiaro Dell'Erma dialoga con la propria anima in forma di donna. Misurato è il giudizio di William Michael, custode ed editore delle opere famigliari, che nel curare il volume dei *Rossetti Papers*, premette a una lettera di Thomas Keightley:

> He was not entirely right in supposing me to 'reject' my Father's theory concerning Dante. I apprehend that some features of the theory are decidedly correct, and some others may be so without my being convinced of them. There are, on the other hand, certain points which I think clearly far-fetched and erroneous.[46]

Benché siano molteplici le contraddizioni e le forzature esibite nel suo progetto esegetico, a Rossetti va riconosciuto il merito di aver focalizzato l'attenzione sul contesto politico e storico che presiedette alla composizione della *Commedia*,[47] disvelandone, tra i primi, anche le componenti neo-platoniche, e non ultima, l'intuizione della necessità di un lavoro di mutua cooperazione e collaborazione critica che il macrotesto dantesco esige, un'assenza deplorevole, come rileva Hollander, nella storia del dantismo.[48] Tuttavia, gli esiti

45. Cfr. *Carteggi*, II, n. 306, p. 495.
46. William Michael Rossetti (ed.), *Rossetti Papers* (1862 to 1870), London, Sands & Co, 1903, p. 79.
47. Cfr. Helena Lozano Miralles, "'Dantis Amor': Gabriele Rossetti e il 'paradigma del velame'", in *L'idea deforme*, pp. 47-77.
48. Robert Hollander, "Dante and his commentators", in Rachel Jacoff (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 235. Si confronti *Carteggi*, II, n. 163, p. 78.

singolari del percorso rossettiano hanno oscurato tali potenzialità, trascurate anche in recenti contributi dichiaratamente "esoterici".[49]

Oltre che nella vita, la dimensione dell'esilio si riverbera nell'intera opera di Gabriele Rossetti, la cui ricezione ha visto l'alternarsi di luci e di ombre. Parimenti, il contrasto cromatico tra lucore e oscurità ne innerva non solo la produzione poetica e critica, ma investe in profondità anche il tessuto semantico e il registro più colloquiale dell'epistolario – "squarcerò il velo", "svelare", "portare la luce", "metter la testa fuori dalle ombre" e simili espressioni ricorrono con insistenza. L'idioletto rossettiano sembra attingere a piene mani dal Vangelo di Giovanni, *ur-text* del linguaggio occulto dei Muratori e dei massoni di ogni tempo.[50] L'isotopia del *chiaroscuro*, predominante nella *Commedia*, è anzitutto tentativo di congiunzione anche linguistica con il modello che ha plasmato e orientato un'esistenza che può definirsi per molti aspetti "all'ombra di Dante". Nel sintagma dimora la devozione di una *lifelong passion*, ma anche il rammarico per una produzione poetica oscurata e irretita tra le maglie del dantismo critico; più di ogni altra cosa l'ombra dantesca stigmatizza la malia dell'esoterismo. Ben prima di essere avvolto nelle tenebre a cui lo condannò, paradossalmente, la cecità, Gabriele Rossetti sembra aver preferito le ombre alla luce. Il binomio dantesco/notturno torna come un *leitmotiv* a descrivere la sua parabola umana e artistica: *L'ombra di Dante* è il titolo di un suo componimento, ma anche il segno dell'omaggio tributatogli da Maria Francesca nel volumetto sulla *Commedia*, *A shadow of Dante* (1894),[51] e da Dante Gabriel con il sonetto scritto in sua memoria, *Dantis Tenebrae*.

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49. Gabriella Bartolozzi, *Exoterismo ed esoterismo nell'opera dantesca*, Firenze, Atheneum, 2001; Bruno Cerchio, *L'ermetismo di Dante*, Roma, Edizioni Mediterranee, 1988; Angelo Chiaretti, *Dante medico, mago e alchimista*, Milano, Media Med, 1999; Emma Cubani, *Il grande viaggio nei mondi danteschi*, Roma: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1993.
50. Il motto che campeggia sullo stemma degli Albigesi recita "Lux lucet in tenebris" (*Carteggi*, II, n. 255, p. 322).
51. La prima traduzione italiana dell'opera è apparsa solo qualche anno fa: cfr. Maria Francesca Rossetti, *Un'ombra di Dante*, con traduzione e a cura di Paolo De Ventura, Lanciano, Carabba, 2011.

Sull'orizzonte di un presente "tutto immerso nella politica e nel negozio",[52] Rossetti percorre, nei versi di Dante Gabriel, "the vale of magical dark mysteries."[53] All'immagine del visionario, attribuitagli dai suoi denigratori, Panizzi[54] in testa, l'esule abruzzese preferì opporre quella del "veggente in solitudine", come recita il titolo di un suo polimetro (1846), deluso dall'acrimonia di giudizi – allora come ora – viziati da approssimazione e parzialità:

> Si è scritto in tanti libri: *Beatus monoculus in terra caecorum*; ma dovea dirsi: *Infelix monoculus* ecc., poiché il fatto mi prova che tutt'i ciechi chiamano *visionario* e *matto* e *impostore* quel monocolo che vedendo dice vedere quel che tutt'i ciechi non veggono, e che credono che altra vista vi sia se non la loro.[55]

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52. *Carteggi*, II, n. 315, p. 533.
53. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Dantis Tenebrae. In Memory of my Father*, in *Poems*, ed. by Oswald Doughty, London, Dent & Sons, 1957, p. 145. Cfr. Valeria Tinkler-Villani, "In the Footsteps of His Father? Dantean Allegory in Gabriele Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti", in David Clifford and Laurence Roussillon (eds), *Outsiders Looking In: The Rossettis Then and Now*, London, Anthem, 2004, pp. 131-144.
54. Panizzi era l'autore, anonimo, di una feroce recensione apparsa sulla *Foreign Review* (vol. 2, 1828, pp. 175-195). Sulla rivalità tra i due italiani, si veda Enzo Bottasso, "Gabriele Rossetti e Antonio Panizzi: antagonismo e incomprensione tra due italiani integrati nell'Inghilterra vittoriana", in Gianni Oliva (a cura di), *I Rossetti tra Italia e Inghilterra*, pp. 33-60.
55. Lettera a Charles Lyell del 16 marzo 1830, in *Carteggi*, II, n. 308, p. 511.

# "Rome disappoints me much:" Clough, Rome, and *Amours de Voyage*

*Phillip Mallett*

> There are two different kinds, I believe, of human attraction;
> One which simply disturbs, unsettles, and makes you uneasy,
> And another that poises, retains, and fixes and holds you.
> I have no doubt, for myself, in giving my voice for the latter.
> I do not wish to be moved, but growing, where I was growing,
> There more truly to grow, to live where as yet I had languished.
> I do not like being moved; for the will is excited; and action
> Is a most dangerous thing; I tremble for something factitious,
> Some malpractice of heart and illegitimate process;
> We are so prone to these things with our terrible notions of duty.[1]

Arthur Clough's *Amours de Voyage* can be briefly if inadequately described as an epistolary novella in verse, set in Rome in 1849, and tracing the cultural, political, and erotic adventures of Claude, a young Englishman not long graduated from Oxford, and the author of most of the letters. Or rather, since he refuses to commit himself, it traces his near-adventures: Emerson observed, grumpily, that it exhibited "much preparation to no result", which was "bad enough in life, and inadmissible in poetry."[2] The author of a celebrated essay on "Self-Reliance" was unlikely to be won over by a hero whose

1. Arthur Hugh Clough, *Amours de Voyage* (ed.), Patrick Scott, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1974, Canto II, pp. 264–273. Subsequent references are to Canto and line number; all italics are in the original.
2. Letter to Clough, 17th May 1858, in Frederick L. Mulhauser (ed.), *The Correspondence of Arthur Hugh Clough*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957, vol. 2, p. 548.

vacillating nature is insinuated in his name (*claudus*: lame), but other friends had similar misgivings. John Shairp, reading the poem in manuscript, protested that "everything crumbles to dust beneath a ceaseless self-introspection and cynicism which is throughout the only inspiration."[3] Matthew Arnold "forbore to comment", or even to apologise for not doing so: "what is to be said when a thing does not suit you [?]"[4] Recent critics have made the case for *Amours de Voyage* as a witty, poignant, and original work, but even now it is less often discussed, and more importantly less widely enjoyed, than it deserves.

Clough himself was in Rome for three months in 1849, from 16th April until 17th July. There, on 30th June, he witnessed Giuseppe Mazzini's short-lived Roman republic fall to the French under General Oudinot, thus ensuring (as Claude points out in Canto III) both the reinstatement of Pope Pius IX, who had fled to Naples the previous autumn, and the security of the English tourist. Clough worked on *Amours de Voyage* throughout his stay, focusing initially on the sights of Rome and episodes from the siege; the "love theme", in Anthony Kenny's phrase, was developed later.[5] A version of the poem was more or less complete by October 1849, but it was not published until 1858, when it appeared in four instalments in James Russell Lowell's *Atlantic Monthly*; the first English edition, revised and extended, came out in 1862, a year after Clough's death. In this final form it has three main strands: Claude's exposure to the art and culture of Rome; his response to the French assault on the city, and the struggle to defend it; and his tentative exploration of romantic and sexual love with Mary Trevellyn, on tour in Italy with her family. Each of these is marked by Claude's refusal to be bound by the expectations of others, or what he calls, in the opening letter, the "*assujettissement* of having been what one has been, | What one thinks one is, or thinks that others suppose one" (I, 30–31). The French word, at once precise and affected, is wholly characteristic. It also catches the tone and idiom of Clough's

3. Letter to Clough, November 1849, *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 275.
4. Letter of 21st March 1853, *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, Howard F. Lowry (ed.), London, Oxford University Press, 1932, pp. 131–132.
5. A.J.P. Kenny, *Arthur Hugh Clough: A Poet's Life*, London, Continuum, 2005, pp. 170–171.

own letters from Rome: Clough is not Claude – as Robindra Biswas remarks, "Claude is at least as much observed as he is expressed"[6] – but when he asked Shairp whether there was not, after all, some "Strength of Mind" in his "unfortunate fool of a hero",[7] one reason was that he shared Claude's wish not to be constrained by social pressures, even by those that answered to impulses in his own nature.

Like most of his contemporaries, Claude approaches Roman art and architecture with the aid of John Murray's 1843 *Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy*, studying the works and scenes noted by Murray, but he self-consciously withholds his admiration. Byron, visiting in 1817, thought Rome surpassed "Greece – Constantinople – every thing – at least that I have ever seen."[8] Not Claude:

> Rome disappoints me much; I hardly as yet understand, but
> *Rubbishy* seems the word that most exactly would suit it. (I, 19–20)

Shelley, in 1819, took regular evening walks to the Forum, to admire the "sublime desolation of the scene",[9] but Claude is unimpressed: "What do I find in the Forum? an archway and two or three pillars" (I, 43). Charles Dickens in 1844 felt the "solitude" and "awful beauty" of the Coliseum strike "like a softened sorrow";[10] Claude grants only that it is very big. In his eyes Rome appears a jumble of architectural layers, the remnants of "past incompatible ages" (I, 22), with nothing to "reconcile Ancient and Modern" (I, 204). Only gradually does he learn to detect and admire, half-hidden behind the sculpted "Martyrs and Saints and Confessors and Virgins" of Bernini's Rome, "the mightier forms of an older, austerer worship" (I, 162–163), and the abiding presence, even in the modern city, of "*a spirit from perfecter ages*" (II, 1).

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6. Robindra Kumar Biswas, *Arthur Hugh Clough: Towards a Reconsideration*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 302.
7. Letter of November 1849, *Correspondence*, volume I, p. 278.
8. Letter to Murray, May 1817, in *Byron's Letters and Journals, vol. V: 1816–1817*, Leslie A. Marchand (ed.), London, John Murray, 1976, p. 221. It was Murray's son, also John, who initiated the series of *Handbooks for Travellers*.
9. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, Mrs Shelley (ed.), London, Edward Moxon, 1845, p. 126.
10. Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 366.

In this, Claude speaks in part for Clough, who had described the city in a letter home as "*rubbishy*" before Claude does so. It is a different matter with the battle for the Roman republic. Claude chooses to be apolitical, is briefly drawn into enthusiastic support for Rome and anger at the French, and then pushes politics aside. Clough, who had strong republican sympathies, found this harder to do. Writing to Francis Palgrave on the eve of Oudinot's final assault, he signed himself "Le citoyen malgré lui", [11] while his early suspicion of Mazzini gave way to a qualified respect for his leadership.[12] There is a series of complex ironies in the poem when Claude dreams of singing the Marseillaise, and of himself fired to revolutionary action by "angers transcendental | [...] a sword at my side and a battle-horse underneath me" (II, 61–62). The Marseillaise was the battle hymn of the French Republic, but now the French were suppressing the republican struggle in Rome: in a spirit of mocking defiance the Romans played the tune to the advancing French army. Claude unpicks the rhetoric of ancient Rome – also, of course, through the primacy of classical languages in the public schools, the rhetoric of mid-Victorian England:

> *Dulce* it is, and *decorum*, no doubt, for the country to fall, to
> Offer one's blood an oblation to Freedom, and die for the Cause; yet
> Still, individual culture is also something, and no man
> Finds quite distinct the assurance that he of all others is called on [...]
> Sweet it may be and decorous perhaps for the country to die, but
> On the whole we conclude the Romans won't do it, and I shan't.[13]

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11. Letter of 28th/29th June 1849; *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 225. In May 1848 Clough had visited Paris to see first-hand the operation of republican government in France, by then already beginning to fail.
12. On Clough and Mazzini, see Renzo D'Agnillo, "'Now in happier air': Arthur Hugh Clough's *Amours de Voyage* and Italian Republicanism", *Rivista di Studi Vittoriani* 22, 2006, pp. 59–73, and Rose Sneyd, "'The seed that we have sown': Giuseppe Mazzini and the 'hero' of Arthur Hugh Clough's *Amours de Voyage*", *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* 13–14, 2014, pp. 77–96.
13. Canto II, 30–33, 46–47. Clough's hexameters are not always easy to scan. The one fixed point comes in the last two feet of the line, which must be a dactyl followed by a spondee, but even here he often substitutes a trochee, given the weight of a spondee only by the pause at the line break (compare the use in classical metres of the anceps syllable, which can be either short or long). Much of the rhythmic subtlety of the poem comes from the varying degrees of stress on this final syllable.

He allows himself to be caught up in the excitement of the Marseillaise because he imagines a "transcendental" cause to fight for. But in the aftermath of the Romans' unexpected triumph in repelling a French incursion on 30th April, prompting the newspapers to "Scream and re-scream to each other the chorus of Victory" (II, 160) in headlines patently not transcendental, the mood of detachment returns:

> Why, it is over. The smoke of the sacrifice rises to heaven,
> Of a sweet savour, no doubt, to Somebody; but on the altar,
> Lo, there is nothing remaining but ashes and dirt and ill odour.
> (II, 153–155)

As Mazzini himself acknowledged, the republican forces had no chance of sustained military success:[14] the resistance was real and heroic, but from the outset it was conceived as a piece of symbolism, a gesture offered to the future. Claude is more right than he realises – though not more right than Clough realised – to be wary of the rhetoric of both sides.

Claude's letters on Roman art and politics are interspersed with others in which he admits a cautious attachment to Mary Trevellyn, though how far he is drawn to her rather than to the idea of domestic life, or the pleasure of feeling himself liked, is never wholly clear, least of all to Claude. His confusion seeps out in an unstable metaphor, which celebrates "the feminine presence" as:

> Meat and drink and life, and music filling with sweetness,
> Thrilling with melody sweet, with harmonies strange overwhelming,
> All the long-silent strings of an awkward meaningless fabric.
> (I, 176–178)

The strings here modulate from those of a neglected musical instrument to the warp and weft of a half-made piece of cloth: the

14. After meeting Mazzini in Rome, Clough wrote to Palgrave that "he expects foreign intervention in the end, and of course thinks it like enough that the Roman Republica will fall." In his own voice, rather than Claude's, he described the victory of 30th April as a "fatti d'armi gloriosissmo": *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough*, edited by his Wife, 2 vols, London, Macmillan, 1869, I, p. 143, p. 148.

only thing certain is that Claude feels himself imperfect, unstrung. Letter 12 in Canto I is charged with sexual imagery, of labyrinths, fissures, and swaying wildly above the floor of a "shell-sprinkled, enchanting" cavern (I, 249), but Claude has no wish to plunge into the labyrinth of another's being,[15] unless with a rope tied to his waist and the promise of escape. His preferred mode is that of compromise and evasion, advance and retreat, neatly captured in the twists and hesitations made possible by the long hexameter line:

> Hopeless it seems, yet I cannot, though hopeless, determine to leave it:
> She goes, therefore I go; she moves, I move, not to lose her.
> (II, 288–289)

Claude's hesitant "semi-performance" (III, 201) as a wooer inevitably prompts questions from Mary's future brother-in-law about his "intentions." His horrified reaction is to break off contact with the Trevellyn family rather than "conduct a permitted flirtation | Under those vulgar eyes" (III, 278–279); only when he learns that Mary too was dismayed by her family's interference does he embark on a desperate attempt to catch up with them as they travel through northern Italy. Eventually, defeated by a series of lost letters and changed plans, he either begins to forget her, or persuades himself that he is doing so, and abandons the effort: to persist would require courage, and "Courage in me could be only factitious, unnatural, useless" (V, 85).

This is tantamount to defending cowardice as intellectual honesty, and the low point in Claude's career – all the more evident in a poem commemorating the bravery with which the Romans fought a losing cause. But even earlier, despite his growing regard for Mary, Claude tracks back as often as he moves forward. In Letter 10 of Canto II he begins three sentences in succession with the words "I am in love", only to call them into question, and then conclude: "I am in love, you say; I do not think so exactly" (II, 263). It is this, the effort to "think exactly", which provides the chief interest of the poem. As Isobel Armstrong notes, and as Arnold

15. The phrase is borrowed from Yeats, the third section of "The Tower" (ll. 110–112).

failed to understand when he called his friend "a mere d—d depth hunter in poetry", in Clough's poems "reasoning is not only a procedure but a theme."[16] What this means can be observed in the letter quoted at the outset of this discussion, in which Claude tries to think through the nature of "human attraction."

The letter brings together a number of themes in the poem. There is an obvious bathos in Claude's worry that "action | Is a most dangerous thing" (II, 270–271), when what is at stake for him is the courtship of a respectable English girl and not the bombardment of the city, but that does not take away its urgency. He distinguishes between two different kinds of love: one that moves, disturbs or unsettles, and one that instead "poises, retains, and fixes and holds you." The distinction is not new – many thinkers have viewed love as a state of being rather than doing – but it is difficult to imagine a form of love that does not in some sort move the lover, and the language elsewhere in the poem puts the idea in doubt. Earlier in the same Canto, recounting his experience of (perhaps) seeing a priest killed by a mob near the Ponte St Angelo, Claude describes, and the verse rhythmically evokes, "a sensation of movement" tending in his direction,

> (Such as one fancies may be in a stream when the wave of the tide is Coming and not yet come – a sort of poise and retention) [.] (II, 172–173)

The moment of poise and retention in the crowded piazza reveals not stability, but chaos and violence held briefly in suspension; a few seconds later, the air is filled with uplifted swords, and a man lies dying. The verbal echo, in "poises, retains", allows room for the thought that to be fixed and held by love might, after all, have its own tidal power to unsettle and disturb. As often happens in the poem, a seemingly confident antithesis is undermined.

There is an element of bad faith in Claude's wish not "to be moved, but growing, where I was growing, | There more truly to grow, to live where as yet I had languished" (II, 268–269). To

16. *Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, p. 81; Isobel Armstrong, *Arthur Hugh Clough*, London, Longmans Green & Co, 1962, p. 20.

languish is to wither, not grow, but even as he admits his lassitude Claude wants to be confirmed in his old existence: to become more fully alive, but at the same time to preserve his identity unchanged. This personal anxiety feeds into a wider debate in the poem about the meaning of "growth." Claude's study of Roman architecture has already led him to question the idea of continuity in national history. What was presented as growth might in reality be as arbitrary as the consecration of the Pantheon as a Christian church five hundred years after its completion as a pagan temple; worse, it might be regressive, as with alterations and additions carried out under Spanish and Jesuit influence during the Counter-Reformation, "debasing" and "overcrusting with slime" even the dome of Michel Angelo (I, 112). With every building in the Eternal City bearing witness to change and the power of time, to believe in an essential spirit of Rome persisting unaltered through the ages would be "*a vain superstition*" (I, 283). But by the same token, individual identity too might be contingent on the rhetoric and perception of others:

> What our shadows seem, forsooth we will ourselves be.
> Do I look like that? You think me that: then I am that. (I, 85–86)

At the root of Claude's hesitation is the fear that, rather than affirming his selfhood, to love and court Mary Trevellyn might be to lose himself in the world of shadows.

In Canto III, Claude raises the question of growth to the level of universal rather than personal history, proposing that it subsists in the movement of humanity towards knowledge, set like a blossom on the apex of the Tree of Life. Yet even if it is attainable, such knowledge may not be an unequivocal good. It might be "needless" and "unfruitful" (III, 84), granting insight into the human condition but without the power to amend or escape it. Indeed, it might be inimical to growth: would the grain sprout in its furrow, Claude asks, if, like humankind, it were "endowed with a sense of the general scheme of existence", and could "compare, and reflect, and examine one thing with another?" (III, 46, 44) The image that comes to his mind, recalled from the Gallery of Statues in the Vatican, is that of "a Triton in marble" (III, 57), a figure with the upper body of a man

and the tail of a fish: the symbol, as it seems to Claude, of humanity estranged from the rest of organic nature by that very intelligence he is so assiduously cultivating, yet ineluctably caught within it. A similar thought drives Arnold's Empedocles to hurl himself into the volcano at Etna,[17] and at the turn of the century comes to haunt Hardy's poems, with their longing for the return of "nescience", before human life had attained consciousness.[18] At such moments, what in happier ages had been conceived as growth is reinterpreted as a second Fall, leaving us alone and exposed in a world stripped of teleology.

Claude's distinction between the two kinds of attraction also determines his approach to courtship. He pursues the thought by contrasting "juxtaposition" and "affinity":

> Juxtaposition is great, – but, you tell me, affinity greater.
> Ah, my friend, there are many affinities, greater and lesser,
> Stronger and weaker; and each, by the favour of juxtaposition,
> Potent, efficient, in force, – for a time; but none, let me tell you,
> Save by the law of the land and the ruinous force of the will, ah,
> None, I fear me, at last quite sure to be final and perfect. (III, 151–156)

In some cryptic remarks on "Ethics" in his 1849 "Roma" notebook, Clough wrote that "There is something sacramental in an act – the spiritual reaction on the agent is transcendental."[19] All actions are either "vital" or "sham". Where the act in question is the coming together of two people, it is, if genuine, analogous to chemical affinity, that is, it exhibits "the tendency of an element to unite with another to form compounds."[20] The outcome is the creation of a new

17. Empedocles concludes that "mind" and "thought" make us "strangers" in the world; "Empedocles on Etna", ll, in Kenneth Allott (ed.), *Poems of Matthew Arnold*, London: Longmans Green & Co, 1965, pp. 345–363.
18. See "Before Life and After", ll. "Ere nescience shall be reaffirmed. How long, how long?", in James Gibson (ed.), *Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, London, Macmillan, 1976, pp. 15–16.
19. Now at Balliol College (Balliol MS 441); Scott's edition of *Amours de Voyage* includes a partial transcription (Appendix 3, pp. 81–82).
20. *Oxford English Dictionary* 8. In a further layer of complexity, Claude also uses affinity to denote the common ancestry of all life forms (*OED* 2). Affinity in this biological sense appeals to him because it offers to elide individual difference, quell the "demon within us of craving", and restore an originary "perfect and primitive silence" (III, p. 180, p. 172).

substance: it is this that makes an act vital, or "sacramental." Juxtaposition, by contrast, in which two elements are merely placed together (Clough's example is hydrogen and oxygen), without the added spark or energy required to produce a chemical transmutation, is a sham action, devoid of sacramental meaning. In the poem, the images for such action derive from physics rather than chemistry: juxtaposition is a chance mechanical bond, operating in terms of attraction and repulsion. Claude's fear is that his relationship with Mary might be of this kind:

> But my manner offends; my ways are wholly repugnant,
> Every word that I utter estranges, hurts, and repels her [...]
> (II, 298–299)

Mary, in her turn, uses "repel" or "repulsive" five times in relation to Claude. This weak bond has no natural continuity; it has to be reinforced if it is to subsist. Moreover, it is weakest where the two elements are similar, strongest where they are opposed, as with an acid and an alkali; one of the sadder ironies of the poem is that among the factors that keep Claude and Mary apart is their likeness to each other.

In the "Roma" notebook Clough cites Aristotle's doctrine of habits (*ethismos*), set out in Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that is, the continual practice of good acts so that one becomes habituated to the good: "By doing acts *like* those of love, we shall come to love." Clough rebuts this argument, since it fails to distinguish the acquisition of mechanical habits, such as learning to march to music, from what he calls "Spiritual Ethics." But the idea had wide currency in mid-Victorian England – it was taken seriously by John Stuart Mill and George Eliot, among others – and a dispirited Claude puzzles over it further in the poem:

> *Action will furnish belief*, – but will that belief be the true one?
> That is the point, you know. However, it doesn't much matter.
> What one wants, I suppose, is to predetermine the action,
> So as to make it entail, not a chance-belief, but the true one. (V, 20–24)

The immediate target here is Carlyle's doctrine of action, according to which we discover and create ourselves by *doing*; action, or work of any kind, is a purifying fire that consumes the poison and sour smoke of our hope and sorrow, desire and doubt. In his 1840 lectures on *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Carlyle construes belief not as a mental or moral state but as an act: "Belief I define to be the healthy act of man's mind." We have our minds given us not to debate many things but to see into some one thing, "whereon we are then to proceed to act." Scepticism is a form of sickness, not merely an intellectual fault but "a chronic atrophy and disease of the whole soul."[21] For Carlyle, action is both the end and the ground of our being. Better to act wrongly, but with belief, than to hesitate in doubt.

Claude rejects this view. Implicit in the argument that he should propose to Mary is a virtual equation: "juxtaposition" plus "notions of duty" equals "obligation", which finds its ultimate expression in marriage. The chiming of the verse suggests the remorselessness of the sequence: *attraction*, *action*, *factitious*, *malpractice*. Moreover, as Clough's 1849 notes go on to argue, obedience to the lesser bond of juxtaposition might preclude the transformational possibilities generated by higher order or elective affinity. Rather than "Let love be its own inspiration" (II, 278), Claude is expected to keep himself up to the mark by summoning "the ruinous force of the will" (III, 155).

This, at least, is the price to be paid if, like Claude, "we turn like fools to the English" (I, 32). By contrast, the speaker of Goethe's *Roman Elegies* of 1795 turns casually to the women of Rome instead of those of his own class and nation.[22] Rather than wait for love's inspiration, Goethe celebrates the goddess *Gelegenheit*, or "Opportunity", always ready to appear in a new and different form,

21. Thomas Carlyle, "The Hero as Man of Letters", in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1897, pp. 173–174. Despite his (or Claude's) misgivings here, Clough was among many to fall under Carlyle's influence in the 1840s.

22. Clough almost certainly had the *Elegies* in mind; a cancelled line in the manuscript includes Goethe among the "host of exclaimants" who celebrated Rome (*Amours de Voyage*, ed. Scott, p. 42).

like a daughter of Proteus.[23] In the *Elegies* her chosen shape is that of a young widow; it is true that she halves the time her lover can give to his classical studies, but she also offers him twice the pleasure and a deeper insight, as he learns to understand marble statues by caressing her body with a feeling eye and a seeing hand.[24] Unluckily for Claude, Opportunity offers herself only to the daring and decisive man;[25] more to the point, she doesn't have, as Mary Trevellyn does, a soon-to-be-married and deeply conventional sister who thinks it "delightful to bring young people together" (II, 338). Among the cautious and respectable English, a group that for all his slightly shamefaced mockery of them includes Claude, Opportunity is easily silenced by that "Terrible word, Obligation" (III, 190). John Goode suggests that what Claude "really needs" is "a Roman whore", but this goes against the grain both of Claude's nature and of the poem;[26] the *Roman Elegies* hover in the margins of *Amours de Voyage*, but as the sign of a road not taken, to be acknowledged only in the discreet form of literary allusion.

The debate about the two kinds of love, and their power to bring poise or disturbance, has other links to Claude's study of the art and architecture of Rome. Following Murray's *Handbook*, he approves of the Arch of Titus and the view from the Lateran, but finds the city as a whole incoherent, "Merely a marvellous mass of broken and castaway wine-pots" (I, 40). That incoherence extends to its ecclesiastical architecture. Most of the three hundred or so churches listed by Murray omit what Claude supposes to be at the heart of the Christian faith – the drama of humiliation and exaltation, the sense of shame in our earthly selves, and the consequent aspiration to "something most perfect above in the heavens" (I, 69). These were

23. J.W. von Goethe, *Roman Elegies and the Diary: Bilingual Edition*, London, Libris, 1988, Elegy VI: "Sie erscheinet euch oft, immer in andrer Gestalt. | Tochter des Proteus möchte sie sein" (ll. 120–121).
24. Elegy VII: "[Ich ...] Sehe mit fühlenden Aug, fühle mit sehender Hand" (l. 144).
25. Elegy VI: "Gern ergisst sie sich nur dem raschen, tätigen Manne" (l. 125); in Claude's terms, "the audacious, the wilful, the vehement hero" (II, 292) he himself can never be.
26. John Goode, "*Amours de Voyage*: the Aqueous Poem", in Isobel Armstrong (ed.), *The Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 286.

qualities mid-Victorian England found most fully expressed in medieval Gothic, and looked for in vain in Renaissance building. But behind the "gauds and gewgaws" of Roman baroque (I, 74), which like Murray he dismisses with contempt,[27] Claude comes slowly to admire an architecture which is more "*rational*" if less overtly Christian, in which the strained intensity of Gothic gives way to the "positive, calm, Stoic-Epicurean acceptance" he begins to detect in St Peter's (I, 76).[28]

The praise of acceptance, however, and the emphasis of Stoic and Epicurean thinkers on the real and present life rather than the putative ideal one of the future, cannot easily be mapped on to Claude's thinking about love and courtship. In Canto III he protests against the belief that "the Present indeed is the Only" (III, 114). Women may believe in "eternal ties and marriages made in heaven" (III, 112), and for their sake men may pretend to do so, but the true reason we allow juxtaposition – the conversation with the girl we happen to sit next to in the railway-carriage – to lead on to wedded life is the knowledge of our own mortality, and with that our future escape from a condition so far short of the ideal.[29] We "fall in with the marriage-procession" only because we can see our "funeral train" in the distance (III, 117–118), and the promise it brings of "a freer and larger existence" after death (III, 123), in which the person we take up with for "an *ad-interim* solace and pleasure" will give way to "a perfect and absolute something" (III, 143–144). In love at least, whatever conclusions he draws from the study of church architecture, Claude demands that "something most perfect above in the heavens" (I, 69).

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27. At such moments in the poem "Rome" stands not just for the physical city but also for the conflicts associated with the Oxford Movement of the 1830s and 1840s, including debates about the ethical and theological meanings of ecclesiastical Gothic.
28. A cancelled line in the manuscript contrasts the "infinite straining" of Gothic churches at Freiberg or Rheims with the "finite completeness" of Renaissance Rome (*Amours de Voyage*, (ed.) Scott, p. 42). Claude's aesthetic hints at the arguments worked out more fully by Geoffrey Scott in *The Architecture of Humanism* (1914).
29. By "we" Claude means men. Throughout Canto III his views of love, including this one, are shaped partly by the mistaken belief that Mary approved the question about his "intentions."

What is effectively Claude's farewell to Rome comes in letter 11 of Canto III.[30] Writing from "Montorio's heights" – the platform in front of the Renaissance Church of San Pietro, which Clough himself had visited on his first day in Rome – he commemorates an imaginary excursion to Horace's Sabine villa, where the waters of the Anio still cascade into the Tiber, "Falling, falling yet, to the ancient lyrical cadence" (III, 215). He even incorporates a loose translation of lines from Book I of Horace's *Odes*. But the view of the groves and waterfalls of the Sabine valley, "Fair in itself, and yet fairer with human completing creations" (III, 227), derives from Claude's reading; in reality, any such visit was made impossible by the military conflict, and the imagined scene swiftly yields to the prosaic "tile-clad streets", "bushes and kitchen-gardens" (III, 233–234), of the Trastevere quarter. Montorio was close to the French encampment, and Claude's companions are not the nymphs and fauns of ancient Rome but weary soldiers awaiting Oudinot's entry into the city, the surrender of the republic, and the suppression of whatever had remained of the "*spirit from perfecter ages*" summoned in the elegiacs that open the poem. Claude's dream, that he would find the ideal Rome of his imagining embodied in the actual city in 1849, ends in disappointment.

Throughout *Amours de Voyage* Claude's encounter with the art and politics of Rome serves to bring into focus the wider dilemmas of his intellectual life, and in particular those questions about selfhood, knowledge, and commitment which, in the words of the final elegiacs, had been "*flitting about many years from brain unto brain of | Feeble and restless youths born to inglorious days*" (V, pp. 221–222). In a cancelled passage, intended for Canto III, he reflects that it is "the virtue of Man" to "discern and love the ideal", but "wisdom" to "accept and live in the real."[31] The lines are too sweeping, and Clough was right to discard them, but they gesture

30. Claude's intellectual journey does not end with his departure from Rome. In Canto V he briefly imagines that he has found "a religious assurance", then rejects it as "factitious", before conceding that on his death-bed he might be glad of even a false belief (V, pp. 95–112).

31. *Amours de Voyage* (ed.), Scott, p. 63.

towards the central concerns of the poem. Claude has been searching for the moment when conviction would finally banish doubt: when art would reveal itself "instinct with life" (I, 193), political action be guided by "ripe and indubious instinct" (II, 84), and love be "its own inspiration" (II, 278). That moment has not arrived, and even if it had the reader may doubt whether Claude would find the courage to seize it. Mary Trevellyn is surely right when she reflects on what it would be like to love him:

> She that should love him must look for small love in return, – like the ivy
> On the stone wall, must expect but a rigid and niggard support, and
> E'en to get that must go searching all round with her humble embraces. (III, 37–39)

The unaffected clarity of that voice plays a part in the moral economy of the poem. But weak and indecisive as he is, it remains true that it is Claude's "virtue" to seek the ideal, rather than settle for the actual: to keep social pressures at bay, to refuse compromise, and to defend the notion of an inner sovereignty. "Rome disappoints me much" (I, 13), he writes in his opening letter, but he never denies the hopes the city promised to fulfill. *Amours de Voyage* is both a satire on Claude's timidity, snobbery, and inexperience – his inability to come to terms with the world's "wisdom" – and a compassionate study of a thwarted yet necessary idealism. It is hard to interpret Claude's decision at the end of the poem to travel to Egypt: it can equally be read as a flight from Rome with its memories of Mary – "Rome will not do, I see, for many good reasons" (V, 204) – and as a reassertion of his faith that "Knowledge abideth" (V, 197). But the elegiacs which conclude Canto III, and which we may ascribe, if not to Clough, then at least to the controlling intelligence behind the poem, embody not only a loving farewell to the city and the myths attaching to it, but also a promise to return:

*Therefore farewell, ye hills, and ye, ye envineyarded ruins!*
*Therefore farewell, ye walls, palaces, pillars, and domes!*
*Therefore farewell, far seen, ye peaks of the mythic Albano,*
*Seen from Montorio's height, Tibur and Aesula's hills!*
*Ah, could we once, ere we go, could we stand, while, to ocean descending,*
*Sinks o'er the yellow dark plain slowly the yellow broad sun,*
*Stand, from the forest emerging at sunset, at once in the champaign,*
*Open, but studded with trees, chestnuts umbrageous and old,*
*E'en in those fair open fields that incurve to thy beautiful hollow,*
*Nemi, imbedded in wood, Nemi, inurned in the hill! –*
*Therefore farewell, ye plains, and ye hills, and the City Eternal!*
*Therefore farewell! We depart, but to behold you again!*
(III, 293–304)

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# "The Italian method" and the "Italian gesture." Musico-literary considerations on W.B. Yeats, Italian music and Italian composers

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The presence and influence of Italian music were pervasive in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland. As Derek B. Scott has suggested, in the first half of the eighteenth century, even Irish traditional music "had been coming to terms with the Italian style" because "the itinerant harpers encountered the popular Italian music in the important Anglo-Irish establishments, especially in Dublin": thus, "it is possible that Turlough O'Carolan, the best known of the harpers, met Geminiani in one of the ascendancy houses where the Italian usually stayed. Certainly, it was in these venues where the harper encountered the music of Corelli and Vivaldi."[1] However, already around the last decade of the eighteenth century, while pondering on "Irish national and cultural identity" and presenting "perhaps the most articulate expression of the identification of Ireland with music among eighteenth-century writers", the Irish antiquarian and intellectual Joseph Cooper Walker (c. 1762–1810) reacted precisely against this Italian domination of Dublin's musical

1. Derek B. Scott, cit. in W.H.A. Williams, *'Twas only an Irishman's Dream.' The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800–1920*, Champaign, University of Illinois Press, 1996, p. 247.

taste and gave an indirectly paradigmatic definition of Italian music as a byproduct of English rule: in actual fact, he:

> firmly blamed the English for the spread to Ireland of Italian music, which 'began to reign with despotic sway' in London, from whence 'its influence spread so wide, that it reached these shores. Our musical state became *refined* and our *sweet* melodies and *native* musicians fell into disrepute'.[2]

Despite Walker's musical and politico-cultural resistance, "during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Italian operas were produced in Dublin at irregular intervals, especially in the years 1781, 1782, 1808, 1811, and 1819"; in the following years,

> the four-thousand seat Theatre Royal in Hawkins Street, which opened in 1821, presented operas of the Italian *ottocento* composers Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini, and later Verdi. A series of spectacular Italian opera seasons featuring the world's best singers (including Grisi, Viardot, Lind, Patti, Mario, Rubini, and Lablache) continued almost every year until the theatre was destroyed by fire in 1880.[3]

This dominance of Italian opera notwithstanding, it may be emblematic of the musical and musico-literary condition of Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century that, "for much of the 1840s" – namely, the decade in which "Italian opera [...] had almost completely overwhelmed the sound of the spoken word on Irish stages"[4] and, at the same time, the political, cultural and social movement of Young Ireland celebrated "the formative years of

2. Barra Boydell, '*Whatever has a Foreign Tone / We like much better than our own.' Irish Music and Anglo-Irish Identity in the Eighteenth Century*, in Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn (eds.), *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond*, Burlington, Ashgate, 2014, p. 21 (italics mine).
3. John Allen, *Opera in Ireland*, Lelia Ruckenstein and James O'Malley (eds.), *Everything Irish: the History, Literature, Art, Music, People, and Places of Ireland, from A to Z*, New York, Ballantine Books, 2003, p. 318.
4. Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 107–108.

cultural nationalism" with all its musical implications – "'Young Ireland' and Italian opera did not consort with each other."[5] Later on, in the last decades of nineteenth-century Ireland, "musical tastes in Dublin were slowly changing" and "the golden age of Italian opera was on the wane"[6] – which, however, seems to be contradicted, e.g., by Joyce's dialectically musico-literary representation of his country as the *Land of Belcanto* (where the term *Belcanto* is to be understood *lato sensu*) in *The Dead.*

In the English-speaking countries, all along the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the syntagms "Italian gesture" and "Italian method" were shorthand for the main features of the musical, cultural, social, political etc. phenomenon of Italian opera, which was itself short for Italian music. Perhaps on the basis of an analogy with Italian gesticulation, interpreted not as "the result of study, but rather of attention" and as "perfectly dramatic"[7] as the "expressive direction and motion of [the] forefinger" of the Italian protagonist of Henry James's *The Golden Bowl*[8], "Italian gesture" in music stood for "the vehemence of first thought and the excitement of the senses."[9] English sopranos of Italian origin like Elizabeth Augusta Griglietti were systematically discouraged from adopting it too extensively, since, as Leigh Hunt wrote in 1810,

> the Italian gesture [...] may be very well in Italians, whose climate renders them more impassioned than ourselves, and whose want of sincerity compels them to make a greater protestation of it; but this

5. Harry White, *Cultural Theory, Nostalgia and the Historical Record: Opera in Ireland and the Irishness of Opera during the Nineteenth Century*, in Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (eds.), *Irish Musical Studies. 9. Music in nineteenth-century Ireland*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2007, p. 27.
6. Ita Beausang, *Echoes of the Lied: Women's Vocal Repertoire in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, in Aisling Kenny and Susan Wollenberg (eds.), *Women and the Nineteenth-Century Lied*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015, p. 256.
7. Anon, (review of Andrea De Jorio, *La mimica degli antichi investigata nel gestire napolitano* [1832]), *Dublin Review*, July 1837, p. 13.
8. Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, London, Methuen, 1905, p. 188.
9. Arthur Symons, *Notes on Wagner in Bayreuth*, in *Plays, Acting, and Music. A Book of Theory*, London, Constable, 1909, p. 313.

> style will always contain something very ridiculous to the judgement and feelings of Englishmen.[10]

To the more famous Louisa Bassano (1818–1908), an anonymous reviewer of *The Spectator* dictated a somewhat peremptory suggestion: "*If she keep clear of Italy*, she will probably turn out a very charming English singer."[11]

The syntagm "Italian method",[12] instead, may have been present in Ireland since the times when Johann Sigismund Cousser (1660–1727) – who, according to John Hawkins, had introduced "the Italian method of singing" in Hamburg "about the year 1693"[13] – "arrived in Dublin on 4th July" 1707 and influenced its musical life in such a "philo-Italian" way as to "be credited for the adoption of Italian music in Dublin", where the first concert hall was built in 1730 exactly "for the practice of Italian Musick."[14] Some decades afterwards, immediately before the Acts of Union 1800, traces of the interaction between the "Italian method" and Irish cultural-musical experience can for example be found in the strong influence of the famous Italian castrato Giuseppe Aprile (1735–1813) – author of *The Modern Italian Method of Singing* (1795) – on the celebrated Irish tenor Michael Kelly (1762–1826) – that is, "Chelli Michele" in

10. Leigh Hunt, in Theodore Fenner, *Leigh Hunt and Opera Criticism: the "Examiner" years, 1808–1821*, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1972, p. 131.
11. Anon. (section "The Theatres"), *The Spectator*, 1847, p. 135 (sic; italics in original).
12. In Yeats's days, Dyneley Hussey, English war poet and music critic (1893–1972), defined it as follows: "(in drama yielding to music) the action cannot remain static, which is what usually happens whenever music is allowed to have its way. Here is the central problem of opera, and it has been solved in various ways. The first is the *Italian method*, by which the opera was frankly divided into recitatives in which the action was carried on, and airs in which the emotional situation is reviewed while the drama stands still. [...] The *Italian method* does at least allow for the maintenance throughout the opera of musical tone, so that the adherence to one main tonality varied with excursions into contrasting keys can make its musical and dramatic effect – an effect which plays a very large part in the operas of Mozart and Verdi" ("A Note on the nature of opera", *The Musical Times*, 70:1032 [1929], p. 119; italics mine).
13. John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music. Volume the Fifth*, London, Payne and Son, 1776, p. 249.
14. Harold E. Samuel, "John Sigismond Cousser in London and Dublin", *Music & Letters*, 61:2 (1980), pp. 170 and 167.

James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*[15] – who continued his studies with him in Italy[16] in 1780: as Kelly himself wrote in his *Reminiscences*, this "famous soprano singer [...] was allowed to be the greatest singer and musician of the day" and "was called by the Italians, and indeed everywhere, 'il padre di tutti i cantanti', – the father of all singers."[17] Some decades before Young Ireland's celebration of music as "the first faculty of the Irish,[18]" it should be noticed that Aprile's technical precepts had also some impact on the socio-politically sensitive subject of musico-literary experience since, in his *Modern Italian Method of Singing*,[19] he recommended both "XVI. That in pronouncing the Words care must be taken to accord with the sentiment that was intended by the Poet" and "XXI. That the Ornaments and Embellishments of Songs should be derived from the Character of the Air, and Passion of the words."

Yeatsian scholars have totally neglected William Butler Yeats's experience, knowledge, textualization and literarization of Italian art music, which is just one (although minor) aspect of the deep and far-reaching devotion to Italy and "learned Italian things"[20] that manifested itself in different ways all along his life and throughout his work. The number of references to Italian musical experience and culture in secondary critical sources is very scant and superficial even in Ronald Schuchard's imposing and authoritative study *The Last Minstrels. Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (2008). For instance, when Edward Malins and Peter Davidson happen to

15. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, London, Faber, 1975, p. 199.
16. Jane Girdham, "Kelly, Michael (1762–1826)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition May 2007 (http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.opac.unicatt.it/view/article/15303, accessed 13th March 2017).
17. Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*, London, Henry Colburn, 1826², vol. 1, p. 73.
18. Thomas Davis, *Preface*, in *The Spirit of the Nation. Ballads and Songs by the writers of "the Nation" with Original and Ancient music, arranged for the voice and piano-forte*, James Duffy, Dublin 1845, p. VI.
19. "Necessary Rules for students and dilettanti of vocal music", in *The Modern Italian Method of Singing*, London, Birchall, 1795, p. 2.
20. William Butler Yeats, *The Collected Works of William Butler Yeats. Volume I: The Poems*, edited by R.J. Finneran, New York, Scribner, 1997², p. 202, l. 157.

mention Monteverdi's typical formal technique of "aria parlante"[21] or compositional strategy of "Parlar-cantando",[22] they (somehow chauvinistically and surprisingly) attribute its paternity to the Anglophone musician and composer Henry Lawes (1595–1662), brother of the younger William Lawes (1602–1645), thus making an interpretative choice that is not documented in coeval cultural-musical sources. One has to wait for Pierre Longuenesse until 2008 to read that "Yeats se place dans une filiation qui remonte à la Renaissance et à l'époque baroque, lorsque Monteverdi cherchait à obtenir le 'parlacantando' de son opera *Orfeo*."[23]

However, Yeats did not lack friends and acquaintances, fellow writers and collaborators who could help him mediate with art music from Italy, either encouragingly or discouragingly. He had contacts with Italian contemporary composers active in Dublin like Michele Esposito (1855–1929) and Franco Leoni (1864–1949). On the one hand, Michele Esposito, a Neapolitan musician and composer whose family and actress daughter Vera Yeats he had known since the 1890s or so[24], had been Professor of the Pianoforte at the Royal Irish Academy of Music since 1882 and became the Irish representative of the British Incorporated Society of Musicians in 1893 in "a decade that witnessed a remarkable revitalization of national cultural life": however,

> unfortunately very little detailed research has been carried out on the influence of the Gaelic and literary revivals on musical activity [...], but it does appear that there was a growing sense that more should be done to encourage the emergence of a native school of composers.[25]

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21. Edward Malins, *Yeats and Music*, The Dolmen Press Yeats Centenary Papers MCMLXV, edited by Liam Miller, with a preface by John Stallworthy, Dublin, The Dolmen Press; London, Oxford University Press; Chester Springs, Dufour Editions, 1965–1968, p. 496.
22. Peter Davidson, *Music in Translation: Yeats; Pound; Rummel; Dulac*, in *Yeats and the Noh. A Comparative Study*, Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1990, p. 137.
23. Pierre Longuenesse, "Dramaturgie musicale de Yeats: la question des partitions", *Études Irlandaises*, 33:1 (2008), p. 14.
24. William Butler Yeats, *The Collected Letters of William Butler Yeats. Volume IV: 1905–1907*, edited by J. Kelly and R. Schuchard, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005, p. 261, note 1.
25. Jeremy Dibble, *Michele Esposito*, Dublin, Field Day Publications, 2010, p. 61.

On the other hand, Franco Leoni, a Milanese composer who had kept asking Yeats for allowance to adapt *The Countess Cathleen* and some other plays into operas with unremitting insistence especially between 1910 and 1913[26], emblematically pops up in a letter exchange of May 1911 between Yeats and Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966), the English theatrical designer of musical dramas[27], who imparts to his Irish addressee some emblematic suggestions that are highly relevant to our subject and that would deserve further musico-literary comments:[28]

> My dear Yeats, I have been thinking over the Leoni-Yeats-GC opera affair – & now your other letter comes saying 'Leoni has every reason to believe' etc. that Covent Garden will etc. You say you know nothing about music [...]. I beg of you for everything's sake to [...] get a really first-rate composer's opinion of Leoni's work before you agree to let him do anything with your name. Maybe he is a nice simple tune writer (Italians who have not come under the dread Wagner's influence can be nice & tuneful & therefore harmlessly pleasant) but he may be the reverse & be one of those profound frauds (as musician) with a lot of philosophy & fits & starts. He may even be an admirer of [Richard] Strauss & the God help you. [...] They are so restless, so rhythmless, these modern brainy composers ... and the Italians who at least had a sense of tune direct & straightforward are now beginning to drop all that and chatter in their music. [...] I have asked Russians here if they've ever heard of Leoni's music but they haven't. I've never heard it or

26. Roy Foster in *W.B. Yeats: A Life, Vol. I. The Apprentice Mage*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 424,440; John Kelly, *A W.B. Yeats Chronology*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 148, 149, 166.
27. Cf. Avril Flockton, "Edward Gordon Craig and 'The New Stagecraft'." *The Dalhousie Review*, 50:1 (1970), pp. 88–96.
28. Yeats included Gordon Craig's letter in another letter that he sent to Lady Gregory asking her for advice and informing her that "Mrs Anderson [i.e., Julia Quinn Anderson (1880–1934), sister of John Quinn (1870–1924)] says Leoni is very much of the modern school" (*Letter To Lady Gregory, 22 May 1911*, in W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Letters of William Butler Yeats*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, InteLex Electronic Edition, 2002, Accession letter #1639).

> of him till now. Why not ask Arthur Symonds [*sic*] about Leoni. I do think he'd know, though he alas likes Strauss.[29]

Arthur Symons, poet and music critic (1865–1945), sticks out among Yeats's fellow writers interested and versed in Italian music: even though no explicit reference to the abovementioned operatic Italian gesture and the Italian method can be found in Yeats's writings, he may have heard about both precisely from Symons, whose definition of the former as "the vehemence of first thought and the excitement of the senses" (from a 1909 book listed among those in Yeats's library)[30] has already been quoted above, and who had evoked the latter in his 1904 essay on *Beethoven*, more specifically in a passage where he observed that "'Fidelio' is an opera which has not even the formal merits of the best operas produced on the Italian method."[31] Other reliable and favourable mediators for Yeats to Italian musical experience were or could surely have been the hyper-musical George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), who admitted in a 1916 letter to Demetrius O'Bolger that "my deliberate rhetoric, and my reversion to the Shakespearean feature of long set solos for my characters, are pure Italian opera",[32] and J. M. Synge, who had tried to start "a professional career in music" on German training foundations before turning "to writing plays" and "knew the Esposito family best, and was frequently invited into their home in Ranelagh."[33] On the contrary, Yeats was surely given an utterly unfavourable judgement on Italian art music

29. Gordon Craig is probably making reference to an essay on *The Problem of Richard Strauss* that Arthur Symons wrote in 1902, revised in 1905, and included in *Studies in Seven Arts*, London, Constable, 1906, pp. 301–328.
30. Arthur Symons, *Notes on Wagner at Bayreuth*, p. 313 (book listed in Edward O'Shea, *A Descriptive Catalog of W.B. Yeats's Library*, New York, Garland Publishing, 1985, p. 275, n. 2060).
31. Arthur Symons, *Beethoven*, in *Studies in Seven Arts*, p. 205.
32. Cit. in Jonathan Lorne Wisenthal, *"Please remember, this is Italian opera": Shaw's plays as music drama*, in Christopher Innes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 286.
33. Ann Saddlemyer, *Behind the scenes: Irish theatre, Irish lives, and the Task of the Biographer*, in Sherill Grace-Jerry Wasserman (eds.), *Theatre and Autobiography. Writing and Performing Lives in Theory and Practice*, Vancouver, Talonbooks, 2006. p. 262.

by Frank O'Connor (pseudonym of Michael Francis O'Donovan, 1903–1966), who was a board member of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in the mid-late 1930s – in the same years as William Starkie (1894–1976), who had studied violin in Dublin at the Royal Irish Academy of Music with "the celebrated Italian virtuoso and composer, Achille Simonetti, a master who had been taught by Camillo Sivori, the only pupil of Niccolò Paganini"[34] – and who made a paradigmatic and strategic distinction between "Italian [art] music" and "real music" in the following passage:[35]

> I was once telling him how my only visit to Italy had been poisoned by Italian music. The guide-books never warn you against it, but you can take my word for it that it is much worse than mosquitoes. One night I was sitting at dinner, listening to a baritone with a voice like Chaliapin and wishing I were dead when I heard *real* music coming up a dark lane from the canal. [...] A sailor lad with a friend and a couple of girls were sitting on the bank in the darkness, strumming a guitar and singing in the traditional style, much, I imagine like the gondoliers Wagner heard singing Tasso on the lagoons. 'I wonder', Yeats asked wistfully, 'if it was like my singing.'

It is true, however, that direct and explicit references to Italian music rarely pop up in Yeats's writings, perhaps as a side effect of influences like O'Connor's, which echo the traditionally Irish late-nineteenth-century dialectic between "the purely Celtic musical style" and "the reminiscences of Verdi and of the *good old Italian method*".[36] Such a dialectic is understandable only against an Irish background where "music offered a model a pan-European, shared culture", since "certainly, in Dublin, there existed a shared appreciation among Unionists and Nationalists for recital and opera

34. William Starkie, *Scholars and Gypsies. An Autobiography*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1963, p. 90.
35. Frank O'Connor, *What made Yeats a Great Poet?* in David Pierce, *W.B. Yeats: Assessments 1889–1959*, Mountfield, Helm Information, 2000, p. 359 (italics mine).
36. Anon. "Italian Opera in Dublin", *The Freeman's Journal*, 3rd August 1909, p. 2.

which naturally looked to the continent for its staples."[37] As a matter of fact, there are a few main and notable exceptions to such scantiness of references to Italian musical experience and culture in Yeats's thought and work. Two of them deserve special mention: a very early one to Niccolò Paganini and a very late one to Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina.

Yeats mentioned Paganini in the three-page headnote on the Irish polymath and polyhedral artist Samuel Lover (1797–1868) – poet and novelist, composer and song-writer, painter and miniaturist, and "a sincere member of the Church of England"[38] – with which he prefaced two tales by Lover in the second series of his *Representative Irish Tales* (1891). In that headnote, he extensively recalled Lover's early interest, "to his father's disgust, in music", his instrumental training and skills, and the social effectiveness of his "good songs" (like "*Rory O'More*, written at the suggestion of Lady Morgan") in opening "all doors." More relevantly to the subject of the present study, Yeats also recalled that, "in 1834, [Lover] took advantage of some renewed celebrity gained for him by a miniature of Paganini to move over to London."[39] His decision of mentioning the connection between a celebrated representative of Italian music and Lover's move to London is highly emblematic and its different components should be accurately interpreted.

On the one hand, it unmistakably evokes the year 1831[40] when "the autocrat of the fiddle"[41] – as the Dublin press called Paganini – arrived in Dublin from England "at a very high fee",[42] "being engaged for the first Musical Festival held in that city" where he

37. Ben Levitas, *J.M. Synge: European Encounters*, in Patrick J. Mathews (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1009, p. 79.
38. William Bayle Bernard, *The life of Samuel Lover*, London, Henry S. King, 1874, p. 346.
39. *Samuel Lover 1797–1868*, in *Representative Irish Tales*, compiled with an Introduction and Notes by W.B. Yeats, Second Series, New York and London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1891, pp. 1 and 2. The two stories by Lover included in this volume are *Barny O'Reirdon, the Navigator* (pp. 7–72) and *Paddy the Piper* (pp. 75–90).
40. Michael Murphy, *The Musical Press in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, in Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (eds.), *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, p. 257.
41. Anon, ["Notizen"], *Allgemeiner Musikalischer Anzeiger*, 3:41 (1831), p. 163.
42. Anon, "Paganini in Dublin", *The Irish Times*, 19th January 1931.

played "his fiddle" under the English conductor Sir George Thomas Smart (1776–1867) and before "the Lord Lieutenant and his Suite attend[ing] in State and all the *élite* of Dublin [...] in the dress tier."[43] Such an English-dominated *parterre de rois*, however, did not automatically determine negative socio-political effects on the Irish reception of the Italian virtuoso, even though the inescapable political bias of coeval cultural-musical sources (which alternatively praised "the urbanity of the Dublin public"[44] or disparaged "the mercurial temperament of the [Irish] occupants"[45] on ideological bases) should be more carefully weighed[46] : from this point of view, it may be emblematic to emphasize the 1831 dissonance between the enthusiastic "parallels between [the] art [of the 'modern Orpheus'] and Irish folk music" drawn by *The Freeman's Journal*[47] and Thomas Moore's perplexed remarks that read as follows: "Paganini abuses his powers – he *could* play divinely and does sometimes, for a minute or two – but then come his tricks & surprises – his bow in convulsions & his enharmonics like the mewlings of an expiring cat."[48]

43. Stephen S. Stratton *Nicolò Paganini: his Life and Work*, London, J. Leng & Co., 1907, pp. 60, 63, 62.
44. John William Calcraft, "Leaves from the portfolio of a manager – No. III [...] Anecdotes of Paganini [...]", *Dublin University Magazine*, CCXIX (1851), p. 380.
45. Stratton, *Nicolò Paganini: his life and work*, p. 62.
46. Cfr. also, for instance, the American-born London-based William Bayle Bernard (1807–1875), who wrote in his 1874 biography of Samuel Lover that "to the melody-loving Irish [Paganini] was peculiarly welcome and his attraction was not lessened to their impressionable natures by a personal appearance that was almost as singular as his genius [...] – no Irish crowd could gaze on without a superstitious shiver" (*The Life of Samuel Lover*, pp. 130 and 131); and the English music critic Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808–1872), who noticed that "so greatly was popular curiosity excited on [Paganini's] account, that the very gossoons and girleens of that merry city – the *lazzaroni* of the North – ran after his carriage, and crowded round the door of his lodgings, eager to get one peep of him" ("Paganini", *The Athenaeum*, 411 (1835), p. 700).
47. See Murphy, *The Musical Press in nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 259.
48. Thomas Moore, *The Journal of Thomas Moore. Volume 4: 1831–1835*, edited by Wilfred S. Dowden, Cranbury, Associated University Presses, 1987, p. 1417 (entry for 23rd June 1831).

On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that, in his three-page headnote on Samuel Lover, Yeats established a consequential connection between (at least) three different socio-cultural factors:

1. the above-mentioned controversial cultural implications of the presence of the "Italian fiddler"[49] in Ireland;
2. Lover's potentially debatable choice of a non-Irish subject for "his finest work of art [...] which exhibits him in the perfection of his latter and higher style";[50]
3. Lover's abandonment of the "miniature-loving family" of "the Irish people",[51] following his decision to show his masterpiece at the Royal Academy Exhibition in London in 1833 (thus achieving "the double end of confirming its painter's fame in Ireland and establishing it in England"[52]) and to move over there in 1834.

In sum, what happened to Lover around the year "1832" – which, according to the American-born London-based biographer of Lover, was "to be considered a sort of era in his life, since one of its events led to the transference of his home and after career to London"[53] – less than two decades later, to the young Anglo-Irish "apprentice mage" W.B. Yeats, seemed instead perfectly coherent with the class-biased and identity-disruptive "accent of the gentry" and "voice of those who lived lightly and gaily"[54] that he attributed to Lover's life and stories in 1891. And, perhaps, this seemed all the more problematic to Yeats since, in a short essay on *Clarence Mangan's Love Affair* written in the same year, he defined Lover as "the most important" member of The Comet Club, "a gathering of [young Irish] journalists and writers"[55] of "differing religious background"

49. Willbur Fisk, *Travels On The Continent Of Europe; Viz., In England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, And The Netherlands*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1838, p. 140.
50. Bernard, *The life of Samuel Lover*, p. 131.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
54. *Introduction*, in *Representative Irish Tales*, p. 2
55. *The Collected Works. Volume IX. Early Articles and Reviews*, edited by J.P. Frayne and M. Marchaterre, New York, Scribner, 2004, p. 136.

founded in the spring of 1831 as "a publishing consortium in Dublin", in order "to provide rudimentary instruction on political topics, conveyed in familiar language" on the basis of "an O'Connellite agenda that included reform of the Irish municipalities, repeal of the union, and the abolition of tithes."[56]

Besides this very early mention of Paganini, there is another reference to Italian art music in Yeats's work that deserves attention because it is just as culturally and socio-politically oriented as the first one above, though in a different way. It is his musico-literary elaboration of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594), which is mentioned in *Dramatis Personae*, his autobiographical text dealing with the Yeatsian years 1896–1902[57], where the Anglo-Irish poet recalls his experience with his friend and financial supporter Edward Martyn. Martyn's mediating cultural stance usually alienate critical ideologies: his "politics made him an eccentric among the Irish landowning class to which he belonged"[58], since he was "a Nationalist of strong convictions",[59] a member of a Catholic landed gentry family "founded in the twelfth century" and "an unhappy, childless, laborious, unfinished man, typical of an Ireland that is passing away." In his Dramatis Personae, Yeats writes that, during his visits at Tulira Castle (Co. Galway) – a "house, part fourteenth century, part that pretentious modern Gothic once dear to Irish Catholic families"[60] –

> Edward Martyn brought [Arthur Symons and I] up the wide stairs of his Gothic hall [.] We both knew that those pillars, that stair and varnished roof with their mechanical ornament, were among the

56. Robin J. Kavanagh, *Religion and Illustrated Periodicals in the 1830s*, in James H. Murphy (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Irish Book, Volume IV: The Irish Book in English 1800–1891*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 345.
57. *Dramatis Personae* was originally published by Cuala Press in 1935 and then posthumously included in *Autobiography* in 1953 and in *Autobiographies* in 1955.
58. Denis Gwynn, "Edward Martyn", *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 19:74 (1930), p. 237.
59. Ernest A. Boyd, *The Contemporary Drama of Ireland*, Boston, Little, Brown and Co.,1917, p. 12.
60. *The Bounty of Sweden: a Meditation, and a Lecture delivered before the Royal Swedish Academy and Certain Notes*, Dublin, The Cuala Press, 1925, pp. 52 and 51, note 2.

> worst inventions of the Gothic revival, but upon several evenings we asked Edward Martyn to extinguish all light except that of a little Roman lamp, sat there in the shadows, as though upon a stage set for *Parsifal*. Edward Martyn sat at his *harmonium, so placed among the pillars that it seemed some ancient instrument*, and played *Palestrina*.[61]

Martyn's musico-cultural predilection for Palestrina's vocal music was no marginal feature of his politico-cultural identity and contribution to the "Irish cultural nationalism", since "he set the calls for the reform of church music firmly in the Irish-Ireland context of a growing quest for an Irish national identity."[62] His "munificent gift of £10,000 [in November 1902] to endow a choir in Marlborough Street Pro-Cathedral to sing, for the first time in Ireland, church music *a capella*"[63] was celebrated with strong denominational implications by the Irish Catholic musicologist and composer William H. Grattan Flood (1857–1928), who dedicated his *History of Irish Music* to him as "the Founder of the Palestrina Choir and the Munificent Patron of *True Church Music* in Ireland."[64] As Rebecca Troeger has perceptively written, Martyn "melded" his personal elaboration of the "conservative ideals" of the Cecilian model of Palestrina's music "with a cultural nationalist approach to Irish politics, making church music an issue of Irish national importance."[65] The relevance and the impact of Martyn's commitment to such a musico-political (re)birth of Ireland can be adequately gauged – as Thomas MacGreevy (1893–1967; Irish

61. *Dramatis Personae*, in *The Collected Works of William Butler Yeats. Volume III: Autobiographies*, edited by W. O'Donnell and D.N. Archibald, New York, Scribner, 1999, p. 289.
62. J.C.M. Nolan, "Edward Martyn and the Founding of Dublin's Palestrina Choir", *New Hibernia Review*, 4 (2000), pp. 98 and 89.
63. Anon, "Music in Dublin (from Our Own Correspondent)", *The Musical Times*, 1st March 1903, p. 190.
64. Dublin, Brown and Nolan Limited, 1906, no page number (italics mine). Flood also wrote a short essay on the connections between Palestrina and Bishop Thomas Goldwell, "the last survivor of the old hierarchy in England" ("Palestrina and Bishop Goldwell. A link with England", *The Tablet*, 17th April 1926, p. 7).
65. Rebecca Troeger, *The formation of musical communities in Twentieth-Century Irish Literature*, PhD Dissertation, Boston College, 2014, p. 142.

Catholic modernist poet, and Director of the National Gallery of Ireland from 1950 to 1963) did – by placing Palestrina among the "saints of music" and promoting "the music of the Liturgy" as "the source from which the Irish music-school of the future, like the modern Russian and French schools, should draw sustenance."[66] This was exactly:

> the paradox of Martyn's cultural position[:] while he drew great intellectual conviction and spiritual strength from his own encounters with European Catholicism, he passionately struggled to share the fruits of his privileged experience with his fellow countrymen, clerical and lay, who failed to understand his national dream.[67]

Emblematically enough, in this brief though dense quotation from *Dramatis Personae*, while acting as a personal and cultural mediator between Martyn – a "nineteenth-century [Irish] idealist" and Catholic high-class "eccentric"[68] – and the "impressionist view of art and life"[69] of the English Methodist-reared middle-class Symons, the Anglo-Irish middle-class Yeats – who was born in a family historically involved in the Church of Ireland – places Palestrina alongside with the English pioneer of the Gothic revival Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–1852) and the German composer Richard Wagner (1813–1883). Thus, while pondering back on his stay at Tulira Castle and radically disapproving of the characteristics of its Gothic hall that recalled "the worst inventions of the Gothic Revival" imported in Ireland by the Catholic convert Pugin, Yeats – nonetheless – also recalls how Martyn's Puginesque "pillars", "stair", and "varnished roof" repeatedly turned into "a stage set for *Parsifal*" thanks to the feeble Rosicrucian[70] light of "a

66. Thomas MacGreevy, "For Vincent O'Brien", *The Capuchin Annual*, 1945–1946, p. 238.
67. Nolan, "Edward Martyn and the Founding of Dublin's Palestrina Choir", p. 102.
68. Thomas MacGreevy, "Edward Martyn. An Irish Catholic Eccentric", *The Father Mathew Record*, April 1943. p. 2.
69. Yeats, *The Collected Works of William Butler Yeats. Volume III: Autobiographies*, p. 247.
70. On the Rosicrucian implications of this "little Roman lamp" cf. the American folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland (1824–1903) in *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1892, p. 325, and the Irish writer Sean O'Faolain (1900–1991) in the essay *Æ and W.B.* (1939), in *Selected Essays*, edited by Brad Kent, Montreal andKingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016, p. 108.

little Roman lamp" and the twilight-like play of shadows it produced, thus allowing the then Wagnerian-oriented Yeats and Symons to parallel Martyn's "cult of liturgical aestheticism [...]" that find its "grandest expression"[71] in *Parsifal*, though not from the point of view of Roman Catholicism or, more widely speaking, of one of the different denominations of Christianity available in Ireland at that time. At Tulira Castle, this miraculous Wagnerian intertwining[72] was perhaps conjured up also through Martyn's solely organ (i.e. instrumental) performance of "the superhuman perfection of Palestrina",[73] which excluded verbal factionalism and conflictual denominationalism with all its cultural, social and institutional consequences. Though apparently discordant with the coeval Catholic Church's typical frowning upon it "as an elaborate solo instrument in liturgical contexts",[74] the polyphonically and dialogically symbolic protagonism of the *Palestrinian* organ[75] at Tulira Castle, "so placed among the pillars that it seemed some ancient instrument", could even make the miracle of becoming *vocal* in one musico-literary passage of Arthur Symons's "causerie" of his listening experience:

> in the evening my host plays [...] Palestrina on the organ, in the half darkness of the hall, and I wander between the pillars of black marble, *hearing the many voices* rising into the dome: [...] Palestrina, an exultation and a triumph, in which *the many voices* of white souls go up ardently into heaven.[76]

71. Edward Martyn, "Wagner's Parsifal, or the Cult of Liturgical Aetheticism", *The Irish Review*, 3:34 (1913), p. 535.
72. On Yeats and Wagner see Enrico Reggiani, "An Irish literary Bayreuth. Yeats, Joyce and the Revivalist Wagner", *Joyce Studies in Italy 4 (o.s. 17): Joyce, Yeats, and the Revival*, edited by John McCourt, Roma, Edizioni Q, 2015, pp. 197–212.
73. Martyn, "Wagner's Parsifal, or the Cult of Liturgical Aetheticism", p. 540.
74. Hermann J. Busch and Martin Herchenroeder, *The German-speaking Lands*, in Christopher S. Anderson (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music*, New York and London, Routledge, 2012, p. 50
75. What Martyn played was not a "harmonium", but an "organ", as Yeats himself wrote in 1925 (*Bounty of Sweden*, p. 51, note 2), while Una Jeffers (1884–1962) called it "a great pipe-organ" (*Visits to Ireland: travel-diaries*, Los Angeles, The Ward Richie Press, 1954, p. 22)
76. Arthur Symons, "A Causerie from a Castle in Ireland", *The Savoy*, 6 (October, 1896), p. 93 (italics mine).

Samuel Lover and Niccolò Paganini; Edward Martyn and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: as seen above, Yeats did not entirely approve of these two different relationships between cultural-musical protagonists of both Irish culture and Italian music (with their overall nature and implications: the purely instrumental, self-referential, individualistically virtuosic ones of the former; the purely vocal, other-directed, communitarianly choral ones of the latter). Perhaps surprisingly and apparently in contrast with his alleged unmusicality, Yeats went a different musico-literary way from Lover and Martyn during the whole of his lifetime and creative life, since his lifelong interest and engagement in theatrical culture and experience were paralleled by interest and engagement in Italian opera, though of a very specific genre and circumscribed historical period.

While opera *lato sensu* (unidentified and perhaps unidentifiable "old English operas", seventeenth-century Purcell operas, mid-nineteenth-century French grand opéra, Richard Wagner's wort-ton-drama, late nineteenth-century Gilbert-and-Sullivan "operas") figures sporadically in Yeats's pages, eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Italian opera seems to be almost totally absent from his works: no references to the so-called eighteenth-century Italian schools (Neapolitan, Roman, and Venetian), and none to Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, *et al.* – except perhaps for the bizarre indirect mention in the 1900 version of the short novel *The Speckled Bird* of an "opera singer at Naples who had her nature and she drowned herself because a man [whom] she had married because he had won a billiard match had beaten her."[77] Instead, this is not the case with some of the protagonists of the birth of Italian opera in the transition between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, their early seventeenth-century inheritors, and the recitative, which was their fundamental cultural and compositional resource. As a matter of fact, given the dominance (though slowly waning) of both the abovementioned Italian method and gesture in Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth century, it may be surprising to discover that,

77. *The Speckled Bird. An Autobiographical Novel with Variant Versions*, ed. by William H. O'Donnell, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 136.

in the important essay *The Symbolism of Poetry* (1900), after Wagner's ideas, the allegedly unmusical Yeats competently mentions the fact that "opera, and with it modern music, arose from certain talks at the house of one Giovanni Bardi of Florence"[78] – which is predictably in tune with what the English artistic polymath Florence Farr (1860–1917) wrote on "the *Italian method* of singing exemplified by"[79] composers like Giulio Caccini (1550–1618), Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643), Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674) in her 1907 *Note*[80] to Yeats's short explanatory prose on *Music for Lyrics*. His perhaps unexpected interest in "one Giovanni Bardi of Florence" and, as a direct correlation, his competence in the music theory and practice of the Florentine Camerata is even linguistically confirmed by the textual occurrence of some specialized musico-literary syntagms (e.g. "heightened speech" and "regulated declamation") that he employed in his explanatory essay on *The Music for use in the Performance of these Plays*[81] (1908) and that are frequently used in coeval musicological sources.[82]

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78. *The Symbolism of Poetry*, in *The Collected Works of William Butler Yeats. Volume IV: Early Essays*, R.J. Finneran–G. Bornstein (ed.), New York, Scribner, 2007, p. 113. On the connection between Wagner and the Florentine Camerata (with Greek tragedy as the shared "point of departure") cf. e.g. Alan Roy Anbari, *Richard Wagner's Concepts of History*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2007, p. 141.
79. Ruth Katz, *Divining the Powers of Music: Aesthetic Theory and the Invention of Opera*, New Brunswick and London, Transaction Publishers, 1994², p. 107 (italics mine).
80. *The Countess Cathleen. The Land of Heart's Desire. The Unicorn from the Stars. Being the Third Volume of The Collected Works in Verse and Prose of William Butler Yeats*, Stratford-on-Avon, The Shakespeare Head Press, 1908, p. 236.
81. *The Collected Works of William Butler Yeats. Volume II. The Plays*, D.R. Clark and R.E. Clark (eds.),New York, Scribner, 2001, pp. 757 and 758.
82. Cf., e.g., the syntagm "heightened speech" in César Saerchinger (ed.), *The Art of Music: Volume Nine. The Opera*, New York, The National Society of Music, 1916, p. 13; and the syntagm "regulated declamation" in George Alexander Macfarren (1813–1887), *Music. History*, in *The Encyclopedia Britannica in Thirty Volumes*, New York, The Werner Company, 1902, vol. xvii, p. 101. Emblematically enough, the latter figures also in two foundational eighteenth-century musico-literary works by John Brown (1715–1766): *Dissertation on the Rise, Union and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of* Poetry and Music, London, Davis and Reymers, 1763, p. 116, and *The History of the Rise and Progress of Poetry*, Newcastle, White and Saint, 1764, p. 130. The presence of the two abovementioned syntagms could also be interpreted as one of the effects of Yeats's interaction with Arnold Dolmetsch (1858–1940), one of the most influential figures in the early twentieth-century revival

Yeats's 1900 reference to "one Giovanni Bardi of Florence" follows, at a distance of only three years, a mention in his 1897 story *The Tables of the Law* of another protagonist of Florentine musical life in the transition from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century: Giovanni Cellini[83] (1451–1527), "the [Florentine] lute-player who was father to Benvenuto Cellini"[84] (1500–1571). Yeats could have read about his excellent musical competence in *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini Written by Himself*,[85] whose English translation by the poet and cultural historian John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) was in his library.[86] This Florentine connection between Giovanni Cellini and Giovanni Bardi is all the more significant because it sheds light on three different aspects of Yeats's knowledge of Italian music and composers.

Firstly, it is consonant with cultural-musical research in the 1890s, which, for example, held that "the revolution which took place at the end of the sixteenth century did not do more than adapt and develop forces which had been in existence for nearly a hundred years", thus countering the apocalyptic view that "the little knot of men who assembled in Count Bardi's palace to discuss the Nuova Musica have been accepted by posterity as the Dantons and Robespierres of a bloodless revolution, as the arch conspirators of a

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of early music, who concluded the *Introduction* of his *Interpretation of the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries revealed by contemporary evidence* (1915) as follows: "It is advisable, however, before beginning this study, to clear our mind of prejudice and preconceived ideas, and *put aside intolerant modernity*; or else we may, as others have done, corrupt and twist about the meaning of even the clearest statement. We should take warning from the eighteenth-century connoisseurs, who declared Gothic architecture barbarous, or the early nineteenth-century art critics, who could see no beauty in pre-Raphaelite art" (London, Novello, 1915, p. viii).

83. On Giovanni Cellini cf. Timothy J. McGee, "Giovanni Cellini, piffero di Firenze", *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 32 (1997): 201–221; reprinted as "Giovanni Cellini, Piffero of Florence", *Historical Brass Society Journal*, 12 (2000), pp. 210–225.
84. *The Tables of the Law*, in *Mythologies*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1959, p. 297
85. "Giovanni [Cellini] began to turn his mind to music, and together with the theory learned to play most excellently on the viol and the flute" (*The Life of Benvenuto Cellini Written by Himself*, translated by J.A. Symonds, London, Nimmo, 1889,[3] Book First, p. 5).
86. Edward O'Shea, *A Descriptive Catalog of W.B. Yeats's Library*, p. 54, n. 358.

revolt against choral polyphony, and the inventors of the melodic style and its natural successor, the instrumental."[87]

Secondly, the connection Cellini-Bardi also shows that Yeats was strongly interested in Florentine Renaissance music already in the 1890s, that is, some years before the first decade of the twentieth century during which, according to William Carpenter, he developed and manifested his predilection for Italian Renaissance as "the historical realization of Unity of Being", often expressed by the metaphor of the unison, rooted in the "Renaissance tradition of universal order and harmony, symbolized by the images of cosmic order, *musical harmony*, and universal health."[88]

Thirdly and lastly, through the connection Cellini-Bardi, Yeats also emphasized two features of Florentine (musical) Renaissance whose potential influence on Irish culture of his age he valued greatly: on the one hand, the stress on the spiritual foundations of art, exemplified in *The Tables of the Law* (1897) by the transmission of "a secret book of [Joachim of Flora] called the *Liber inducens in Evangelium aeternum*" which passed "from generation to generation until it came to the lute-player who was father to Benvenuto Cellini";[89] on the other hand, the emphasis on the need for "a philosophy of poetry in the doctrine of symbolism" that Yeats epitomized in Giovanni Bardi, since – as he wrote in *The Symbolism of Poetry* (1900) –

> all writers, *all artists of any kind*, in so far as they have had any philosophical or critical power, perhaps just in so far as they have been deliberate artists at all, have had some philosophy, some criticism of their art; and it has often been this philosophy, or this criticism, that has evoked their most startling inspiration, calling into outer life some portion of the divine life, or of the buried reality, which could alone extinguish in the emotions what their philosophy or their criticism would extinguish in the intellect.[90]

87. Anon., "Giovanni and Benvenuto Cellini", *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 33:596 (1st October 1892), pp. 593 and 592.
88. William M. Carpenter, "The 'Green Helmet' Poems and Yeats's Myth of the Renaissance", *Modern Philology*, 67:1 (1969), pp. 54, 56.
89. *The Tables of the Law*, p. 296.
90. *The Symbolism of Poetry*, p. 114 (italics mine).

One can move easily from what has been said above to conclude that the "Italian method" and the "Italian gesture" of the Florentine musical Renaissance had great impact on Yeats's musico-literary experience and culture[91] and represented for him what Italian Belcanto and nineteenth-century Italian melodrama represented for Joyce.[92] However, unlike Joyce's, Yeats's approach to that portion of music history and its correlated cultural-musical language was always sustained by his anthropological awareness that "no vowel must ever be prolonged *unnaturally*, no word of mine must ever change into a mere musical note, *no singer of my words must ever cease to be a man and become an instrument.*"[93] Such lifelong awareness kept emerging strongly in his work and thought (at least) until two years before his death in 1939 (more specifically, in a letter he wrote to Dorothy Wellesley in 1937) in the form of both the creative-compositional formula "music, the *natural* words in the *natural* order" and the Irish musico-literary project to "sing" about a new Ireland by going

> back to the people. Music will keep out temporary ideas, for music is the nations clothing of what is ancient & deathless. I do not mean of course what musicians call the music of words – that is all corpse factory, humanity melted down & poured out in a bottle.[94]

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91. For example, as regards his pioneering enterprise of the Abbey Theatre, he dealt with the typical musico-literary issue of the theatrical "intonation of passionate speech" (*The Music for Use in the Performance of these Plays*, p. 757) by applying what looks like a nineteenth-century Irish elaboration of the Italian method and gesture of Claudio Monteverdi's *seconda prattica*.
92. On this aspect of the Yeats-Joyce relationships cf. my "A singer born": tracce musico(-) letterarie in Joyce and Yeats. Una ricognizione comparativa, in Enrico Reggiani, *Il do maggiore di questa vita. Cinque saggi sulla cultura musico(-)letteraria di lingua inglese*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2016, pp. 77–98.
93. *The Music for use in the performance of these plays*, p. 757 (italics mine)
94. Letter *To Dorothy Wellesley, 8 February [1937]* (*The Collected Letters of William Butler Yeats*, Oxford University Press (InteLex Electronic Edition), Oxford 2002, Accession letter #6804 (italics mine).

# D.H. Lawrence, Montecassino and the "Spirit of Place"

*Peter Vassallo*

An episode concerning Lawrence's sojourn in Italy seems to me to have special significance in that it relates to his visit to the abbey of Montecassino in February 1920 and to his account of his visit, published later in his *Memoir of Maurice Magnus*, which is one of the most remarkable pieces of travel writing in Lawrence's prose.[1] On his way travelling south from Rome, Lawrence had passed by the big noble towering monastery like a fortress crowning a great precipice. He and Frieda were in Capri when he received a letter from a friend, a certain Maurice Magnus. He had met Magnus earlier in Florence in the circle of British expatriates, including Norman Douglas and Reggie Turner, many of them homosexuals. Magnus informed him that he would be staying at the monastery as a guest there (he was, ostensibly, intending to join the Benedictine order) and invited Lawrence to visit him. Lawrence was both attracted and repelled by Magnus who excited his homoerotic tendencies.[2] Magnus, it should be said, had no fixed income and lived by his wits and his modest literary talent, cadging money from his friends whenever the occasion presented itself for he was frequently impecunious. There was an ulterior motive in Magnus's invitation to Lawrence to visit the monastery. Lawrence had then established a number of publishing literary contacts and could possibly be of

1. K. Cushman (ed.), *Memoir of Maurice Magnus*, Santa Rosa, Black Sparrow Press, 1987.
2. See Jeffrey Meyers, *D.H. Lawrence. A Biography*, London, Macmillan, 1990, pp. 260–261.

assistance in the eventual publication of his projected "Memoirs of the Foreign Legion" which he was in the process of completing in his cell at Montecassino. The provisional title of his projected book was *Dregs* which was in fact an account of his horrendous experience in the Foreign Legion in the years before the First World War and from which he had earlier deserted. Magnus intended to get Lawrence's assistance in the publishing of his "Memoir" and was also hoping to tap Lawrence for a much needed loan which, as was his wont, he would never repay.[3]

Lawrence and Frieda were staying in Capri when he received Magnus's invitation and he decided to go to Montecassino alone since Frieda disliked Magnus. Lawrence's ambivalent feelings for Magnus were projected onto the Monastery. Lawrence's first impression was that of entering a huge fortress palace in the late Medieval times, not a comfortable place to be living in "dead silent stone cold everywhere."[4] His visit happened to be on a very cold evening in February 1920 and the uncomfortable way of living of the Benedictine monks made him think of life in a Cambridge college with the dons putting up with their discomforts and with their punctiliousness and petty jealousies. The atmosphere of life in a castle or monastery that gave him the odd sensation that he was a child of the present who happened to stray into the "grandiose violent past of the Middle Ages" and the peasants in their brown homespun frieze and skin sandals added to this sense of the medieval past. It is here that "the spirit of place" asserts itself, that strange sinister spirit – a spirit at once alluring and discomforting presides over the place where those ancient *numina* or gods impose themselves on one's consciousness and which we resist at our peril, before we are engulfed by mechanical progress which flows like flowing lava silently obliterating all in its way "the perfect mechanizing of human life" which he abhorred. It is this spirit which informs most of his fine travel writing in *Twilight in Italy* and *Sea and Sardinia.*

3. See Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D.H. Lawrence. Triumph to Exile 1912–1922*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 566.
4. Cushman, p. 48.

Lawrence's poetic sensibility impels him to perceive the monastery and its precincts living in a sort of agony like Tithonus (Lawrence's simile) unable to die and clinging tenaciously to the past. It makes him sensitively respond to the liminality – the in-betweenness – of dying humanistic culture and a present intrusion of the modern mechanical life in the form of the railway at some distance below "with glistening lines making a long black swoop into the hills. And trains with white smoke bringing tiny people swarming like flies have replaced a few stray, straggling pilgrims."[5]

The monastery with its medieval aura of cold silence was, for Lawrence, a brief refuge from the political turmoil spreading throughout Italy at a time when Mussolini was making his bid for power, when Fascist *squadristi* were clashing violently with the followers of the Red Banner. The train and the railway were symptoms of the disease of egalitarian modern ideologies (as Lawrence imagined it) encroaching on the serene past of feudalism and hierarchy. His poems "Hibiscus and Salvia flowers" written a few months later in Taormina attest to this disconcerting feeling of unease which dramatize his feelings about revolutionary socialism and the danger of the individual self being surrendered to a wider overwhelming ideology.[6]

Inside the building Magnus takes him on a quick tour of the monastery – the Bramante courtyard and the great well in the centre, its Renaissance colonnade of arches giving a momentary sensation of jolliness but now devoid of colourful pilgrims of the past, those old "grand gentlemen in scarlet trunk hose, ladies in brocade gowns and page boys with fluffed golden hair" conjured up by his imaginative response, have faded into the miasma of the past. Instead there are occasional excursions, in throngs, bringing with them the sordidness of industrialism. Lawrence, as he repeatedly claimed, was not Baedeker and here in his *Memoirs of Magnus* as well as in *Sea and Sardinia* and his earlier travels along Lake Garda, one is always

5. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

6. See Tom Paulin's fine essay "'Ibiscus and Salvia Flowers': The Puritan Imagination", in Peter Preston and Peter Hoare (eds), *D.H. Lawrence in the Modern World*, London, Macmillan, 1989, pp. 180–192.

aware of his personal and intimate response to the scene around him rather than a description of the architectural or artistic features of the place which are only mentioned *en passant* as it were.

Magnus, who was homosexual, had struck a chord with Lawrence who was fascinated with homosexuality and with his aristocratic bearing. He had been a collector of celebrities, and business manager of Gordon Craig, the theatre director, and on Craig's suggestion had conducted business for Isadora Duncan. There were rumours (not unfounded) that Magnus was the son of Kaiser Wilhelm II's illegitimate daughter Hedwige Rosamunde Liebetrau who had married a Polish *émigré*, Charles Ferdinand Magnus, who had become a naturalized citizen of the United States sometime in the 1860s. Lawrence at the time of his visit to Montecassino was probably aware of Maurice Magnus's aristocratic connections.[7] Incidentally, Hedwige's portrait by the artist Paul is in the Doria Pamphili gallery in Rome. Lawrence later commented that Magnus had "Hohenzollern blood in his veins."[8]

Once in the intimacy of his cell in the monastery, Magnus confided to Lawrence his anxiety over a bouncing cheque with which he had defrauded a Hotel in Anzio and expressed his fear that the *carabinieri* were searching for him. In his cell where he was hoping to abscond with the pretext of becoming a Benedictine monk, Magnus showed Lawrence the shoddy typescript of some chapters ("rather raggedly typed out") of his secret "Memoir of the Foreign Legion" which both fascinated and shocked him. The original title was *Dregs: The Experience of an American in the Foreign Legion* which give a graphic account of the sordid lives of the Legionnaires, "the sticky male mess" of life in the barracks. Magnus wanted Lawrence's opinion and hoped he would put him in touch with a potential publisher. Magnus was in fact a deserter from the French Foreign Legion which he had joined in 1916 in a moment of reckless idealism for the Allied cause, and was then living in a state of anxiety, evading arrest.

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7. See Elizabeth Wright (ed.), *Maurice Magnus. A Biography,* Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, p. 25.
8. Cushman, p.151.

In his first encounter with Magnus (in the company of Norman Douglas) Lawrence describes him as follows:

> He [Magnus] looked a man of about forty, spruce and youngish in his deportment, very pink-faced and very clean, very spruce, very alert, like a sparrow painted to resemble a tom-tit.[9]

With his patronizing attitude Magnus took Lawrence on a tour of the monastery all the way down to the crypt which was usually out of bounds to visitors. Magnus persuaded Lawrence to put on his big over-coat made of black cloth with its collar of silky back sealskin which Magnus had lent him because he was feeling the effects of the "dead, silent, cold stone everywhere." Lawrence's imagination is inspired by the scene in the crypt which prompted him to imagine himself as a sort of Parsifal (a modern version) in a New York expensive coat being led by the sinister magician Klingsor (in Wagner's *Parsifal*) who, according to the Parsifal legend, had stolen the spear which pierced the side of Christ and was attempting to have the innocent Parsifal seduced by the flower maidens – an image probably suggested to Lawrence by the flower and tree motifs in the colourful modern mosaics adorning the dank walls of the crypt. Interestingly, Lawrence casts Magnus in the role of a sinister seducer.

During his brief visit to the monastery Lawrence also met Dom Bernardo, Magnus's friend. In the process of publication of Lawrence's *Memoir of Magnus*, Martin Secker, his London publisher, had changed the name from the original Dom Martino. This Benedictine monk was in fact Dom Mauro Inguanez, a Maltese monk. From Lawrence's later account in his *Memoir of Magnus* it seems that he was taken with this erudite Benedictine who was at the time the Archivist at Montecassino and a renowned classical scholar. He was also a supervisor of the novices and was entrusted with the duties of "foresterario" or guest master who was in charge of visiting pilgrims who sometimes stayed in the monastery for a night or

9. In Lawrence's introduction to *Memoirs of the Foreign Legion*, London, Secker, 1924, p. 31.

two.[10] These were usually benefactors of the Monastery from the "borghesia italiana" (mainly "signore per bene, di una certa età").[11] Lawrence and Dom Bernardo discussed Italian politics over a few glasses of wine late into the night. Lawrence seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed his conversations with Dom Bernardo because he later records that "he parted with real regret" from him.

The following afternoon Lawrence and Magnus went for a walk in the precincts of the monastery where they thought they heard the whining of a child but which was actually an abandoned puppy, where they met an old wizened farmer "deep lined like a gnarled bough", one of those "contadini" crying their speech as crows cry and living their lives as lizards among the rocks, sustained by the time old will to live from day to day. In this thumbnail sketch Lawrence conveys the harsh conditions of these hardened humble "contadini" who mumble insentient answers, as a tree might speak.

The visit to Montecassino and the simple daily life of the Benedictines sparked off his earlier feelings about a sort of monastic life in a community of like-minded souls which he called Rananim – that rather elitist group wishing to detach themselves from the civilized world of "war and squalor" of which the symbol was to be the Phoenix, the mythical bird resurrecting from its own ashes, after self-immolation. A scheme which, like the Romantic "pantisocracy", never materialized.

The following day Lawrence parted from Magnus and Montecassino and eventually moved to Fontana Vecchia in Taormina with his wife Frieda. It was here where Magnus eventually turned up with his pathetic story of how he had to flee desperately down the slopes of the Monastery when the *carabinieri* informed Dom Mauro that they were looking for the "signore Americano" who had defrauded the Hotel Victoria at Anzio "per un affare di truffa." From then on Magnus was always on the run evading arrest and he eventually moved to Malta with a letter of introduction to

10. See Carol Jaccarini, *Dom Mauro Inguanez, Benedictine of Montecassino*, Malta, Mdina Cathedral Museum, 1987, p. 26. See also Kinkead-Weekes, *D.H. Lawrence. Triumph to Exile*, p. 584.

two of Dom Mauro's Maltese friends. It was in Malta living on borrowed money (mainly from two Maltese friends Michael ["Kelinu"] Borg and Walter Salomone) that the Italian police caught up with him and where in his small house in Mdina he decided to commit suicide rather than face internment in an Italian prison.

Montecassino still had a certain resonance with Lawrence because when he was writing *Aaron's Rod* he thought of sending his hero, the alienated flute-playing Aaron, to the Monastery of Montecassino but on reflection chose to let him find his way around in the "curious" enclave of British expatriates in Florence who were living in Florence because they considered themselves "non grata" in England.

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# Naples and the Anglo-American Allied Forces: John Horne Burns's *The Gallery* and Francesco Rosi's "Napoli '44"

*Gaetana Marrone*

## Mapping out a Discourse

I briefly wanted to address my approach in constructing this essay within the context of the cultural relations between Great Britain and Italy. I chose a filmmaker who, although honoured and favourably reviewed by the English press throughout his career, had somehow eluded to adapt his films from British literary sources. Yet, he had relied on French (Prosper Mérimée, Edmonde Charles-Roux), Russian (Andrei Platonov), and Colombian (Gabriel García Márquez) novelists, besides the Italian Gian Battista Basile, Emilio Lussu, Leonardo Sciascia, Carlo and Primo Levi.[1] As the film critic John Francis Lane wrote in the mid-1970s:

> In Britain Rosi has began to make his mark amongst connoisseurs thanks to the recent prestige success of *The Mattei Affair* which earned serious articles about his work in papers like *The Times* and *Guardian* [...]. Rosi has not had the fashionable success that Lina Wertmuller, for example, has been getting lately.

1. I am referring to *Carmen* (1984), *Dimenticare Palermo* (To Forget Palermo, 1990), *Tre fratelli* (Three Brothers, 1981), *Cronaca di una morte annunciata* (Chronicle of a Death Foretold, 1987), as well as *C'era una volta* (More Than a Miracle, 1967), *Uomini contro* (Just Another War, 1970), *Cadaveri eccellenti* (Illustrious Corpses, 1976), *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Eboli, 1979), *La tregua* (The Truce, 1997).

> There may be an explanation. Rosi's films do not have much sex in them [. . .]. Perhaps some day Rosi will make a film *about* sex, or anyway about permissiveness as a political issue.[2]

In this respect, I purposely selected "Napoli '44", a project that Rosi never realized but somehow has particular meaning for several of his films. In fact, "Napoli '44" might have been *that* film about permissiveness as a political issue: it documents how the Neapolitans were liberated by the Allied troops and were thrust violently into a city of chaos. To explore this claim, I focus on the relationship between the British and the Americans while dwelling on passages and scenes which I believe bear special import.

## Naples: The Author's own Journey

Born in Naples on 15th November 1922 into an upper-class family, Francesco Rosi belongs to a generation for whom the Second World War produced profound changes in personal attitudes, which eventually developed into anti-fascist and reformist beliefs. He attended the prestigious Liceo Umberto I and became an assiduous movie buff at a very young age. He learned his life lessons from his exuberant family and the culture of the South; he developed an eagerness to pursue experiences that could carry him into unbounded realms of thought and feeling. In his artistic investigation of contemporary life and form, Rosi evolves over time, but the bond with the artistic heritage of Naples remains a repository of specific notions and ideas throughout his long career. He will not be afraid to venture his moral credibility on a wide range of potentially controversial subjects concerned with the complex actuality of postwar Italy.

Through the centuries Naples has remained influential, serving as a model for representing national identities. In the 1950s, Rosi began to feel invested with the role of interpreter of his city's social sphere, overloaded with tensions and contradictions. Naples is the

2. J.F. Lane, "Films and Politics in Italy: Francesco Rosi's Example", *Films and Filming*, 22:8, May 1976, p. 16. To his credit, Lane, who also had cameo roles in *Il momento della verità* (The Moment of Truth, 1965) and *Lucky Luciano* (1973), first met Rosi in Sicily in 1962 on the set of *Salvatore Giuliano* and covered his career ever since.

subject of a number of unfilmed projects which precede *La sfida* (The Challenge, 1958), among them "Napoli '44", which Rosi announced as his third film after *I magliari* (The Swindlers, 1959).[3] In a personal interview, he swiftly defines it as "a story about Naples seen through the eyes of an American soldier after the liberation" (my translation).[4]

The initial idea for the film was born in 1959, when Rosi proposed "Napoli '44" to Franco Cristaldi, the legendary producer of *La sfida* and *I magliari*, and of *Salvatore Giuliano* three years later. It was based on John Horne Burns's *The Gallery* published by Harper and Row in 1947, to great critical acclaim. In the words of one reviewer, Gore Vidal, it was simply "the best book of World War II."[5] In seventeen chapters, or better still "Portraits" and "Promenades", Burns recounts life in occupied North Africa and Naples in 1944 from the point of view of several diverse characters. In 1942, he was drafted into the United States Army as a private, then sent overseas in 1943, and served in military intelligence in Casablanca, Algiers and, for a year and a half, in Italy. Plans to cooperate on a screenplay with Sergio Amidei and Paul Jarrico were made in November 1959. Amidei had worked with Roberto Rossellini on *Roma città aperta* (Open City, 1945) and *Paisà* (1946), Jarrico was an American screenwriter who had moved to Europe after being blacklisted in Hollywood during the years of McCarthyism. But after several months of negotiations and a couple of meetings, the plan for the film fell through: the participants kept arguing about Burns' negative depiction of the Neapolitans as well as the Americans, and could not agree (in particular Jerrico) on Amidei's approach, which was: "make it gutsy, human, stark, and

3. T. Chiaretti, "Il suo terzo film è Napoli 1944", *Mondo Nuovo*, 31st January 1960, p. 10. See also M. Liverani, "Rosi pensa ad un film nella Napoli del 1944", *Paese Sera*, 20 November 1958, p. 3.

4. Personal interview, Rome, 10th December 1999.

5. "That same year Burns and I met several times", Vidal writes, "each a war novelist, and each properly wary of the other. Burns was then 26 but looked older, with a receding hairline above a face striking in its asymmetry, one ear flat against the head, the other stuck out." G. Vidal, "Speaking of Books, John Horne Burns", *New York Times Book Review*, 30th May 1965, p. BR2. Hemingway and John Dos Passos, among others, also praised the book.

don't say much."[6] Meanwhile Rosi ventured to Berlin to meet with William Holden to offer him the leading role for his film. But Holden, who was at the peak of his career with the enormous success of *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957, dir. David Lean), was disdainful toward the young director for his limited experience.[7] Amidei eventually walked out, and Jerrico was instructed by the production not to proceed with the treatment. In August 1960, Rosi finally told him that the film was indefinitely postponed. Most importantly it had become too complex for Cristaldi to raise the money. The project was shelved but Rosi felt the haunting presence of *The Gallery* for many years to come.

## Men at War

What caught Rosi's attention in Burns's novel was not the anti-heroic stories about the liberating army but the peculiar conditions of the war's political and economic dynamics it symbolized. It was its bold, realistic portrayal of the condition of men at war, with the corruption that inevitably follows in the aftermath of victory, the humiliation and degradation of the hungry, the social divide between the occupiers and the occupied. Burns's culturally pivotal reportage enabled Rosi to revisit the historically common experience of his hometown as symptomatic of larger national issues.

From the outset, Burns warns his readers that, while his characters are fictitious, "the descriptions of Casablanca, Algiers, and Naples are based on fact."[8] Indeed, life in the Allied-occupied Naples is depicted with a reality of detail that preserves a strong veneer of objectivity and matches Rosi's definition of *film documentato*. For Rosi, the director must, first and foremost, formulate a "documented" understanding of his subject.[9] A film, he

6. L. Ceplair, *A Biography of Paul Jarrico: The Marxist and the Movies*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2007, p. 182. In the book, Jarrico describes Amidei as "'temperamental, arrogant, chauvinistic', a bull who always vented his fury on the weakest person in the room." *Ibid.*
7. Personal interview, Rome, 6 June 2003.
8. From the inscription to J.H. Burns, *The Gallery*, New York, Harper and Row, 1970, no pages.
9. F. Rosi, "Documentario? No, film documentato", *L'Unità*, 1st August 1999, p. 21.

has said, "sees, documents, denounces, imagines, and narrates" (my translation).[10] Moreover, it is a responsible act. Throughout his career, what interested Rosi most is how characters react to the social norms and economic structures that define their historical condition. Burns's *The Gallery* is at once an unbound historical field and a receptacle of social consciousness in which the facts disclose their human meaning.

In streamlining the material, Burns is not linear. In North Africa he is too little involved with navigating the borderless world of the Allied Forces wrestling with survival. In Naples, however, he finds their geographical place of action in one of the city's architectural marvels: the Galleria Umberto I, a spectacular arcade through which the many characters pass by. Dedicated in 1892, the Galleria was traditionally the commercial, social, and artistic center of the city, with its entrance opposite the Teatro San Carlo, and located in the vicinity of the harbour.

> There's an arcade in Naples that they call the Galleria Umberto Primo. It's a cross between a railroad station and a church. You think you are in a museum till you see the bars and the shops [...]. In August 1944, it was the unofficial heart of Naples. It was a living and subdividing cell of vermouth, Allied soldiery, and the Italian people.
>
> Everybody in Naples came to the Galleria Umberto. At night the flags, the columns, the archangels blowing their trumpets on the cornices, the metal grids that held the glass before the bombs broke it, heard more than they saw in the daytime. There was the pad of American combat boots on the prowl, the slide of Neapolitan sandals, the click of British hobnails out of rhythm from the vermouth.[11]

And so begins Burns's semi-autobiography. The Galleria provides the structural framework for a display of portraits – grotesque, sad, touching. The promenading narrator describes the largest gathering space in the city as an embodiment of the coalescence of public life

10. A.G. Mancino and S. Zambetti, *Francesco Rosi*, rev. ed., Milan, Il Castoro, 1998, p. 5.
11. Burns, p. 1.

at wartimes. More importantly, he vividly literalizes the assimilation of the British with a cadence *out of rhythm*.

## The British, the Americans, and the hustling Neapolitans

The British were the predominant influence during the Italian Campaign. General Harold Alexander led the amphibious landing near Salerno on September 9, 1943 and remained in command until December 1944 when he relinquished his powers to General Mark W. Clark.[12] On 1st October 1943, the "Kings Dragoon Guards" entered Naples closely followed by the Allied Forces. Among those arriving with the British troops there was one of the most renowned war correspondents, Alan Moorehead (1910-1983), who wrote for the London *Daily Express* and whose dispatches covered the war, with incise simplicity, from the western African front to the shores of Normandy. "From the summer of 1943 onwards the Allies, and the British in particular", writes historian Paul Ginsborg, "staked their claim to Italy. Control of the Mediterranean was traditionally a strategic aim of the British, and the Americans acquiesced to the British desire to be senior partner."[13] Churchill, who had been an admirer of Mussolini, favoured the continuance of the traditional social order. King Victor Emanuel and Marshal Pietro Badoglio were the most compliant partners the British were going to have. In August 1944, the Foreign Office drafted a document advocating that Italy "should remain under British control until her people had learned from the British how to behave in a democratic fashion."[14] But not all British nationals shared this condescending view towards the Italians. For example, in his military memoirs entitled *Naples '44* (1978), Norman Lewis, an officer in the Army Intelligence Corps, describes the horrors and travails of civilians under shells and bombs.

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12. Clark became the Supreme Commander of the Allied Force Headquarters and lead the Fifth Army in its liberation of Rome in June 1944. In Curzio Malaparte's novel *La pelle* (the Skin, 1949), Mark Cork is a disguised allusion to General Clark.
13. P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988*, London, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 39.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

The British hegemonic contempt played an important role at wartime but it was countered by a rather different American position which was strategically less hostile. The differences between the two Allies can best be illustrated by the catch-phrases that they used for their policies in Italy: "the British proclaimed their intention to 'prevent epidemics and disorders', the Americans to 'create stability and prosperity.'"[15] There is no doubt which is more appealing.

This proportionally alternate view is alluded to in Burns's Seventh Portrait dedicated to Giulia, a nineteen year-old who never batted an eyelash at the bombings and rarely took to the shelters:

> In 1943 the Allied bombers hit Naples incessantly. They came in the afternoon with a noise like mad cicadas [...]. The English bombers made sorties almost daily from noon to fifteen hours. While families scurried screaming underground [...]. Often the American planes dropped nothing but leaflets telling Neapolitans that the Allies were coming as friends.[16]

After the reassuring pamphlet bombing, Giulia, "had long arrived at the conclusion that it mightn't be such a bad thing to be liberated after all."[17] She knew the score.

In the summer of 1943, Giulia may set the base for America to become the major nation of reference, economically and politically, during the postwar era. By early October, however, when Naples fell to the Fifth Army, this comforting feeling over the liberators was doomed to crumble. Giulia reverts to emotions far more ominous than during the air raids: she begins to wonder whether suffering and adversity unite people or rather divide them. Naples had become a city of chaos, with the food shortening and the black market. The Neapolitans had entered "a desert of hopelessness"; they had kept

15. *Ibid.*, p. 41 The British conservative stand over the entire process of liberation will eventually play down the role of the Resistance for fear of unpredictable political consequences in the leftist sense.
16. Burns, p. 232.
17. *Ibid.*

alive during the German occupation and now discovered that "they hadn't been liberated from anything after all, that the war was just beginning for them [...]. Everyone in Naples agreed only in saying that the Allies were worse liars that the Fascists."[18] The Allies had promised the Italians democracy and security but by August 1944, social and collective decency no longer existed in Naples. The Americans are now viewed differently as well. Burns sadly records that "one of the most tragic spectacles in all history was the Italians' faith in us."[19]

Some unfathomable force is at work that diverts Burns's adventuring spirit and discloses what underlies the surrounding ordinary daily life at wartime. He no longer tingles with delight as when he scorned the British soldiers at the Allied Force Headquarters in Algiers:

> In the AFHO offices there was an Englishman to counter-balance every American. Thus the streets of Algiers clomped with British hobnails. The British wore shorts till 1800 hours. Through the leafy heat their legs bobbed like brown pistons. They wore canvas gaiters and short sleeves and berets designed after the queen's own tam [...]. They scratched their bare legs, bitten by the anopheles mosquito.[20]

On their part, the British despised the Yanks, who were better off than they were, and resented their good rations, their cigarettes, their women, and their cinemas. After grinding through the alien habits of the Limeys, as he calls them, Burns admits that "the Americans and the British rarely liked one another" and that "neither understood the other, or tried too."[21] The British are eventually dispatched to Naples. In the land of sunshine, Burns dwells more on particular individual portraits. Now beneath the contempt, there lies a vivid cynical streak. The Galleria Umberto I, the site of a

18. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
20. *Ibid.*, 125.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 166. Limeys is the North-American slang name originally referring to Royals Navy sailors.

collective form of leisurely life, is a swarming place of back market activity as well as sexual encounters. The Galleria is where Momma's bar is housed.

Momma has survived the ruins of her apartment in March 1943 and consequently relocates to a dreary room on the third floor of the Galleria. She swiftly learns how to make space for herself in the cultural hybrid of the liberated city. She is allowed to open a bar and her only desire is to be renowned as a great patroness. Momma proudly exhibits furs, lovely dresses, and black market goods; she essentially embodies the malicious vitality of survivalism: "And now that the Allies were in Naples, the Neapolitans were united in milking them", or "They thought the world owed them a living, so they preyed on one another."[22] Such passages confirm the realist ethics propounded in Eduardo De Filippo's celebrated play *Napoli milionaria* (1945), which represents the plight of the poor drifting away and the corruption of the illegal trade.

Momma, whose character and prospects are identified with her bar, lives only for the Allied soldiery. She bows to the Americans and rescues those she thinks need affection. But, in the summer of 1944, psychological liberation is not easily attained, a fact Momma acknowledges in conjuring the British. She hardly accepts them whether it is the Desert Rat, the handsome English boy who fought at El Alamein and never spoke to a soul, or the two hawkish gay sergeants who shriek like parrots and prey on other costumers. It is telling to read what she has to say about them:

> There now arrived the only two Momma did not rejoice to see, two British Sergeants wearing shorts draped like an old maid's flannels. They were almost twins, had peaked noses and spectacles that caused them to peer at everyone as though they were having difficulty in threading a needle from their rocking chairs [...]. Their conversation was a series of laments and groans and criticism of everyone else present [...]. They were disdainful and envious and balefully curious all at the same time. They reminded her of old

22. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

> women who take out their false teeth and contemplate their photograph of forty years ago.[23]

The picture is sharp and Momma's resolve clear. Burns reaches a pungent *crescendo* when he brings up the British one last time, molding them in a depraved show. In his Sixth Promenade, Burns walks in the heart of the city, through piazzas and alleyways, in a sort of tribute to a Naples alive and furious with life. As he strolls and looks around, this officer turned *flâneur* chronicles a kaleidoscopic metropolis: the mobile crowds laughing, crying, shouting, gesticulating; the children swarming the streets; the stores with their windows half empty; the walls of public buildings stuck with movies posters; and the playbills of the Teatro San Carlo. Then, he begins to pivot in a somewhat different direction: near the Opera House rises "the palazzo where the Limeys took their tea and the British officers got drunk on their roof terrace and poured gin on pedestrians passing into the Galleria Umberto."[24]As opposed to the spectacle of the Neapolitans so rich by merely being alive, the British come to the fore as a strident discord.

Burns's trail of urban wondering ends with an emotional pronouncement: "Napoli? . . . I've had it . . . or it's having me . . . ."[25] Undergoing a spiritual conversion, Burns begins to reassess the American dream as a topos centered on superiority and democratic freedom:

> Yet after a little while in Naples I found out that America was a country just like any other, except she had more material wealth and more advanced pluming. And I found out that outside of the propaganda writers (who were making a handsome living from the deal) Americans were very poor spiritually. Their ideals were something to make dollars on. They had brankrupt souls.[26]

Burns's America is at a critical crossroad.

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23. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 280.

## Imagining the Allies

Equally critical is Rosi's journey through liberated Naples. Using the visual, his memory travels from delightful episodic encounters to a lesser heroic image of wartime Americans. Rosi's tales of Allied occupation in Naples are initially astonishing for their exuberant tone. Nothing is more inspiring than the impact of the Americans on the social customs of his city:

> The Americans had brought us bread, but also the cold cuts. In other words, freedom. They made us see that an inferior person could communicate to a superior while both resting their feet on the desk. It was the end of an authoritarian era, which had existed in Naples from the beginning of time (my translation).[27]

Another thing the Americans were well known for was their inexhaustible thirst for the visual. Both Rosi and his father Sebastiano, an amateur photographer who also loved to sketch, made numerous amounts of sketches, well paid. For Rosi, there was a common denominator between the Americans and the Neapolitans, and that was their strong desire to survive.

A bid for survival is in Rosi's mind when he returns to Naples in October 1944. In early 1943, young Rosi was drafted into the army and sent to Tuscany for training. After Mussolini was arrested on 25th July, he first joined the resistance and then began his journey back home. The Naples he found was unexpectedly transfigured. As he tells Michel Ciment,

> It was hell. The ruins were lit incessantly by the lights of military trucks. I arrived late one night and dared not to go home since I feared the worst. So I walked and walked through the city until dawn. I was in choc. When I left, Naples had already been heavily bombed, but what I saw that night was terrifying. You can find it in Burns' novel *The Gallery* (my translation).[28]

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27. C. Cosulich, "Colloquio con l'autore", in F. Rosi, *Uomini contro*, edited by C. Cosulich, Bologna, Cappelli, 1970, p. 55.
28. M. Ciment, *Le Dossier Rosi*, rev. ed., Paris, Ramsay, p. 107.

This imagery functions as a shared collective memory, but more importantly feeds into the soul of the future filmmaker. In the working script of *Salvatore Giuliano*, Rosi includes newsreels of the Anglo-American forces landing in Sicily on 10th July 1943 intercut into the actual scenes.[29] The Allies's armed occupation of the island triggered the rise of the Sicilian separatist movement. Giuliano, who became an outlaw in September 1943, was its nominal colonel. But it is in *Lucky Luciano* (1973) that the director dramatizes his city's wartime shortages and deprivations. The film is set against the backdrop of Mafia collaboration and all kinds of illegal commercial activities. The Allied Military Government had placed known mafiosi in liaison positions and allowed them to control the black market using U.S. military trucks. Take, for example, the flashback that details the collaboration between Charles Poletti, an American Colonel, and Don Vito Genovese, who was in charge of the public administration in Southern Italy and made millions by selling American goods (flour, penicillin, cigarettes, olive oil, sugar) destined for the poor people. Rosi captures the atmosphere of his city in a montage set to the music of Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman at the Army Officers' Club. He focuses on a gallery of faces with girls devouring sandwiches and chocolates as they dance with drunken soldiers. The poorer women had turned to prostitution. As Rosi confesses to Giuseppe Tornatore:

> The sequence of the Americans who dance with the girls evokes my own memories in many ways. This theme was at the heart of Burns's novel, *The Gallery*, from which I always wanted to adapt a film, even though one of the most important facts was not included: the relationship between the Mafia and politics (my translation).[30]

29. S. Cecchi d'Amico, E. Provenzale, F. Rosi, and F. Solinas, "La prima sceneggiatura," in T. Kezich, *Salvatore Giuliano: un film di Francesco Rosi*, with the collaboration of A. Levantesi, Rome, Cinecittà Holding, 1999, p. 163. The Allies' armed occupation of the island triggered the rise of the Sicilian separatist movement. Giuliano, who became an outlaw in September 1943, became its nominal colonel.
30. F. Rosi and G. Tornatore, *Io lo chiamo cinematografo: conversazione con Giuseppe Tornatore,* Milan, Mondadori, 2012, p. 314.

This flashback comes to an end with Genovese delivering a deceitful speech on the collaborative efforts with the occupying forces in order to fight corruption and help the hungry people. Rosi relied on the report of a sergeant in the Army's Criminal Investigation Division, Orange C. Dickie, who began to retrace the losses of the vital supplies and discovered a widespread operation headed by Genovese.[31]

Politicians, criminals and Allies became an organic component of Naples' organization of government after the liberation. In Burns's novel, civic degradation materializes in the difficult alliance between the liberators and the local population at large. If the name of Naples "spelled a certain freedom and relief to him" when he arrived, it progressively became a dry land, where the women, who owned silk stocking, were prostitutes in Via Toledo, and the black market in Via Chiaia was "patronized by Americans."[32] Burns's increasingly pessimistic view of the liberators takes us to another foul situation of the war in the portrait entitled "Queen Penicillin." Everyone knew in Naples that you could buy the medical supplies if you had the price. This chapter evokes the end of Eduardo's *Napoli milionaria*, with the psychological and cultural crisis that came with the loss of moral identity during the allied occupation of the city. Rosi directed this play at the Teatro San Carlo in 2003, with the Compagnia di Teatro Luca De Filippo. He also planned to adapt a film but was unable to find an enlightened producer. As he tells Alessandra Levantesi, "If I had been given the opportunity to make a film from *Napoli milionaria*, I would have finally fulfilled my dream of adapting *The Gallery*, the film I had scripted with Amidei" (my translation).[33]

Burns's novel ends under the dome of the Galleria Umberto I where everyone in Naples came sooner or later in August 1944.

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31. This report is published in L. Jannuzzi and F. Rosi, *Lucky Luciano*, Milan, Bompiani, 1973, pp. 183-218.
32. Burns, pp. 2, 136.
33. A. Levantesi, "C'era una volta un futuro regista: conversazione con Francesco Rosi", in *Francesco Rosi: cinema e verità*, Assisi, ANCCI, 2008, p. 34.

> The Neapolitans came to the Galleria to watch the Americans, to pity them, and to prey upon them. The Americans came there to get drunk or to pick up something or to wrestle with the riddle. Everyone was aware of this riddle. It was the riddle of war, of human dignity, of love, of life itself. Some came closer than others to solving it. But all the people in the Galleria were human beings in the middle of a war. They struck attitudes. Some loved. Some tried to love [...]. They were all in Naples, were something in them got shaken up. They'd never be the same again-either dead or changed somehow. And these people who became living portraits in this Gallery were synecdoches for most of the people anywhere in the world.[34]

Burns and Rosi speak to us in important ways. They succeed in portraying eyewitness testimony as a narrative of first-person experiential knowledge which emerged in liberated Naples. Both go beyond the haunting realities of everyday life, as a muted hope courses through their descent into the depths of memory. For even in the midst of the night, they cling to a moment of recovery.

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34. Burns, p. 372.

# Notes on Contributors

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**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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